



FLORIDA GATOR TALE

Honda Sport Touring Association

March 2007



My Motorcycle Trip to California

Submitted By: Kurt Gratzol

This is the story of my 4700 mile first time over the road adventure. The idea of using a map of the entire United States as a visual aid is particularly attractive. It's also an equipment evaluation of all the stuff I put on my ST1300.

All the "how to take a long trip" articles say not to use the trip to test new equipment. So I put lots of new stuff on the bike just prior to the trip. I put Michelin Road Pilots on the bike the week prior, and had the 12,000-mile check up done on the bike. Cycle Sports in Clearwater did the work, and overfilled the oil, and forgot to exchange one of the valve stems. I don't know if they did all the torque checks, alignments, etc, but it's a Honda, so the bike worked flawlessly during the whole trip.

I got a Russell Day Long saddle, which is wonderful. Prior to the Russell my stock seat, with a beaded cover worked about 300 miles before my butt started to burn. The Russell really rocked, but it is taller than stock. How do I know? I dropped the bike 3 times the first 2 days; before my buddy told me I was falling down because my legs were too short. Once I started jamming my groin against the gas tank every time I wanted to stop the bike stopped falling over, but it never felt safe on anything but a flat asphalt surface.

Our plan was to go from Tampa to Deals Gap, then over the Blue Ridge Parkway to Aberdeen Maryland. From Aberdeen to Ironton MO, to Dana Point CA via Oklahoma, and the Mohave Desert.

The first day got us within striking distance to Deals Gap, but it got cold and started to rain, with fog so we quit after 600 interstate miles, and within 30 miles of Deals Gap. I dropped the bike twice the first day. Both times in parking lots, both times at the end of the day when I was tired.

The second day took us to Deals Gap and the Dragon. The Deals Gap motorcycle motel and café was a little intimidating. The parking lot was full of Crotch Rockets and guys dressed head to toe in leather. My buddy and I drank coffee and waited for them to get a head start. The Dragon was a lot of fun. It was technical riding that made me appreciate the rides I'd done with HSTA. Of course I dropped the bike coming out of the gravel turn around just before the bridge (the end of the "dragon"). It was the most serious dropping of the trip, since it broke the rear-view mirror and scratched the saddlebag. Fortunately my buddy carries 100 mph duct tape.

Back to the Deals Gap café, for coffee, souvenirs, and a photo op in front of the Tree of Shame, where I attached a piece of my Tupperware. Then on to the Blue Ridge Parkway. I actually preferred the Blue Ridge to the Dragon. It was technical enough for my level of skill and there was very little traffic. We rode a few hundred miles on it, until rain drove us off to a small motel and dinner.

(Continued on page 4)

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
Orvil Roesberry	Hudson	'97 Magna	Eve Blazsur
Steve Marcum	Melbourne Beach	'07 GoldWing	Bill Royal

This 2 time award winning newsletter is produced and edited by:

Bill Royal
HSTA Florida Newsletter
Editor

Web Addresses:

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

The Florida Chapter of the HSTA has two State Directors. They Are:

North Geography: Sam Ulbing
545 Turkey Creek, Alachua, FL
32615 352-262-6221
n4uau@cox.net

South Geography: Bill Royal
1521 New Bedford Dr
Sun City Center, FL 33573
(813) 633-8155
RideFL@flahsta.org

Inside this issue:

MC to California	1, 3, 4, 5
Free Ads	2
Florida News	2, 3
Ramblin' Around	3
Rides/Events	5, 6



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

Bikes

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
Call Richard at 954.675.4728 or rpk2fla1@yahoo.com

Gear

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: ebloeday@mindspring.com or phone: 813-633-8155. I can send a photo or bring them to a lunch ride.

Shoel RF -- 800 full face white helmet, new, still in box with factory packaging. Size XXS, perfect for a young passenger. Price: \$125
Contact: diannelpark@yahoo.com or 561-793-7907.

KBC Helmet - FFR Flip Top silver and black. This helmet is brand

new.. I wore it twice and realized that I do not have a KBC head.
\$175.00

Givi T80 Tank Bag - Magnetic. The bag has a map case and a clear rain cover \$50.00

Kapa top trunk for the Suzuki VStrom - Silver color matched for the '02 Vstrom - \$100.00

Fenda Extenda for Vstrom - Brand new - never installed - \$20.00

Stock regular and Tall windshields for a DL1000 VStrom - \$50.00 and \$75.00 respectively

Larry Fitch at fitchle@hotmail.com or 321-266-8757

Other

Corbin drivers seat for ST1300 - \$150.00

Honda Pan European top box for '05 candy red ST1300 - \$300.00

Saddle bag and top liners by Bestem \$35.00 excellent condition.

ST1300 shop manual - \$25.00 All above in excellent condition
Les Herman - 352-669-8995 or e-mail ap2329@aol.com

Wells Cargo Cycle Wagon enclosed motorcycle trailer - Lightly used, probably less than 5,000 miles. 12.5' X 7' box, probably 16 to 17 feet overall. Tandem axle, electric brakes, aero nose cone, diamond plate aluminum fenders, black with chrome bottom trim, rear ramp door with spring assist, paneled inside with interior lights, wheel chocks and multiple floor and side tie down points, side door on front right side. This trailer cost over \$6,000 new, current models are about \$7,000. Buy mine for \$4,500. Will deliver up to 250 miles for cost of gas. I can E-mail photos upon request. Contact Jan Berryman, Tallahassee, Florida (850) 893-2253 or E-mail berryman15@comcast.net.

Florida News

Submitted By: Bill Royal & Sam Ulbing

North News:

Despite the quite cold weather we had a good turnout for the February lunch ride to Floyd's. Sixteen riders braved the 30 degree morning temperatures to make the ride. Those of us with heated gear had it running but at least one tough member, Orvil Roesberry, rode with Bill's group from Sun City on a Magna and no heated anything. Also notable for riding 203 miles one way was Larry Fitch on his ST1300 using his new Tom Tom GPS to guide him.

North Lunch Rides: Because March is Bike Week there are going to be two north lunch rides. Phil Ridgdill is organizing the 'Official Bike Week Lunch Ride' on Thursday 8 March. This lunch provides a good opportunity to meet out of state members. Scott Wingerter has organized one for the following Saturday called the Get Away From the Maddening Crowd lunch ride because it is located in Bell a small town well away from Daytona Beach. There are some nice country roads around Bell and you will not have to compete with half a million Harleys!

If *you* know a nice place to eat and ride to, let me or Bill know so we can plan a ride there.

South News:

The South Lunch ride turned out to be quite an adventure, even before it started. I had originally planned to take us to Flora & Ella's in LaBelle - a place we'd been to before a number of times - but, when I called 2 weeks before to let them know, I found out that particular day fell into "Swamp Cabbage Weekend" in Labelle and the street the restaurant was on would be closed for a parade! So, thanks to a recent suggestion from Paulie in Miami, I re-directed this ride to Stan's Idle Hour in Goodland. This was a longer ride but still in the southern part of the state where I was looking to go. We did have to take some new (to us) roads, one of which ended up being far more heavily trafficked than I would have cared for, but oh well, we got there and it was a good ride. There were a lot of emergency vehicles too for some reason. At one point we had ambulances passing us from both directions! The place turned out to be quite a "jewel" - with ample seating, and excellent food and service. In fact, seeing that that particular day was also Eve Blazsur's birthday, I had the place bring us a birthday cake and we all got to wish Eve a Happy Birthday and share in the calories! The turnout was a little low considering the great weather but fun was had by all and we put on plenty of miles. The Tampa group was at



Ramblin' Around

Submitted By: Phil Ridgdill

RESPECT. I know a lot of our members subscribe to RIDER magazine and I'm sure you've read Clement Salvadori comments on the respect of motorcyclists, this is one we should all take a moment to think about. As a matter of fact I think Brick mentioned this article in the last STARReview.

I would imagine every area is a bit different, small town/big city, motorways, back roads, wherever, with regards to the local motorcyclists. One thing we do share in common, we are definitely in the minority. I live in NE FL, (actually Jacksonville is the largest city in the US, square mile area. I'll probably be called out on that one, time does change things but it may still be) Being as large it's spread all over the place with pockets of high density traffic, Interstates-10-95-295-9A, I do my best to stay off of these motorways but occasionally I use them. To put it quite bluntly, it's a Bloody mess and as motorcyclists you're subject to all kinds of disrespect. I could go on and describe the incidents that have happened to me but I'm sure its happened to us all. I don't know the solution to this, maybe Clement is correct. *? million of us with one voice, we may get some attention from the politicians. Is the AMA the answer, What do you guys think??? I'd like to hear from you, let's get an opinion from you members here in Florida. Let me know what you think, rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net.

While we are on the subject of " What do you HSTA Members think ", here's one for you, and I'd like to hear your thoughts on this also. LANE Splitting. Personally I like it. When you ride where it's legal, it's very nice. Of course, it's not going to be safe if the public does-

n't accept it and its not legal. I realize there will be all kinds of reasons why this is not acceptable, Driver skills, Motorcycles are very difficult to see, (complete BS), Me first syndrome, I could go on with a multitude of reasons that the driving public would put against lane splitting. However, I think most important to them, would be the fact that the motorcyclists got to go in front of them. The Me first syndrome is alive and well. Carmel and I were having an evening meal with friends, non motorcycling friends and the subject of motorcycles came up. Being curious I thought bringing up the subject of lane splitting would be interesting. We got an immediate reaction, "Totally unsafe, a lot of what ifs, and this one came out, " if one did it to me I would just open the door and knock him off" . Unfortunately a lot of people would probably have the same attitude. It would certainly be difficult to get the public to accept. I would suggest that if a law were to be passed approving lane splitting, the first 6 months lane splitting should only be allowed by Police Motorcycle Officers. Maybe, just maybe, the general public (drivers) would be a bit more acceptable after that. Having said all of this, I doubt seriously that we will ever see it here in FL.

Daytona Bike Week will be here next Month, HSTA Lunch 12:00 noon Thursday March 8th, Blackwater Inn, Astor Park FL, see you there.

Ride Safe & Smart
Phil Ridgdill

Florida News

Continued...

(Continued from page 2)

205 with several of the west central coast folks at 250+ Orvil Roesberry took LD kudos at 285 one way miles!

Lots of rides coming up - The Daytona Lunch Ride, The North & South Lunch Rides and the New Years Day "make-up" ride all in the next 4 weeks!. Beyond that don't forget the Spring Fling, and the Helen - North Georgia Classic. - ALL great rides and within easy striking distance. If you have thought about making any of these rides but just aren't sure, give me a call and I'll help you make it happen!

Also, with STAR07 in Asheville, NC this year, we have an opportunity to seriously contend for the most members from a state attending. Not that we should really need the excuse as a ride to STAR will put you in some of the best riding roads the USA has to offer. Whether you ONLY ride in groups or prefer to go it alone, there's something for everyone at a STAR. If you haven't made one yet, don't let this opportunity pass you by! I guarantee it'll be one of the cheapest, yet best vacations you'll ever take. And if you're re-tired - well then you just have NO EXCUSE not to come!

I look forward to seeing you all on a ride some time in the coming months. Remember this club is only what you make of it. So c'mon out and play! You'll be glad you did.

Ride Safe, Ride Smart, Ride HOME!

Sam & Bill

My Motorcycle Trip to California

Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

The third day was another interstate day, which included Baltimore freeways during rush hour, construction, and rain. It also gave me an opportunity to squabble with my road buddy who comes from California, where they split lanes. Great! Rain, rush hour, and a disappearing buddy. Did I mention the steel plates in the road construction?

The next day took us on a tour of Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and joy of joys, through Baltimore's labyrinth with no rush hour or rain. Off on the Baltimore Washington Expressway where I was the lead bike, I glanced into the mirror to see a LEO coming up on me at an outrageous speed. My friend later reported the sick feeling you get when you see LEO coming fast, thinking, I'm getting a ticket for sure, then when he saw the Officer pass, he sighed a relief, knowing I was to get the ticket. As circumstance would have it, he passed me too. There must have been great excitement ahead of us. I deserved a little something.

In the afternoon, at a gas stop where another motor head was gassing, a guy with local knowledge tipped us to an alternate route, and we were off to Maryland County Road 9. It was a wonderful road. Plenty of twisties, very little traffic, excellent views, and Danger. Which I am told is the nurturance of the long distance rider. I was going around a sweeping left hand turn with a car stopped, prior to making a left hand turn in front of me. No, he didn't pull out, but the car behind him was going fast enough not to be able to stop. Instead of passing on the left to kill me, or eight-balling the left turning car in front, he passed on the right, taking the shoulder and ditch. Big excitement. This was the best day so far, as it was the first day without rain, and the county roads were superb. The day ended in a small town's strip mall Appalachian Mexican restaurant's happy hour, where they speak Appalachian as a first language, and serve Mexican chicken wings. Strangely the food was good, and as luck would have it, we witnessed a young lady's 21st birthday party. The party degenerated quickly to drunken cell phone pictures taken up skirts, and down blouses. Loud, staggering, fun.

The next day took us mostly over the Kentucky Blue Grass Parkway, as we needed to make time to arrive in Ironton MO in time to meet two of our friends. We used the next two days off the bikes, and into a SUV to go ridge riding on gravel roads, into and out of foot trails full of poison ivy and chiggers and cliff edges and views.

The four of us then traveled on gray highways, (US routes are blue, county roads were gray on our maps). We were on a ST 1100, ST1300, Ford SUV, and Honda Sports car through southern Missouri and northern Arkansas's Ozark mountains and into Oklahoma. All on very, very back roads of the type that had occasional farm pickups but no traffic to speak of. Surprisingly the bikes and the sports car kept together very well.

In Oklahoma we split from our friend and continued by bike.

Oklahoma, Great Plains, Great winds, Great distances. You know you are in for it when you see windmills all over the horizon. No one told me.



Offering to the MC Gods Made

I had put a clearview medium windshield on the bike to cut down on wind noise. It was a substantial improvement over the stock windshield, but it was 1 inch taller and 2 inches wider than stock. Next time I'll get the small version. It's the same size as stock, but with the airfoil at the top edge to take the wind over your head. I understand that the smaller the windshield, the easier cross winds are to navigate. The ones we had were no fun at all. By 2 PM the cross wind had picked up enough that I was down to 45 miles per hour, and what felt like a 45 degree lean. I was then passed by a semi truck and pushed sideways 6 inches. It felt like 6 feet; and I was done for the day. It was the first time on the trip I was too scared to continue. Off the road at the next exit, which happened to be an Indian Casino. Since it was on a reservation it was a DRY Indian Casino. How can you gamble and not drink?

To beat the cross winds we started very early the next day, and we drove very fast. It turns out my bike is stable at speeds too high to put in writing.

I know this, because we spent several hours at "stable" speeds. This was the high mileage day that also was the widest temperature swing day. We started the day at 61 degrees F, dropped to 45 degrees in a mountain pass, then up to 105 degrees as we worked our way to the Road Kill Café, then down Route 66 down to 29 Palms CA. Flying J truck stops are the best. In the RV tank flush area they have potable water hoses, just perfect for hosing down to drive in the 105-degree heat. We also stopped at Roy's Motel and Café. It's still under new ownership, still not open, and new Roy is still sitting on his barkalounger, thinking of things to come.

Our last road day included more windmills, the 10 (as freeways are noted, the 10, the 5, etc), and the ORTEGA Highway. It's the Dragon, but instead of riding off the road to certain death among the trees, on the Ortega you ride off the road to certain death among the boulders.

Few of the gee jaws I put on the bike turned out to be useful. I bought an Autocom so I could use the cell phone, GPS, and iPod. It was marginal at best. I lost the cell phone the third day. When I dumped the bike on the Dragon I must have damaged the Ram Mount holding the cell phone, the next day it got bumped off at a gas station. The iPod has a volume limit so kids won't blow out their ears. At speed I couldn't get it loud enough to enjoy, and as it turns out the ride is the thing. Even on the interstate, the ride takes over, and listening to music seemed superfluous. The GPS showed some value. With the resolution turned all the way up you could glance down and see the general direction of the twisties

(Continued on page 5)



My Motorcycle Trip to California

Continued...

(Continued from page 4)

ahead. It's not accurate enough to believe, but nice for a general idea. There is also a "find a gas station", "find a motel", feature that was useful, as well as an accurate speedometer and compass.

It turns out I'm a LDR. Who would have thought it.

The most useful thing was the Russell seat. I'm a believer; even though it raised my butt just high enough I couldn't reach the ground comfortably, I rode comfortably all day long. Next most useful was the Clearview windscreen. The Michelin Road Pilots were loud. I'm not skilled enough to say if they have better adhesion than the Metzlers I had on the bike before the trip. The electronics weren't necessary, but I'll keep the GPS because it's cool. The real deal foul weather gear, made by West Marine, from my sailor days, worked flawlessly, although took a long time to put on. My friend is a true LDR, and he talked about gear having a "F%#k with it factor". As the trip wore on, my foul weather gear, and my duffle bag, which was strapped onto the pillion seat, both had high, negative, FWIFs. Before my next trip I'll get a real seat bag with quick release buckles. I'll also get a heated vest, and fix my heated grips.

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 Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride - Thurs. Mar 8th - Blackwater Inn, Astor Park FL.** Lunch at 1200 noon. Blackwater Inn is located on US 40 about 35-40 minutes ride west of Ormond Beach. We run this ride so that out of state HSTA visitors to Bike Week can get an opportunity to hook up with our local membership and maybe even get in a nice ride along the way. Reasonable prices, Salad Bar or Menu available. If you need further information contact: Phil Ridgill - 904-287-9654 or rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net

♦ **HSTA Florida North Lunch Ride - Mar. 10th - Akins BBQ, Bell, FL.** Lunch at 11:45 AM. Located on US 129 in the center of town. Approximate GPS N29 45.254 W82 51.719. Please be sure to let Scott or Sam know if you are coming to that lunch. Contact: Sam Ulbing n4uau@cox.net or 352-262-6221 or Contact: Scott Wingerter vmax97@peoplepc.com or (352) 447-2662

Future North Rides/Dates:

Apr 14th - Outback Crab Shack, Green Cove Springs, FL (Buck DeShazo)

May 12th - Salt Creek Seafood, Suwannee, FL (Sam Ulbing)

June 09 - JT's Seafood Shak, Flagler Beach (Bob Fischer)

♦ **HSTA Florida South Lunch Ride - Mar 24th - Crossroads Cafe, Okeechobee, FL.** Lunch at 11:45 AM. This is a new place for us that Jim Park has recommended. Location: 5050 NE 128th Ave, Okeechobee. Ph: 863-763-8333. GPS: N27 17.212 W80 41.822
Contact: Bill Royal RideFL@flahsta.org or 813-633-8155

Future South Rides/Dates: Apr 7th - TBD May 19th - TBD

♦ **HSTA Florida Bonus South Lunch Ride - Apr. 1st - Peck's Old Port Cove, Ozello, FL.** Lunch at 11:45 AM. This is a "make-up" for the weather cancelled New Year's Day ride - Same destination, hopefully much better weather. The last 5 miles approaching the destination make this worth the trip! Location Information: 139 N Ozello Trl. Crystal River, FL 34429 Ph:352-795-2806 GPS: N28 51.829 W82 40.081

♦ **3rd Annual Spring Fling Weekend - April 20-22 - Quality Inn, Thomasville, GA.** We've opened this ride up by invitation to the BMWNEF and the COG groups so there could be a pretty good crowd. Only 15 rooms are booked so far - we upped the block to 32 rooms but the hold deadline is Mar 20th so you must book NOW!

(Continued on page 6)

Upcoming Rides/Events

For more details go to: <http://members.cox.net/n4uau/HSTA/RealFlorida07.htm>

Contact: Bill Royal at RideFL@flahsta.org or Jim Park at jimpark53@adelphia.net

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

NOTES: Event schedule is subject to change without notice. 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	Contact	Web Address/E-mail
March 16-17-18	Ride the Rio El Duodecimo (the 12th)	The Hotel Limpia Ft. Davis, TX 1-800-662-5517	Dave Gorham 281-996-5043 (hm)	www.ridetherio.com cycledog@sbcglobal.net
April 13-14-15	T-19	Queen Wilhelmena Lodge/State Park Mena, AR	Becky Wing 501-824-3413 (hm) 501-824-5738 (wk)	bwing@pgtc.com www.hpnt.net/T/T-home.htm
April 27-28-29	Helen North Georgia Classic	Helen, GA (hotel yet to be determined)	Eric Larsen 770-805-0607 (hm)	http://bellsouthpwp.net/p1/pippin01/helen/page1/htm enlarsen@bellsouth.net
May 18-19-20	Twistar 2007	Voyager Inn Reedsburg, WI 1-800-444-4493	Ray Kang 952-476-6677 (wk)	www.hstatwistar.info riding@hstatwistar.info
May 25-26-27-28 (4 days)	Tri-Star	Allegheny Inn Sparta, NC 888-372-2501	Galen Diehl 276-647-3162 (hm)	http://bellsouthpwp.net/p1/pippin01/tristar/page1.htm gdiehl@kimbanet.com
June 24-25-26-27	STAR 2007	Crowne Plaza Resort Asheville, NC 800-733-3211 or 882-254-3211	Harry & Beth Hemstreet 970-667-0460 (hm) 240-376-7447 (fax)	http://www.ridehsta.com/star/2007/star07@hemko.com
August 3-4-5	Nolichucky Valley Rally	Holiday Inn Express Erwin, TN 1-800-304-7958	Richard Giddish 423-245-5558 (hm)	http://webpages.charter.net/jrandall/erwin/erwin.htm rickandnick@hartern.net
August 24-25-26	Mail Pouch Fly By	Best Value Inn Marietta, OH 1-800-526-5947	Jon Campbell 513-932-3341 (hm)	-
September 7-8-9	Ozarks BS Rally	Theodosia Marina & Resort Highway 160 Theodosia, MO	Ed & Linda Young 417-926-3075 (hm) magna@fidnet.com	http://come.to/The_Ozarks_BS_Rally
September 14-15-16	River City Ride	Vevay, Indiana (hotel not yet determined)	Don Moose Parish 317-936-5818 (hm)	mparish@hrtc.net
September 21-22-23	SE Star	Holiday Inn Express 64 White Oak Lane Dillard, Georgia 706-746-3585	Trey Hall 615-367-6495 (hm)	Strey1100@aol.com
October 5-6-7	Friends of Freddie's	Rosener's Resort Park Hills, MO 1-800-888-4241	Bob LaMear 636-938-3788 (hm)	racerboy@fms4u.com
October 19-20-21	AR By Way Boogie	Paris, AR (?)	Robert Bashaw 870-460-9570 (hm)	artravlr@seark.net
November 2-3-4	Texas Hill Country Ride	YO Ranch Resort 2033 Sidney Baker Kerrville, TX 78028 877-967-3767	Ken Bowen & Dave and Connie Schluter	http://www.geocities.com/jfpoulos/THC2007.html TXHillCountryRally@gmail.com