

The Florida MSTA Grapevine

You heard it through the Grapevine...

Volume 3 Issue 7

Events in July

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Editor's Note: This month's edition is light, as everyone has been at STAR, too busy riding to send in articles/notes for print. However, I hope everyone who went to STAR will contribute their adventures for the August Edition!

Feature Article

Our Feature Article this month provides more excerpts from Fanny Haine's diary as she continues her summer European motorcycle odyssey...

1 JUNE (TUESDAY): TRAVEL TO MIDI PYRENEES

Left at 10 AM under cloudy grey sky but dry. I rode mostly small country roads which lead me through many fields and panoramic views. I was in the area of Champagne Ardennes. I worked my way South slowly passing by some very old villages who still had all the charms of the past. Houses built with large stones, many old farms. Eventually I arrived around 5.30 PM at Auxerre which is located in the region of Bourgogne, wine country. I stayed at a chain type hotel called B&B where the rooms are tiny but clean.

Price for 1 person: 40 Euro, with breakfast (a real one), add 6 Euro

Price of gas in France: 1.34 Euro per liter

To eat I went to a supermarket where there is a buffet, for a salad and a main dish with a soda, it was 11 Euro

MONTHLY RIDING TIP: Tires...

Some thoughts on tires: First off, when was the last time you checked your tire pressure? Do you need to check it routinely? Well, if you don't, how do you know something hasn't damaged the tire and is causing a slow leak? Contrary to popular belief, you can lose quite a bit of air and it won't be visually noticeable. Tread depth, remaining tire life and condition are all things to pay attention to. One final thought: Tires are like any other component of a motorcycle: They are designed for a specific type of riding. Harder rubber compounds mean longer life, but less traction, particularly in aggressive corners. Softer compounds grip better, but at the expense of long life. Think about your tires...often. Remember: They are literally where you meet the road. - ed.

2 JUNE (WEDNESDAY): TRAVEL TO MIDI PYRENEES

Left Auxerre at 10 AM still under a grey sky. Right away I took a road recommended by a special book for motorcycle tours. The road was along the canal de Nievres, with many nice curves on the road and passing through some tiny villages looking like I was in the middle age area. There were old castles still in use with big round towers and walls around them. Most of them are in the middle of the vineyards. I rode in the middle of some small valleys up and down giving again some nice panoramas to admire. After that special road I continued on some similar roads until the skies started to get darker and darker showing rain ready to pour. I then modified my way to reach a larger more direct road and by the time I got to that road, it just poured. As the traffic was heavier, I was getting dozed up by all the trucks. I had to stop to put my rain suit on, and the temperature had also dropped quite a bit. I then decided to go on the highway to speed up my arrival. I went by the area of Auvergne where some old volcanoes are located providing many fresh springs from which most of the French water bottle come from. The rain had stopped, I noticed some remaining of snow of some of the higher volcanoes. In the Winter it can be a ski area but often there is not enough snow. The temperature was pretty cold, so I kept my rain suit to stay warmer and also I was too lazy to remove it. Used to go there with my parents and do a lot of hiking. By 5.30 PM I had enough and beside I had arrived where I wanted to stop for the night. I was at Brive-La-Gaillarde located in the Limousin. I had planned to go to another B&B and had it programmed on my GPS but the exit to take was closed due to some constructions. As I had to ride a way before being able to exit I decided not to go back to find B&B and went to another similar hotel called Etap hotel.

Price for hotel: 41 Euro, with breakfast, add 5 Euro

The hotel gave me a coupon to eat at the restaurant across the street where for 12 Euro I had a salad, a piece of Salmon with veggies and a desert being some kind of chocolate cake (my luck).

3 JUNE (THURSDAY): TRAVEL TO MIDI PYRENEES

Finally a nice blue sky to ride. Left again at 10 AM and rode some country roads who took me again to the top of the hills. Then as I was going through some complicated village with all the narrow streets and turns, I somehow took the road. I did not notice it too busy looking at the scenery, then when I realized something was wrong, I saw I was going the opposite direction. It then took me an hour to get back on the right track. But with the nice weather I did not care too much. By the way it is not so easy to find gas on all those small roads. The only gas stations left are those connected with a mini market. There is no one there, you must pay with your VISA, and only VISA. Same thing with the highway, there is no longer any personnel at the boots, and again it is cash or VISA. Kind of sad to deal with machines instead of people. As I went out of my way I had to get back on the highway for a short portion of the way to avoid going through a large city. I arrived at my destination Le Vieux Chene (the old oak tree) at Serignac by around 2PM. The place is fantastic. First the owners who are a British couple, Mark and Merynn, both 59 years old, he rides a Harley, she rides as passenger, they bought the place 10 years ago and have been permanent residents for 5 years. The place is an old farm, 400 years old, of course completely renovated. There is a nice large and deep swimming pool, and a breath taking view. The house is surrounded by old trees which means I can hear all kinds of birds singing non stop, ay night the frogs take over. It is so quiet, only hear nature's sounds. I LOVE IT. There is a large garage for the bike. We eat outside morning and evening. The husband Mark prepares all the food using all the products from his own garden. Tonight, the meal was delicious and tasty, and of course red wine at will to remain healthy. Here is the deal, I pay 35 Euro per night including breakfast and 15 Euro for the evening meal, there is no menu, he decides what to prepare. Like I said wine and tea is included. It is so nice I decided to stay here until 1 July.

4 JUNE (FRIDAY): LE VIEUX CHENE

After a nice leisure breakfast taken outside, I rode to the closest town to the super market to do a few purchases for my lunch. After lunch I went for a hike of 2 hours up the hills, down the hills. I visited the tiny village of Serignac where I was surprised to see so many old farms being restored. After this hike, I enjoyed the pool, took me a while to get in, but I did get in. This evening 3 couples arrived. They are French, the younger couple is restoring an old farm in the area and both set of parents came to assist their children. We all ate outside a huge delicious lasagna following a good soup made with beetroots from the garden. We stayed at the table till pretty late.

5 JUNE (SATURDAY): BEAUMONT DE LOMAGNE

Went to the local market in the small town closed by called Beaumont de Lomagne. Always fun to see all the local products and that definitely rises my appetite. Then I visited the village who has a huge church in pretty good shape. There too, many houses are under restoration. In the afternoon I went for another 2 hours walk followed by a jump in the pool.

I saw some more black and white cows who got up and came close to see me. This gave me the idea to call my trip : "European Safari Leading to the Grazing Cow"

For those who know about my neck/shoulder/arm problem with the pinched nerve, it seems that everything is OK. The pain has finally gone away and my head is again flexible. It is a relief to be pain free.

At diner there were only the 2 owners, Mark and Merynn and myself. They both have traveled extensively in Asia, mostly India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and so on. We had a nice conversation about all the different cultures and philosophy of those countries. They married only 3 years ago, Merynn had never been married before, she was too busy with her career in the textile, traveling all over Asia. Like me she has no children and never had a desire to have some. They both come from Great Britain, he is from Welsh and she is from England. They both speak French but we talked together when no one else is around, in English.

6 JUNE (SUNDAY): SAINT ANTONIN NOBLE VAL

Weather prediction was nasty. It rained hard during the night and temperature dropped by 25 degrees. In the morning The sky was grey but no rain. Rode an hour away to Saint Antonin following the Aveyron river and its gorges. The town dates from the 12th Century. There was also a local market selling many local products such sausage, foie de gras, cheese, nut bread, nut wine, honey, many spices from the area, and of course a variety of fresh products. The streets are very narrow, many houses have stories, and in the middle of all a large church from the 19th Century. As I rode back, I was quite lucky to arrive "home" before the rain.

Tonight we are having a special Indian dinner for the 3 couples and myself and of course Mark and Merynn who always eat with us.

7 JUNE (MONDAY): RIDE AROUND

Weather is nice again. Did a whole day ride of about 200 miles plus passing by all the small villages and country roads. Went towards Condom, then Auch, too many places to site them all. Most of the time there is no traffic on those roads making the ride pleasant. Quite evening as I am right now the only guest.

8 JUNE (TUESDAY): VIELHA, SPAIN

Mark asked me to join him on a bike trip to Spain in the Pyrenees to a village called Vielha. It is only about 20 miles away from the border, and the road is in the valley along a river, so no steep climbing for me. The reason to go there is to buy alcohol

and cigarettes cheaper, how much cheaper I do not know, but it is a 200 miles round trip. To me it seems like a good excuse as any to go for a ride. It is always wonderful to follow someone who knows all the roads of the area. We ate lunch in Spain of course and the village looks like an Austrian village. I guess in the mountains houses look somewhat alike. Mark has a noisy Harley, so we attracted some attention, him with the noise, me with my fluo yellow jacket and fluo new helmet. Of course it is always nice to follow someone who is familiar with the area. On one of the road we encounter a farmer who was moving his cows from one field to another one across the road. In the little Spain town where we had lunch a farmer came through the town with a horde of beautiful horses going by the main road. Another quiet evening as the next customers are only expected for this coming week-end.

Price of gas in Spain: 1 liter costs 1.16 Euro

9 JUNE (WEDNESDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Today rainy and cold, did not ride.

10 JUNE (THURSDAY): BMW SMALL SERVICE, TOULOUSE

Still nasty weather but decided to go to the closest dealer to have some more oil put in the bike. Following my best friend the GPS, I somehow arrived at the right location after passing by dozen of roundabouts, a new favorite way to circulate all over Europe but especially in France. The good think about the roundabouts is that you can ride in circle as many times as you want until you figure which street or road to take. The GPS is surprising good at showing where to get off. When you get into a busy roundabouts with many streets it is a little bit like being in a bender.

I asked the dealer, after waiting 2 PM because in France all businesses close their doors from 12 to 2, to check my oil and add what is needed. He was a little bit "annoyed" because he had to enter me in his system. I told him it was not necessary as he would probably never see me again, but ... I got my oil, and rode back by some country roads. Got a little wet, again the GPS took me by some nice roads.

11 JUNE (FRIDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Again rainy and cold. However, I rode to a larger shopping center close to Montaubant where I was able to have nitrogen put in my tires.

12 JUNE (SATURDAY): MONTAUBANT

Rode to Montaubant and walked around the pedestrian streets. As tonight it was the football match between England and USA, there was a get together at Beaumont to eat in a restaurant and watch the game at the same time. I was the minority being surrounded by nothing but British people. As no one won the game, there wasn't much to say.

13 JUNE (SUNDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Nasty weather, did not ride. That evening at the Vieux Chene, two British couples riding a CBR and a Yamaha came to spend the week-end. All I am going to say there were some characters! First from wherever they are coming from, I could not understand a word of what they were saying. Fortunately for me a older French couple (not on bikes) just happened to stop by for the night. So I spent the evening with them.

14 JUNE (MONDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Nasty weather, one British couple went riding anyway, the other went and came back after an half hour. I did not ride. Then when the other couple came back, by 4 PM it looked like the clouds went away and we saw a little bit of sunshine. So Mark decided

we all ride to a place located about an hour from us to a bike fest. I joined them, took the last position and was somewhat, not surprised, but amazed to see them taking off and riding at 90 plus miles an hour on the country roads. You know I do not have the skills to take curves at those speeds, but I do not like when we ride at high speed through the villages. This is what make the population turns against bikers. I decided to go my speed and slow down in the villages, I had my GPS so I was not worry about getting lost. But at one of the few intersections we had to take, the three bikes were waiting for me, so it was nice. By the way, I have never seen a Harley accelerating so fast to a high speed. One we arrived to the location of the bike fest, an awful large scary black cloud showed up above us with lighting and thunder. We never saw the bike fest, we did a U-turn and rode even faster back to the Vieux Chene. As we rode faster than the lighting, we did indeed managed to arrive without getting wet. It was then time to eat and as the wine is included at will with the meal, I can assure you that Mark did not make any benefits on that meal, because I lost count of how many carafe of wine went by. We had to eat inside because it was so cold. We had fun.

15 JUNE (TUESDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Took some time for the British to get ready and go on to their next location. Nasty weather again, rainy and cold.

16 JUNE (WEDNESDAY): VIEUX CHENE

Nasty weather again. You might have heard of all the bad weather in France doing some casualties in some places. The weather prediction remains the same, cold and wet. It does not call for any changes before another week at least. Though the place I am staying is charming, it loses its charm when the weather remains nasty day after day. As the building is the one from an old farm, it retains a lot of humidity in the room, and I start to feel like everything I had was damp. While it is nice to be away from everything, with the bad weather it is also not so nice, because it is impossible to walk anywhere. The TV they had only had a few British stations to be watched in a big cold damp room. It got to the point that I was cold when I go to bed, cold when I get up and cold during the day. I had some warm clothes with me but not much, and I was wearing the same jeans and sweaters everyday.

I then decided to make the painful decision to leave and ride back to Belgium. That evening we were invited by two British couple who live close by, and my last evening was very pleasant.

I am absolutely amazed about the large number of British living in that area on a permanent basis. During my two weeks straight, I spoke more English than I speak when I am staying home. Nothing against the British, but I also kind of wanted to be with French people. All the B&B are owned by British couples. I did not know that.

17 JUNE (THURSDAY): TRIP TO BASTOGNE, BELGIUM

I made up my mind I would attempt to do the trip in one day using the highway. I left at 8 AM, cold but dry. The whole trip was very cold, average of about 57 degree Fahrenheit. I also rode several times under some short cold sprinkle type rain. However, I made it. I rode 1,063 Km which is 660 miles and arrived at Bastogne at 7.30 PM. It was a little bit warmer here and dry. I was welcome by the owners of the place and we drank some wine while I told them about my short escape and what to do next.

18 JUNE (FRIDAY): BASTOGNE

I went back to Paul's place to pick up warmer clothes and a few extra I like to have. We talked about the whole situation as I am not sure what to do. I know I do not care to ride in the rain and the cold day after day. I need someone to drive a pickup and

follow me. When it get nasty, the bike goes on the pickup and me in the pickup. It would also have the advantage to carry a broad range of clothes fit for any weather. Any candidates ?? Yes, indeed this year is supposed to be the worst one ever seen in I do not know how many years, kind of like our Winter in Florida. It is almost July the Summer season and there is no trace of any Summer. In the streets people are dressed with coats and scarves. In the shops, they are nice Summer clothes for this year, but I do not see any wearing them. I bought some too and so far they are staying in the suitcase.

19 JUNE (SATURDAY): BASTOGNE

I spent the day to play catch up on my emails and my diary and think about what to do next. Since my arrival here I have ridden 3,500 miles which by US standards isn't much, but for here it is pretty good.

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

Let's get back to RIDING! Try this month's hyperlink to see some adventures...

CLASSIFIED ADS

Note: If you have bikes, gear or other motorcycle stuff, here's the place to hawk it!

Gear for Sale

No gear for sale this month!

Bikes for Sale

No bikes for sale this month!

South Director's Report

Greetings All!! "How hot is it!?!?!?" Fortunately, we have changed the monthly get-togethers to morning breakfast/brunch rides!! I know the South Brunch ride to Lake Placid was certainly more comfortable on June 12th than if we were still meeting for lunch. The morning departure from the usual meeting place for the Boynton Boys was actually pleasant. We enjoyed a relaxed ride across the Glades and around Lake O. I did allow a bit too much time for our ride to Main St. America, so we arrived a bit early. This was a blessing, as the staff had enough time to group some tables for us, and allowed our eventual group of 12 riders to all sit together. We had six members and six potentials who keep up with the ST Owners site that Bill Royal posts events to as well.

We were all VERY impressed with the new restaurant. It suffered a total-loss fire a while back, and the owners rebuilt the place with some very nice finishes. Fortunately, they managed to keep the prices in check, and have hired a most efficient service team. The order taking, coffee cup filling, and food delivery timing was the best we have had in quite some time. Did I mention how good the food was!?! You will want to put this place on your destination calendar for sure. And the roads around the Lake Placid area are a lot of fun. No matter where you are traveling from, you can find some fun stuff to ride on.

Be sure to check the State website for all the brunch/lunch rides coming up the rest of the year. The Central and South rides for July and August are posted, and the South rides are posted for the remainder of the year. The Central rides will be updated shortly. So I hope to see a bunch of you at the next South ride, July 31, to Fellsmere. We are trying a new location this time. Let's get together and share some STAR stories!!

Lastly, be sure to check out the great article submitted by Bob Shields. This opportunity to sharpen our skills under the expert guidance of Lee Parks Total Control School will be a blessing to all who attend. Please click onto the link and read all about the school, the instructors and their philosophy. Watch some of the video links as well. This training is applicable to all of our riding styles. You don't ever need to "get your knee down" to appreciate the increased skill level that you'll take away from this training. Not a day goes by that somebody tells me how dangerous it is to ride in Florida, and how somebody that knows somebody else had to "lay 'er down" because..... Well, we know better, don't we!! We have several opportunities year round down here to advance our skills and avoid becoming a statistic or somebody's story!! Let's sign up now and be sure to get the significant discount that they are offering us. This could be the beginning of beautiful relationship between you and your motorcycle!!

ATGATT!! Van

Florida Rides in July

July 10, Saturday, 10am-11am – MSTA Florida Central Brunch Ride. Red Wing Restaurant, 12500 State Road 33, Groveland, FL 34736

If you haven't been to the Red Wing for breakfast, you just haven't lived! This is an easy place to get to from any direction and somewhat of a historical landmark to the Groveland locals (all 10 of them). The place has been open since 1940, so they must be doing something right. Lets meet to eat at The Red Wing at 10:00 for brunch. Contact: Bob Shields boju29@msn.com or (863)523-3626

July 31, Saturday, 9am-10am – MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride. Marsh Landing, 44 N. Broadway, Fellsmere, FL, 32948

This is new place for us. Our faithful scout, Jim Park, paid a visit recently and highly recommended it. I know how important riding and eating is to Jim, so this should prove to be a winner!! Contact: Van at 561-386-2594 or busavan@flahsta.org

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

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