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while I was getting scored. The internet is a wonderful thing and so are good friends. After that I tried to get as much sleep as possible. At 4:00 AM the second leg bonus packet was handed out and I was in 26th place, out of 97 riders that started the rally, and had 84,570 points. Not a stellar performance but I still had six more days to improve my standings.

The second leg of the rally was all to the west. I made a plan to head to Washington State but then decided I would be better to head to Denver and then southern California. I went to the southern rim of the Grand Canyon and then collected the London Bridge bonus in Lake Havasu, AZ. The next morning I headed into Death Valley in a major thunderstorm and almost ran out of gas. The Patriarch tree in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest was big points but it was my toughest bonus. The ride to the grove included 24 miles of really rough dirt/rock/sandy roads. I cut the rear tire about half way in and would have to plug it three times that day. I also dropped the bike and needed help picking it up in the sand that was so fine it was like powder. I rode up into Glacier National Park after that and then over to Mono Hot Springs, CA at the end of the day. I completed the last 30 miles to Mono Hot Springs on a twisty little path, which was somehow paved through the forest, with a flat rear tire because I didn't have time to stop. I got the bonus with 20 minutes to spare. I plugged the tire again and in the morning, after going up to the General Sherman Tree in the Sequoia National Forest, I managed to get it plugged by Wilson's Motorcycles in Fresno, CA. Although it was a tough day I had a lot of luck in overcoming the obstacles but I still had 4 more days to go.

I paced myself the rest of the day and collected bonuses around San Jose, San Francisco, and Sacramento. The next day I headed across Nevada, Utah, and into Wyoming. In order to be considered a finisher you needed at least 190,000 points which meant you could ride for 11 days, do as many miles as you could, collect all the bonuses you could, and still not finish if you didn't collect enough points. I decided that if I didn't finish with enough points it wouldn't be from lack of trying. I positioned myself at the end of day 9 to have a big ride the last day and a half. I decided to ride through the night on the last night of the rally. My last day I left Rawlins, WY before sun up and collected bonuses near there and a few in Nebraska. From there I headed up to Mount Rushmore and across to Sioux Falls before dark. I forgot my wallet at Mount Rushmore and had to use my cash reserves to get back to St. Louis. That was just one more thing to deal with later because I needed to finish first and worry about the wallet later. At night I pretty much headed south to get back to St. Louis. About 600 miles from the finish my rear shock would go out and every

minor change in direction caused the backend to wobble incessantly. I rode into thick fog on a state highway that was under construction. I could see the time I had, to get back, was ticking away. If the road or the fog didn't let up soon I was going to be in big trouble. Luckily both let up and I managed to keep the rear end from getting away from me as I rolled in with about 4 hours to spare. Gary was there again to see me come in and I was as glad to see him as he was to see me. In the last 24 hours I had covered 1600 miles and collected over 30000 points. I spent the morning scoring myself and then headed down for the final scoring. I had made it back in one piece and now just hoped I had collected enough points to finish.

The ride for me went well even with the windshield, the tire, my wallet, and the rear shock issues. I covered 11,090 miles in the 11 days, collected 285,512 points, and placed 13th overall. Only 62 riders, out of the 97 that started, officially finished the rally. I felt pretty lucky just to have finished but to finish close to the top ten was a great feeling. It was one of my greatest challenges to date. When you're in the rally you wonder why you paid money to do it but by the time you're finished you're ready to sign up again. We'll see if I get another chance in 2009. It's difficult, if not impossible, to explain why people enjoy endurance riding. I'm sure there are a lot of different reasons. The US is probably the only place in the world where you can hold a rally of this size and I'm very glad that I live in the country where it's hosted. I also realize that it probably wouldn't be possible without the support of organizations like ABATE, the AMA, and the MRF which are enabling motorcyclists to enjoy the freedom of the road. I want to thank all of you who contribute to these organizations. Also, thank you to everyone that supported me on this ride. It was the experience of a lifetime and I feel fortunate to have friends that support me. If you want to read the full ride report, with pictures, stop by my web site: www.hard-core-ware.com. Thanks again to all of you. Ride far... ride safe... just ride.

Curt Gran-ABATE of Wisconsin, Web Site Administrator

Thx to Abate of Wisconsin for the Story. www.abatewis.org

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888-345-CAMP (2267) - BlackRiverRumble.com - CampNCN.com

Must be 21+ years of age!!! Photo ID Required!!!
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ABATE of Wisconsin's Official State Rally

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June 19-22, 2008
ABATE Acres, Rural Greenwood, WI
Camping, Showers, Vendors, Food & Beverages On-site!
Open to the Public, Must be 21 or over with photo ID to enter

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Michael "Big Dog" Murphy
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Saturday, Night
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*All cards must be drawn by 5 pm on June 21, 2008
Music—Vendors—Bike Games
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PLUS 7 more LIVE bands to be announced! Check the web for updates!

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Raffle Tickets on Sale Now or at the Event. \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00.

Directions to ABATE Acres—W8742 Capital Rd, Greenwood WI
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From Thorp (Hwy 29) - South on CTH B, left on CTH MM to Capital Road.