

The Florida MSTA Grapevine

You heard it through the Grapevine...

Volume 3 Issue 2

Feature Article

Events in February:

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IT ALMOST WAS FLORIDA'S "COOLEST" RALLY!

by Jim McClure

It came perilously close to being Florida's "coolest" rally, but we missed the really severe cold weather by about a week! We'll come back to that later. If you were at Camp Blanding, Florida, for the 'Winter Rally 2010' in mid-January, you got to participate in a really unique event. This rally is presented by the BMW Motorcycle Owners of North East Florida (the same group that presents "[Riding Into History](#)" each year) and is open to all brands and types of motorcycles (well...they do have to be street legal!). There were attendees from MSTA,, many of whom are members of both organizations. The riding opportunities, the vendors, the seminars, and the dinners on Friday and Saturday, made it a bit hard to believe you were at a club rally. They do a terrific job of organizing and staffing the event, and most of their members pitch in as volunteers to make it run smoothly.

The event is widely advertised as "Florida's Coolest Rally", and there is a really good reason for that, which I will describe later. This rally has become well known and was *oversubscribed* this year, from a planned limit of 500 attendees. The "home" facility for the event was the armory at Camp Blanding (near Starke, FL) which easily accommodated several indoor vendors, a large conference room for seminars, and, oh yeah, they were able to feed about five hundred people in there! There were vendors outside as well, and, including the vendors located in the armory, they represented a good mix of services and products.

MONTHLY RIDING TIP:

(This is a new section I'd like to start for everyone. If you've got a great riding or touring tip you'd like to pass on, please send it in! All suggestions are welcome!!)

We've survived a colder than normal winter here in Florida, and while many of us (as with most MSTA members) have continued to ride whenever possible, some may have waited for the warmer weather to return. If you've not ridden in awhile, make sure to give your ride a thorough inspection before putting it back on the road. Even if you find everything is up to speed, the piece of mind is priceless! - Doug.

There were three seminars which were presented multiple times each, so you really had no good excuse for missing one you were interested in. There were seminars on BMW tech, motorcycle adventure camping, total motorcycle control (including an outdoor demo), endurance riding, and world motorcycle touring. I attended one of the seminars, and the room was full.

There were very well administered 50/50 and door prize programs at the rally. They had a generous array of ticket options, and there must have been 50+ prizes that you could put your tickets in for. One of the best parts was that the winning numbers were posted in a convenient location and at the time promised!

There were maps available for several self guided rides around that part of north Florida, and a set of printed "ride rules" for people who wanted to ride with a group, but were not familiar with just how to safely do that. There are some very interesting roads in that part of Florida and many of us do not have much opportunity to get up that way. Another interesting event was a motorcycle tour: Camp Blanding Expanded Historical Ride. It was scheduled to start with a riders' meeting at 9 a.m., and the guide promised to have them back by 2 p.m., in time for the seminars. You immediately know, by looking at a map, that Camp Blanding is a very large expanse of land, and this ride schedule confirms it. I spoke with a couple who went on the ride, and they said they enjoyed it very much.

Now for one of the best parts of this rally: accommodations. There was a tent city, made up of mostly one and two person tents. Seemed like there must have been at least a hundred of 'em; tents and motorcycles everywhere! Now, remember, this rally is held in January of each year, and we all know what the weather was like in the first half of this past January. This is one of the reasons it is called "Florida's Coolest Rally". It has been a few years since I attended this rally, and the last time I was there, I seem to recall very vividly, the weather was very much like what we experienced early this year. There are alternative accommodations available, some on site, an RV campground, nearby motels, etc., but I am always amazed by, and have great respect for, the number of people who camp.

There are photos of the event on the BMWNEF website (BMWNEF.org) where you can take a look. Even though the weather is sometimes a challenge, this rally is one you might consider as you put together your riding plans for next year.

Heard Thru the Grapevine:

Editor Introduction:

Disclaimer: Since Bill and Van were desperate enough to rope me, a total neophyte, into becoming the new Grapevine Editor, I guess I'll take this section and do the obligatory introduction. :-)

For those who don't know us, my wife Becky and I are both retired military, living in Valrico, just outside Tampa. I've been riding for about 37 years now; I'm estimating with about 500,000 miles under my belt. My current bikes include an '09 K1300GT, an '08 Ducati 1098, and an '07 CBR600RR that I use on the track. Riding is a huge part of our lives, and as such we also spend time teaching as MSF RiderCoaches. When we're not riding or instructing MSF courses, I teach for the University of Phoenix and Becky works as a personal trainer. We have three kids, but they are the furry, four-legged kind that go "Meow" all the time. I'm pretty sure that translates to "Feed me, NOW!" I'm looking forward to harassing everyone for news and photos for our newsletter, so watch out! - Doug

Florida News

South Director's Report

Greetings!! I'd like to welcome our new Newsletter Editor, Doug Westly. Those who don't know Doug have no idea how lucky we all are to have him step up and take over for Jim McClure. I know that Bill Royal and I are doubly blessed to have Doug on board. How else could we continue to annoy the membership with our ramblings!! Really, the next time that you see Doug, thank him for his commitment. And you will see him around--he and his better half ride and ride and ride and ride...

Well, what a difference a week can make in our weather!! We had 100% warmer temperatures for the Jan. 16th South lunch ride than the previous weekend's snow, sleet and 35 degrees that canceled the North lunch ride. And the resulting cabin fever we all felt was broken by a wonderful day of riding to Lightsey's Seafood on the bank of the Kissimmee river as it feeds into Lake O. O.

We had 25 people make their way to lunch from all over the Southern half of the state. Bill's group made it in early and made a striking presence in the parking lot, all arranged parallel and evenly spaced along the south side of the lot. The Palm Beach County crew took the loooong way around the north side of the lake, arrived a little behind the majority, and showed very little discipline when it came to their parking efforts!! We were there for the food after all. It was a pleasure to see many of the "locals" as well. We try to space out the destinations so everybody can make a real ride out of the event. You might have to get a little creative sometimes!

As usual, everybody had a fine meal together. We have always liked this place, and we continue to enjoy going there. It did seem that yours truly did manage to avoid a major drink spill by our waitperson, as I was checking in with other members at other tables. Fortunately, nobody else at our booth was effected, and we had a good laugh while teasing the waiter the rest of the lunch! He was very attentive for the rest of our meal.

We all had a good time, and spent just over two hours talking and catching up on our New Years plans. It was great to see several people making their way from table to table in order to check in with everybody else. One of the key minglers was Dianne Park. Thanks to Dianne and others, our Florida chapter has the new MSTA ITR postcards to hand out as we run into other riders enjoying the best riding season in the country. If you did not get some for yourself, or were not able to get to the lunch ride, contact Bill Royal or Van VanSteelant for your own stash. Later this year, the National membership will have ITRs for their riding season. Hard to believe that there's less that 12 months to ride a motorcycle every year!?!?!?

Be sure to stay tuned to the Fl and National websites for reasons to ride. There are a LOT of opportunities to ride. We are scheduling lunch rides for the rest of the year as I write this. Next month features a ride organized by one of our own, Jim Park, and will be showing off the greatness of winter riding in Florida. It's not to late to read about the event in the Just for Fun links, and make your reservations. Even if you can only make a day trip out of it, check out the info. As there are more rides planned than days to ride, I'm sure you'll be able to join in on the FUN!!

One last thing...if you have been thinking of volunteering to organize a ride, or can recommend a lunch destination (look for some new places coming up this year), or might simply call up a few members that are in your "neighborhood" to go for a ride (look in your MSTA Blue Book!), JUST DO IT!! Really, it will be fun and you never know what it might lead to...ATGATT Van

Florida Rides This Month

February 6, Saturday - MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride. Lunch at the Shamrock Inn, 12pm - 1pm, 8343 East Orange Avenue Floral City, FL, 34436. For more details go to the FL MSTA website at <http://www.flahsta.org/>

February 20, Saturday - MSTA Florida North Lunch Ride. Lunch at the Cherry Pocket Steak & Seafood Shak, 12pm - 1pm, 3100 Canal Road, Lake Wales, FL 33898. For more details go to the FL MSTA website at <http://www.flahsta.org/>

February 26, 27 & 28, 2010 - "Fun In The Sun Rally" - this is a "pre BikeWeek" ride through Ocala horse country and has been organized by Jim Park. Preferential group rates have been arranged for the rally at the host hotel in Ocala, and can be extended for those staying on for bike week. There will be additional information as we get closer to the event. To see the poster for this event, [click here!](#)

February 26 - March 1 (or following week as alternate) - "Apalachicola Run" This trip is being put together by Bronson Griggs as a 3 day run from central FL (or wherever you want to start) to the Bay City Lodge, nestled along the banks of the Apalachicola River. Dates are flexible as of this publishing, but the schedule includes two nights at the Lodge, bicycling on St. Vincent Island and other fun stuff. For more information, contact Bronson at griggsbw@msn.com

For additional Florida events, [click here](#) to see Florida MSTA web site Events page.

MSTA web site information on "Just For Fun Events": [click here.](#)

National MSTA www.ridemsta.com

Florida MSTA www.flahsta.org

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

Click on the words above and you will go to a mystery URL that should be of interest. If you know of a site you think the members might like, let us know!

STAR '09 ... via Alaska! by Bill Royal

(We pick up Part 6 of the on-going saga on Day 9...)

06/02/09 - Day 9

... So this morning we are up and returning to the dealer to see what the day will bring. We walk over to a Mickey D's breakfast early enough to be back in time for the service department employee to pick up Larry & Sally for transport them back to the dealership. I rode over on the ST running an errand to the Post Office along the way. Once at the dealer we are waiting around for the news. Tech says the computer says the problem is the fuel injectors and that mother BMW wants to overnight the replacements for the next day replacement. Well, that isn't going to help us much since we've already lost one day getting towed in and now to lose a 2nd day as well as part of a third day. That will put us in jeopardy of missing our weekend event in Hyder altogether! We regroup in the dealer's plush waiting area to consider our options. I don't see why they can't simply "borrow" the injectors from a new bike on the floor (they had several GS's there). That would get us on our way the quickest. Larry approaches the service manager with that but he returns a short while later and says they can't do that. So we hang around so more thinking out our options. Nothing is looking very promising. Larry calls and chats with his local (PA) dealer a time or two updating them on what's going on. This gets us nearly to lunchtime when finally the service manager comes back up and says that if Larry is willing to pay the labor to take the parts off the showroom bike than they will do that after all. It was under an hour's labor so he didn't need to think long to answer yes.

The plan now is off to lunch while they swap over the parts and then hopefully back on the road in the early afternoon. We hit our new favorite restaurant for the awesome southwestern chicken wraps and soon are back at the dealership. It was a while yet but eventually we get the bike back and running, but we still need to return to the hotel to re-pack the bike before we can make our escape. Long story short we finally got back on the road at 4:23 Eastern time (2:23 local). Yeah, kinda late but it's what we are dealt. Just getting out of the city and onto the interstate is a stall and crawl mess though we finally make it. Then we turn north onto US93 hoping to start making some miles and we do - for a short bit, but then we hit the border of the Flathead Indian Reservation which is where the construction starts... We take 25 minutes to cover a 12.5 mile stretch before we finally bust out of the construction. It doesn't seem like we're going to make much miles today but we hang in there. We head north and up along the west side of Flathead lake making decent time save the occasional town slowdowns and before long we're approaching the Canadian border. We stop for our last fuel in the US in Eureka MT. We make the border at 8:35 PM ET (2 Hrs earlier local time). The US side stops us only long enough to record our license plates but the stop at the Canadian side isn't much longer with both bikes getting checked through in just 3 minutes. No searches, just a nice young lady asking the usual questions. We've made 192 miles in just a shade under 4 hours. Not too bad considering the construction zone holdups. Now we expect to cover some ground. We can tell we've crossed the border. We immediately spot our first deer by the side of the road today and it isn't long before we spot another. Keeping a wary eye out we are none the less making decent time and miles. We are on CA 93, which generally parallels the Kootenay River. It is quite scenic through here and especially so as we get up to Columbia Lake where we stop for a photo op.

*Taken at a rest stop on CA 95,
overlooking the Columbia Lake,
near Kootenay, British Columbia*



We've covered another 112 miles in just under 2 hours and given our northern latitude we have daylight left so off we go to see how far we can make it today. We manage to make another 93 miles before we begin to run out of daylight in Golden BC at approx 10:15 PM local time. After we get checked into the hotel we check out our progress. We soon discover that we've covered some 404 miles since leaving the dealership in Missoula and that puts us just 50 miles or so short of where our original plan would have us so we've done way OK and fully expect to make up that 50 miles the next day to restore us back to our plan. It's been a long day though so it isn't long before we're all cutting Z's.

06/03/09 - Day10

We awake ready to take on the day and hopefully get back on our schedule today. Fuel for the bikes is our first order of business. We gas up and I experience my first dealings with new math. Let's see, litres in place of gallons - OK, but now to deal with the exchange rate too. It won't be until I return home and get my bank statement and run some calcs on the computer before I finally understand fully the costs but it wasn't hard to see that fuel here was expensive - more so than in the states for sure. Since there wasn't anything appealing for breakfast in town we decided to head up the road a ways and see what we could find for a later breakfast. We aren't too far out of town when we enter the Canadian Glacier National Park. Certainly smaller than the US counterpart it is still breathtaking. The road is covered in several places to keep it open when avalanches would otherwise cover it and avalanche warning signs abound. We did not stop for any pix though as I think our focus was on getting to breakfast. We ended up stopping in Revelstoke BC which is at the intersection of the Columbia River and Mt Revelstoke National Park. The scenery is stunning and we had a window seat at the restaurant so as to enjoy the view while dining.



*The breakfast scenery at
Revelstoke, British Columbia!*

I should also mention that now that we are in the mountains the riding is way fun. Plenty of twists and turns as well as elevation changes on top of the fantastic vistas are making it a ride to remember above many others. After breakfast we are now heading mostly due west on CA 1. Eventually we need to stop for fuel again, now in Kamloops BC. About 50 miles out of Kamloops we turn north now on CA 97. We stop for lunch in a town named "100 mile House", BC. What I have found so interesting about this area is that we have moved out of the mountains and now are in a vast plains area. I guess I always thought all of Canada in the northwest was mountains. So much for paying attention in geography class. After a short lunch we press on. We don't stop again until Quesnel BC where we fuel for the third time today. We've covered 250 miles on this tank and we're just 76 miles from our planned overnight stop (and back on original schedule!) in Prince George BC. We arrive there at 9:00 PM ET (not sure what the local time is now). We managed 554 miles today in 12:20 minutes elapsed time but we're back on schedule and all seems right with the world again! (...to be continued)

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ALL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE PROVIDED BY THE CREDITED AUTHOR, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

CLASSIFIED ADS

BIKES FOR SALE

Motorcycle: 1987 Yamaha Venture 1300 - 35,000 miles . Has been garage-kept. Recently serviced, including valve adjustment, oil and filter, driveshaft/differential oil change, new clutch and carburetor diaphragms. Runs GREAT. \$3,500
Contact Dennis Anderson, (863) 763-6069;
okeeanderson@embarqmail.com

Motorcycle: 2006 Honda VFR 800 Interceptor:
37,000 miles, ABS, white w/white wheels.
Immaculate! RiderCoach-owned. All services done on time, new upgraded chain, brand new tires, lots of extras! Never a problem and a beautiful sport-touring bike, runs great! \$6000 OBO. Contact Becky at (813) 684-8737 or pr8hed@msn.com

GEAR FOR SALE

Motorcycle Trailer: Chariot single-bike fiberglass platform. \$500 -
Contact Dennis Anderson, (863) 763-6069;
okeeanderson@embarqmail.com