

# The Florida HSTA Grapevine

you heard it through the grapevine

Volume 1 Issue 6

## Events in June:

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## Feature Article

### San Juan Escape

by Henry Custer

Henry was a retired HSTA member, but has recently rejoined the club. He has ridden many miles on many kinds of bikes. He has published three books (Sam has read all three and reports they are very interesting) and is currently working on two more, one recounting his 60 years of motorcycle riding. You can learn more and read some of the articles he has written in the past for HSTA at <http://www.henrycuster.com/>. We are fortunate to have his permission to reprint this story. (Ed.)

**I**t had been raining most of the night; very unusual for July in this part of the Rockies. Bob Hanner, George Lair and myself were in Silverton, Colorado for the purpose of riding the 700 miles of trails and jeep roads networking the San Juan Range. We had been following this ritual for several years and this was about the fourth day we had ridden. With the advent of this unusual weather we had decided not to do any serious riding today.



Photo provided by the author.

**New Members:** There are no new members to introduce this month, so.....we all need to keep potential new members in mind when we are out riding or talking with other riders at a dealership or bike shop. It's pretty easy to casually mention the Florida group, the national organization, some of the events and their locations, and maybe even the web sites. Maybe you could even convince them to participate in one of our lunch rides or other FL events. It's very possible that experienced riders would know about roads, routes, etc. that we are not familiar with and new riders would clearly benefit from the collective wisdom and experience of our members.

Now, after breakfast at the Kendal Mountain Cafe, the rains had subsided, allowing the sun to show up over the mountains. By 10 o'clock it was a beautiful, sunny morning with the temperature already rising to about 62 degrees; perfect for comfortable dirt riding. After some discussion we all agreed that it was a bit late in the day to begin any of our normal routes. Usually we would take one of several routes to Ouray, Lake City, Telluride or Rico. Each offered a scenic, sometimes challenging ride over a major mountain pass, some crossing the Continental Divide.

Kendall Peak, rising some 3,000 feet above Silverton's 9,300 feet, has a fairly easy jeep road running about seven miles up the mountain. Winding around the back of the mountain then facing out over the town at over 12,000 feet. "We could make a quick run up Kendall," I suggested. "I believe the girls are planning a cookout this afternoon," Bob said, reminding us of the previously made plans. "No problem," George assured us, "we'll be back at least by noon or so."

Usually this time of the year, there were several Hang Gliders coming off Kendall Peak and landing between our travel trailer and the Animas River. Of course they wouldn't show up until fairly late in the afternoon. The winds and air currents were more agreeable just before sundown.

We were fired up by around 10:30; Bob on his vintage 350cc Bultaco, George on his 175cc Yamaha, and me on a 250cc Yamaha. We left without jackets, in the sure knowledge that it would continue to get warmer and knowing we would be working up a sweat shortly, then return before the evening cooled down again.

Riding in only a sweat shirt it was a little chilly for the first few minutes but by the time we crossed the Animas River and started uphill I was comfortable. It was a wonderfully clear, sunny morning. We made a short stop before rounding the base of the mountain. It would be the last view of Silverton until we rounded the peak. Here we watched the Silverton-Durango narrow gauge steam engine cross the river and pull into downtown where they would disgorge the first of four daily loads of tourists. Further up, we stopped for a few minutes to relieve ourselves and check out the now familiar box car that had been dragged up the mountain some years ago. Now abandoned, we could only speculate as to its previous use. There being no mines in the near vicinity, we assumed that they were unable to get it any further up the ever increasing incline. By now we were gaining a lot of altitude with each of the continuous switchbacks in the worsening jeep road.

The road officially ended at the 'Ice Cave' which was an old mine tunnel opening right onto the road. The name was derived from the fact that it didn't get much sun and was usually full of snow and ice all summer. From there on up the road was passable but tricky. ([See San Juan on Page 7.](#))

### *Heard through the Grapevine:*

- John Cali will be flying to Isle of Man at the end of May to watch the TT races there. He is also taking a marshalling class!
- Fanny Heine has recently returned from a 102 day around-the-world cruise and has a lot of stories plus 4-5 thousand (yes, thousand!) photos to share.
- Phil Ridgdill would like to give one of our members a gift certificate for European travel. For details, see [Ramblin'Around](#), Page 5.
- There is a sad note to report regarding the loss of HSTA-MI member Dale Wahlstrom in a motorcycle accident.
- Our sympathy goes out to the family of long-time member Sonny Gager, of St. Augustine, who passed away recently after a long illness.
  
- *What have you heard or what did you do that others might like to know about? Tell us so we can include it here.*

## Florida News from the Directors

### South News

**T**he south lunch ride to the Crossroads Restaurant in Okeechobee on May 10th drew a smaller than usual turnout. We had a total of 11 attendees. The weather was good though maybe a tad too warm for some. Jim Park brought along his usual group - including his wife Dianne on her Yamaha FZ-1 this time. P. Van Steelant, John French, Scott Bills and Buck Jones rounded out the West Palm Beach Crew. Mitch Louis rode up from Hollywood solo on his ST1300. The Sun City group was smaller than normal. Fanny Haine had battery trouble on her '06 ST1300 so ended up riding pillion on Bill Royal's steed. Jim Cavanaugh started out on his '06 ST1300, but after several miles dropped out due to surging issues which he later attributed to a bad tank of fuel. That left Just Bill's ST1100 and Sid Spann on his Goldwing trike to round out the Sun City group. Eve Blazsur came along later after her gym routine to join up at the lunch destination. Everyone enjoyed a good meal with lots of talk about the recent STAR event (since most of the attendees had been there). And then, before we knew it we were heading back out for various destinations but one common denominator - to put on some more miles.

With the heat of summer now upon us, as well as the ever increasing likelihood of severe afternoon weather, the south rides will be scheduled earlier in the day so pay attention to the scheduled times as they may vary. Also, with the cost of gas skyrocketing, it might mean that some will have to cut back their riding so I encourage you all to try to sponsor smaller local rides to give everyone an opportunity to meet up on the road somewhere.

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### North News

#### Lunch Topics:

We had 2 north area lunch rides this past month. The Saturday one, organized by Bob Vanderwaag, was to a new restaurant, BackWoods Smokehouse where nine members enjoyed lunch on the lanai - see Bob's write up and photos. My mid week lunch ride to the Horse and Hounds in Ocala had 7 of us and was most enjoyable. Nice riding through horse country from Alachua. The food was so tasty some of us couldn't wait for the obligatory photo to start eating! For more photos, [click here](#).

Lee and I will be out riding for most of the month of June so I asked for volunteers to do a north area lunch ride. I got three responses. Thanks guys! Bill Robinson is organizing the ride to 3 Bananas, a perennial favorite, on 21 June. Al Bogard will run one on July 19 to Lake Harris Hideaway, and I hope to make that ride. The third event will be later in the year.



#### GPS Thoughts:

I think it is almost time for a new GPS. My Street Pilot 3 is 5 years old and has served me well. Looking at the various options and talking to others I am becoming quite interested in Tom Tom. It seems to me that Garmin is focusing more on bells and whistles that I find of no use, like the ability to look at

pictures with my GPS - give me a break. Tom Tom on the other hand is introducing features I have often wanted such as: "TomTom Map Share™ technology that enables users to make updates and corrections to their own maps instantly and to benefit from improvements made by other users, completely free of charge." This feature is now available in the just released 'improved' Rider 2 motorcycle unit. At the Tom Tom Home site you can report errors to maps and download map corrections others have submitted. If you are interested in learning more you can check it all out at their web site: <http://www.tomtom.com/news/index.php?Lid=4> This link will get you to the May 2006 press announcement. You can then click on "products" to get to the Rider 2.

Another TomTom innovation available in the top of the line automotive units is called IQ routing: "The new TomTom IQ Routes™ technology is based on actual average speeds on roads, rather than the sign-posted speed limits. This intelligent routing technology is based on anonymous historical speed profiles of over 6.2 billion miles of driven roads, gathered over the years by millions of TomTom users. It takes into account all the factors that may influence the time it takes drivers to get to their destination, including traffic lights, rotaries, steep slopes and speed bumps."

These features sound very useful and I would like to hear from anyone who has used a Tom Tom GPS to learn their impressions. How good is the routing? Are the maps accurate? Are dirt roads identified? How well does the Internet updating work? Can you route on your PC? Etc.. This could make a great article for Grapevine.

### **Lunch Ride to the Backwoods Smokehouse near Interlachen – by Bob VanderWaag**

On Saturday May 10, nine HSTA members met for lunch at the Backwoods Smokehouse. This was the first time we've met here for lunch and we all agreed we had a delicious lunch. We sat in the screened porch eating peanuts and throwing the shells on the floor, a nice breeze blowing, this set the stage for a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. Money was about to change hands regarding "Bucks Luck" (he always gets served last - and well after everyone has started to eat). His luck continued - however he did finally get served. Buck also earned the notoriety of "short distance rider" being only 4.5 miles from the restaurant. The longest distance rider was Randy Peterson clocking 115 miles.



To see more pictures [click here](#)  
Photo by Rosemary VanderWaag

The usual topics were discussed. However the one that really peaked our interest was the trip Buck was planning on taking soon, which encompassed loading his bike and taking the auto-train to Virginia and taking a tour down the Blue Ridge Pkwy beginning from Front Royal. This trip would also include staying at the few hard to reserve hotels located directly on the Blue Ridge Pkwy.

It was a very nice unhurried lunch; if there had been a pool, we may have stayed longer.

## Ramblin' Around by Phil Ridgdill

Gentlemen & Ladies < HSTA MEMBERS >

I have a \$250.00 discount certificate for a Beach Motorcycle Tour that was given to me by a good friend ( HSTA Member ). Carmel & I already have two short trips in the US , one overseas trip in Aug and Indy in Sept, plus a Europe Tour next year. I will give this \$250.00 discount certificate to any HSTA member at no expense to the member. If you're planning a trip with Beach Motorcycle Tours, it'll save you a few bucks. Give me a call or send me an email and I'll post it to you. Phil Ridgdill / 904 287 9654 / 904 699 2447 / [rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net)

## How Well Do You Know Your Fellow Florida HSTA Members?

**T**his lady rider, who often rides with her Mickey Mouse helmet, has been with HSTA since 2006. To say she's dedicated to the sport is an understatement. Currently she owns a VFR, a GB500 and her most recent acquisition, a custom CBR600RR. Last year she rode her VFR from central Florida to Monterey, CA and back, covering 7000 miles in 18 days. This summer, she and her husband will be at the Superbike races at Miller Raceway in Utah, then headed up to the Honda Hoot, only to travel 3 weeks after that to Laguna Seca races, working or volunteering for Honda at all three events. You know she's serious when you see the tattoo of the girl sport bike rider on her ankle! Her name appears in the [Member Bulletin Board](#).



## More Photos From STAR08

**V**ery busy and active HSTA-FL member Jim Park has put together a photo album from STAR08, and the somewhat indirect trip home, and you can take a look at it (allow some time to do this!) at his website which is [located here](#).

## Florida Rides This Month

Saturday, June 14, 11:30a.m. - South Lunch Ride to Sandy's Circle Cafe, 213 Circle Park Drive, Sebring, FL (813) 382-1942 This is a new destination for us thanks to Jim Park. It's a quaint old Florida cafe located on a circle (roundabout) in old downtown Sebring. They have plenty of seating for us. For directions/map see the [events schedule webpage](#) .

Contact: Bill Royal - [ridefl@flahsta.org](mailto:ridefl@flahsta.org)

Saturday, June 21, 11:30a.m. - North Lunch Ride to 3 Bananas, 11 S Lake St, Crescent City, FL 32112, (386) 698-2861 <http://www.3bananas.com/> A Google map is [here](#). Bill Robinson is organizing this lunch. Please let him know if you plan to attend at [motowarrior@comcast.net](mailto:motowarrior@comcast.net).

## Upcoming Events

July 19, 11:30a.m. - North Lunch Ride to Lake Harris Hideaway, 352-343-3585, 11912 Lane Park Rd , Tavares Fl 32778. A Google map is [here](#). Al Bogard is organizing this lunch, please let him know if you plan to attend at [cruznattitude@aol.com](mailto:cruznattitude@aol.com) or 813-362-6939.

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

HSTA web site dedicated to "Just For Fun Events": <http://tinyurl.com/3dnxtf>

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## MEMBER BULLETIN BOARD

The Florida HSTA member is Becky DeShazo-Westly of Valrico, FL

Shown at the Laguna Seca 2007 Races



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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.

(San Juan from Page 2) We went all the way around to the face, sat and watched the town below for a while, then started back. At the summit, on the backside from town, there was an opening cut out through the rock face looking down into another valley. It looked like someone had started to build a road through and down the back side. Now, there was only a pile of large rocks descending about a hundred feet to the snow. There was always some snow fields down that way that lasted all summer. "Hey, that looks like an old road down there," Bob exclaimed.

Sure enough, just below the last of three snow fields, you could see the faint tracings of roadway cut across the face of the loose rocky mountainside. It continued as far as we could see, rounding the mountain about a half mile away. For three seasoned trail riders with good bikes, this was nothing less than a challenge!

"Well, what do you think," George asked of nobody in particular.

"Let's go!" I exclaimed. (I'm probably not the brightest when it comes to making rash decisions.)

"I don't know," Bob reasoned. "It could get pretty rough, and I don't see us coming back uphill over that snow pack."

"Yeah, but we won't be coming back up," I argued. "It stands to reason that road has to go on down to the main road. It had to be built from the bottom up, and I know there is an old mine and mill just east of town. I've been up past it on the unused wagon road for a mile or so. This road has to be the same one."

"Sure, I remember that road," George grinned, "looks pretty good for the first mile or so coming uphill."

George seemed ready to go, but Bob was showing better judgment. I just didn't like the indecision.

"So, let's give it a try." And with that I cranked up.

The others followed.

It was a little rougher than I had expected just getting down the first few yards, but we managed to bulldog the bikes down onto terrain we could actually ride. The snow proved to be solid enough to slide the bikes down; too steep to ride but not steep enough to get out of control. After the first snow field, we rode a short distance and repeated the process. The third one was easy, we were able to actually ride over it.

I was beginning to feel very good about finding this new piece of territory. It was going to be great!

We must have traveled about three hundred yards on the old road as it curved around the side of the mountain. The surface was small rocks, actually graded out through an old slide. We were still a ways above timber line when we rounded the curve. By now we were out of sight of our drop off point at the peak, and well beyond the point of no return due to the snow fields.

We all realized our worst fear at about the same time. As we rounded the bend the whole mountain side had slid down, wiping the road out completely, leaving nothing but loose small rock as far as we could see around the mountain. We rode to the beginning of the slide area before stopping. We all turned off the key and sat in silence for a minute or two, surveying the slide. It was about two hundred feet down to what appeared to be a level area of larger rocks. The two or three acre rock field ended at timberline. I wasn't saying a word, already feeling guilty about instigating this rash course of action. I knew, as well as they; one should never ride into an area where you can't be sure of the return route.

"Well, Henry, what now?" It sounded to me like I was being accused of something.

"Yeah, stupidity," I thought to myself.

Aloud I replied, "We need to think about this." It was all I could think of at the moment.

We spent the next fifteen minutes discussing the possibilities. The options were none too optimistic.

We could walk back up and out, leaving the bikes. But how could we retrieve them? We could slide down the shale for about two hundred feet but it looked very steep. How fast would we be sliding by the time we hit the level area? How much damage would it do to us and the bikes, would we be able to ride them out even if we got past the rock field below?

Like the three musketeers, Bob, George and I had been through some very rough places together in the past few years, but this was the granddaddy of them all. My previous bravado had left me with just the cold chill of fear niggling my backbone. That slide looked altogether too steep to me. I could just see me hitting the rocks below at a high rate of speed. Bob was more analytical. Studying the slope and distance and the consistency of the loose shale, he hadn't yet made a decision.

While we were still discussing the slide issue, Bob and I heard a rumbling noise behind us. Looking around we watched in amazement as George, always a man of action, drop his Yamaha on it's side, shove it off the side and start sliding down the shale towards the rock field below. Digging one handlebar into the ground for braking power he only slid about twenty feet before stopping completely. He just looked back at us on the edge, laughing as he shoved off again, working the bike downhill. Evidently it was not as steep or loose as expected.

"OK, let's go," I heard Bob call out as he followed George's lead.

My fear alleviated somewhat, I followed suite. The slide turned out to be the least of our worries. We arrived on the fairly level rock field without any damage.

By now the temperature was beginning the daily drop which we knew would reach near freezing before morning. We didn't notice the cold much yet as we worked the bikes over the huge rocks towards the timber below. There was no possibility of riding yet. We literally dragged the bikes over one big rock after another for the next couple of hours. Without water, the exercise and dry climate was taking it's toll. We took many short rest breaks, sometimes helping each other over the more difficult places. By the time we reached the edge of the rock field it was getting dark and cold, and we were getting very dehydrated and exhausted.

As we rested in the upper growth of stunted pines our thoughts were pretty much in sync.

I tried to sound encouraging. "That road has to be off to the right, and can't be too far away."

But as we could all see, the mountain side sloped off to the left, which would make it difficult to maintain the right direction which would be somewhat uphill. This became painfully apparent as we proceeded into the forest below. The deadfall of decades of fallen trees were an unbelievable hindrance. Some were large pines and we had to drag the 285 pound bikes over each tree trunk. So long as we were going downhill this wasn't quite so bad. The problem was, it was working us inexorably toward the canyon on our left, not toward the old roadway we hoped to find to our right. We had to keep to the right at every obstacle if we were to find the road, and it was always slightly uphill. Even in darkness, we knew we were nearing the canyon as we could hear the water below.

Now, in total darkness, the cold, hunger and especially thirst made the swarm of mosquitoes even more exasperating. Even when we occasionally came to an open area where the timber had been wiped out by snow slides, it was covered with weeds and underbrush as high as our heads. At one point, just before dark thank goodness, I came upon an old mine shaft, only partly covered with tin and rotting lumber. The rest of the ordeal was overshadowed with the fear of stumbling into one of these bottomless pits in the darkness.

I had lights on my bike, the others had none. Of course I couldn't afford to use up the small battery, so I never used the lights except when I could run the motor.

It felt like it must be midnight or later when we got the good news. We had stayed as close together as possible throughout the night.

"I think this is it!" Bob shouted.

George and I made our way to the sound of his voice. I cranked up my engine and lit up the most beautiful sight of the year. The faint signs of an 80 year old trail, grown over and rugged. I led with the lights and the others followed, in less than an hour or so we were on a better road, able to make better time down the mountain. When we saw the town lights I stopped and we all took a much needed break.

There wasn't enough energy for much conversation. After a few minutes, I cranked up and led the way down to the blacktop, then another mile into town. I think we were all surprised to find the Cafe still open. They normally closed around ten o'clock, and I knew it must be well after midnight.

We parked and went in, teeth chattering, clothing torn and dirty and more than a few scratches and bruises. I looked at the clock and was shocked to find that it was not quite 10 o'clock yet! We stood before the open fireplace as Betty cooked up some hamburgers. We drank water like it was going out of style as she told us a story of her own.

It seems that just a month ago, a local man had come down the same side of the mountain. He was on horseback. He straggled in on foot. The horse was left with a broken neck somewhere on the slide.

It was a great adventure, re-told many times in the past twenty years. I'm glad we did it. It helped create a bond that can only be gained through experience with already good friends.

"But we ain't gonna' do it again!" (I Hope)

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

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

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### BIKES FOR SALE

**2003 Honda VFR800VTEC Interceptor**, 7500 mi., factory hard bags, Power Commander, Scorpion cans, sport touring windscreen, Heli Bars, Throttlemeister cruise, new Dunlop D220's, Silver. Sport Touring Ready! \$7500.00 Contact: Richard at 954.675.4728 or <mailto:rpk2fla1@yahoo.com> (5)

### BIKES WANTED

Wanted Small off road bike 80cc-125cc 4stroke, 3-5 yrs old, Honda, Yamaha or Suzuki. Contact Phil Ridgill 904 287 9654 Email: [rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net) (5)

### GEAR FOR SALE

**4 Back Support Belts**, each of them 8" tall, support full range of lumbo-sacral spine.

1. Gericke Klimax, new, size 34-38, \$20.00
2. Two IXS, new, size 30-34, \$20.00 each
3. Hein Gericke All Season, used, size 30-34, \$10.00

**Yellow open face VEGA helmet** with one clear shield and one visor, size small, almost new, \$30.00 Contact Fanny at 813-634-2223 or email [happysunshine@verizon.net](mailto:happysunshine@verizon.net) (6)

### MORE GEAR FOR SALE

#### **Other - VarioBar Handlebar System:**

[Www.gillestooling.com](http://www.gillestooling.com), cut from high strength Aircraft Aluminium AL 7075. Can be used as clip ons, Multi Adjustable, this kit comes with a 3 inch riser ext multi Adjustable, fits BlkBird/VFR or any bike with same diameter fork tube. Phil Ridgill 904 287 9654 Email [rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net) (5)

**Tour Master Cortech GX Air lady's black mesh summer riding pants.** Women's size small, tag says small 8-10 but this is a very small 8-10, inseam short 27". Removable padding, washable, sold as is, great condition. \$50.00 & you pay shipping. Paid \$169.00 new. Contact Eve by email: [eblueday@mindspring.com](mailto:eblueday@mindspring.com) (5)

**New Bridgestone BT020** 120/70 ZR18, ST 1300 front tyre, never mounted on rim, CHEAP \$100.00 you pay the shipping. Phil Ridgill 904 287 9654, 904 699 2447 [rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net) (5)

**Aerostich 2 pc Roadcrafter - Great Condition Suit** that wifey no longer uses. 38 jacket 36L pants. Grey with black ballistics. Used less than 10 times, never wet. A steal at \$400.00 (new ones go for \$800+!!). Will ship to 48 states. Check out sizing, colors and other details at [www.riderwarehouse.com](http://www.riderwarehouse.com). Contact Eric Larsen at [enlarsen@bellsouth.net](mailto:enlarsen@bellsouth.net) (5)

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