

STURGIS - 2004

By Glenda Kelly #13645

Definitely an event of a lifetime! Last December, my husband Robin said that sometime in his lifetime he would like to go to Sturgis for the big 'bike event.' Thought about, decided why not? Having just taken and passed the Rider's Edge Course in September, bought my first motorcycle in October, I thought that might be a great goal – get enough practice in to take my bike to Sturgis!

So I began perusing the internet, reading anything I could about campgrounds, recommendations, etc. Settled on the Hog Heaven Campground which is approximately 1 mile out of Sturgis. We decided to take the motorhome and haul the bikes; good thing, there were only a few RV sites left that had hookups. Another couple was going with us so I didn't want to have to worry about water shortages, etc. And I really wasn't keen on the idea of 'tenting' in Sturgis! So I made the reservation and we were booked! There was no backing out now, they do not give refunds, only credit on the next year's rally! They also charge one price for the entire rally time, regardless of how long you are there.

We loaded up and left town the night of August 5th! We were hauling our friends' new Road King, Robin's Dyna Wide Glide, and I decided to take the Softail Standard (and left the Honda at home). I was being very confident and brave! Actually, I really wanted to try out a new Corbin on the Softail! We arrived Friday afternoon, got checked in and set up camp. The campground accommodations were great; people were not packed in together, the bathroom facilities were clean the entire time, there was a small café where you could get food early in the morning until late at night, a few vendors (an airbrush artist that was neat to watch), a few bands, and a bar! Interestingly, people camping near us were from Kansas also.

It is really an incredible feeling, to be heading somewhere and see all kinds of motorcycles going the same direction you are. It is amazing to think that there are that many people riding – and it seemed they were all going to Sturgis! The traffic in Sturgis is as bad as you hear, particularly by mid-week of the rally. I rode in town a couple of times, parked and had no problems!! Did find the Corbin trailer, put that sales guy through his paces, and got a seat and backrest!! Best \$\$\$ on motorcycle gear I have ever spent! Made a big difference with my reach to the forward controls, and the backrest is the best comfort I know of for long trips!

We spent several evenings just going into Sturgis, parking, finding a place to sit or stand, and just "people and bike watch"! You really do see it all! Although from what I heard I guess we didn't see 'as much' as you usually do; the weather was colder than normal. It did rain and hail the second day we were there, fortunately we had went for a short ride and made it back in time! A lot of the riding time I wore the heavy leather with liner and thermals!

We spent one day riding up into Wyoming, to Devil's Tower, and back. No matter where you went, what little towns/spots in the road you went through, there were motorcycles everywhere! We even met some people from South Africa and Germany! One of the more interesting rides is Needles Highway. The rock formations are a must-see. Of course you have to visit the historic towns of Deadwood and Lead!

We took off one day exploring and headed out towards Deadwood. As we were riding down Highway 385, we saw a sign for Rochford. Some friends in Lawrence had told us about some of

their friends that have a 'summer cabin' right in town. So, we decided to see if we could find them. After approximately 25 miles of gravel, we found it! Beautiful scenery; you are riding through the Black Hills Forest! The gravel wasn't bad; mostly hard-packed dirt. We actually met a few bikes going the other direction! The 'dirt roads' are better than a lot of our paved roads around here! We found the friends, said 'HI', and had a bathroom break! Right across the one street is the Moonshine Gulch Saloon – and a lot of bikes lined up out front. We checked out the saloon; definitely a place with character! I believe it has been around since the early 1900's!

We headed back the way we came! We eventually found the turn-off we needed for Nemo, but after a few miles found the road blocked by some big rig that had flipped over on its side (no people injuries!) So we turned around, went back the same way, and turned off on another gravel road! It was much like the road to Rochford, and even more scenic! Eventually we made it back to paved road and continued on through Nemo, to Vanocker Canyon Road (which was the road I really wanted to ride!) I would have to say it is the most scenic road I was on while at Sturgis, some great twisty sections, eventually ending near Sturgis, with about a mile of unpaved road into town. I would guess that the city and county couldn't decide who was going to take care of that one mile stretch of road!

I am glad we went. It was definitely an experience I will never forget. Will we go again? Maybe, sometime – but there are so many places we want to go and roads to ride – and that's just the paved ones!