

LowCal 250 Rally *EVENT RECAP*

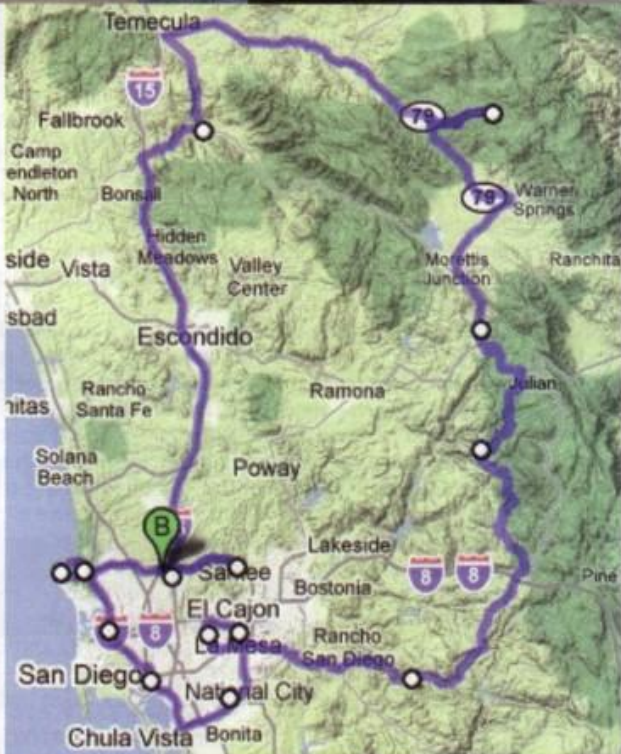


LowCal 250
San Diego County
moto rally for the
PKD Foundation
April 24, 2010

"There is no better evidence of the fantastic riding conditions that we have in San Diego County than the date reserved annually for the LOWCAL 250 Rally (the last Saturday in April)," said Craig Chaddock, Rally Architect. "The average precipitation for late April is 0.01 inches, the temperature between 65F and 80F. We just set the date and forget about it." Sure the weather was close this year, but you can't fight the stats. The day was "perfectly pleasant riding weather for anywhere in the county" according to Gary Orr, owner of San Diego BMW Motorcycles. Gary's dealership sponsors this rally that has raised over \$10,000 in the past three years for Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD).

"As a large portion of the Northern Hemisphere is still de-winterizing their motorbikes," Craig said with a grin, "We ride in what I loosely refer to as the first 'long-distance style' rally of year in the West." Although formatted like the 24-hour and multi-day rallies, the LOWCAL 250 is set-up around an eight hour time limit. It's just the

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right length for rally veterans to warm-up for the season, or for novices with a curiosity to give rallying a try.

Riders showed up at 7:00am to receive their rally packet with a menu of possible locations to visit for the day. They had to create their own route based on what each rider felt they could successfully reach in the time given. Each location was worth points based on the distance and difficulty of reaching them. On occasion, a location was worth more points simply to encourage rally participants to take a first-hand look themselves. Each location had a task involved to prove that you were indeed on site. For example, at the Flying Leatherneck Museum, riders had to find the Bell "Sea Cobra" and note Capt. Edwards' call sign. The top five finishers all visited sites in the City of San Diego, The Flying Leatherneck Museum in Miramar, Chihuahua Valley, the Santa Ysabel Astencia, and the Eagle Peak Trailhead on Boulder Creek Road. Other popular checkpoints were Mt Soledad Park, the Mission San Antonio de Pala, and the Lyons Valley Trading Post.

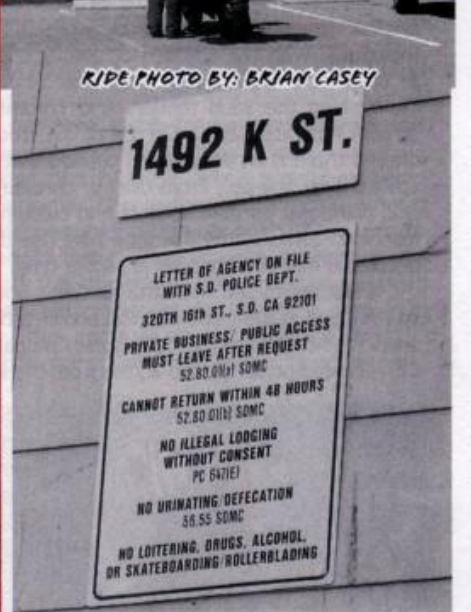
"The hook this year was a 250 mile cap to each rider's route" said Craig, "That put even more pressure on creating an efficient route. Often times riders have the misconception that speed will win a rally. A mileage cap illustrates



RIDE PHOTO BY: BRIAN CASEY



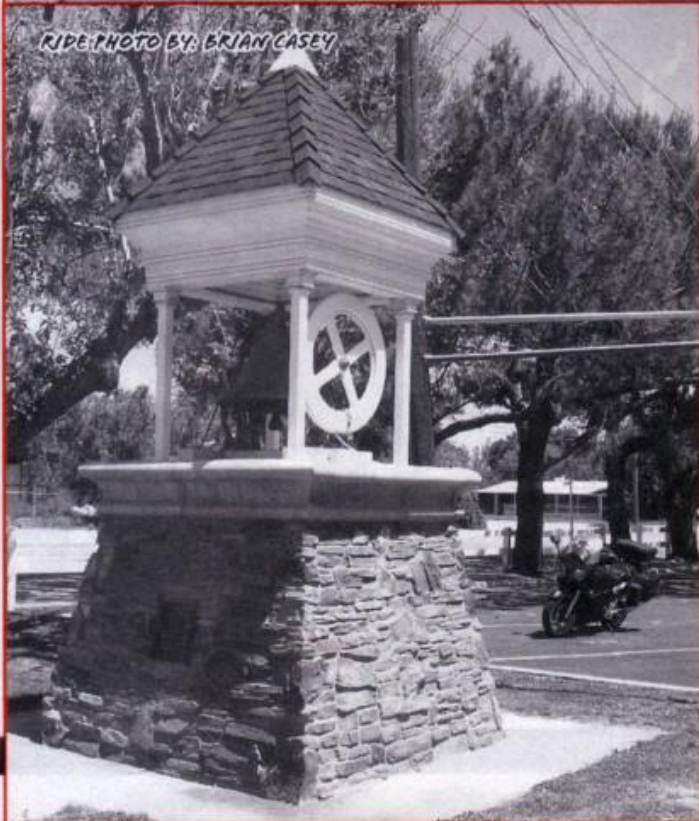
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RIDE PHOTO BY: BRIAN CASEY

that is not the case. Rallies are won by good planning and proficient riding. Limiting wasted time at stops and finding less congested routes are what a good rider will focus on in a short rally."

One amusing element of this year's rally was the inclusion of a *sucker bonus* and an *adoration bonus*.

A *sucker bonus* is defined on the LOWCAL 250 website FAQ as a *bonus location that entices you with a lot of points, but has a high risk of not being obtainable in the planned amount of time. Often it will not ensure a win... but then again you never know. That's why it's called a sucker bonus. There's always a chance.* This year's sucker bonus was in Vidal, CA, a distance that would far exceed the limit of the 250 mile cap. Never-the-less the 42,850 point bonus enticed a lot of riders into doing the math of whether the 150 point per excessive-mile penalty, or the 100 point per excessive-minute penalty would bring that score quickly back down to Earth.

The *adoration bonus* was thrown in for any rider who felt the 250 mile cap within eight-hours was so easy they would have time to burn. The bonus to ride the Belmont Park Roller Coaster was worth a negative point (-1). According to the packet; *you'll lose one point for goofing off during a rally, but you'll earn the admiration and respect of your fellow riders for having not only the time, but enough spare points and miles to ride a roller coaster during a competitive motorcycle rally!* There were no takers for either the sucker or the adoration bonus this year.

13 of the 22 rally locations were marked with a bell logo. If a rider successfully visited seven of those designated locations they

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would earn an additional 1,000 points. One of those locations that quite a few riders visited was the old dilapidated *Bell Hotel* on the corner of K Street and 15th Street in downtown San Diego. They had to record the time and their odometer (as with every location), and write down the last prohibition number listed at the bottom of a particular sign.

"One of the promises a good rally architect likes to keep is that every rider will see something they have never seen or noticed before," added Craig. That is a tall order considering the experience and observation skills of expert ralliists. This year the top riders and many others got to see the largest Buddhas in the Western United States at the Lieu Quan Meditation Center near Warner Springs. Like many rally sites, this one is just a few miles off the beaten path and not part of typical set of roads that riders piece together for a weekend route.

Several riders arrived at the Police Museum near SDSU outside of its posted hours *Only open on Saturdays between 10AM and 2PM*. "They did not get the points for that location if they arrived too late," remarked Ken Meese, the Rallymaster for 2010, "Locations like that represent what might be a daytime-only bonus in a multi-day rally. If the rally packet describes business hours, and the answer must be retrieved from inside... well, then you have to make sure your route accounts for that and you arrive there in time."

Every one of the 42 starting riders chose to do the odometer check option, which awarded them 4114 points. In exchange they forfeited any advantage if their odometers underreported mileage. All the riders returned safely and with enough points to qualify as finishers. Only two riders went overtime, and only four riders invoked a mileage penalty for riding too far.

The rally proved to be well designed this year, as the results showed it was about the rider and not their particular choice of equipment. A lot of long-distance rally motorcycles are farked* out with custom upgrades, but shorter daytime only ralliies give riders the opportunity to take on the challenges with almost any set of two-wheels.

Jacob Langford was the top scoring rider on his 2007 Harley Davidson Street Glide. Jacob rode as a team with his *Iron Butt Rally* experienced father, Mike Langford, but Mike gave up some points at the scoring table from a documentation omission and was moved

RIPE PHOTO BY BRIAN CASEY



down to third place. Eddie Frowiss finished a strong second using no GPS navigation assistance on his BMW R1200R. Jon Good & Andree Bergman placed fourth riding 2UP on their 2006 BMW R1200RT. Brian Casey was close behind on his 2005 Yamaha FJR1300:

Jacob Langford - 14761

Eddie Frowiss - 14576

Mike Langford - 14463

Jon Good & Andree Bergman - 14429

Brian Casey - 13341

There was even a 125cc Genuine Buddy entered this year, ridden by Jessica Teplin (with her husband Frank onboard!). "They didn't cover the miles of the big bikes, but their route was remarkably efficient for what they did cover" noted Craig, "After seeing their performance, I can envision a very successful event like this targeting scooters."

The LOWCAL 250 is normally held the last weekend in April. Advanced registration is preferred, as some information may be sent out before the rally that can help the riders get better prepared. Information about registration and past ralliies, as well as links to a rally tutorial wiki can be found at www.lowcal250.com. -RR

**Sited from the Urban Dictionary. "Farkle": The act of adding equipment to a motorcycle, sometimes unnecessarily. Especially popular amongst the BMW GS crowd. The word is generally accepted to mean a combination of "function" and "sparkle", hence, farkle.*

