

RAT 2022

(Ride Around Texas)



3,100 Miles Around Texas in 65 hrs. 50 min

Flashback from the Iron Butt Associations' (IBA) 2021 Big as Texas Party (BAT). I had just completed the RAT Gold (3,100 miles in less than 70 hours) : I was off the bike and telling Karen about my ride. I told her how awesome the River Road was between Lajitas and Presidio. In the past, we've ridden all over Texas many times, but not the River Road. All of a sudden, Karen said she wanted to ride the RAT with me next year (2022)! I hadn't even recovered from this RAT ride yet!

Fast forward to 2022: Our plan this year was to ride down to Texas on Sunday, Sept. 18 with Kith Burkingstock. This would give us time to chill out for a day prior to our RAT attempt. Kith planned to the RAT again this year too! We also had friends Jimmy & Toni Burns that would meet us down there later in the week. They were relatively new Iron Butt members and would be participating in the Bonnie & Clyde SS1000.

This year the IBA BAT party had the same format as last year.

On Sunday, Sept. 18, the Senior Butt and Junior Butt rallies would begin. These were 2-bike teams competing in a 6-day scavenger hunt. 10 teams were registered for each event.

On Tuesday, Sept. 20, the RAT riders would be released. There were 20 bikes registered for this 3-to-4-day event.

On Friday, Sept. 23, the Bonnie & Clyde SS1000 and BBG1500 riders would be released for a 24-hour event.

All week long, incoming riders would be doing various IBA rides to Allen, TX on their way to the party.



BAT Headquarters

BAT RAT Rules 2022:

Ride the perimeter of Texas, clockwise or counterclockwise, stopping at 18 mandatory checkpoints, including start/finish

point, in order within the allotted time period.

RAT Insanity - less than 85 hours

RAT Insanity Gold - less than 70 hours

You must obtain a Dated Business Receipt (DBR) every 350 miles or less AND in the following jurisdictions and the receipt MUST indicate the city, date and time. Check your receipts.

Sherman (START location)

Childress

Follett

Texline

Kermit

Guadalupe Mountains National Park (Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of park entrance)

Anthony

Presidio

Lajitas General Store (Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of store sign)

Panther Junction, Big Bend NP (Take a picture of your motorcycle in front of Visitor Center sign)

Del Rio

South Padre Island

Victoria

Galveston

Port Bolivar (Take a picture of your motorcycle on the Galveston - Port Bolivar ferry while underway)

Port Arthur

Texarkana

Sherman (END location)

You may not leave the State of Texas except for emergencies. If you do leave the state, you must return to the point where you crossed the border and continue your ride from that point.

Since the RAT started in Sherman this year (38 miles from BAT Headquarters in Allen), Karen and I had a room at the La Quinta Inn next to the gas station where we would start the next morning at 7:00 am.

RAT Wrangler, Tim Masterson, was in Allen at the host hotel assigning flags and finalizing paperwork for the ride. We met Tim and took care of the preliminary tasks. Flag #35 for Team Campbell!



RAT Wrangler Tim Masterson

Later that afternoon, Tim had a pre-ride dinner planned at the Golden Corral in Sherman. It was a great time to get to know the riders that would be attempting the RAT the next day.

At the dinner, Tim gave a rider's briefing. Safety is always a priority! Everyone was excited and looked forward to the challenge.



RAT Start

RAT Day 1 – Karen and I were up ready to ride by 6:30! We rode over to the Valero station where several other riders were waiting. Tim Masterson was walking around with a clipboard documenting everyone's odometer. He told us we were free to leave at 7:00 am.

Right at 7:00 am, riders started leaving the station. The group was split on the direction they headed. Some went clockwise (CW) while the other half went counterclockwise (CCW). Since I rode it CW last year, we decided to ride it CCW this year.

It was 80 degrees when we started. First stop was Childress for a required DBR. By the time we made it there, the small group of riders had dispersed and were riding separately or in small packs. Long distance riders don't typically ride with many other bikes. Everyone's needs differ, such as gas stops etc. Another rider would only slow them down or distract from the challenge ahead of them.

At Childress, we headed north into the panhandle. The wind picked up as we rode north to Follett. There, we

got our second required DBR. We stopped for lunch at a local café. After lunch, we headed west to Texline.

By now the temperature had warmed up to 96 degrees with low humidity. It was very comfortable riding! We passed several other riders as they backtracked from Texline on their way to Dalhart. We continued to Texline for our third mandatory DBR. Then, we turned around and double-backed to Dalhart where we headed south to Kermit.

Between Vega and Hereford, we passed a couple of huge dairy farms with thousands of Holstein cows in large feedlots/holding pens. The sun eventually set as we continued south. In one town, I accelerated through a intersection as a traffic light turned yellow. The bike suspension bottomed out as we hit the rough intersection hard! The rest of the ride to Kermit was uneventful.

We arrived around 8:30 pm and decided to eat at Chaotic Pizza. After a short break, we found our hotel and crashed by 10:00 pm. *Total for the day, 913 miles.*

RAT Day 2 – We were up at 4:00 am! So far, it had been a great ride! The weather had been great! We were excited to start another day!

We jumped on the bike and as we left the parking lot, there was a fluttering noise that soon went away. But, as soon as I pressed down on the rear brake pedal there

was nothing! No rear brake! The brake pedal had no pressure at all! The front brake worked fine. We rode down the street about a quarter of a mile before turning into a gas station to check out the bike. We sat there for a moment to try and figure out what was going on! There was no problem the night before! What had changed?

We decided that we couldn't continue. It was still early morning, so back to the hotel. There, I called our roadside assistance provider. I told them that we had a disabled motorcycle and needed to get it to a BMW shop. The customer service lady was very helpful. She said the closest BMW dealer was 250 miles away in El Paso. I said that was the wrong way, we really need to go east! She said there's a BMW shop in San Antonio. It's 368 miles away! I said okay, but as she was entering the information, I thought to myself, we really need to get back to Allen, TX where the BAT headquarters are located. So, I told the lady that we really need to go to Allen. She said there's a BMW shop in Plano. It's 476 miles away! I asked if they would tow us there. She said "yes, you are covered!" Great! What about me and my wife? How do we get there? The lady said she would make a note to the towing service that me and my wife would need to ride along. So, she said she would need some time to find a towing service for us. She would contact us as soon as she could.

Well, we were sitting in the hotel with all our riding gear on. Let's get into some comfortable clothes. I walked back out to the bike to get our shoes. When I got out to the bike and started to open the left side box, I noticed the small black plastic storage box that I had mounted on the inboard side of that box was off! It had lodged itself between the metal saddle bag and the bike's swingarm!

I grabbed the small box and dislodged it. Then, I could see that it had pinched the steel braided brake line running on top of the swingarm. Wow!



Brake Problem

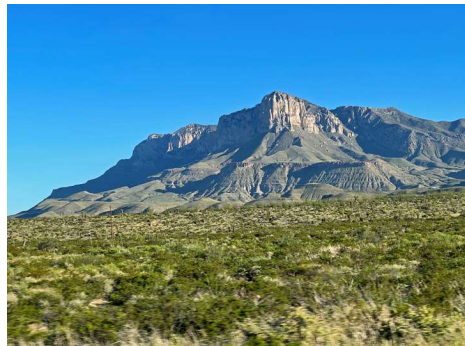
Once I removed it, I tried to press down on the brake pedal. It worked! I continued to work the pedal to make sure it was okay. It was! Whew! The bike is okay! Unbelievable!

I went back in the hotel to tell Karen the great news! When I got there, she had already changed into street clothes! I said, we're ready to go! She thought the tow truck was there already. I said no, the bike has been fixed! We're ready to continue with our ride! We were both relieved and

excited! Then, the roadside service lady called. I told her the problem had been resolved. She asked if we still needed their help. I said no, we're back in business! The bike is okay! She was glad to hear that, and she would cancel the tow truck.

My guess was when we bottomed out at the intersection the night before the little storage box broke loose. Then, as we left the parking lot of the hotel, the box shifted and got wedged between the saddlebag and the swing arm pinching the brake line. Luckily, it wasn't worse than that!

Since we had wasted a few hours with this dilemma, we'll have to make it up tonight. That will take away some of our sleep time!



Guadalupe Mountains

The good news is the delay allowed us to arrive at the Guadalupe Mountains National Park during daylight hours! Karen and I had been through there before when it was dark. Daylight didn't disappoint! We needed to stop to take a picture of the park sign required for the RAT. We agreed that we would set up the tripod on the required pictures (if possible) so both of us would be included. This

was a challenging ride that we wanted to preserve with nice photos. While I got the tripod ready, Karen walked around and took some great shots!

Back on the road, we continued our trek through El Paso to Anthony in the far western corner of Texas for a DBR. Then, we had to double-back through El Paso and head along the Mexican border to Big Bend country.

We stopped between Valentine, TX and Marfa at the Prada store for a few fun photos.

Wikipedia paraphrased - Prada Marfa is a permanent art installation by artists Elmgreen and Dragset. It is a freestanding building. The front door is nonfunctional. On the front of the structure there are two large windows displaying actual Prada wares, shoes and handbags."



Prada Store

From there, we rode through Marfa, then stopped for a picture of the colorful billboards where the movie "Giant" was filmed in 1956. It starred James Dean, Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and Dennis Hopper. James Dean was raised in

our hometown of Fairmount, Indiana.



James Dean "Giant"

From there, we headed south to Presidio for a mandatory DBR. The next 59 miles is what Karen came to see! Highway 170 between Presidio and Lajitas is also known as "The River Road"!

We rode right along the Rio Grande River through mountains and canyons on this curvy, hilly two-lane road! It was awesome! Unlike most roads, this was three-dimensional with the up and down hills along with the curves. The beautiful scenery really adds to this awesome road. Definitely one of our favorite roads!



River Road (Hwy 170)

At Lajitas, we stop for the mandatory photo and email it to Tim.



Lajitas General Store

We continued on into Big Bend National Park to Panther Junction Visitor Center for another mandatory photo. It was 98 degrees! Fortunately, the humidity was low that made for comfortable riding.



Big Bend Panther Junction

After we rode out of the park headed toward Marathon, an elk walked into the middle of the road! His nose was up in the air. He paused for a second, then walked across and along the road. This happened so quickly, we weren't ready for this! Karen was trying to get her phone out to take a picture, but too late! He was huge! His antlers were massive, shiny, whitish, brown. Wow! We did a U-turn to see if we could get a photo, but he had disappeared into the desert shrubs.

Later, I found out that elk rut between mid-September and mid-

October. I knew he had something else on his mind! Definitely not us!

We continued to Marathon where we fueled up and stopped for dinner across the street at a pizza place. The pizza was slow, but we needed the break. After we ate, it was 7:30 pm. Karen and I knew we had almost 500 miles more miles to go to make it to our hotel. Our break really helped! We were ready to ride, knowing we wouldn't arrive at our hotel until the wee hours of the morning!

About 30 miles from Marathon, the sun had set. It was prime time for West Texas deer! As we rode along, I see a deer on the left side of the road, then another one on the right side of the road. Both deer looked at us! Then, the right one took off to the right! The left saw the other one and it took off to the right too! Right at us! I sped up! That small 6-point buck (with full velvet antlers) just missed running into our left side! I was surprised when I didn't hear or feel it hit our left pannier (side box)! Whew! That was close!

We continued on along the Mexican border to Del Rio for a mandatory DBR, then on to Rio Grande City to our hotel. We made it at 2:40 am. By the time we checked in it was 3:00 am. We set the alarm for 6:30 am. We had time to make up! *Total for the day, 1,119 miles.*

RAT Day 3 – We were up at 6:30 am and on the road by 7:00 am. We could see on the Spotwalla tracking page that we were back within the

pack. But, at the cost of some sleep time. We both felt good and thought we'd be just fine!

It was morning rush hour as we rode through McAllen and Harlingen. The traffic was thick! At one point, there was a traffic jam. The GPS routed us around it in the nick of time! According to Garmin, it saved us 40 minutes! Yay! Once we made it over to I-69 south, it was smooth sailing to Hwy 100 down to South Padre Island. The Mexican border was done! No problems or even any unusual activity was noticed, but we did see a lot of border patrol vehicles scouting along the border area.



Leaving South Padre Island

Once we left South Padre Island and jumped on Hwy 77, traffic was light all the way up to Victoria for another mandatory DBR. There, we jumped on Hwy 59 all the way to Houston.

We were lucky! We hit Houston between 2:00 & 2:30 pm. Traffic was light! But, the temperature was 102 degrees! It was hot! Moving at highway speeds helped with the high temperature. We made it to Galveston with no problems!

Mandatory DBR collected. The ferry was only a few miles away!

The fourth and final mandatory picture is required as you are riding the ferry across Galveston Bay to the Bolivar Peninsula. It was hot as we waited in line to board the ferry. But, once we were on, it was pleasant as we crossed the bay.



Galveston Bay Ferry

From there, we rode to Port Arthur, the southeast corner of Texas, for another DBR. Now, we knew it was smooth sailing the rest of the route. But, we still had 500 miles to go! Today! Let's stop and eat a Chick-fil-a sandwich, take a short break, then knock it out! And, that's what we did!

It was around 6:30 pm when we left the parking lot heading north. We made great time as we rode north on mostly 2-lane roads. The sun set and the darkness crept in. But, light traffic allowed us to hit the bright lights and move on! Fortunately, we didn't see any critters as we rode up the eastern side of Texas.

It was 10:30 pm when we nabbed our DBR in Texarkana. Only 159

miles to go! No fuel stops in-between! Let's finish this ride!

We made it to Sherman in great time! The evening temperature was nice! Clear skies and nice backroads make for a great ride! Final DBR and official end time: 12:50 am. For a total of 3,057 miles (odo) in 65 hours and 50 minutes! We were both exhausted but excited! We had completed the RAT Gold! What an accomplishment! Karen was a trooper throughout the ride! She is one tough Biker Babe! Over 3,000 miles in less than 3 days on the back of that GSA! Wow! I'm so proud of her! *Total for the day, 1,025 miles*

Our hotel was right there! We rode over, unloaded, checked-in and crashed. When we woke up, we headed to Allen to the host hotel to join the Big as Texas Party!

Our friends, Jimmy and Toni, were out on the Bonnie & Clyde SS1000 today. We would see them tomorrow.

The hotel was a busy place! The 6-day rally riders were checking in from their rides. Others were arriving from all over the country from various IBA rides.

Later that evening, there was a gathering across the street at a bar and grill. We met up with Barb Smith, an MTF member from way back! It was great to sit and catch up with her. She had a lot of IBA rides under her belt!

Saturday morning, we caught up with Jimmy & Toni. They had an exciting time on the Bonnie & Clyde SS1000. Later that morning, I attended a Rookies Meeting for the 2023 IBR (Iron Butt Rally). It was very informative and hit me that it'll be here before I know it!

That afternoon, the ride certificates were presented! There was a roomful of riders receiving all sorts of ride certificates. Later that evening was the BAT banquet where Dean Tanj spoke. He was a very interesting guy that had done some incredible things from hang gliding to long distance riding. Finally, the 6-day rally winners were announced! It was a great time! We are already talking about next year!



RAT Gold



Toni and Jimmy Burns

Ride Around Texas 2022

Bike: 2019 BMW R1250GSA

Low Temp	64		9/20/22 Start Time	7:00 am
High Temp	102		9/23/22 End Time	0:50 am
Bike Odo Mileage	3,057		Total Time	65.8 hrs
Google Maps	3,109			
			Total Down Time/Rest	14.5 hrs
Start Odo	-74,095			
End Odo	77,152		Average Miles Per Hour	46 mph
Total Fuel	98.965		Gas Mileage	31 mpg
Day 1	Gallons	Leg Time	Miles Per Leg	
Gas 1	7.498	3:07	220	
Gas 2	4.759	1:20	152	
Gas 3	6.557	2:58	182	
Gas 4	6.838	3:20	193	
Gas 5	5.471	2:37	166	
Day 1 Totals	31.123	13:22	913	
	Down Time	9:00		
Day 2				
Gas 1	1.565	1:00	63	
Gas 2	5.596	3:17	184	
Gas 3	6.529	3:28	211	
Gas 4	1.579	1:34	58	
Gas 5	5.4	3:42	163	
Gas 6	6.156	2:38	170	
Gas 7	6.166	2:46	176	
Day 2 Totals	26.825	15:39	1,025	
	Down Time	4:55		
Day 3				
Gas 1	6.333	3:36	217	
Gas 2	5.617	4:27	174	
Gas 3	2.082	0:57	65	
Gas 4	5.548	2:43	170	
Gas 5	2.019	2:01	72	
Gas 6	5.449	3:19	175	
Gas 7	3.163	1:30	89	
Day 3 Totals	36.377	20:19	962	
	Down Time	0:00		
Gas 1	4.64	2:21	157	
Day 4 Totals	4.64	2:21	157	
Totals	98.965	65:50:00	3057	