

The Charley Pride Challenge

We were in the RV driving back from the multiple events in Bend, Oregon. On the open road, and on the radio I hear, "Is Anybody Going to San Antone" by Charley Pride. It triggered so many memories. Charley Pride was Sherry's Dad's favorite country artist. We came to agree. We enjoyed Charley on the 8-track, on the record player with both 33rpm LPs and 45s. His songs were played on the local Rocky Ford radio station. They grew on you, and you could always recognize a song was his because of his distinctive voice. In 2020, Sherry and I traveled to Reno and enjoyed a live concert with Charley. He was 85 and his voice was just as mesmerizing as ever. It was a great loss to the country music community, and to us, when Charley passed on December 12, 2020. He will be in our hearts forever.

Sniff. As I piloted the RV down the mostly center of the road I thought, "Wouldn't it be a fun thing to do a series of walk events between San Antonio and Phoenix, and back." So, I started setting it up in my mind. Thus was born the Charley Pride Challenge.

The Charley Pride Challenge consists of 16 events. There are two different challenge booklets, one that starts in the east (San Antonio for the directionally challenged), and one in the west (Phoenix, for those that have not heard the challenge song). Each event is about 150 miles apart, and by the time you complete both directions you will have traveled over 2,000 miles. If you choose the East Challenge Booklet you get two events in San Antonio. If you choose the West Challenge Booklet you get two events in Phoenix. The rest of the events on the challenge from Phoenix are: Payson, AZ; Show Low, AZ; San Antonio, NM; Roswell, NM; Lamesa, TX; San Angelo, TX; and Fredericksburg, TX. Then from San Antonio: Del Rio, TX; Sanderson, TX; Fort Davis, TX; El Paso, TX; Lordsburg, NM; and Tucson, AZ.

Wow, you say. For all that work I should get a prize. I agree. The prize will be a USB stick (or CD if you have not accepted newer technology) that contains as much of Charley's music as I could find. I'm still working on it, but so far I have over 2.5GB of MP3s. That's 422 individual songs over 46 albums. With the duplicates removed. If I kept the albums in their entirety there would be 466 individual songs. Woof. Of course what I also wanted was to assign a song to each city. But Charley did not sing so much about places as he did about people. So, if I choose to do that, it will probably be an arbitrary song that I simply like. After all, it IS my challenge.

Check out the web site, <https://woodlandwanderers.org/CharleyPride/> to keep up to date on the progress, and any information I think is important to you. There is a document listing all the available events and how to register for them. Only eight events are mine, the rest are events that were already in existence along the trail. That means you will be helping out other clubs along the way. Of course the two Challenge Booklets will be there for you to download. No cost to you, other than IVV Credit Only and travel.

Should you have any questions or comments, I have set up a special email just for this. Send it to charley@woodlandwanderers.org and I will make every effort to respond in a reasonable amount of time. Always remember, I could be out walking.

Frank Sayers, President
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