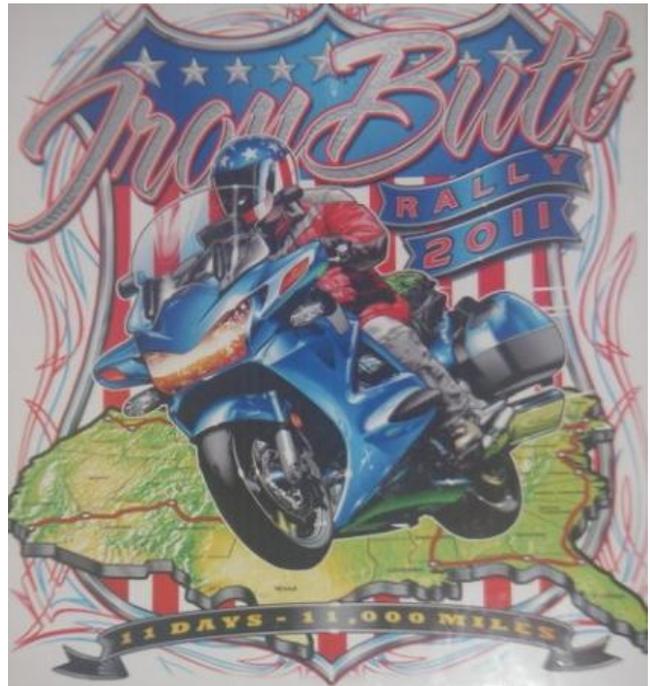


## The 2011 Iron Butt Rally

August 21, 2010 - the date in which we needed to make the first important decision regarding the 2011 IBR. Do we want to apply? Well, that was a "no-brainer". Of course we want to apply. The application was written and sent in:

"Wow-it's been a whole year since the 2009 IBR. It seems like it was just yesterday that we were taking off on one of the most exciting adventures of our lives. Being selected to ride in the 2009 IBR was one of the best things that ever happened to us. Even though, at the time, we had only one prior rally under our belts, we were given the opportunity to ride in the 2009 IBR. Not only were we IBR finishers, but bronze medal finishers. This is a priceless accomplishment for us. We are incredibly proud of our achievement, but now, we want more. We realize that we will probably never be "top 10" finishers (unless we were given four extra days, as Maura Gatensby would say), but our competitive nature is telling us that we could definitely be gold medal finishers. We would love the opportunity to prove ourselves, once again.

I'm 46, Jeff is 51. We completed our first LD ride in 2004 and since then have completed the Minnesota 1000 in 2009, the IBR as bronze medalists in 2009, the 48/10, SS4000, BB1500, and several other certified rides. We enjoy rallying as our schedule permits, and most recently had a top 25 finish in the Minnesota 2010. It's funny how life can change opinions. When I read ride reports from the 2007 IBR, I thought those people were nuts. Shortly after that, I not only enjoyed being a pillion with Jeff, but also wanted to learn how to ride on my own. Today, I'm talking about riding one more IBR as a pillion and then attempting to ride as a team with Jeff in 2013, on separate bikes, should we be given those opportunities again. What a big change from 2007.



We feel very fortunate to be part of the long distance riding community. Not only do we enjoy promoting the sport of long distance riding to others, (I did a brief talk recently on Side Stand Up), we also enjoy helping others learn how to ride long distances safely.

We are hoping to have the opportunity to compete again in 2011 in the IBR. We feel, now that we are no longer newbies, that we can really offer some good/fun competition to the other accomplished two-up couples. It would be great to have that "adventure of a lifetime", once again.

Jeff and I operate a small Staffing Company in Milwaukee, WI. Because we have six great kids, with four of the six grown up and out of the house so far, it is not always possible for

us to attend as many LD functions as we would like. Our family helped with our smaller children so we could ride the IBR in 2009 and they have committed to do that again, should we be chosen to ride in 2011. We will be awaiting the good news in mid-September.

With this year's IBR application, there was a requirement of a \$100, refundable application fee. The waiting began. The waiting continued. Still waiting...OK, now this was getting a little ridiculous. Everyone that I knew, who had applied to the IBR, either had received the happy email or received their \$100 back. How many times can one hit the refresh button on a computer in a day? I think I should have my name recorded somewhere in the Guinness Book of Records. I learned exactly how impatient of a person I was. I think I was bordering on some type of mental disorder. It was Monday, Sept 20, 2010. EVERYONE knew but us. I now started leaving phone messages for Lisa Landry and Mike Kneebone, that I'm sure sounded pathetic. The not knowing was a difficult pill to swallow. By the morning of Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>, I had given up all hope and realized that it was simply not meant to be. I stopped hitting the now well-worn refresh key on my computer. I would get a grip and move on. I consoled myself by trying to think of something frivolous to spend the \$100 entry fee on. By Wednesday afternoon, as I was preparing for the two youngest kids to return home from school, the email arrived. Jeff was on the computer in the kitchen and he announced "We're in!" I didn't believe Jeff and thought he was attempting to provide humor in some sick sort of way. When I didn't respond, I was summoned to view the email in front of him. Sure enough-we were in ☺.

There it was, the email from Lisa Landry - "Carol and Jeff - not sure why this didn't get to you...sorry to make you wait!

Congratulations! Your application was drawn for entry in the 2011 Iron Butt Rally!"

Immense joy, fear, trepidation and then that plain "oh my God" feeling hit all at once. We were in. We were really in. The old saying "be careful what you ask for" came to mind. What next?

Before I move on, I need to add a disclaimer here. I was the one who really wanted to do the IBR again. Jeff accomplished his mission in 2009, and was satisfied. I was the one who wanted to do it one more time. I didn't have to twist Jeff's arm, but he was satisfied with 2009, and he rode in 2011 for me. What a great husband he is. I know there are two sides to that coin. How many guys reading this, wish they had a spouse that supportive of the IBR that they actually wanted to compete in it more than once?

**9 Months= 273.931649 days**

A lot can be accomplished in 9 months. A human life can be created. You can learn a foreign language, or lose 50 pounds. A lot can be accomplished. We had 9 months to prepare for the 2011 IBR. Because we rode in 2009, we had a pretty good understanding of what needed to be accomplished. Our packing would be much easier, because we would bring far less crap we didn't use, and far less clothing. We weren't going to run with auxiliary fuel, so nothing to worry about on that end. The bike had all of its rally farkles in place. We simply needed to prepare mind and body.

We had the discussion of whether we should acquire a Nexus card for simplified border crossings in Canada. Should we purchase a National Parks Pass? MedJet evacuation insurance or the SPOT version? We went with the cheaper SPOT evac insurance, knowing it wouldn't transport the bike if we had an accident and we skipped all the rest. Our trusty Minnesota friends, aka Team Strange, worked diligently on honing their skills with EZbake. They were ready to route to any bonus location with ease. We received private ezbike lessons from our buddy Curt Gran when we couldn't make the training session with Team Strange in MN (see picture). We purchased a backup Garmin 2610 GPS. All was right with the world.



Curt Gran

This time around, the IBR didn't consume our thought process as it had in '09. We spent the winter months embracing each snowfall by riding our snow machines through the crisp evergreen forests surrounding our lakehouse in the SE Kettle Moraine Forest. Jeff can always outride me through the open fields, but I can give him a run for his money



through the twisty paths lined with tall trees, as long as he always breaks the trails when the snow is deep and fresh.



Spring arrived in WI. We thought about the

IBR, but we were far from getting into "rally mode". In fact, with less than one month to go before the start of the IBR, we did something we had talked about for an entire year. We took a week trip to KS to go Prairie Dog hunting. It was an awesome adventure. There will be a separate Prairie Dog report someday. Originally we planned to have a Saddle



Sore Ride in the '96 Gold Wing w/ sidecar to



carry our equipment. After a 400 mile day to see our friend Gary Klinker in Camp Douglas, WI on the Wing, we decided it just wasn't going to be comfortable enough with its stock



seating. Jeff's Dad (78 years young) was kind enough to lend us his Miata for the trip. We even managed to take out a couple rattlesnakes

The month of June arrived and now it was time to focus our energy on the IBR. An additional checkpoint was added, so we had another option on where and when to change the rear tire. We did our mileage math twice and decided to ship our tire to Jacksonville, FL. A mistake that will show itself on the last day of Leg 1. We made sure our younger kids would be OK during the 18 days of our adventure. Our middle son Colin and my sister-in-



law Cindy were the two people who stepped up to help. They made our adventure possible and we are both forever grateful.

A great benefit of riding in the '09 IBR, was knowing how to eat for 11 days. This time around, we loaded up the bike with nuts, dried fruit, "ho-made" beef jerky and cliff bars. We even used two new, empty gas bottles and filled them with two different types of gin. A good gin and a cheap gin. In '09, Jeff emptied our gas bottles of the gas, washed them in the dishwasher and filled them with scotch. Trust me, never again.

That scotch tasted like gas and it was awful. See, we did learn something important from the '09 IBR ☺. We both knew that we could live off of "bike food" for breakfast and lunch and then try to find a more satisfying meal when we stopped to rest. This didn't always work as planned, as you will later learn.

It's finally time to leave for the IBR. We had over a 2,000 mile journey to arrive at the start in Seattle, WA. Many riders had already arrived as we were just leaving WI. I was super excited to actually get to finally meet face-to-face the new people riding in the rally. Jeff

had started a 2011 IBR group on facebook and I had seen pictures and talked to many people already. It was super to get to converse with them in person.

June 16<sup>th</sup> was finally here. We left the house at 4am. It was cold and dark. Our plan was to ride to Rapid City, SD for the first night, Park Falls, ID the second night and arrive in Seattle on Saturday morning. We rode the long, cold and wet 2,000+ miles and arrived in Seattle at 10am as hoped. It rained the entire day. It didn't matter, because we made it to the start with no issues. Here is the link from Tom Austin as riders begin to arrive in Seattle:

<http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/1.pdf>



June 18<sup>th</sup> was a great day. We were in Seattle, WA surrounded by people who shared our passion and addiction. We have all been informed at one time or another that we needed to search for a cure, but I don't think there is one, nor is one necessary. It was the first time in months where I didn't feel like a leper or like I had a giant "X" on my forehead. I was among the addicted and it felt great.

No one complained of the cold or rain or of the thousands of miles they had just ridden to be in the parking lot. It's a great feeling to be surrounded by the worlds toughest motorcycle riders. Motorcycles spanned the parking lot, filled with farkles. All but a handful had auxillary fuel cells attached. They all sat proudly next to one another, just waiting to be back on the road for another adventure. June 20<sup>th</sup> was only two days away.

We spent the next four hours going through the IBR registration process. The bike needed to go through tech inspection. Our insurance had to be verified. We needed to give a video taped statement involving the risks of the IBR. Our camera needed to be checked and the memory cards marked and approved. Finally, we needed to do the odometer check. The odometer course was 31 miles. We were told that part of the route was a mess while they clean up an accident. It rained most of the day. The bike needed fuel so we did that and then attempted to ride the course. Jeff and I didn't use the intercom, so we could not easily communicate with one another. Jeff had a copy of the course on the tank bag and I had a copy in my hands. As we were approaching the last exit, Jeff hesitated and went straight. For the first time ever, I knew the proper way to go. It was too late. We came back and had to rerun the course. It was another 31 miles in the cold and rain. I think we both felt better when we learned that about 15 other riders missed the same exit. At least we did it right the second time and we were about to be done with our check in process. Here is just a sampling of the riders going through the odometer check process and the camera check process:



*Odo Chk*



*Camera Chk*

We headed off to the hotel bar for some good old fashion social time and nourishment. There was an evening gathering spot for all of the riders. We sat with the Team Strange group and got to know many of the riders that we had ridden with in the past MN1000 rallies. John Coons and Jim Winterer were two great guys who we finally got to know a bit better. They both told us great stories and it turned out to be a memorable evening.

Here is Tom Austin's link of IBR events for Saturday:

<http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/2.pdf>

Sunday, we had plenty of free time until the mandatory 4pm riders meeting. Our good friend Fred sent us an email telling us we needed to eat at 13 Coins. Curt Gran (5<sup>th</sup> place finisher) and Peter Behm (this years IBR winner), joined us. We had an amazing breakfast served with giant Bloody Mary's. I guess we felt far more relaxed about this years rally. We went to the 4pm riders meeting. Many questions were answered and we were informed that we would be getting all of the bonus locations at the start of the rally. Something was really going to be different about the format, but we weren't sure what.

Jeff was convinced that a 48-10 ride would be a big part of the rally. I was convinced that Hyder, AK would be a bonus. It turns out, we were both correct. Following the meeting there was a brief prayer session for anyone that wanted to attend. We both attended and I found this to be quite an emotional and uplifting experience. Now it was time for the start banquet.

Food was served, but we were all awaiting the much anticipated rally packs. We were informed that we wouldn't be riding in Canada, unless we went to Hyder and everyone needed to ride to all 48 states in order to be considered a finisher. In order to be a gold medal finisher, you needed to not only ride to all 48 states but also include either the four corners or Hyder, AK. You could acquire additional points by photographing the different state capitol buildings. Depending upon how far off a basic route the capitol buildings were, the points for that capitol were determined.

There was no fuel log required. Everyone cheered about that. The rally was going back to the basics. This time, it wasn't about how well you could manipulate data in a computer, but more about how many miles you could ride. You could pretty much pick your route right from the start. Everyone simply wanted to get back to their rooms and determine their plan. The room emptied out in minutes. 87 riders were determining their fate for the next 11 days. If you were going to attempt the four corners ride, you had to make that decision right away. There was no chance to add that later. You had to set that course for the rally right from the start.



***TeamStrange World Domination***



***Tom Austin***



***Bob (Lady GaGa) Higdon***

Jeff and I determined almost immediately that we would not ride to AK. We also decided that we didn't want to ride to the four corners tour. We thought we'd attempt to be competitive by collecting state capitols. Since Jeff had a strong feeling that the 48-10 would be a bonus for this rally, he brought our 48-10 route along, that multi-day ride we had done as preparation before the '09 IBR. This was a great help, since Jeff spent a lot of time refining that route. My first thoughts when I heard of the rally format was a little dissapointment. Not that I felt this was going to be an easy rally, but rather that it was going to be mostly interstate riding, seeing what we've already seen, and we wouldn't be hunting for amazing, obscure bonus locations in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the night. However, it didn't take long for that dissapointment to dissapate after attempting to find our first hotel to sleep. (More on that later). Jeff pulled up our original 48/10 route, and modified it for the rally. By 11pm, we were tired and off to sleep. In '09, I remember not getting to bed until 3am. It was a nice change. Although we never did get a chance to enjoy the pool and hottub in the hotel, like Jennyfer and Jacque.



Tom Austin's report as to the new rules for the 2011 IBR:  
<http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/3.pdf>

Jeff and I were up early on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Jeff refined the route, taking out extra miles where he could. It looked like we had a solid plan for the first five days of the rally. The first leg would be the longest. By 8am we had to be out by the bike to get tagged for the 10am departure. There was much excitement as everyone was anxious to get on the road. I stopped into the hotel and got big breakfasts for us. I figured it might be the last real meal in a long time. I learned from '09 that it worked well to start with a full belly, since we were starting the rally at 10am. Last minute tire pressure checks were done on the bike and we were ready to go!



The start of the rally is always a special moment. 87 bikes all leaving together must be fun to watch. Warchild tries to scare everyone and make them crash. Here is the link to the video of the start. Jeff and I appear at 1:03 minutes:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMyYiRqMxXU>



The weather was partly cloudy, cool and comfortable. Our goal for the first day was to ride through just three states and take pictures of their capitols. We would stop in WA, OR and ID. We were planning on spending the night in Boise, ID. At least, that was the plan. While riding to our first bonus location, I told Jeff that I also wanted to get a receipt in each state and not just take a picture. I was concerned something might happen to the picture or I might lose the camera. If we had a receipt in each state, at least we would be able to be considered finishers. Jeff said that he didn't think that was necessary and I shouldn't make

the rally harder than it was. We stopped in Olympia, Washington and took our first picture of our first state capitol. As we were leaving the state of Washington, Jeff pulled off for gas. We stopped a little short, but we also had a receipt for the state of Washington and not just a picture.



***Olympia, Washington***

We rode on to Salem, Oregon and had a short roadside discussion along the way. No harm, no foul and best of all no ticket 😊.



We learned that when we stopped to take our second photo in Salem, OR the camera memory did something weird and didn't show that we had any photos. Jeff took the memory card out and put it back in. Our photo from WA suddenly appeared. I sure was glad we were also collecting receipts for each state, just in case.

Our final stop for the day was Boise, ID. We were happy about how well the first day had gone. We were going to get our last picture before dark and then find a place to rest. Day one of the IBR complete. I was satisfied because I had all the photos and receipts.

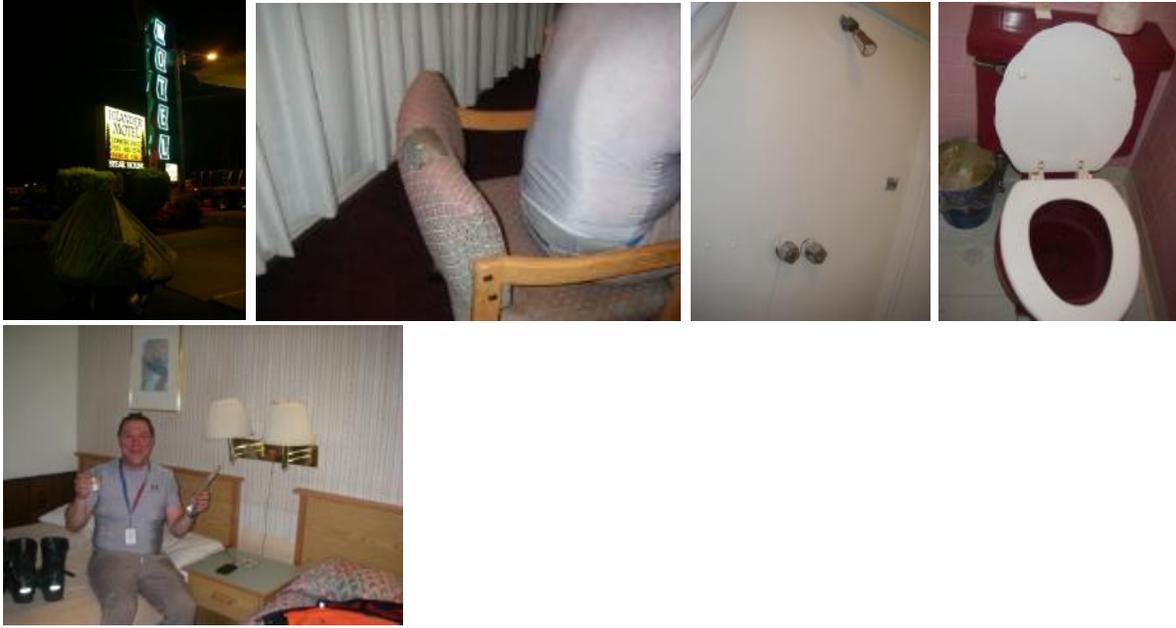
Now off to sleep in a nearby hotel – or so we thought. We pulled into a Days Inn just outside of downtown Boise. We dismounted and went to check in. The front clerk walked out to have a smoke. She politely informed us that if we didn't have a reservation, we didn't have a room. In fact, there were no rooms available in Boise. There was some kids soccer convention in town. We understood we needed to move on.

Now the fun and adventure began. We were tired, hungry and perhaps a wee bit crabby. We needed a place to stay. We rode on towards Montana. After riding for a few miles, we needed to pull over so Jeff could change his helmet shield because it was past sundown. He spotted a small sign along a road that had a strange looking bed. We whipped around and attempted to follow the sign – thinking hotel? It was leading us back to Boise. So much for that option. We once again headed towards Montana.

We saw that the next city was Mountain Head or Mountain Home. (I would vote Head-just sayin). We began to see a sign for a place to sleep. Two options were available: Motel 6 or the motel with the Steakhouse sign. From the outside, the Steakhouse motel (which had a real name), looked appealing. I was so in, until...Oh yes, the first thing I saw as I leapt off the bike was a sign that said "prostitutes and truckers welcome – all guests must arrive by 10pm". It was certainly way after 10pm, but I was still hopeful for a room. I asked the very friendly front desk clerk if he had a room available and if it could please be on the first floor. He hesitated, was distracted with screaming children, spoke to a woman in a foreign tongue and gave me the thumbs up. Life was now great. I think I just managed to find us a room at the "Hindu Hell Motel". I had to sign a form saying that a "smoking" room was OK. Why did I need to sign a form? I didn't care – I signed the form. I asked if they had internet (ha ha), surprisingly they did. I asked for the internet password.

Now it gets really weird. Jeff walks in the door, the nice man re-explains that there is only a smoking room available, but it is on the first floor. He asks Jeff if this is OK. (Apparently the form I had just signed, didn't really matter). Jeff asks if they have internet. I'm thinking, I just covered that and have the slip of paper with the code. It is some long Hindu word. Jeff is foolish enough, at this time, to ask what it means. Remember, I just want to get into a room, any room, and eat a big steak, as the sign says. Jeff gets a brief, yet informative infomercial regarding an elephant god who will watch over us. Wait-elephant god to watch over us, this is not all bad...? At this point-I DON'T CARE! Now, I ask about the steak. Silence from the clerk. I ask again, with no reply. The nice clerk tells me they have free coffee at 6am. Oh-I guess there will be no steak. Now I am a bit sad, but we have a room. I open the door and start to haul in our bags. Jeff asks if he thinks he needs to bring in the tank bag, since we will only be sleeping here for about 20 minutes. As I point out the young "lady" across the street, on her porch, flicking on and off the front porch light. Wow-this is just SO wrong. I think it might be necessary to completely unload the bike so someone else doesn't unload it for us.

We enter our room. OMG was what first came to mind. There were indeed two beds. I wouldn't actually say they were clean. The chairs were held together with duct tape. The bathroom was directly behind the beds. Red seemed to be the color of choice. The shower stall was narrow and made of tin. A few drops of water did come out when you turned both handles. Remember my initial disappointment about not being able to travel to unique places in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night. Well, it was only the first day of the rally and we were there. Hazmat jammies were not on my list of things to pack. It was going to be a long night. Thank goodness Bill Thweatt gave me a pop tart before we left. Instead of a nice, thick, juicy steak, we shared the pop tart and our emergency gin. Keeping most of my riding gear on, I thought I'd try to get some sleep. I was pleasantly drifting off to sleep when a train went by. Our flimsy metal shower stall began to shake and vibrate. The train blew its whistle. It sounded like it was in our bathroom. So much for sleep at the "Hindu Hell Motel". At least the elephant god was watching over us. I think we were relieved that we had made the first day with 700 miles under our belt.



Here is Tom Austin's link to what other riders did on Day 1 of the rally:  
<http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/4.pdf>

Day 2 came upon us very quickly. It felt like we really did only have 20 minutes of sleep. Today would be the day we would ride across the state of Montana. Unfortunately, Jeff had developed a sore shoulder that was quite painful as we rode to Seattle. Riding only exacerbated that pain. On top of that, Jeff was coming down with a head cold. Not something you want to have when there are still 10 days remaining in the rally. Aleve and Advil would soon become Jeff's best friend.

We decided to allow our SPOT to be made public, along with 44 other riders. This gave the outside world an opportunity to see exactly where we were riding at all times. A close friend of ours began texting that we were nowhere near the rest of the riders. I kept thinking that we missed a state and would end up with only 47. I felt really unsettled when I received a text message saying that we were the only riders taking Hwy 12 through Montana. While the other riders were making time on the interstate, we were enjoying the beauty of Montana. There would be times when we wouldn't see another car for 20 minutes. Sometimes, it's just more fun to take the road less traveled. Weather conditions were perfect, however at 2:30pm, in the middle of Montana, a giant deer jumped out of the ditch, directly in front of the bike. I was taking pictures at the time, not really looking for wildlife. Jeff hit the brakes hard. My body tossed into him. I turned around just in time to see the gigantic deer that looked very lost and confused. For the remainder of the afternoon, we saw many deer gatherings along the roadside. There was even a cow that seemed to think that the grass was greener on the other side of the fence. Thanks to Jeff's quick maneuvering, we were fine. I learned, once again, to never stop looking for road hazards, whatever they may be.



We had a relatively pleasant day of travel through Montana. I determined that since no one else was anywhere near us, we must be winning. Since this isn't a race, I don't know what we were winning, but we were indeed winning.





*Helena, Montana*

It was still light out when we arrived in Miles City, MT. It was a relatively easy 900 mile day. We found a hotel and were told there was a steakhouse just up the street called Boardwalk. We unpacked the bike and we were there. This was a family run restaurant. The food was awesome and inexpensive. They didn't have a liquor license but they allowed me to go to the casino next door and grab cold beers and bring them in. They served "ho-made" cinnamon bread, which I know would be our breakfast the next day.



(I think Jeff called Curt to make sure he was OK during this meal)

Here is the link for from Tom Austin as to what other riders were doing on Day 2:  
<http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/5.pdf>

Day 3 began without incident, except for the fact the Jeff really did have a head cold and his shoulder was even more painful. Today we would have the mission of collecting a picture of the state capitol in South Dakota. It would be a busy day with many stops, since we needed receipts for North Dakota, Wyoming, and Nebraska. We also needed to make our "call in bonus" anytime between 2pm and 2am. I had us being able to make that call when we stopped in South Dakota for our state capitol photo.

We ran into early morning fog, cool temperatures and rain by the time we got to Nebraska. Our timing was perfect, because we missed most of the big storms that swept through Nebraska earlier in the day. We only experienced a few hours of rain. Jeff used our "thank you points" and secured us a hotel in Fremont, NE. We

would be staying at a Sleep Inn.

A little morning fog as we began Day 3.



As we headed towards Nebraska, the rain fell but Jeff was prepared.



Let it be known he abandoned the giant rubber glove concept.

We had our final gas stop for the day at Fred's (how appropriate).



Pierre, SD



The Sleep Inn that we stayed in was actually quite nice. Across from the hotel was a Burger King which provided us our dinner. This was also when we took our sleep bonus for a total of 480 points. I was able to use the Burger King receipt for the start of the bonus and we topped off with fuel in the morning for our end rest bonus receipt. It was a long day but we completed another 900 miles.

One of the nice things about having a smart phone is being able to read all of the other discussion boards while on the road. I had read that I-29, going to KS was closed do to flooding. We needed to slightly adjust our route before going to sleep, so we could still get the KS bonus on this leg.

Here is the report from Tom Austin: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/6.pdf>

Day 4 was cool as we started. We rode in the cold and later rain almost all day. We had an additional two hours of riding because of our detour. Many states were preparing for more floods as the rivers were sure to crest:



We obtained receipts in Kansas and Missouri without much trouble.

Our first photo of the day was in Iowa.



Des Moines, Iowa

The rain began in earnest as we rode through MN. I the TeamStrange discussion board was buzzing with "Strangers" that were spotted riding through the state. We chose to skip the capitol of MN on ride on to WI. We were 50 miles from our lakehouse when we stopped in Madison for a photo. We would be sleeping in Rockford, IL for the evening. There were so many options and choices for staying with family and friends in the area. I knew from a past rally that staying with friends is a big mistake. Although it was tempting to stay with friends, we chose to find a hotel. This time, Jeff found us a resort, using the "Thank You Network". Another free room. We talked about bringing the younger kids back to this place. We intended to take pictures of us with our rally flag in the water park, but sleep overcame us. We ordered room service and had a gigantic meal. Jeff had a side dish of garlic mashed potatoes that he never ate. This would make an awesome breakfast at our first gas stop in the morning.



Madison, Wisconsin



Here is Tom Austin's report: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/7.pdf>

Day 5 – We're heading into the first checkpoint. Today was simply the day to make time and head into the checkpoint. The weather was cool and overcast with light rain. We needed to get receipts for Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York. As I read Tom Austin's report from the prior day, I learned that Jim Winterer was out of the rally. Jim was a "Stanger" and someone I had sat with the Saturday before the start of the rally. Jim is a

really great guy. Glad that he will be ok, but it is always sad to hear of anyone in the rally getting hurt.

We were making good time and we were on schedule to be at the checkpoint a few hours early. Jeff was giving me a hard time about making us leave at 4pm. We could have certainly slept until 7am. I proceeded to explain that I would rather be early than risk something going wrong. Suddenly, the traffic came to a dead stop. We pulled off to get gas. Jeff checked our tires and realizes that our rear tire would barely make it to New York, much less Jacksonville, FL as planned. OK-time to get help. I had been busily texting our friend Fred Silloway for the last 4 days. He sent back stories, and is just plain humorous. It is certainly a big help to have contact with the outside world to pass the time or help keep Jeff awake. Fred is also our #1 emergency contact, should anything go wrong. Fred had been texting me from his computer. I sent him a text asking if he could help us locate a tire before we reached the checkpoint and gave him the specifications. Normally, Fred would reply to anything I sent within minutes. I thought about it and sent him a text directly to his phone. "Need Help – please see email". I knew that this probably made Fred's heart skip a beat, as he would have thought we crashed, but I wanted him to help me locate a tire, because it would be far easier for him than me from the back of the bike. Within 20 minutes, he had a tire lined up and we knew we would be ok. The tire was 20 miles from the checkpoint, but we had plenty of extra time. I guess it was a good thing that I made us leave at 4 am, after all.

We arrived at Bob Weaver Motorsports in N. Tonawanda, NY just before 1pm. They had a Dunlop QS tire. It would get us to Jacksonville, FL where our tire was shipped. Jeff stripped off the bike and took off the rear wheel. Immediately the new tire was put on the wheel and Jeff put it back on the bike. I went inside to pay (\$170.59), and we were off to checkpoint one. The entire process took 23 minutes. We would still be 2 hours early for check-in at checkpoint 1.



We checked into our room and began the task of organizing our photos and receipts. This time, I made Jeff double check the receipts with me. He hates doing this and it showed. His cold was also miserable and he had intense shoulder pain. We made our way to get food and get scored. One of the first people I met in the food line was Rick Miller. He handed me two cigars to smoke when we finished the rally. What a great guy. I've always respected Rick and it was really nice to see him.

We got in line to be scored, and guess what? Rick Miller was our scorer. How fun was that! Everything was in order. We had plenty of time to rest, as bonus listings for Leg 2 wouldn't be handed out until 4am the next morning. We went across the street for refreshments and off to bed.



Here is the report from Tom Austin: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/8.pdf>

Day 6 -Leg 2 bonus packs were handed out at 4am. I'm sure rally staff considered the difficulty in traveling along the east coast and made sure we had the weekend to traverse this section of country. We would have many stops today, collecting many bonii along the way. We ran into two other riders as we headed to the state capitol of New York.



Phazer Phil



Curt Gran



Albany, New York



Concord, New Hampshire

In Vermont and Maine we simply gathered receipts to prove we were in those states. The weather was getting warmer as we entered Massachusetts. There seemed to be an interesting protest taking place in front of that state capitol building.



Boston, Massachusetts



By afternoon we were both suffering from fatigue. Our 900 mile day seemed to be draining on both of us. Jeff's shoulder was causing him much discomfort as well as his head cold. I sent Fred a text message asking him if he could find us a place to stay for the night in Trenton, NJ. He found us a hotel in South River, NJ and said that we really wouldn't want to stay in Trenton as we had planned. We stopped in Rhode Island and Connecticut for state capitol photos. In Connecticut there was a police car parked in front of the capitol building, with the building itself roped off. We asked the officer if we could go around the rope and take a photo. He was so excited when he heard that we were driving around the United States taking photos of state capitol buildings, that he wanted to take us for our own personal tour of the capitol. If only we had more time, I bet that would have been a really neat tour.



Providence, Rhode Island



Hartford, Connecticut

Now it was the final push to New Jersey. Since the hotel we were staying in was out of the way of Trenton. We decided to skip that capitol building and just go directly to our hotel. It was hot and traffic was now very heavy, even for a Sunday night.



We arrived at our hotel and I got the menu for the Italian Restaurant across the street. I convinced them to deliver because we were both exhausted. This was where our one and only terse verbal altercation took place. Jeff was feeling as if he was doing more of the work than I was. He needed to voice his displeasure. I felt hurt and angry all at once. I was doing as much, if not more, than I had on every other rally. There was more laundry that needed to get done, since we packed far less clothes. I always went out and found food, which was not always easy and rarely good. I was handling all of the paperwork detail. I felt unjustly accused and also didn't like being hit with that after riding almost 900 miles.

To make matters worse, I read the ride report from Tom Austin and learned that John Coons had crashed his motorcycle 10 miles from the start of checkpoint 2. Jeff and I sat with John the night before the start of the rally. He was telling us stories of attempting to enter Canada and had us in stitches. Now, two of the people we sat with had been in accidents. It was the wrong time to read this news on top of a very long day, accompanied by a terse verbal altercation. I would have cried, but I was simply too tired.

Here is Tom Austin's report: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/9.pdf>

Day 7 started at 3:30 am. We wanted to miss the traffic on the New Jersey turnpike and make our way to North Carolina. The weather was getting warmer as we were heading

south. Our first stop would be the capitol of Delaware. Still feeling upset from our terse verbal altercation from the night before and the news about John Coons, I spent the first two hours of our trip in tears. I swear that if anyone would have been behind us, they would have needed to use their windshield wipers. By the time we arrived in Maryland for our bonus photo, we had managed to discuss our frustrations and move on. In retrospect, after spending 18 days on the road, away from the kids, this was really not a big deal. However, at the time, it wasn't very pleasant. After our bonus stop in Maryland, I made our call in bonus. The remainder of the states that we would drive through that day would all be gas receipts. ( Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina).



Dover, Delaware



Annapolis, Maryland

The rest of the day was uneventful. We spent the day traveling, with the goal of reaching our hotel in Ashville, North Carolina before dark. Kentucky was the state that we didn't pick up on Leg 1. We knew we would have to drive a long way, on twisty mountain roads, to get a receipt in Kentucky. This was something we did before on our 48-10 ride. Jeff was making great time driving through West Virginia. We finally reached the state of Kentucky. Jeff pulled the bike into a parking lot where there were two squad cars and an ambulance parked. He asked how far until the nearest store or gas station, which was open. They informed us it was only 5 miles up the road and to be careful. Just then, as Jeff was pulling out of the parking lot, I felt the bike start to fall. I yelled "it's going down", and leapt off the bike, disconnecting my intercom in the process. Jeff was on the ground with the bike on top of him. I tried to help him right the bike, but it was far too heavy for me. Fortunately, we had an entire team there to help with the process. Once the bike was righted, I asked if the guys would pose with Jeff for a picture, since this had never happened before. The one officer was so cute; he had to run over to his car to get his hat first. They were a great group of guys who were all really good sports.



### Kentucky "Tip Over"

We made our way to our hotel. I believe it was a not so super – Super 8. We were there before nightfall. We could park the bike directly outside the door of our room. I ordered Chinese food since the phone number to the pizza place didn't work. I set out on a walk to find something cool and refreshing to drink. Wouldn't you know it; the direction I chose to walk had nothing open. I turned around and eventually found an open gas station. By the time I arrived back to the room our food had arrived. Another awful meal served in Styrofoam. We were off to bed early and got a full 8 hours of sleep.

Tom Austin's report: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/10.pdf>

Day 8 - Because the temperatures were climbing, we decided to get on the road early, so we could make it to the second checkpoint before noon. When I awoke and went to make the coffee in the room, I noticed there was only decaf. I went around to the front desk. There was no one at the front desk. I had to yell for someone to help me. Finally, a kid who looked like he was 12 appeared. I asked him if I could please have some regular coffee. He asked me for ID. I told him I didn't have it with me but I was certainly checked into a room and there was only decaf coffee there. He went to get coffee but couldn't find any. He said that he would be right back. After waiting for 5 minutes, I simply left. I really wanted to get moving before it became too hot. I also really wanted coffee.

Jeff was having a difficult time trying to stay awake. We stopped at a few waysides but none had coffee. I really just wanted coffee.



We had only one state capitol to photograph and then on to Georgia and Florida.



Columbia, South Carolina

Finally, we found a wayside that had coffee, where we met up with Cletha. It was a nice break and it was so good to finally have coffee.



The first thing we needed to do when we arrived in Florida was get our rear tire changed. Jeff had shipped the tire, so it was simply a matter of changing tires and sending dirty clothes home in exchange for the clean clothes we had shipped. We did this, got scored and off to sleep until 10pm.



Tom Austin's report: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/11.pdf>

### Day 9 – Leg 3

The start of Day 9 was really a continuation of Day 8. We were being served breakfast at 10pm and given the last rally pack. Jeff finally understood my reasoning. For 8 days, I had been trying to tell him that, unfortunately, we would have to flip our sleep schedule on the last leg of the rally and become night riders. After riding through the Mojave Desert in '09, neither of us wanted to suffer through that type of heat. The flip side to night riding is wildlife. There were far more creatures out on the roads at night and not all of them are visible.

When the rally packs were distributed, we were warned about Hwy 10 through Florida. It was also known as the "Deer Highway". Jeff opened the rally pack and read that the Four Corners Monument was a bonus on this leg. If we took a photograph of the monument, we didn't need a receipt for the states of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, or New Mexico. We decided, on the spot that we would do that instead of getting all four receipts.

We immediately got on the road, as we had the bike already packed and began the final push to the finish. Our first stop would be the capitol of Florida.



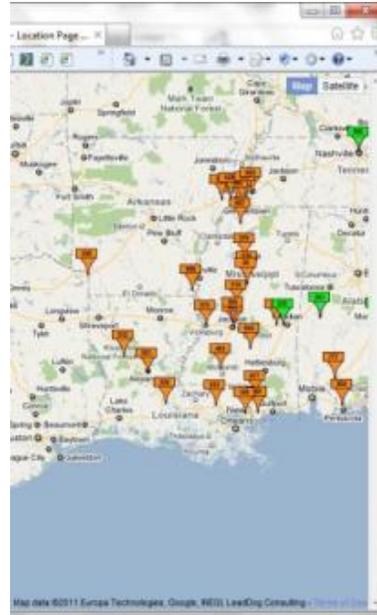
Tallahassee, Florida

It was incredibly hot when we left the hotel. As we rode into Alabama, the temperature would change dramatically as we would reach higher elevations. We had a brief roadside discussion with an officer in Alabama. He was extremely friendly and let us off with a warning. As we were riding through Alabama, at about 3am, Jeff said that our next state would be Louisiana. I asked, what about Mississippi. Jeff said that Mississippi wasn't a state, but it was a river. We began to argue about whether Mississippi was a state or a river. I finally got out my flashlight and map to prove that Mississippi was indeed a state. We stopped, looked at the map, and determined Mississippi was actually a state. Switching from day riding to night riding was going to be a bit more challenging than I thought.



Jackson, Mississippi (It really is a state)

We rode on through Louisiana, Texas and finally into Arkansas. We spent the afternoon in Texarkana, Arkansas for our 5 hours of sleep. I obtained bad food at the local Denny's and did a load of laundry in the hotel. By the time we arrived at our hotel it was blistering hot. Our night riding plan seemed to be like the smart choice. Here's what the people riding during the day experienced. We are the loan spot #350, out of the storm.



At this point, I was confused as to where to document the 4 corners monument in our passport book. I sent Lisa a text message. She replied that we just needed to obtain a picture, as long as they were open. I didn't understand. I thought it was a monument. She texted back to look in the rally pack, that it was a "place" with hours. I went back through the rally pack and noticed that there were indeed hours for the monument. We now needed to redo our route. We were scheduled to arrive at the monument at 1am, and it wouldn't be open. We needed to add receipts for Utah, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. Jeff was worried about finding fuel in the middle of the night. He made some phone calls and we thought we would be ok. A quick 4 ½ hour nap and day 10 would begin.

Here is Tom Austin's report: <http://www.ironbuttrally.com/IBR/2011/12.pdf>

Once again we were on the road by 10pm. Most people were winding down their days as we were beginning ours. This night, we would ride through the Oklahoma turnpike. Talk about deer, they were everywhere. There were groups of deer all along the side of the road with green glowing eyes. Night riding was becoming scary. The other problem was lightening all around us. Jeff tried to tell me it was heat lightening. Then the rain began. So much for heat lightening. We were on the edge of the storm. Jeff decided that we could outrun it. This was one of those times where I just needed to trust in Jeff and his riding abilities and pray that the wildlife stayed at bay.

We made it out of the storm. We never had issues finding fuel. We dipped into the state of Utah to get our gas receipt. I love Utah during the day, but I was reminding Jeff of the deer that jumped in front of us, in Utah, on the '09 IBR. Just then, we drove right by a huge donkey, right on the side of the road. I could have petted him if I wanted. We both screamed. Its eyes didn't glow, and we didn't notice him until we were right upon him. Since it was 3am, I couldn't text anyone to ask them if there were wild donkeys in Utah. I later learned that indeed they were and they were called burrows.

Another great thing about night riding was that we were both in a strange zone. After 7 hours of riding, the sun would come up and we would realize that we had been on the road, actually riding for 7 hours. It was very strange. Were we both actually awake during that time? I think we were, but it was a very strange feeling. We would both come alive as soon as the sun would come up.

We had one actual photo bonus left in the state of New Mexico. We would stop at the capitol in Santa Fe.



Santa Fe, New Mexico

We gathered receipts for Arizona, Nevada and headed to the finish in Ontario, California. We actually completed all 48 states in 10 days. We were "first to finish", arriving at noon Pacific Time. We were so excited to be done. We could go out and collect a few more capitols, but why? We would certainly not be podium finishers, but we had finished our second Iron Butt Rally, and once again had a great time doing it.

This was actually the second time we had completed the 48-10, the first time was in 2008.



We were greeted by Lisa and Toby Stevens, Voni and Paul Glaves and a few others. It was so great to be done. Although, we wouldn't be certified as actual finishers until we completed our scoring in the morning.

We parked our bike, had a cold beverage and celebrated . It was good to be done.

Friday, July 1, was the final scoring table. We were fortunate enough to be scored by Jim Owen, the 2009 IBR champion.

I had gone through the paperwork numerous times to make sure all of the receipts were in place. I must have touched them all at least a dozen times. I was so nervous as we were getting scored. Jim was very thorough in our scoring process. He was checking off the receipts for all of the states. We finally came to the state of Texas. All of the receipts were sitting in front of us on the table. I couldn't find Texas. I knew I had it before we sat down at the table. It was missing. I wondered if I left it in our hotel room as I did a final check. I was in a total panic and almost in tears. Jeff went through the receipts and found it stuck to the bottom of another receipt. All was right with the world. We had all of our receipts. Jim Owen declared us finishers. It was finally over ☺.

I was so relieved to be finished. We had a fun evening of eating and socializing. Awards were handed out and we were off to bed. We completed the 2011 IBR in 58<sup>th</sup> place overall, but finished our 48 states in 10 days, rather than 11.

As Jeff and I proudly proclaim:

**“We finished the 2011 Iron Butt Rally first” ☺**

