



FLORIDA GATOR TALE

Honda Sport Touring Association

December 2005



Texas Hill Country - Ride Report

Submitted By: Sam Ulbing

Ride 3000 miles to go to a one day 200 mile HSTA event? That's what Chuck Headrick and I

did for the Texas Hill Country event and to me it was the essence of HSTA. Here's why. First, I won the 'Anti Monkey Butt Powder' door prize (how can you beat that?). I got to meet more HSTA members; people like Denise Dickenson, State Director

of Oklahoma, who has ridden 92k miles on her 4 year old bike and told me she would like to ride more but has to work. Wow! Of course the roads at Hill Country were a major draw but even the

roads out and back were fun because we explored as we went.



Chuck Headrick and Sam Ulbing on their Texas Hill Country ride

Chuck and I decided to ride mainly US 84 out to Texas. While it is 80 miles north of the Gulf, the effects of the recent hurricanes were evident. We passed many houses with blue tarp roofs and more importantly for us, from a bit west of

Dothan, Alabama to Huntsville, Texas all the hotels were booked up by hurricane related service people like FEMA. Using the internet before

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If you're "connected" be sure to check out the National HSTA Site at:
www.ridehsta.com

And the Award Winning Florida HSTA Site at:
www.flahsta.org

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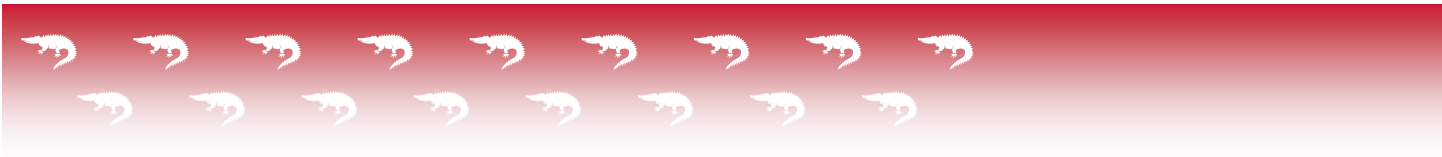
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Welcome to the Club!

We would like to extend a hearty and sincere welcome to the following recent new members. Thank you for choosing to join our group. Many long lasting friendships have begun here and we hope your experience will be a satisfying one!

Name	Location	Ride	Introduced By
Roger A Lowe	Atlantic Beach	'99 BMW 1100RT	FOF 2005
Ellen F Wilder	Keystone Heights	MOH	Bill Wilder
Art Bremer	Crystal River	'99 Honda ST1100	Internet
Marsha Bremer	Crystal River	MOH	Art Bremer
Sandeep V Pillarisetty	Sanford	None listed	Friend/SEStar05
Paul Heydemann	Miami	'01 Kawasaki Concours	Internet/Bill Royal
Jody Custer	Ruskin	MOH	Henry Custer
Sharon Burgess	LaBelle	MOH	Gary Burgess



Texas Hill Country - Ride Report

Cont'd...



Photo 3 - "Dry" river bed crossing

Hill Country roads are unlike any I've seen elsewhere: big open country, basically barren with occasional trees and sagebrush, 70 mph speed limits, miles and miles with no signs of civilization and as you can see (Photo 2 & 3) hilly. State Trooper Jones reminded us at the riders' meeting that cell phones often did not work in the outback and even if they did, emergency help was a long way away. To add to the danger it was the first day of deer season – we saw a few who had evaded the hunter but not the vehicle. Hill Country also has many dry rivers or ones that are a mere trickle until it rains so, instead of bridges, the road dips down to the river with a small culvert under it. When it floods there is a marker telling you how deep the water is over the road (Photo 3). We were lucky; it was dry and we were able to fly along the roads but going down into a dip you'd compress your suspension to the maximum and then run up the rise out of the dip with nothing in sight except for blue sky. You reach the top of the rise and 'surprise' a 35 mph turn is coming up next. Not a lot of time to set up for it or scrub off speed. Exciting riding and I'm glad to report no one got hurt at the event.

(Continued from page 1)

we left we found the only available room in that 700 mile stretch, snapped it up and then planned our trip out around it. US 84 across AL and MS is a major route and often 4 lane but because we were doing two 350 mile days to Huntsville from Dothan we had time to explore a few of the back roads on the way. My favorite was 42 out of Andalusia, AL. We planned to ride it to route 6 and then take 6 back up to 84 but even with GPS we missed the unmarked turnoff and by the time we realized it, we were having too much fun staying on 42 so we rode it back to 84. It's all an adventure!

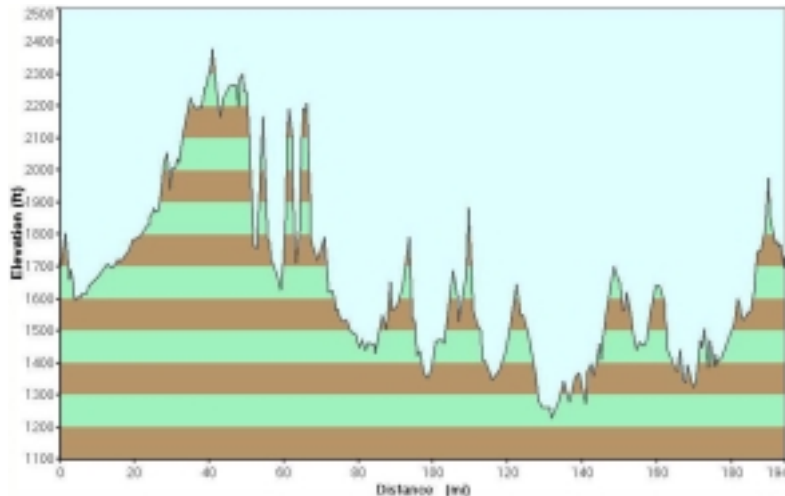
US 84 brings you to Natchez, MS and then across the Mississippi river. While AL and MS have good roads, in LA things change. Most of the roads are full of pot holes and little better than gravel roads so I now call LA "The Dual Sport State". The first town across the bridge consisted of continuous semi-derelict strip malls on both sides of the road. Architecturally and physically the place was old and I expected to see two-tone pastel colored BelAirs with 'Blue Suede Shoes' blasting from the radios. While there were a few decent roads in LA, route 8 leaving it into Texas was right down there with the one coming in from MS, narrow and potholed.

Crossing the Sabine River into Texas we re-entered the present. Good roads and, I love it :-), 70 mph speed limits! Here again we took a back road detour and wound up at a country store in Colmesneil where we stopped for a drink and wound up chowing down on some really good ribs. In Huntsville we met up with the group from Louisiana who, the next day, lead us into Kerrville, home base for the event, via local roads like "The Devil's Backbone". Great roads and good views but Chuck and I decided that these guys ride too "spirited" a ride for us and on Saturday we did the official Hill Country loop by ourselves.

The route also included a wonderful personal touch in that one of the members had an ice cream and cookies stop at his ranch. It offered a chance to relax and chat with some of the Texas members and their wives before continuing the ride.

I found it a great event and a fun ride out and back. Chuck was the perfect riding partner for me, the weather was great and the Texas people were a delightful bunch. Some people have questioned if HSTA is worth the dues when "I can ride those roads for free". To me there is no question - it is. My motorcycling experiences have been so much fuller since I joined HSTA!! I hope more of you can make it to one of the many out-of-state rides next year and experience the true meaning of HSTA.

More pictures are on the FI HSTA members Yahoo Group under Photos/Hill Country.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FlAHSTA/>



Elevation Change over their ~200 mile ride at the event



Safety Corner - Incident Report

Submitted By: P. VanSteelant

Greetings Florida members! I'm Paul VanSteelant (call me Van!). I'm a long-time HSTA member and increasingly involved South Florida participant. Those of you who have made it to any of the South lunch rides since 2000 have seen or met me. Now, after our September ride, I became a statistic. Fortunately, I've had the Hayabusa repaired and I'm 95% recovered from the injuries I sustained. After a couple of conversations with Bill, I decided to share my recent experiences with the membership. File this in the "food for thought" category, though I will admit to a little "preaching" here and there!

The Accident...

Great conditions, 30 minutes after our departure from Jaxson's in Lake Placid. We're heading east on County Route 621. At the edge of the bridge over the outfall of Lake Istokpoga is a canal access road used by locals for fishing. The oncoming driver in a Chevy Safari minivan fails to yield the right of way, making a left turn in front of me onto the access road. I'm the lead rider of a group of three. From the instant I recognized the dire situation until I pulled in the clutch 150 feet east of the vehicle contact, I'm all reflex and training. NO THOUGHTS...NO DECISIONS!

I almost avoided contact because: 1) We were actually going slower than the posted limit, as there were fishermen (future accident witnesses!) on the bridge, and I've had fishing tackle bounce off my truck from inattentive casting! Being "hooked" on a bike would really suck! 2) My bike had recently been serviced with new tires and braided brake lines just 2000 miles before the accident. Like most of us, maintaining my ride matters to me. 3) In March of this year, I attended my fourth or fifth MSF Experienced Rider Course on my 'Busa. I do this every two or three years to maintain a propper skill level.

According to riding partner, Jim Park (MSF Range assistant), I straight-line braked until the moment before impact. I swerved HARD to the left to minimize contact with the back of the minivan. I hit the right rear panel and bumper with the right front side of the bike, my right knee, hand and arm. The impact caused the bike to SNAP hard to the right as the minivan passed. The result of this move had me riding down a 45° bank toward the wetlands adjacent to the canal. I corrected my angle of travel halfway down the bank and continued parallel to the road. I attempted to ride back up the grassy, sandy bank to the road – no such luck! This is when the brain reconnected to my left wrist, and I pulled in the clutch and came to a stop, STILL UPRIGHT!

Adrenaline is Nature's way of helping you through some tough times. Recognize it, use it and be sure to realize that when it wears off, rational thought MUST return to carry the day. I was blessed to be riding with two other riders, who stepped up for the next six to seven hours, just as I would for any other rider. Be prepared to do WHATEVER IT TAKES, because you can never prepare enough for the unexpected.

Between the three of us, we had three cell phones, a digital camera, minor first-aid kit, water, help numbers and credit cards. All were put to use before we made it home.

In previous newsletters, Bill has highlighted some ways to be safer, better riders. With regards to riding gear, I ride with motorcycle-specific gear from head to toe. Boots have padding at the ankle and heel cup. Vented over-pants have padding at the shins, knees and hips. The hard-sided, padded knee cup reduced my injury to severe bruising only – no cuts, no broken bits! Gloves have hard-sided, padded knuckles. "Punching" a minivan at 10-15 mph and walking away with a bruised knuckle and a cut to a pinky finger is pretty amazing...My padded, vented jacket reduced the bruising to my elbow and upper arm. Fortunately, the helmet had no part in the wreck.

The result of the X-rays (long story short, ALWAYS accept medical treatment at the scene and the hospital) showed that I'd be riding sooner than later. I'm positive my gear and training were huge factors in minimizing my injuries.

Another point Bill has made concerns distractions. If you are breathing and reading this, you are multi-tasking! What matters is how much "stuff" you are attempting to do while riding. We do have finite abilities. Choose how you "load up" wisely. We, as a group, ride often and usually for longer than just a run to the nearest diner. Don't get complacent or over-confident about your abilities or the condition of your ride. As sore as I've been these past eight weeks, things could have been FAR WORSE. In 29 years of riding, I've been down once on my own (12 mph in city traffic in Philly!) and now this. We make our own luck, but riding, reading about riding, a super bike one-day school some years ago, and several MSF-ERC since 1990, all came to play in the seven seconds when thought was replaced by trained reaction. Could I have done anything prior to the crash to have further reduced the consequences, or even avoided the accident entirely? I will be using that question to fuel the future improvement of my skills and additional training for as long as I ride.

When was the last time you practiced HARD braking and obstacle avoidance? I rarely preach about improving one's skills. I've always been very supportive and informative about skill development when asked, but it may be time to become proactive. Maybe this story will help somebody I don't even know get off the fence and into a recognized skills-improvement class (Call MSF at 800-640-2415 ext. 5). Did you ever wonder why the pro riders practice and practice and practice before a race? Even they need to get better!



Free Ads

Motorcycle related items - wanted or for sale, riding buddies or room mates for events can be placed right here - for free! Just send them to arrive by the 15th for the next month's publication. Send to Bill Royal, 1521 New Bedford Drive, Sun City Center, FL 33573 or email to ridefl@flahsta.org.

For Sale

Gear

Triumph Summer Weight Motorcycle Jacket. Black. Size 46 US 56 UK New. Worn 3 times. Fully perforated panels. Cordura construction. Removable CE95 protectors, shoulders and elbows. Removable back insert. Excellent condition. Too many jackets. \$75.00. Tom Roe 321-777-0219 or RTR2169@aol.com

Tour Master Cortech GX Air mesh summer riding pants.

Women's size small, tag says small 8-10 but this is a very small 8-10. Removable padding, washable, sold as is, great condition. \$80.00 & you pay shipping. Paid \$169.00 new. Pants legs are

too short for me, but provide great air circulation for summer riding. Contact me by email: eblueday@mindspring.com or phone: 813-633-8155. I can send a photo or bring them to a lunch ride.

Rides

Looking for a riding buddy in the Lakeland area to partner up on HSTA rides and other central Florida rides in the evenings and weekends I ride both a sport bike and a sport touring bike but enjoy all kinds of riding and bikes.

I ride both the North and South monthly HSTA rides and I'm planning on attending some of the STAR events this year. Give me a call if you're within 45 minutes of Lakeland and want to try linking up. Bob Shields 863-646-9016 home or boju29@msn.com

North News

Submitted By: Sam Ulbing

STAR 06:

I have created a database on our Yahoo Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FIAHSTA/> so we can have a list of people who plan (or hope) to go to STAR2006. Even if you are still up in the air I encourage you to sign up on it. You can change the details or delete yourself as plans firm up. Having this database should help those who are looking for riding buddies. The group is open to all HSTA members but you must sign up – that is easy. You can choose to not receive emails if you wish or have them summarized if you are afraid joining the group will overload you email. Try it; you can always drop out later. Sam

Lunch Rides:

The north lunch ride to Gator Landing had 28 attendees with the longest coming 195 miles. We ate on the deck overlooking the St John's River and celebrated Phil Ridgdill's birthday. We will be returning, great place. I need more suggestions for good lunch sites.



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December South Lunch Ride Weekend Event

Submitted By: Bill Royal

I have some special plans for the December South Lunch ride weekend... Now, this isn't for everyone, and especially so if you shun group riding or crowds so beware.

The Saturday lunch ride will be a pretty normal affair. We'll lead anyone wishing to ride with us from the Winn Dixie in Sun City Center as usual, down through some nice back roads to a new destination for us - the Sonny's BBQ in Clewiston. Up to here, it's our normal lunch ride program and you are welcome to make this part only if that's your desire.

From there, it changes though, as Eve and I will not be returning to SCC this day. Instead we're heading out after lunch to Boynton Beach where we'll visit my Mom, and spend the night. Then, on Sunday morning, we'll be heading for the Toys in the Sun Run. If you haven't heard of this it's one of, if not the biggest toy run anywhere. (Expecting some 50,000+ bikes) Here's a prelude for this year's event -

The world's largest motorcyclists charity parade and event leaves from Pompano Harness Track and ends at Markham Park in Sunrise. Scheduled for Sunday, December 4, 2005, more than 70,000 motorcyclists and twice as many people are expected to participate in the "[Annual Christmas Toys in the Sun Run](#)" presented by Rick Case Honda. Proceeds benefit the Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, Florida and the Boys and Girls Club of Broward County Florida. Motorcyclists line up at 7 a.m. and start at 10 a.m. I-95 South of Atlantic to I-595 West to 136th Avenue and SR 84 (exit for Markham Park) will be completely closed down for the duration of the run, which lasts about three hours. This year's Grand Marshals are Steven Tyler from

Aerosmith, Richie Sambora of Bon Jovi, and BSO Sheriff Ken Jenne. \$10 to attend and one unwrapped toy.

HSTA Sunday Plan:

So, we'll be meeting at 6:00 AM for breakfast at the IHOP at the intersection of S Pompano Pkwy (Powerline Rd/SR845) and SW 14th St (Gateway). (See addn'l note below) After that, we'll head into the track to stage for the run, then spend the next few hours people and bike watching until the ride kicks off at 10:00 AM. The ride to the park is a hoot, with thousands of spectators along the way waving and cheering us on. Speeds never exceed 45 and mostly it's much slower. There is ample police escort all along the route, complete with their reindeer antlers :-)

Once at the park, we'll tour and shop around a bit and plan to leave early enough to make it back to the Tampa area before or very close to dusk.

Hope some of you can/will make this unique event!

For more info on the event check out:
<http://www.toysinthesunrun.com/index.htm>

Additional Notes: If you can't make the 6:00 AM breakfast time then you can hook up with us after we finish breakfast - say about 7:15 AM or so. Once we enter the harness track assembly point there is NO WAY to group up so if you want to be together you need to meet up with us at the IHOP parking lot. Best idea is to call or email me to let me know you're coming.

South News

Submitted By: Bill Royal

November Lunch Ride:

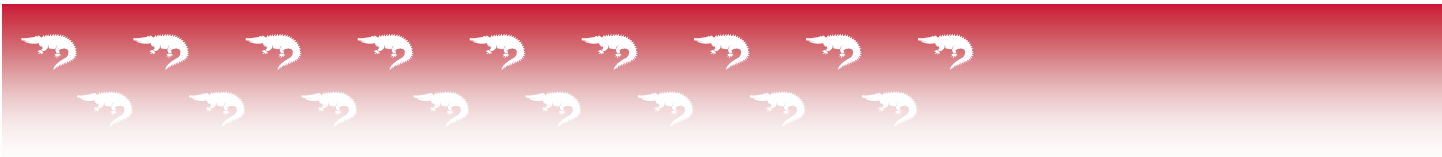
The south lunch ride to the Nav-A-Gator was a major success. We drew 40 on the sign-in sheet and I think we actually missed a couple. Buck DeShazo took top mileage honors with 265.3 miles ridden to get to lunch. Way to go Buck! Bob & Cheryl Fisher were not far behind each riding 258 miles on their respective machines.

The food was good, though they were running out of items before everyone got served and a table or two were not too happy with their waitress. I think the waitress was blaming the crowd, but other tables fared much better so I think it was more the one waitress issue. I got no reports of problems with checks. For whatever reason, a lot of folks hung out for a while so we got some chat time in too. We got there at 11:30 and didn't leave until nearly 2:00 PM. We couldn't have asked for any more perfect weather so the riding was as good as it gets in South Florida.

Other News:

Long time HSTA member and rider Henry Custer is once again attempting to exit the riding scene gracefully. You may remember

Henry sold his longtime steed, a PC800 a few years back in a bid to quit, but after 6 months or so he got on a Reflex scooter which, among other rides, he rode out to Hot Springs AR for STAR 03 on. Well, Henry recently sent me an ad to sell the scooter off but then cancelled when one of his neighbors bought it before the newsletter went to print. Any of you who know Henry know he's got a lifetime worth of riding stories and adventures under his belt, and although I personally miss him terribly on rides, he's a thoughtful man and I know he feel's it's time to hang up the riding gear while all his riding memories are fun and safe ones. I applaud him for his courage and fortitude and feel blessed to call him my friend. I do look forward to seeing him make the occasional ride destination, even if by car. And who knows - maybe he'll get around to writing a book about his motorcycling adventures.



Upcoming Rides/Events

Ride/Events are compiled for your convenience from a variety of sources. HSTA sponsored rides are indicated with the "♦" symbol. If you are considering making any of the rides we suggest you call the contact ahead of time to confirm the ride is still on as listed.

♦ **HSTA Florida South Lunch Ride - December 3rd, 2005 - Sonny's BBQ, Clewiston, FL.** Lunch at Noon. 1388 East Sugarland Hwy (AKA US27) GPS: N26 45 14.8 W80 54 41.3 in hddd° mm'ss.s° format. - Phone: 863-983-4171 This will be the 1st half of a special two-day event to be completed with the Toys in the Sun Run on Sunday (below). Feel free to make either or both - the more the merrier! See you there! Contact: Bill Royal RideFL@flahsta.org or 813-633-8155

Future South Rides/Dates: Jan 1st - Ozello - (Pecks Old Port Cove)

Toys in the Sun Run - Sunday December 4th, 2005 - Pompano Beach - Ft. Lauderdale - See above and December South Lunch Ride Weekend Event (Pg.5) for details

♦ **HSTA Florida North Lunch Ride - December 10th, 2005 - Backyard BBQ, Newberry, FL.** Located in downtown Newberry on the south side of 26 just west of the light at SR27. Approximate GPS: N29 38 46.4 W82 36 41.8. in hddd° mm'ss.s° format. This is a rather small place so let me know if you plan to come. Contact: Sam Ulbing n4uau@cox.net or 352-262-6221

Future North Rides/Dates: January 21 - Gator Joe's in Ocklawaha. Feb 11 – Floyd's in High Springs

♦ And all the rest of the HSTA National schedule...

NOTES: The 2006 schedule is not yet available. *The following is the 2005 schedule* as most events are in the same order but be advised that there are likely other additional events and some changes from this schedule are to be expected! Please be sure to check with the listed contact before making your plans!

For non-HSTA members reading this on the internet, be advised that attendance at these National Events requires HSTA membership. You can join at the event and your event fee gets waived (one time only)!

Date	Event	Location
Feb. 18-20	Ride the Rio: El Duodecimo	Chisos Mining Co Motel - Terlingua, TX 432-371-2254
April 8-10	T-17	Queen Wilhelmina Lodge - Mena, AR 800-264-2477
April 28-May 1	Helen 2005	Alpenhof Hotel - 15 Yonah Street, Helen, GA 800-535-8678
May 6-8	AR By Way Boogie	Hot Springs Village Inn - 4429 N. Hwy 7, Hot Springs Village, AR 888-922-9601
May 13-15	Twistar 2005	Voyageur Inn - Reedsburg, WI 800-444-4493
May 27-30	Tri-Star	Allegheny Inn - Sparta, NC 888-372-2501
June 19-22	STAR 2005	Holiday Inn North - Lexington, KY
August 12-14	Nolichucky Valley Rally	Holiday Inn Express - Erwin, TN
August 26-28	Mail Pouch Fly By	Best Value Inn (formerly Knights Inn) - Marietta, OH
September 9-11	Ozarks BS Rally	Theodosia Marina & Resort - Highway 160
September 16-18	River City Ride	Baymont Inn - 2495 Landmark Avenue Corydon, Indiana 812-738-1500
September 23-25	SE Star	Holiday Inn Express 64 White Oak Lane Dillard, Georgia 706-746-3585
October 7-9	Friends of Freddie - XIII	Tradition Inn Intersection of Hwy 67 & W Farmington, MO 877-355-6205
November 4-6	Texas Hill Country Ride	YO Ranch Resort 2033 Sidney Baker Kerrville, TX 78028 877-967-3767