

# Gila Monster 300k Ride Report

**Jim Pettett - 2/31/15**

I talked Bob Esch, one third of our San Diego Chapter of the Bullshifters, into joining us on the Gila Monster 300K Brevet last Saturday. Bob had never ridden a brevet so he was interested in seeing how these compare to the double centuries in California. We carpooled down to the start in Coolidge, AZ.

A number of the riders Did Not Start (DNS) but there were about 25 brave souls at the start including Bullshifters Bob Larson, Brian McGuire, Mark Gregory (none of whom we never saw after the start) Dennis Sieber, Kim Hedden, Dale Jacobs, Bob Esch and me. Mike Sturgill came down with a cold after his trip to Ohio so he was one of the DNS. Amy Acosta drove up from Tucson but said she had rained the entire way and wasn't going to ride.

As you know it rained all day Friday so the roads were wet and there were puddles everywhere, but it wasn't actually raining when the ride started. The break in the rain lasted for about 10 miles then it started with just a light rain. When Kim flatted I put on my rain jacket as my arm warmers and jersey were wet. She flatted again a few miles down the road. Those were the only flats we had but a number of others flatted too.

When we finally made it to the first check point at Oracle Junction after almost 50 miles of a steady grind of 1% - 2% grade, Kim and Dale decided to call Amy and have her pick them up. I asked why they weren't riding back to Coolidge as they would have almost 50 miles of downhill. Kim said she would if I was turning around and riding back. I told her, "No, but if I was quitting I'd ride back." She said, "Amy talked me into riding this and promised if I wanted to quit she would come get me. I'm going to wait for her."

Dennis, Bob Esch and I continued on and rode the entire thing together. They had to slow and wait for me on some of the hills, both going up and coming down. After leaving Oracle there is at least a 15 mile descent into Mammoth with some of it in the 10% range. With the water spraying off their wheels I dropped back a ways, but then couldn't bridge up to them. After it leveled out they slowed and waited for me. On some of the climbs they waited at the top for me. I think I was less than a minute behind them on the End of the World climb so I didn't slow them down too much. At least I hope I didn't.

The lunch check point was in Winkelman. The Regional Brevet Administrator, Carlton van Leuven, and his wife had a canopy set up in the park. They had hot soup, home-made sandwiches, cokes, coffee, Gatorade, and other goodies for us. This is not your typical brevet as on those you normally have to fend for yourself by using convenience stores, restaurants, and gas stations for your supplies. That hot soup was wonderful!!

From Winkelman to Superior the route is the same as Mining Country Century. In the rain it didn't feel quite the same though. Of course, it could have been because we already had a century when we reached the lunch stop.

It rained or we rode on very wet roads for all of the 188 miles. Even when it wasn't raining the water was still rooster-tailing off our wheels. We all had a chance to try out some of our wet weather gear. I put on some fenders, rain pants, and waterproof booties I bought several years ago and they worked fairly well. At least my chamois stayed dry but my wool socks got wet and stayed wet the entire ride.. Dennis bought some "cheapo" fenders for his bike and had to use a bungee cord wrapped around his Ortlieb bag to secure the rear one to his bike. Bob had a set of bib tights with water proof fabric on the tops of the legs which he said worked very well. That's going to be my next purchase.

The wildest thing was that about 1.5 miles from the end, Dennis was hit by something. We had several cars buzz us really close; one of them was a van. Dennis was about 1/4 mile ahead at that point and he thought the van's mirror hit him in the lower back. Where he said he was hit looked too low for a mirror so we're thinking the van purposely hit him with something...JERKS!

He said the van driver knew he hit him as he put his brakes on after hitting him, but then sped away. Dennis was very sore but didn't think the injury was too bad. He didn't think he needed to go to urgent care or have Carlton file an insurance form.

99.99% of the motorists were exceedingly courteous. They slowed if it wasn't safe to pass and gave us a very wide berth when they did pass.

This was a very tough ride especially in the rain. I haven't been this sore after a ride in a really long time; my whole body is achy. My quads are sore and let me know it every time I stand or bend down, my back hurts and I walk like an old man. The good thing is I know I'll heal and in a few days I'll be back to my normal self.

So, feeling as bad as I do would I do this again under the same weather and circumstances? If I could ride with Dennis and Bob, you bet I would. Those two guys made very difficult situations just challenges to overcome. There was never any consideration of us not finishing the entire ride. It took all day and part of the night, but we finished a few minutes after 10 p.m. And bless his heart; Carlton had pizza waiting for us at the finish.