

FLORIDA GATOR TALE

Honda Sport Touring Association

January 2004



End of Year Update

Submitted By: Bill Royal

First off, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you the very happiest and safest New Year. I hope your holidays were filled with joy and that you all got the motorcycle related toys you were wishing for! :-)

As we close on another successful year for the HSTA, and here in Florida in particular, I thought I would take a moment to update everyone on just where we've been and where we're headed.

For the year 2003 we held twenty lunch rides across Florida. 447 folks attended those rides, with 391 of them as riders and the rest as passengers. The rider's miles totaled 45,344 ONE-WAY to the rides. That seems to be an incredible amount of riding, and yet, I know it to be only the tip of the iceberg as many of us ride a lot more than just those lunch rides. The average one-way mileage ridden to the lunch rides is 115. Over and above that, we had an excellent representation of Florida at the STAR in WV this year with 28 members in attendance and many of them rode their bikes to the event! Way to go Florida riders.

In last month's newsletter I listed the various membership types the club offers. I made an error in the description of the benefits of Life Members. In that box I incorrectly showed "Life Member same as Sustaining Member plus special T-Shirt. This is not the case. Life Members receive Regular benefits plus Gold membership card, Special Shirt, recognized in STARview and Blue Book. STARview sent first class

mail

As of December 22nd, we now have 101 members in the state, with 73 regular members, 21 members of household, 5 sustaining members, and one each merchant and dealer members. It's great that we've broken the 100 member level, but given the number of riders in the state, I believe that we've got a lot of opportunity to grow the club in the coming year. Phil Ridgdill has come up with an idea about that as you'll read in his Ramblin Around in this issue.

Another area of improvement I'd like to see us undertake is in local rides. I have gotten some feedback that some members don't attend the lunch rides because they are too long a ride for them. Even with running two "regional" rides a month, North and South, given Florida's sheer size I can understand why some folks simply cannot make some or even any rides. To that end I am looking to get some more local rides going. In order to do that we need some sponsors, and more importantly, a way to communicate the details. While the monthly newsletter is here for that, I'd like to see a better and increased use of email and internet to get groups of riders together, especially for those short notice rides that simply aren't planned in time to make a newsletter. More on this in the article - "Where are we?" elsewhere in this issue

So here's to you, Florida HSTA Riders - Ride Safe and hope to see you out on the road this year!

This award winning newsletter is

produced and edited by:

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Special points of interest:

- *Daytona Bike Week Dinner plans set - See pg. 5*
- *Where Are We? - See pg. 4*

Web Addresses:

- ✓ If you're "connected" be sure to check out the National HSTA Site at: www.ridehsta.com
- ✓ And the Florida HSTA Site at: www.flahsta.org

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!

**Fanny Haine - Sun City Center Robert & Joan Medwed - Sanford
Mark Reeves - Crestview**

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Ramblin Around

Submitted By: Phil Ridgdill

Christmas is here already, I don't know about you guys but at my age, its coming around to quick. Of course this means winter has arrived and its bloody chilly up here in North Florida. I'm a bit jealous of all you guys in South Florida, all that good weather, 75 degrees and sunshine. As I look out the window now, its gray over-cast, wind blowing 10-15 kts, temp 50 and falling, forecast for tomorrow morning, low 30s-highs for the day in the upper 50s and we are going riding. I certainly hope we have sunshine tomorrow. We got the good roads up here; you guys got the good weather. As they say, you can't have everything.

Having said that doesn't mean that you can't dream. Have you seen all these new bikes for 2004, talk about dreaming. If I were to win the lotto I'd need a garage about the size of a small aircraft hanger because mine is bursting at the seams. My wife might be a bit upset about that but I really shouldn't say that because all she ever asked is save a spot for her car.

My new Blackbird has 3000 miles on it now and it runs just fine. As I said before, when I bought this bike, it fit me perfect. I do think it's a still a bit too heavy, like about 65-70 lbs. This bike seems to get sweeter with miles and it runs quite good. Actually its got so much power you don't have to rev it much. On the street, only a few places where you stretch this baby out. In mid range when you need all that power/acceleration it has what it



takes to do whatever you want, which is really where it should be used. This bike is stable and the suspension works great, better at speed. Definitely a nice quiet classy motorcycle & a keeper.

On Jan10th, N.FL Lunch Ride to Blackwater Inn, Astor Park FL., this will be a good opportunity for us to discuss a weekend event. We should have a separate dining room so we can have a good exchange of ideas about this. It would be nice if we have a large group for lunch; everyone can express their opinion. Another point, Daytona Bike week will be here soon enough. Don't forget the HSTA Dinner on Friday at 5:30pm, early enough so that you can make the motocross event.

We have increased our membership here in FL and Bill Royal & I have been working on an idea to increase it a bit more. Mr. Terry Balara, FL HSTA member, just happens to be the owner of Lists, Inc, an information company located here in Jacksonville. I've suggested a mail out to potential members and Bill has designed an invitation and Terry's company has generously donated the information that we needed. We thank Terry for this, without his donation we couldn't do this.

Ride Safe & Smart

Phil Ridgdill

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 wgr@sprynet.com.

For Sale

1982 HONDA CB 900F - \$2,500 OBO
Rare bike in excellent condition with 11,955 original miles. Original owner – bike purchased new in 1986. Always garaged and adult-owned and maintained. All original parts (except seat) are included: bar, cables, peg holders, exhaust, shocks, Hondaline back rack & back rest. Engine is all stock. Honda Sport Kit was installed on date of purchase. Vance & Hines SS exhaust – sounds great, not too loud. Eclipse standard tank bag also included. Perfect bike for everyday ride or restoration project. Please call Van in Boynton Beach (S. Florida) at 561-386-2594.

1991 ST-1100 Silver, Outstanding condition 29,700 miles, Roller bearings in steering head, tank bag w/am/fm radio, tail bag, J&M CB. Always Garage kept. Picture available. \$5500 Contact: Tom Mewborn – tom.mew@verizon.net

2001 Kawasaki KLR 650 - 3400 miles, as new. Never down. Includes top box. \$3500 Firm.
Contact: John Watts at: (941) 722-0406

Riders Wanted

STAR'04 - OK, the time for talk is nearly over! Some Florida members are planning the RIDE to CA for STAR04 and if you'd like to tag along now is the time to start planning! Eve and I (Bill Royal) are planning 5, 525 mile days each way to STAR04 and back. So far we have one other rider going. If you'd like to join us, please let me know so we can make the appropriate plans (hotel rooms and the like).

South Florida Ride - Member P.Van Steelant, out of Boynton Beach is planning some sort of ride for the South Florida area for February. He doesn't have the details nailed down yet, but stay tuned to email and the Feb issue of Gator Tale for the details.



Daytona Bike Week Dinner

Submitted By: Phil Ridgdill

The Daytona Dinner is scheduled for Friday March 5 2004 at 5:00pm. Same location as last year, INDIGO LAKES GOLF CLUB, 312 Indigo drive, Daytona Beach FL. We will have private Banquet Room and a buffet dinner, menu will be similar to last year. Food is good & there is plenty of it. There will be an Open Cash Bar in the Banquet Room. Price will be same as last year, Meal \$18.95 per person, with tax & service charge total will be \$23.70 per person, children under 12 ½ total price. Dinner will be by Pre-paid Reservation. ALL CHECKS made out to the INDIGO LAKES GOLF CLUB (Please do not make the checks out to me). Mail checks to Phillip Ridgdill, 720 Opossum Lane, Switzerland FL 32259-8323 and last day to receive reservations will be 25 Feb 2004, all checks will be deposited with Indigo Lakes Golf Club. The Golf Club Staff will have the reservation list at the Banquet

Room.

The Indigo Lakes Golf Club location: Indigo drive is the first intersection East of I-95 on International Speedway drive (US-92), Indigo Drive will pass in front of the Holiday INN, continue on Indigo Drive through a residential area until you come to the Golf Club. If you are coming from the Speedway, it's the last traffic light before I-95, turn right on to Indigo Drive.

All the Racing Events at Daytona International Speedway have been changed. This is the reason for the HSTA Dinner change to Friday night. We will not have a lunch Ride this year. If you would like any further information contact Phil Ridgdill at 904 287 9654 or rfoxrdr@earthlink.net

December Lunch Ride Recap

Submitted By: Bill Royal

Well, it was a coolish December, both around the country as well as here in Florida, but did we let that stop us from riding? No way. In spite of 40 degree temps, 18 riders and one passenger showed up at the very quaint Harvest Thyme Café for lunch and chat. Now, to be truthful, the Jacksonville crew led the way with the most attendance. They were well dressed though as their departure temps were near 30 degrees. Electric vests and other high tech gear were the order of the day. However, I did make the ride from the Tampa area with one intrepid Harley buddy. We elected to take the interstate though to keep the time to a minimum. It was chilly when we left and got colder as we went north, actually being cooler at noon in Alachua than it had been in Sun City at 8:00 AM. Needless to say, we took the longest distance honors at 163 miles, though Norm and Maggie Nelson stretched their Beemers out to 150 each from St. Augustine. The Jax crew ran about 90 miles and several other folks came in at 110 or better. Some of the really brave (insane?) folks elected to eat "al fresco", though most of them eventually relented and came inside before leaving. All in all, everyone seemed to have a good time and too soon it was again time to hit the road for home.

By the time the "South" lunch ride rolled around on the 13th, things had warmed up a tad, and since we were headed south from Tampa, we were pretty much assured of warmer climes. We departed Sun City with 7 bikes - 4 of them driven by women riders over the age of 50! Way to go gals. We snaked our way through some of my favorite back roads through Myakka (where we had a not too close encounter with several deer crossing the road!), around Arcadia, and finally along the Caloosahatchie river over to Labelle. There we met up with Sam and Lee Ulbing who were on their way back to Gainesville from a weeks vacation in Key West. It was really nice seeing them show up for a South Lunch Ride. Tom Mewborn took high mileage honors by an early morning departure from New Port Ritchie, covering 190 miles to make the lunch on his Gold Wing. Attaboy Tom! And P. Van Steelant rode in from Boynton Beach on his Hayabusa, accompanied by his buddy Ron Bowen. And finally, another rider who had heard about us by word of mouth came up from Miami on his Connie to say hello and get acquainted. It was great meeting Paul Heydemann and we hope to see him again at another ride.

See you at the next lunch ride!

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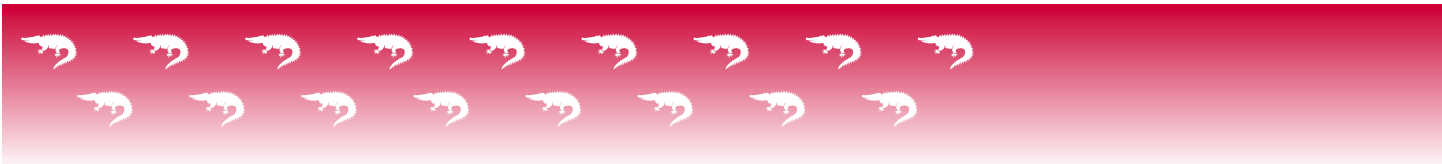
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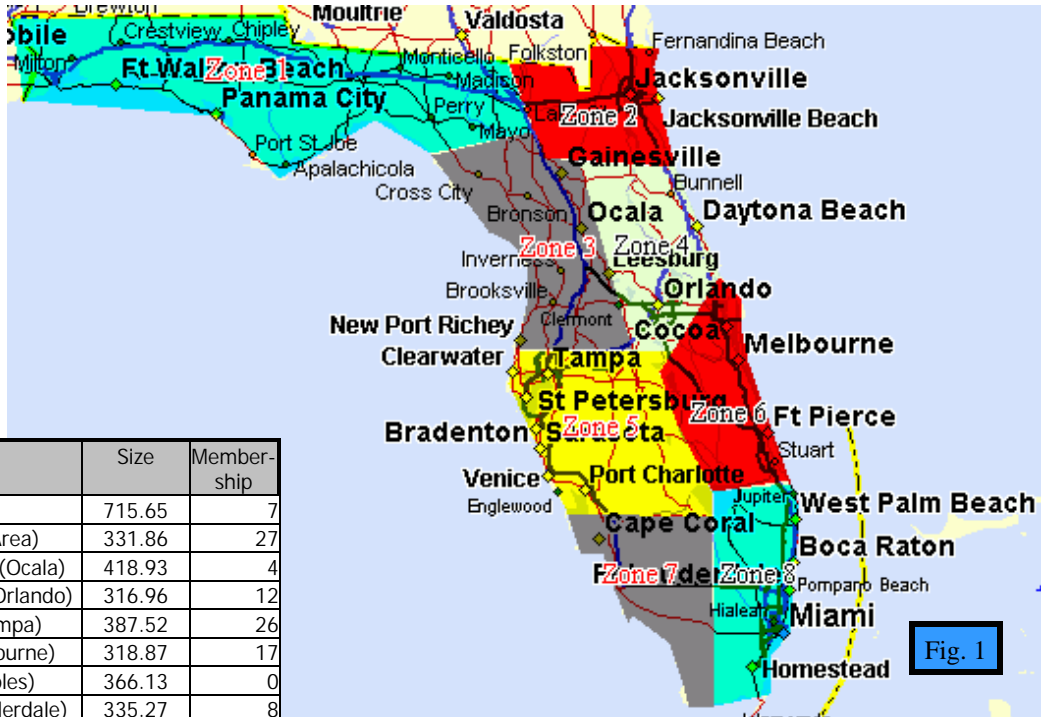
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Where Are We?

Submitted By: Bill Royal

In an effort to better understand who makes up our club, and more importantly, what can we do to increase membership, I have been doing some analysis on our ride attendance and membership data. To that end, I carved up the state of Florida into 8 geographical segments as shown in Fig 1. In this carving, I tried to make boundaries such that sizes of areas were roughly equivalent, either by physical size and/or population. The "zones" are as follows: The Size field refers to square



Zone	Name	Size	Member-ship
1	Panhandle	715.65	7
2	North East (Jax Area)	331.86	27
3	North West Central (Ocala)	418.93	4
4	North East Central (Orlando)	316.96	12
5	West Central (Tampa)	387.52	26
6	East Central (Melbourne)	318.87	17
7	South West (Naples)	366.13	0
8	South East (Ft. Lauderdale)	335.27	8

Fig. 1

miles, giving us over 3200 square miles to deal with! The Panhandle is double the size of most of the other zones because of the relatively low population density up there.

It should come as no surprise that the three largest membership zones (2, 5, & 6) account for just about 80% of the lunch ride attendees (not counting non-member riders). It also helps too that the vast majority of lunch ride destinations are also within or adjacent to those same zones. (actually zones 3, 4, 5 & 6 have had all the destinations) There were some surprises though. One was the lack of any members, or even non-member attendees from anywhere within zone 7. This despite one lunch ride destination that sits just on the border with that zone. The other surprise was the number of members we have in the Panhandle (zone 1) at 7! Even still, all of those members are in or west of Tallahassee, though that is just about the average 115 miles from the nearest lunch ride destination.

Now of course, it's not ALL geography. All of our rides have been on Saturdays. It may be that some folks simply cannot make that day. We will have to do some more analysis and data gathering to better understand that aspect.

The really good news is that 26% of the membership made 5 or more lunch rides, with 6% (or the same number of riders) making 10 or more rides! The other side of that coin however is that a full 36% of the membership made none of the rides, and another 20%, for a total of 56% of the membership made 2 or less lunch rides. I hope to better understand what we can do as a club to attract and keep our members, and engaging them in rides and

other social events surely has to be the key. If anyone has any thoughts or observations or any other ideas about this subject, please be sure to write, email or call me to share your thoughts.

Only member of household and regular members attendance depicted in this chart. Also note that some members who made no lunch rides DID make STAR or other regional events.

# of Lunch Rides made	MOH	Regular Member	Grand Total	% of total
0	9	25	34	36
1	4	5	9	10
2		10	10	11
3	4	4	8	9
4	1	8	9	10
5		3	3	3
6	1	4	5	5
7	1	6	7	7
8		2	2	2
9		1	1	1
10	1	2	3	3
12		1	1	1
13		1	1	1
24		1	1	1
Grand Total	21	73	94	

Chart includes all 24 lunch rides I had data for, 4 more than the 20 I mentioned on page 1 as held in the last year.



December Lunch Ride Collage

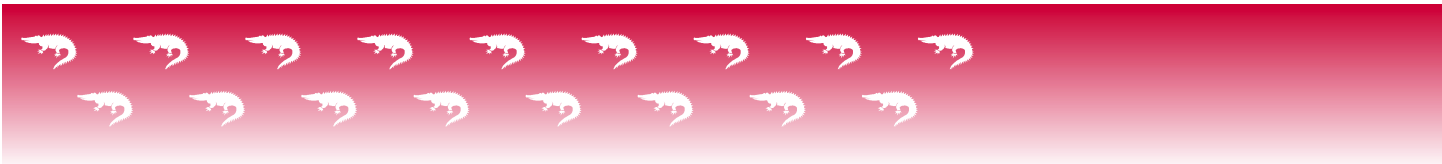
Submitted By: Bill Royal



A happy bunch after lunch at Flora & Ellas—The pies really are good!



The "Northern Crew" as they arrived in Alachua



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 - Saturday, January 10th - Blackwater Inn - Astor Park, FL.** Lunch at 12:00 Noon. We haven't been here in 11 months. Original plan for Jan was McIntosh FL but the Cafe closed. Everybody knows the Blackwater Inn, good food at a reasonable price. Ok, all you guys in Central FL, this is an easy ride for you. I expect to see all of you. During Lunch I hope to announce who our speaker will be at the HSTA Daytona Dinner. If all goes according to plan, this should create some interest. If you need any further Information contact Phil Ridgill, 904 287 9654 or rfoxrdr@earthlink.net.

♦ **HSTA Florida South Lunch Ride - Saturday, January 24th - The Landing - Okeechobee, FL.** Lunch at 12:00 Noon. Located at the Okeechobee county Airport on US98/SR 700, just north of their intersection with SR 70. This is another new location for us as we continue to seek convenient, friendly locations in the South Florida area. Hope to see you there. Contact: Bill Royal - RideFL@flahsta.org or (813) 633-8155

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

NOTES: Schedule now updated with 2004 events. Events highlighted in gray are still tentative. For those and other events marked as unconfirmed, 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
Feb 20-22	Ride the Rio: El Duodécimo	Chisos Mining Co. Motel - Terlingua, TX (432) 371-2254	Dave Gorham (281)996-5043 cycledog@sbcglobal.net
April 16-18	T-16	Queen Wilhelmina Lodge - Mena, AR (800)264-2477	Danny Gordon (903) 463-4973
April 23-25	Road and Track Rally	The Brass Door Motel - Gassville AR (870)435-2288	Tim Bailey (901) 737-7210 Biking2gether@aol.com Kathy Mellembakken (870) 322-7777 peeweevett@yahoo.com Peter Pietz (870) 435-6777 pggeitz@cox-internet.com
Apr 30-May 2	Helen 2004	Location unconfirmed	Eric Larsen (770) 805- 0607 enlarsen@bellsouth.net
May 22-23	Twistar 2004	Spring Green Motel - Spring Green, WI (608) 588-2141	John Perkins (608) 280-8204 john@cs.wisc.edu
May 28-31 (Memorial Day W/E)	Tri-Star	Allegheny Inn - Sparta, NC (888)372- 2501 (mention HSTA when you call)	Galen Diehl (276)647-3162 gdiehl@kimbanet.com
June 20-23	STAR '04	Sierra Nevada Rodeway Inn - Mammoth Lakes, CA	Jim Alexander (925) 458-4596
August 27-29	Mail Pouch Fly-by	Knights Inn - 506 Pike Street Marietta, Ohio (800) 526 5947	Jon Campbell (513) 932-3341
September 10-12	Ozarks BS Rally	Theodosia Marina & Resort - Highway 160 Theodosia, Missouri (417)273 4444	Ed & Linda Young (417) 926-3075 magna@fidnet.com
September 17-19	SE-Star	Holiday Inn Express64 White Oak Lane Dillard, Georgia (706)746 3585	Trey Hall (615) 574-9927 strey1100@aol.com
September 24-26	Byway Boogie	Location unconfirmed	Robert Bashaw (870) 460-9570 Robert.Bashaw@ocse.state.ar.us
Oct 1-3	River City Ride	Baymont Inn - 2495 Landmark Avenue Corydon, Indiana (812) 738 1500	Don "Moose" Parish (317) 936-5818 mparish@hrtc.net
Oct 8-10	FOF - XII	Tradition Inn - Farmington, MO (877)355-6205	Bob LaMear (636)938-3788 racerboy@fms4u.com
Nov 4-7	Texas Hill Country Ride	YO Ranch Resort - 2033 Sidney Baker Kerrville, Texas 78028(877)967-3767	Joe Paolili (830) 537-5552 joep@beecreek.net