



FLORIDA GATOR TALE

Honda Sport Touring Association

May 2006



Back Roads, Buffets, & BBQ

Submitted By: Larry Fitch

Spring Fling 2006

"I have not known where I am since lunch time yesterday."

These words, spoken by my friend and fellow Florida HSTA member Terry Brown, really summed up our experiences over a three-day weekend trip from our home in Melbourne, Florida, to Thomasville, Georgia, and back to attend the 2nd annual Spring Fling. The Fling is the brain child of Sam Ulbing, Florida state Co-Director and all around nice guy. I attended the fling last year in Tallahassee, but this year's event just seemed better in so many ways and if you missed it, well then, you missed a great time.

The Journey North

I led a small group from Melbourne to Daytona Beach via the I-95 super slab and then picked up Florida Route 100 for the trip to Lake Butler and lunch at Rhodes BBQ on the lake. The reason I mention the route numbers in this explanation is that after lunch, following Sam and others to Thomasville, I had no earthly idea what roads I was traveling, or what my location actually was. Route 100 was an easy ride that rolled along through countryside and farmlands. With the sun coming up at our

backs and a posted 65MPH in front of us, I dialed in the Throttlemeister and enjoyed the cool temperatures and passing landscape.

When we arrived at the lunch location, Sam was already there with his lovely wife Lee, clipboard in hand, handing out discount chits to the Friday night social at the hotel. We had a great buffet lunch at Rhodes and the wait staff did a good job of taking care of us. I have heard that a few folks thought that it was not very good, but anytime I



Some of the bikes lined up for lunch at Rhodes BBQ.

can stuff myself on BBQ for \$6.99 I am a happy camper. Of course, I was also in a good mood because Alan Singer from the Florida BMW crew was nice enough to take a set of Aerostich Panniers off my hands at a bargain price. Thanks again Alan, I hope they get a lot of use!!

After lunch we divided into two groups (due to the number of riders) and started our trek toward Thomasville. After a quick gas stop I became instantly turned around to the point that if I had lost the group, I would probably still be out there on the road somewhere trying to find my way home. After nearly an hour I was relieved to see us passing under I-10. At least I know where that road goes. The rest of the ride to the hotel

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This 2 time award winning newsletter is produced and edited by:
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HSTA Florida Newsletter Editor

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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

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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!

No new members this month



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

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.

2003 FunMover 35C (toy hauler w / living space) - Ford F650 / Cat diesel / Allison 6 sp - 8x10 cargo area (2 bikes) - Power lift - Diesel Generator - 1 Slide out - Sleeps <6 - Sat TV - Roof-top observation deck - many, many extras - 37K miles - Ext Warr - Exc Cond - \$93,500. Jim, FL - 352.324.0569 - jamcclur3@aol.com

Adjustable Hook & Loop Heated Grip pads, \$30.00 - Phil Ridgill 904 287 9654, rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net

1 1996 to 1998 CBR900RR Honda Service Manual including a parts microfiche CD \$10 buyer responsible for shipping. Contact: Doug Pippin 828-684-8488 or dpippin5@bellsouth.net

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

Chapter News

Submitted By: Sam Ulbing & Bill Royal

Sam Ulbing

Spring Fling: From the positive responses I got from people I think it was a success. Last year we had 38 attendees and this year it was 47. I'm hoping we will break 60 next year. The consensus is to hold it at the same location. Read Larry Fitch's article for more details.

Yahoo Group: Remember we have a Yahoo group for FI HSTA members <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FIAHSTA/> which lets you email all the other group members. Pictures from the Spring Fling and other events are posted on it, a database of people who are going to STAR and more. If you want to join it let me know and I can send you an invitation.

Name Tags: If you'd like a nifty HSTA name tag like the ones Bill and I wear they are still available for \$9. Let me know and I can send you the ordering information.

T-shirts: Since our last T-shirt order I have had several people ask to be put on the list for the next order. When we have enough Kurt Gratzol has volunteered to handle the ordering and shipping of them, thanks Kurt. So let me know if you think you'd like a T-shirt. Remember we now offer long or short sleeves as well as white or grey colors.

Help your HSTA: As I noted in the last news Bill and I are looking for members who would be willing to coordinate an occasional lunch ride. This would let us have rides to places that are just too far for us to make and also to new restaurants. Remember your participation will help to make FI HSTA a better club for everyone.

Bill Royal

Lots of news, very little space - The two **lunch rides** in April were very well attended. Sam's pre-Spring Fling lunch on Friday pulled 26 attendees while the South ride a week and a day later drew 27. My sincerest thanks for all of you who support the club by attending the lunch rides. Special honors go out to P. Van Steelant, who was the lone "Real Man" who made the south lunch ride, albeit nearly an hour late, by having traveled an impressive 277 miles to make the lunch! Kurt Gratzol earned the runner up there with 205 miles. For Sam's North ride the Melbourne group had top honors with Terry Neiman at 214, Terry Brown at 205 and Larry Fitch at 195 miles.

STAR '06 is zooming upon us and I've yet to finalize my ride plan. So far it appears nobody is joining Eve and I but I hope that's only because you all have OTHER plans to make this year's STAR.

The very observant of you may have noticed that I had a problem with my printer at the end of last month's newsletter run. I ended up having to finish it on my ink-jet and the bad news is that my \$1200 Xerox Phaser 850 has bit the dust for good. I am very disappointed with it and Xerox for it's lack of longevity and their lack of customer support. That has forced me into buying a different printer, and so I went with something that I HOPE will last longer AND be more cost effective to run - an Okidata C5800Ldx. At \$800, it was a steal compared to the Xerox, and it appears to be every bit as good quality and a tad bit faster. Time will tell about the costs of consumables.

Back Roads, Buffets, & BBQ

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was simply fantastic, with empty roads, nice curves, and excellent views along the way. I was almost disappointed when we finally emerged into Thomasville and made the final turn to the hotel.

Dollar Drinks and Lots of Them

After cleaning up and stowing our gear in the hotel room, Terry and I moseyed on over to the hotel lounge, which Sam had arranged to have set up for us. Once again we lucked out with a great bartender who poured cold beer and good mixed drinks and even served up some great appetizers. The hotel was also nice enough to allow us to set up a cheese & crackers tray, courtesy of Chuck & Francis Headrick. With the combination of good food, drinks and



great people it did not take long before we were carrying on and laughing like I had not done in quite some time. I quickly discovered that Terry Neiman has a funny bone that is easy to expose and if I know that I can make someone laugh that

Drinks for a dollar may cause uncontrollable grinning. easily, I just can't resist. Terry – I hope your ribs have quit hurting by now! And just when we thought it could not get any better, Andray Hubble and his bride Martha arrived and the whole thing seemed to start back up again. It soon became apparent that we needed food and we headed out in search of something to appease our appetites. After a good meal we returned to the back porch of the hotel for after-dinner drinks (I am detecting a theme) and to plan the next day's activities. The latter was not really necessary as we all agreed that we would be more than happy to follow Sam after his most excellent choice of roads earlier that day. Sam had announced an early start, so with reluctance we headed off to bed, which for me was more or less just passing out.

The Roads Less Traveled

The next morning I made good use of the free breakfast buffet (there is that word again) and loaded up on sausage biscuits and coffee to help make the hangover go away. You would think I would have learned by now, but it just ain't so! Sam was already up and about and with drill instructor-like precision was busily barking orders on when we were leaving and what we were doing. Ok, maybe he wasn't barking, but I did mention that I had a hangover. At precisely the agreed upon time, a large group of us (at least 15) left the parking lot of the hotel and began an amazing ride that would take us along the border of Florida and Georgia. With this rather long line of motorcycles I was initially concerned with how Sam, who was leading the group, would be able to manage the whole

thing. Well, this is where smart people with the right technology come in. At the front of the group was Bill Royal, our other state co-director, who was equipped with his J&M CB and headset. At the back of the pack was his better half and partner in crime Eve Blazsur, who was similarly equipped. As we approached turns and all gathered to a stop, Eve would signal Bill via CB that the group was all there and Bill would in turn relay the info to Sam via hand signals. Problem solved! That is, as long as Sam remembered to actually look for Bill's hand signals. I think that a couple of times Bill was close to using a digit other than his thumb to get Sam's attention.

For most of the morning we made our way west along the Georgia border from Thomasville and then turned south and crossed into Florida. Along the way we slipped in and out of easy curves and powered up and over steep hills that I am just not used to seeing in central Florida. The other big plus was the fact that these roads were deserted for the most part, allowing us free reign to do as we liked. Everywhere we went we turned the heads of the locals, most of whom were just getting up and out to start their day.

Eventually we made our first pit stop of the day and began to watch with some apprehension as the skies darkened and the winds picked up. We had all been paying attention to a band of severe weather that had made its way through the Nashville area the day before and was predicted to head our way prior to the end of this day. It was at this point that my buddy Terry Brown indicated to me that while he had indeed brought his raingear with him from Florida, he had in fact left it in the hotel room that morning. That small lapse in memory would come back to haunt him before our ride was over.

After gassing up (this was only necessary for those NOT riding ST1300's) (kidding) we made our way down to Quincy, Florida. It was upon arrival here that I realized that we had actually crossed back into Florida. Until then I was so lost and confused that I



Unfortunately, the \$1.09 sign was for cigarettes and not gas.

Photo courtesy of Bill Royal

thought we were still in Georgia. Passing through Quincy we stopped in the little town of Havana to pick up sandwiches and

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drinks that we would enjoy a little farther down the road. Actually, the end of the road. To be more precise – Meridian Road – a great tree-canopied road that curved and dipped along the way. From here we turned onto Rhoden Cove Road and followed that to its conclusion at Rhoden Cove Landing. Under covered tables and darkening skies we sat down to our fast food feast, all the while keeping an eye on the sky. The wind was really getting strong now and you could smell the ionization that usually precedes a healthy downpour. And we were not to be disappointed.

Terry and I had decided already that it was probably time to head to the barn and a few folks who had heard us discussing this seemed to agree. Just as we finished eating and prepared to head out, the rains came. Folks who had been smart enough to remember their rain gear quickly donned the same and with great haste we made our way out of the park. It is amazing how fast people can be ready to go when something like this happens. It is also amazing how

actually putting on rain gear can help make the bad weather go away. We rode in some fairly steady downpours for about 15 minutes, and then were fortunate enough to find ourselves back in a rain-free zone. We made one more pit stop and Sam, always the adventurer, asked who was crazy enough, I mean, who was adventurous enough to continue riding and who wanted to head back to the hotel.

Now, Terry and I had THOUGHT that we were heading back to the hotel all along, but apparently Sam had been thinking differently. But when the question was posed this time, only one or two brave hands were raised in solidarity with Sam. The rest of us chose to follow Bill back to the hotel. Less than a mile away we were once again assaulted by a pretty strong downpour, but again the fury of the storm was short-lived and by the time we arrived back at the hotel the skies were starting to clear.

Kicking Back on the Back Porch

After the obligatory post-ride shower, I decided to head out to the back porch of the hotel to consult the Holy Delorme and try to come up with a route to get back home the following day. I know that a lot of folks in this crowd are hooked on GPS, but I still tend to be satisfied with a good old M-A-P. Other folks seemed to have the same idea as far as the back porch was concerned, and soon I was joined by a good number of folks. Bill and Eve were first to arrive, and Bill had his laptop with him (geek!) along with a few cold ones. Then along came Sam and Lee, with Sam looking brilliant in his outfit that made him look like a cross between a German tourist

and a soccer player. Nice socks Sam! After that a lot of other folks started to arrive – some that I knew, and some that I would get to know. Like Ashley and Sissy Horn from Jacksonville. Sissy sported a fresh Florida Gators championship shirt, much to the chagrin of Terry Brown, who is a die-hard Seminole fan. And Rob and Joan Medwed from Sanford, who tore up the back roads on their well-equipped GL1800. Then there was Tosh Konya, who came in from Ohio, a 750 mile ride. I never saw that guy without a beer in his hand, unless he was riding. I like that in a person. Tosh is the feature editor for the *Stareview* and acting co-manager since Moose got hurt (see inside cover of the last issue), and is recently retired and trying to get to visit all the different HSTA events just once. This is the other part of being a member of HSTA, and to me it is better than the riding; meeting new people and making new friends. I had as much fun sitting on the back porch as I did sitting in the saddle earlier that day. One thing though – unless you have some time on your hands, don't ask Bill what ticks him off about the government. He seems to never run out of topics where that subject is con-

cerned. There were other folks whose names have escaped me, but not their faces. And next time I see you I will apologize for not remembering your name for this article.

As we sat under the porch, telling lies and swapping stories, I noticed a couple of the BMW folks (Sam had been nice enough to invite them to join us at the fling) bringing their bikes to the interior courtyard of the hotel and parking them outside their doors. Apparently they had heard a weather forecast predicting hail and bad winds in the next few hours.



Rain was the only thing that would spoil this great place.

Photo courtesy of Bill Royal

Hmm... it would indeed be a bummer to have my pretty ST end up with dents and dings. So, I decided that maybe this was a good idea and brought my bike under similar cover. By now, quite a few folks had done this, enough in fact that the hotel staff decided it would be better for everyone, from a safety standpoint in case of an emergency, to let us park under the front canopy of the hotel. Classy!! The word spread quickly and in no time we had a dozen or so motorcycles under protection, courtesy of the hotel. After all that activity, it became apparent that it was time for a cocktail, so we hoofed it over to the hotel bar to throw back a few cold ones before dinner.

And what a dinner it was. Sam had made reservations across the street from the hotel at a place called Crawdaddy's, an all you can eat seafood buffet (again with the buffet) that was just outstanding. The catfish and fried shrimp were great, as was all of the other food heaped up and ready in the buffet line. After my third trip through

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the line, Terry Brown and I began to lament on why we do this to ourselves at a buffet. If I was going out to a normal dinner at any other place I certainly would not have three plates of food in front of me. There just seems to be something about the term "all you can eat" that makes me lose my mind. By the time the check came, I was about as full as I could ever remember being, and it felt really good to get up and walk back to the hotel. Once back, Terry (both Brown and Nie-man), Mike and I retired to the back porch once more for a couple of after-dinner drinks. Unfortunately, the large amounts of food that I had eaten started to have the dreaded "Thanksgiving Day Effect" and I felt myself quickly fading. As I looked around the table I realized that I was not the only person suffering from this and so I felt it wise to say my good-byes and get ready for the next day's ride home.



Bill Royal ignores the taunts of others telling him to go back for a 5th time. Photo courtesy of Sam Ulbing

Thomasville. Our destination this morning was the town of White Springs, Florida, where Sam had promised yet another buffet extravaganza. Geez - if I keep riding with this guy I am going to have to get a larger pair of pants and beef up the pre-load suspension to compensate. Sam took us on some great roads that had been provided to him via the Florida BMW riders and before we knew it we were in the parking lot waiting for the restaurant to open. Terry and I, still full from the buffet at the hotel (I swear, I have never used that word so much in a three-day weekend, even in Las Vegas) decided to part company and head back to Melbourne. We continued back down route 100 and picked up route 19 in Palatka. This road is a great ride through the Ocala National Forest and was mostly deserted as we made our way south. After a lunch at the Blackwater Inn, a favorite destination of our local HSTA rides, we finished the trip back to Melbourne, being hampered all the way by strong winds that at times had

The Journey Home

The next morning Terry, Ashley, Bill, and I left the hotel, following Sam and his wife Lee on our journey back home. Before we left we were able to say good-bye to Eve, who was heading to Myrtle Beach on a solo ride. Man – I have got to retire someday so I can start taking trips like that. The rest of us headed back to Florida under cloudy skies on roughly the same roads that had brought us to

me riding at a near 45 degree angle to try and keep the bike in my lane. Arriving safely back in my garage, I had logged 850 miles for the trip. Although not a lot by Iron Butt standards for three days, I was none the less happy for the miles covered with good friends and good people. I am looking forward to next year's fling and the chance to do it all over again.

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 North Lunch Ride - May 13th - 3 Bananas, Crescent City** Nice place on the lake. Rt. 17 in Crescent City, turn east at the red light. 386-698-2861. GPS is N29 25.814 W81 30.415. PS as I recall they do NOT take credit cards or checks so bring cash! Please let me know if you are coming so I can give the restaurant a head count.

Future North Rides/Dates: June 3 - Ye Olde Boarding House, Trenton July 13 (midweek) Horse & Hounds, Ocala
July 22nd - JB's Fish Camp, New Smyrna (Bob Shields organizing)

♦ **HSTA Florida South Lunch Ride - May 6th, - Michelle's Southern Dining, LaBelle, FL.** Lunch at Noon - This is a new location for us, something that Gerry Venema scouted out and recommended. It's located at 415 S. Main St (Rt. 29 about 1/2 mi. S of SR 80) - 863-675-8100
Hope to see you there! Contact: Bill Royal RideFL@flahsta.org or 813-633-8155

Future South Rides/Dates: June - No ride due to STAR '06 July 15 - TBD Aug 12th - TBD
Sept 16th - TBD Oct 14th - TBD

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Upcoming Rides/Events

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7th Annual Riding Into History Concours d'Elegance - May 20th - World Golf Village, St. Augustine, FL. RIH consists of three parts:
 1). Charity motorcycle rides originating at 10 AM in both Daytona and Jacksonville, leading to the World Golf Village.
 2). The Concours d'Elegance, featuring approx. 300 motorcycles from all over the country, as well as vendors, clubs, dealers and entertainment, 10 AM - 4 PM.
 3). The Biker's Ball, a dinner, dance and silent auction held 6:30 - 11 PM in the Renaissance Resort Hotel at the WGV the night of the Concours.

Full details in the April Gator Tale or RidingIntoHistory.org

Contact Bill Robinson at 904-730-9719, RIH2006@comcast.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
May 5-7	AR By Way Boogie	Hot Springs Village Inn 4429 N. Hwy 7 Hot Springs Village, AR 501-992-9600 or 888-922-9601	Robert Bashaw 870-460-9570	artravlr@seark.net
May 19-21	TwISTAR 2006	Voyageur Inn, Reedsburg, Wisconsin		http://www.hstatwistar.info/
May 26-29 (4 days)	Tri-Star	Allegheny Inn Sparta, NC 888-372-2501	Galen Diehl 276-647-3162 gdiehl@kimbanet.com	http://tinyurl.com/bb2k2
June 18-21	STAR 2006	The Christie Lodge Avon, Colorado	Mike Morris (Registrar) 580-745-2294 (w) 580-924-6878 (h)	mikemelody@netcommander.com
August 4-6	Nolichucky Valley Rally	Holiday Inn Express Erwin, TN	Richard Giddish 423-245-5558 (home) rickand-nick@hartern.net	http://tinyurl.com/873z7
Aug 25-27	Mail Pouch Fly By	Best Value Inn (formerly Knights Inn) Marietta, OH	Jon Campbell 513-932-3341 (home)	
Sept. 8-10	Ozarks BS Rally	Theodosia Marina & Resort Highway 160 Theodosia, Missouri	Ed & Linda Young 417-926-3075 magna@fidnet.com	http://come.to/The Ozarks BS Rally
Sept. 15-17	River City Ride	Hotel not yet determined Kentucky	Gary Dehner 606-233-0321 (o) 606-223-9117 (h)	g.dehner@insightbb.com
Sept. - 22-24	SE Star	Holiday Inn Express 64 White Oak Lane Dillard, Georgia 706-746-3585	Trey Hall 615-367-6495 Strey1100@aol.com	http://tinyurl.com/8de29
Sept. 29- 10-01	Friends of Freddie - XIII	Tradition Inn Intersection of Hwy 67 & W Farmington, MO 877-355-6205	Bob LaMear 636-938-3788	racerboy@fms4u.com
Nov. 3-5	Texas Hill Country Ride	YO Ranch Resort 2033 Sidney Baker Kerrville, TX 78028 877-967-3767	Joe Paolili 830-537-5552 joep@beecreek.net	http://www.geocities.com/jfpoulos/THC2006.html

STOP! Red Light Running Coalition of Florida - www.orgsites.com/fl/floridastops