

XJ GLOBAL RELAY CROSSES CANADA

## What's In The Bag, Man?



By Jim Robertson

**M**ost members of the XJ Owners Group—which includes owners of the old Yamaha XJ series of bikes, the in-line four-cylinder Secas and Maxims from the '80s—had met their international counterparts only through an online forum at [micapeak.com](http://micapeak.com). The months leading up to the new millennium changed all that as the internet-based motorcycle group decided to move from virtual connections to face-to-face meetings between riders around the globe.

American Paul Eisenberg came up with the idea of sending a bag—a leather rucksack, actually—around the world, with hand-offs from one XJ rider to the next. Each rider would add small items for future riders; each rider would receive a Global Relay 2000 crest.

So, starting Jan. 1, 2000, the bag made its way from Melbourne, Australia to New Zealand, then from California across the south to Florida then up the east coast of the

US before spending a year in Europe. There, it made its way through Ireland to England then to Portugal, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Denmark and Finland.

During the summer of '03, it returned to North America, wending its way through the Maritimes to Ontario, before dipping down to the US midwest. Up again to Winnipeg, across the prairies and into BC, and then down the US west coast to Washington and Oregon.

All along the way, riders who had never met each other except perhaps on-line suddenly put faces to names, swapped stories and shared the excitement of being part of a global bike meet. And they all had something to contribute: here's some vodka

**Handoff:** Riders in Alberta accept "The Bag" and all its varied contents as the XJ global relay continued its journey through Canada. In the photo below, the author (far right) helps fly the flag.



from Poland, and a beer can from England, and key-chains, and patches, and lots of pictures and ride reports. Oh, and a couple of penguins—no, they're stuffed.

The journey is now finished and already there's talk about relay number two. All that's missing now is a good home for the bag—an appropriate museum, for example—and some fresh organizers.

