

# The Florida **MSTA** Grapevine

you heard it through the grapevine

Volume 2 Issue 7

## Events in July:

details on page 4

25 - Lake Suzy - Nav-a-gator Grill

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## Feature Article

### Our Trip to STAR '09

By Dianne Park

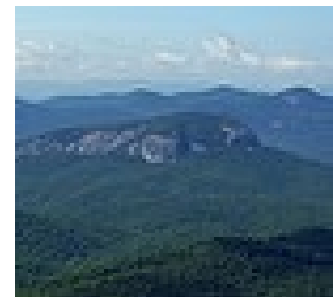
(Dianne Park has been a member of HSTA/**MSTA** for several years and is a very active rider with the South Florida Group. Photos by Jim Park. Ed.)

It can't get any better than Star 2009!!!

But I think that is another article. Jim & I were asked to "say a few words" about our trip to and from Star '09. The vacation was planned by Jim Park. Need I say more? Ok, for those of you who do not know him well or how he travels, it was superb. I had an "inkling" before we got married about his travel interests, but he just keeps perfecting his planning and travel skills.

We had agreed before we left to do the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) at least once, which is Heaven on Earth, in my book! But before arriving on the BRP, we already had ridden the Cherochalla in Tennessee as well as Deals Gap (US129), which is always fun.

Day one of the Blue Ridge Parkway was absolutely perfect, both weather and riding conditions (i.e., very little traffic). Day two was dense fog and some rain, but hey, it's the parkway so it still was enjoyable.



We want to give a warm **MSTA** welcome to new members Mary and Daniel Legault, who live in Sebring and ride KLR 650s. Be sure to say hello to Mary and Daniel when you see them at a ride or event.

We left the BRP to spend two nights in Lexington, Virginia, another charming town somewhat similar to Staunton, about 30 miles south. We toured the Stonewall Jackson House there, walked the town and had a great lunch at Macado's in an historic and charming home built in 1820.

Friday before the start of Star we met up with our very good friend, John French and the three of us did one of the Star route loops putting us back on the BRP and breakfast at Peaks of Otter. (Be sure to include the Peaks of Otter and/or Mt. Pisgah Lodge for meals if you have never done so!)

Once in Staunton, to say that the town itself and the Stonewall Jackson Hotel rolled out the red carpet for **MSTA** is an understatement. We were welcomed everywhere with enthusiasm from the locals. The restaurants were charming and the food was wonderful. The coffee shops were delightful. Everywhere you looked the architecture was truly impressive. It was wonderful catching up right away with Bill Royal, Eve Balzur, and Fannie Heine who has all arrived earlier in the week. It was great to have Larry & Sally Troutman in our group too. Jim, Fannie & I took advantage of a free walking tour of the town on Saturday morning learning lots of history and other interesting tid bits.



### *Heard through the Grapevine:*

- Van VanSteelant, our state Co-Director, is heading back to work after a long recovery from surgery. Van will be working in Virginia for the next seven months or so, but, thanks to the internet, will be able to keep up with club activities and expects to be back in Florida from time to time.
- Buck DeShazo is traveling by motorcycle in the western U. S. with two friends and will have stories and photos to share with us after he returns. In the meantime, you can keep up with his travels by [reading his blog](#).
- With STAR '09 in Staunton, VA, just recently completed, you can start planning for STAR 2010, which will be held in Taos, NM.
- *What have you heard or what did you do that others might like to know about? Tell us..... so we can include it here.*

Many thanks again to Galen, Brick, and everyone else with **MSTA** who contributed so much as well as everyone at the Stonewall Jackson that made Star '09 so much fun. Thanks too to our good friends Randy, Kathleen, & River Bridgewater who came in from NJ for their first Star to see what it was all about. The camaraderie of all of the **MSTA** members truly defines STAR. But ... I digress from the "to and from guideline" of this article.

To make leaving Staunton less difficult (saying goodbye), we picked up the BRP again first thing Thursday morning and enjoyed those roads SO much that both of us were totally exhausted by 4:00 that afternoon when we got off the parkway and spent the night in Boone.

We did more of BRP on Friday and then on to spend the afternoon and evening with some close friends (for those of you who know Fred of *Fred's Famous Peanuts* in Helen, Georgia).

The one (and only) thing I would have eliminated with the trip was the heat on Saturday in Georgia. It was wicked all day, but culminated with a 14 mile stretch of construction on I-95 around 3:30 in the afternoon that took an hour to get only part way through - while the temperature remained at 100 degrees. Since we were close to stopping for the day anyway, Jim found an exit to escape the last few miles of construction. His 5 minute detour took us precisely to the hotel where we had planned to stay which was right beside a wonderful Mexican restaurant. After a shower and some margaritas, we were happy campers once again.

One side note however - Jim now wants to add Bluetooth to his bike to accept phone calls. It seems that Van, our State Co-Director, had spotted us heading southbound on I-95 as he was headed northbound. He left a message warning us of the traffic jam a short 5 miles ahead of us. We got his message after we were at our room for the night!@#\$.

The most amazing thing, of the to and from part of the trip, as well as riding in Virginia and West Virginia is... we never once hit a dirt or gravel road! I think that is pretty much a first for Jim. So thank you Jim and especially, thank you Mr. GPS! It was a wonderful trip.

## Florida News from the Directors

### South News

Several photos were taken at the Lunch Ride to Jaxon's in Lake Placid on June 13. A couple of them are shown below, but you can see Van's other photos [by clicking here](#).



## Florida Rides This Month

### North Lunch Ride

No rides had been planned by publication time. For updates on North Lunch Rides, please click here to check the Florida **MSTA** web-site.

## South Lunch Ride

Saturday, July 25, 11:30am - 1:00pm - Nav-a-gator Grill - 9700 Riverview Circle, Lake Suzy, FL 34269  
Phone: 941-627-3474 - This is a nice little restaurant on the Peace River that boasts "Real Old Florida Dining". It is located just off Kings Highway (State Road 769) 3 miles east of I-75, exit 170, then right on Peace River Street. GPS Location: N27 03.987 W82 00.256 - Contact: Van VanSteelant - 561-738-2011 or [Busavan@flahsta.org](mailto:Busavan@flahsta.org)

## Upcoming Events

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](#).

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

### More Contact Information

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National **MSTA** [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com)

Florida **MSTA** [www.flahsta.org](http://www.flahsta.org)

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*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!

## Yes, Virginia.....There Really Was a Great STAR in Staunton

By Jim McClure (with a lot of input from Lee and Sam Ulbing, and others!)

Those who were able to get to STAR '09 had a great time! Staunton turned out to be an ideal "home base" location, with a lot to see and do within a reasonable distance, some wonderful restaurants, and you could not ask for better riding choices.



*photo by Jim Park*

This was a terrific STAR and I think everyone who attended had a great time. Galen and Flo Diehl did a masterful job with the planning for STAR '09, which, I understand, took over a year and the help of many other members to handle all the details. As you might imagine, there are a lot of moving parts to a large rally like this, and they did a spectacular job with coordination and management during the event in Staunton. There were tons of details, such as coordinating train rides at the Cass Historic Train, nearly a hundred miles away, working out "discount coupons" with local merchants and restaurants, and gathering up maps and brochures for distribution to attendees. They got all of that done, and more, and it ran very smoothly.

While he clearly did not ride from there, the member who came the furthest distance was "Mac" from Stonehenge in the UK. He flew to Charlotte, NC, where he rented a bike to come to the event. This is the second time "Mac" has ridden the USA, claiming 24 states and 7 Canadian provinces.

Many of our Florida members arrived in Staunton on motorcycles after some pretty extensive travel. Bill Royal and Sally and Larry Troutman doing 8300 miles through the western U. S. and up to Alaska. Eve Blazsur via some 5000 miles solo touring out west while dodging strong storms. Diane and Jim Park took a week to get to STAR '09, riding though the southeast, and planned on another week to get home. Lee and Sam Ulbing rode from home in Florida up to Rochester, NY, spent 5 days at the Rochester International Jazz Festival, and arrived in Staunton with 2000 miles on the clock. Fanny Haine rode solo to Staunton, attending some riding courses and making a couple of visits along the way. John French rode solo to STAR '09. I am hoping we will read about many of these adventures in the coming months. I don't recall seeing any other Florida members there, and I apologize if I missed anyone. Let me know, and I'll correct that in the next newsletter.

The 'official' riding routes offered something for whatever time and terrain preference one might have. A lot of miles were ridden to / in / from West Virginia, and the roads going west from the Staunton area offered a lot of diversity. There were at least seven planned routes available, with maps and directions, which took riders to a wide variety of roads, terrain, and destinations. Many attendees rode east toward the Charlottesville area, and many rode on the Blue Ridge Parkway. There are a lot of small towns in this part of the country, and many of them were visited by STAR '09 participants.

Blue Ridge Power Sports, a Honda motorcycle dealer located in nearby Harrisonburg, was the designated dealer for the event. They were kind enough to host the group Monday morning for coffee, donuts, demo rides on "any motorcycle on the floor", and discounts on parts and service. A pretty good

sized group showed up there to take full advantage of their generosity, and it made a good jumping-off-place for the day's rides, whether you chose to go east or west. Jim Park tried out the new Honda Fury, a Harley look alike, and reported that it's not quite as nimble as his ST! Sam Ulbing saw a new 2009 ST1300 on the showroom floor and wanted to work a trade on his 2003 model with 89,000 miles but, for some inexplicable reason, it just didn't work out!



*Jim Park by Jim Park??*

Motorcycle safety is one of the fundamental goals of **MSTA**, and STAR '09 did not miss a beat on this very important issue. In the handout packet, there was information on group riding, riding pace, and constant reminders to "ride within your limits". In his welcome letter, **MSTA** President Dave Brickner emphasized riding safety and also highlighted the *Member Assistance Partner (MAP)* program, in which an experienced rider is matched with a new rider / member so that individual can quickly meet other **MSTA** members and also develop safe riding skills.

All STAR events have good seminars, and '09 was no exception. There was a really good seminar on suspension set-up by the guys from COGENT DYNAMICS SUSPENSIONS, based near Asheville. This discussion got fairly technical, but the crowd was up for it and had a lot of questions. A suspension set-up guide book was provided to each attendee, along with a 2009 RACE TECH catalog. Some pretty good stuff! "COGENT" representatives were available each day in the vendor area to answer questions, set-up bike suspensions, and replace parts, if needed.

There was also a seminar on GPS for Beginners, which touched on the factors one would consider in purchasing a GPS unit as well as elementary route planning, navigation, and actual route tracking. This seminar was well attended and there were a lot of questions, which added significantly to the exchange of information.

There were other seminars covering 1) "Roads of West Virginia", 2) "So You Want to Ride Long Distance?", and 3) personal security when traveling by motorcycle. All of these were informative and the presenters did a lot of work to prepare.

Then... there was the **MSTA** Ladies Meeting, hosted by Flo Diehl. It was pretty obvious that everyone who attended this meeting had a great time. We have since learned that another seminar was being held in the next room and it was impossible not to be aware of the continuous laughter that was coming from the ladies session. In fact, I understand that the presenter in the "other" seminar was asked to tell a few jokes in an attempt to match the fun times they were having right next door. You'll have to talk with one of the ladies who attended this session to find out what was going on.

Florida was well recognized at the event:

The new "Florida **MSTA** Grapevine", following in the footsteps of the two time award winning *Florida GatorTale* newsletter, won the **MSTA** Newsletter of the Year award for 2008. I was proud to accept the award on behalf of our Florida members, and I want to thank all of our members who contributed articles and photos, and also Sam Ulbing who helped tremendously during the start-up and continues to help whenever needed.

Award presenter Jim Randall outlined the factors the award was based on: the large number of different authors contributing to the publication (they are identified at the end of this article); the large number of articles and photos included in each issue; the newsletter distribution methods (mail, e-mail, posted on club web site, all the above); the distribution timeliness: twelve issues delivered consistently on or before the first day of each month. The key "take away" here is that *it's YOU, our members, who really make this newsletter as good as it is.* **MSTA** feels member participation is a vital ingredient to a viable **MSTA** organization. I was very happy to accept this award on behalf of our Florida membership, and I hope that we can win it again.

Eve Blazsur received the 2008 Mileage Award in the Ladies Masters Division (she was the only person in this division due to the extensive mileage she rides), and logged 25, 282 miles.

Bill Royal earned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Place 2008 Mileage Award in the Men's Touring Division and logged 39,572 miles during '08. However, since leaving home in Florida, and including his ride out west and to Alaska, Bill rode 8,231 miles before arriving in Staunton. The Silver Streak is now bumping 200,000 miles!

Fanny Haine received an award from the Dan Clark Safety Fund in the form of reimbursement for safety equipment purchased during 2008. She also won a raffle prize of a one night stay at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel in Staunton.

Lee and Sam Ulbing were recognized for their help with registration at STAR '09, a job they have done at many events over the years.

Jim Park was recognized as one of the official photographers at STAR '09, as well as for his extensive work with the photo gallery on the **MSTA** web site.

Jim McClure won a door prize of a warm 'n dry heated jacket liner which might come in handy for those lunch rides during January and February.

I really want to thank Dianne Park who, basically, got home from STAR, fired up her computer, and wrote the lead article for this edition. That type of effort is exactly why WE won the newsletter award for 2008.

To see what local media in Staunton had to say about STAR '09, try these links:

<http://www.whsv.com/home/headlines/48817917.html>

<http://www.whsv.com/home/headlines/48635382.html>

and / or take a look at the **MSTA** forum, where STAR '09 is being discussed:

<http://www.sporttouring.us/forum/showthread.php?t=880>

These are the members who wrote articles and submitted photos during 2008, and are a key part of our winning the award for best newsletter:

Tom Blake, Eve Blazsur, Al Bogard, Henry Custer, Buck DeShazo, John Duss, Bob Fischer, Fanny Haine, Chuck Headrick, Buck Jones, Eric Larsen, Craig Merritt, Jim Park, Mike Pepin, Doug Pippin, Phil Ridgill, Bill Robinson, Alan Singer, Bob Vanderwagg, Doug Westly, A. D. Williams, Scott Wingenter.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### BIKES FOR SALE

### GEAR FOR SALE

**New Scorpion EXO Helmet** (the one with the pump) - Silver – Large - Asking \$250  
Contact: John French 561-350-6177 (12)

**Tourmaster Cortech Advanced Sport Riding Jacket** - Brand new, never been worn - Size: Mens:XL.Red and Black, Waterproof, full Knox Armour with back protector. Sleeve, Chest and back zipper vents. Full zip in liner. \$85.00 plus shipping. (4) Contact Scott @ [vmax\\_97@peoplepc.com](mailto:vmax_97@peoplepc.com) or 353-447-2662

**Ztechnik V Stream Windshield for R1200RT-**  
used one month-didn't work for me - #Z2402-  
orig size - \$130.00 - Dennis Villarose - (7)  
Call 561-329-3257 or email  
[ipnman2002@yahoo.com](mailto:ipnman2002@yahoo.com)

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