

Trip to Harley's 105th Anniversary Party
 Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 August 26 – September 1, 2008
 By Steve Tanner

I was able to attend this event and will try and recap all the things I did in 2000+ miles, with Dana joining for part of it.

Date	Departed	Arrived
Aug 26 th	Roswell, GA 6:00am (EST)	Mount Vernon, IL 6:30pm (CST)
Aug 27 th	Mount Vernon, IL 11:00am	Riverwoods, IL 8:30pm (CST)
Aug 28 th	Riverwoods, IL 9:00am	Milwaukee, WI 11:30am
Aug 28 th	Milwaukee, WI 5:00pm	Oconomowoc, WI 6:30pm
Aug 29 th	Oconomowoc, WI 9:00am	Woodstock, IL 11:30am
Aug 29 th	Woodstock, WI 12:00pm	East Troy, WI 2:00pm
Aug 29 th	East Troy, WI 3pm	Milwaukee, WI 4:00pm
Aug 29 th	Milwaukee, WI 10:00pm	Oconomowoc, WI 11:00pm
Aug 30 th	Oconomowoc, WI 9:00am	Milwaukee, WI 10:00am
Aug 30 th	Milwaukee, WI 5:00pm	Oconomowoc, WI 10:00pm
Aug 31 st	Oconomowoc, WI 7:00am	Riverwoods, IL 9:00am
Aug 31 st	Riverwoods, IL 9:10am	Elizabethtown, KY 6:00pm
Sep 1 st	Elizabethtown, KY 8:00am (EST)	Roswell, GA 6:30pm (EST)

I left the house at 5:30am in the pouring rain, on Tuesday, August 26th, and headed to the Killer Creek HD store. There I met up with 13 other riders on 10 bikes and one car with two people pulling a trailer with two bikes on it. They were our 'rescue vehicle', in case something happened. We all found out after a few minutes of riding that none of our rain gear really worked. We were all soaked pretty quickly.

It took us about an hour to get to Canton, GA (20 miles), where we stopped to dry off a minute and settle down. That leg of the ride was very hard in the pouring rain, heavy traffic, and very poor sight. We headed out to Hwy20 and went on I-75 northbound. At first the rain slacked up a little, and then it came back hard. After about an hour, an accident that shut down the interstate for a while forced us to take a late breakfast stop at a Waffle House. We all walked in dripping puddles and sat and ate while the traffic cleared up. We headed back out and took a long time to get to Nashville, 6 hours from the time we left. We stopped at an HD store in Nashville and our leader had to have them work on his bike. We all changed to dry clothes (I bought a whole new outfit of jeans, shirt and socks), ate (they had their own café in the store), and left after two hours, without our leader. He said he'd catch up later when they finished fixing his bike. We had a mostly dry ride to our stopping place for the night in the lower end of Illinois. At one of our pit stops, after hearing our leader was about back with us, one guy noticed his tire was going flat, and we saw the nail. Here is where that trailer came in handy. We took off a good bike and loaded one with a flat tire. We called and made an appointment at the HD shop at our stop for the night. They turned out to be at the same exit as us. We were all very tired and left out with our leader rejoining us. We got to our hotel and after some cleanup time, we all met at an Applebee's next door and had a long fun dinner. Our first day had seen us soaked, two bikes needing repair, and one deer along the interstate that left us alone.

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The next day, Wednesday, we had a light breakfast and all headed to the HD shop to get the flat tire fixed and do some shopping. It took 2+ hours to get the flat fixed and we all headed out about 11am.



The ride was very flat and we saw mostly farmland and cornfields. During this leg, our chase car did some drive-bys and took photos of each rider from both sides.



We stopped at another HD dealer, in Verbana, IL, and another bike needed work. We had a long pit stop, another shirt bought, and lunch. We left and went the wrong way at first and then got back on track. When we got into Chicago, we had some major direction issues that got us lost and separated into three groups. After some work, at a very unfriendly part of town, we managed to get going again, in two groups and finally got to the hotel. My group took the longest route and didn't get in until about 9pm. Supper was missed! The hotel had no place within walking distance for food, and we were all too tired to ride more, especially in the dark. So, I had chips and beef jerky from a snack machine as my meal.

The next morning, Thursday, I decide to head out alone to Milwaukee, instead of waiting an hour or two for the 'group' to leave. I headed north on I-94 and found out how hard and unfriendly tollbooths are for bikers. I picked an exit for a gas stop and lucked into my first adventure. I had stopped on the road where the HD Franklin Distribution Center

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was. I went in and got a neat tour and found out all HD accessories come out of this one DC, to go to dealers everywhere in the world.



I then headed north and went to the newly opened HD Museum in Milwaukee.



There were thousands of bikes and people already having a party. I looked around (tickets were all sold-out via a lottery months before) and then headed to the next big event of the day, at Miller Park at about noon.

This is where the Milwaukee Brewers play. Today the place was all HD. They had vendors, stunt riders, food and bands. Later that night, Kid Rock was to perform. After I ate, drank, and shopped, I went into the main stage area and watched the bike show award presentations by HD execs, and then had a front row seat for a performance by the Billy Bob Thornton band. It was great.

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By now I was cooked from standing in the sun for hours and was ready to head to my hotel and meet up with Dana, who flew in. I left the park at 5pm and was amazed to see all the parking lots full of about 200,000+ bikes! The place was packed and more were streaming in.



I rode 30 miles west to Oconomowoc and finally found the hotel, Olympia Resort, just 10 minutes ahead of Dana. We went down the road, not 2 miles, and found a HD dealer

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there who was having a big party all weekend. After some time there, we headed out and saw a neat Italian restaurant across the street from our hotel and had dinner there.

The next morning, Friday, Dana and I had a quest to go to Illinois together. I had checked and found a HD store, just 70 miles south of us in Woodstock, IL.



It was a great ride though very scenic countryside. We headed back to Milwaukee and saw a sign at East Troy for an HD plant. I checked my book and saw that it was the plant where the "Buell" brand of HD sport bikes are all made. We stopped and had just missed the last tour for the day.



We went into the little town and found a quaint eatery on the town square for lunch.

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We headed out to Milwaukee and went to a place called 'Summerfest'. It is a park/venue on the lakeshore set up for bands to perform at several stages at a time and provided all kinds of eating options. It was kind of like a fair.



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We even rode a sky-lift across it.



We walked by the stage where ZZ Top was playing and could not even see them. We walked on down and listened to a band named 'Lukyn Skywyrd', who sounded just like Lynyrd Skynyrd.



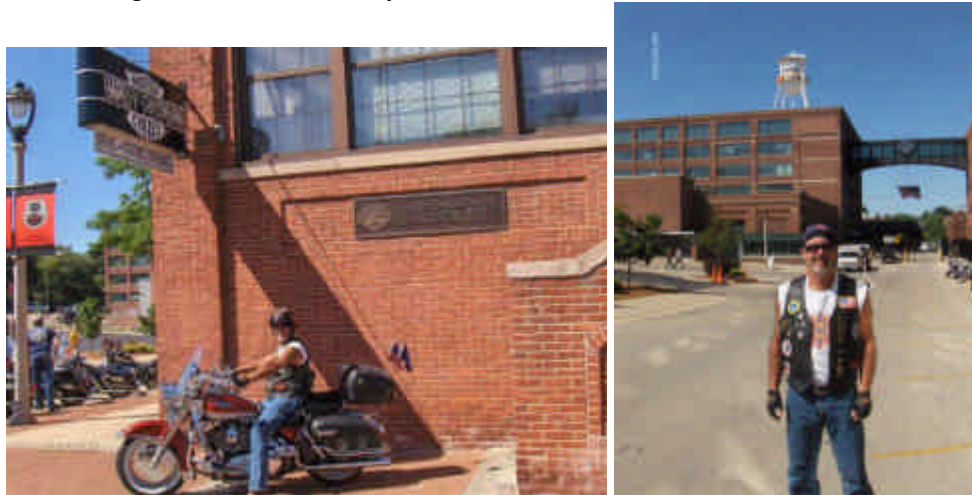
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Then we waited for a band I love, Los Lonely Boys. We sat right at the front row and had a great time.



We left at 10pm, to try and get ahead of the crowd. We walked by the stage where the Black Crows were playing and heard a little of that. There were at least a 100,000+ bikes and people there. We managed to get out safe and back to the hotel in an hour.

Saturday morning we left, after a mighty breakfast bar feast at the hotel, and headed in to Milwaukee. We went first to find the HD headquarters. After several wrong turns, we found it. It was really cool to see it and we got some neat pictures by the buildings and a replica of the original small shed they first built bikes in.



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After that we went to Veterans Park, by the lake, and walked through more vendor booths. We decided to go look for a neat lunch spot and headed north on Hwy 35. We were amazed to see a nice beach area where the place was full of people playing and laying out. We went on up the road through a residential area full of great houses with the one side of the street having Lake Michigan in their back yard. We found a neat old restaurant, named Jack Panells' Whitefish Bay Inn, in an old house that had an outside tent set up for lunch. We got a roadside table and had a great time eating their special fish dish and watching many bikes go by.



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After that we headed back south and had to stop at a house with two little kids selling lemonade and contribute to their cause.

We had had enough in-town time and decided to go out to the Oconomowoc HD dealer's party again. We took a scenic route and fell into another small town's bike festival. The whole downtown area was closed to only bikes and there were 1000s there too. We finally made it to the Oconomowoc HD dealer and joined the party. We saw the Seattle Cossacks Drill Team perform amazing stunts on old 1950s Harleys.



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We left there and went into old town Oconomowoc and ate dinner at a neat place.

Sunday morning I got up and headed south for home at 7am. Dana was leaving on a flight in the early afternoon. I meet up at 9am with my ride-home group, back in Riverwoods, IL. They were splitting into two groups, one to leave at 9am and one to leave at 10am. I was ready to go and left at 9am with 6 bikes and 9 people. We thought we knew the right path through Chicago, but we messed up a little again and did a few extra miles getting back on course. When we got into Indianapolis, IN, I decided to take a back-roads route to Louisville, KY. Several others joined me and we had a great trip. We took about 2 extra hours getting to Elizabethtown, KY down old Hwy 31. We all went out to eat at a restaurant next door and had a lot of fun telling stories.

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Monday morning I left out at 8am to take a scenic back-roads route to Chattanooga, TN. I ended up going by a Jim Beam distillery, Lincoln's birthplace, over the most awesome dam and through an old city downtown having a craft fair. I love those back roads. I got home about 6:30pm and ended my 2000+ miles, 6 state, 23+ gas stops adventure.