

FLORIDA GATOR TALE

Honda Sport Touring Association

July 2003



So you missed STAR?

Submitted By: Bill Royal

If you missed attending this year's STAR in Charleston, WV - well, you really missed a GREAT motorcycling vacation! Actually, we had an excellent turnout from Florida with 28 attendees.

While it wasn't quite enough to win the award for the most attended state (Texas garnered that honor with some 41 members there), we did

manage to place 4th. Oh, but that wasn't the end of the awards categories... Sam & Lee Ulbing won the longest ride to STAR - 2-up, beating out the nearest competition by just one mile! Way to go

Sam & Lee! Phil Ridgdill won an honorable mention for his number of new club recruits—I think it was 15 or so, and last, but not least - I accepted the award for Best State Newsletter of the year. On that note, I would like to take a second to thank all of you for your support and especially to those who have submitted articles for

the publication. It is really YOUR award for without your contributions, there would be no newsletter. So, THANK YOU all and keep the articles coming.

I really was surprised at the turnout at STAR. With all the news about flooding and the picture on the national news of the FedEx truck floating

down the street, I really was questioning my own wisdom about attending. But we forged on ahead anyway, as did 430 other attendees from all over the US to make the 3rd largest ever turnout for STAR, and the 28

from Florida was 6 more than had pre-registered by just one month before the event so evidently there was no shortage of last minute decisions to go.

As it turned out the weather was picture perfect for the entire event. I just could not believe how

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Florida Members
Alan Singer, Eve Blazsur, Terry Balara and Steve Smith
preparing for a STAR ride departure

This newsletter is produced and edited by: Bill Royal
HSTA Florida Newsletter
Editor
1521 New Bedford Drive
Sun City Center, FL. 33573
(813)633-8155
wgr@sprynet.com
www.SilverstreakST.net

Special points of interest:

- *STAR04 Destination: Mammoth Lakes, CA!*
- *Don't forget Ride to Work day - Wed. July 16th*

WWW 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.net

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Free Ads section was deleted to make room for the STAR panorama picture. It will return next month!

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!

Richard Douds - Melbourne, FL

Rick Sawyer - Orange Park, FL



Ramblin Around

Submitted By: Phil Ridgdill

I'm sure by now that you've received your latest issue of the STARReview. If you read "Around the HSTA" by Bill Thalgott, you'll notice that he stated I'm a bit "mystified" at how manufacturers determine the dry weights on their motorcycles. Mystified, not in the least. I, along with a lot others, think its pitiful the way Motorcycle manufacturers issue the weight of their product by dry weight. It's about time we quit beating around the bush and tell it like it is. When was the last time you purchased a motorcycle that when you put the key in and started it, had no fork oil, no coolant, no brake fluid or clutch fluid (ok, so your clutch is cable) no oil, no gas and probably no battery? The company puts out a specification release with various facts about the machine and you'll see; Dry Wt. 399lbs. When will they get the message, we don't give a RA about the dry weight. It is time that all of the manufacturers got their act together on this weight issue. What does it weigh when its full of fuel and ready to ride, that's what we want to know. What we'd like to have is a 550lb ready to ride Super Sport Tourer with all the requirements of that type Motorcycle. I haven't read any publications where a complaint was being made about the way the major manufacturers declare the weight of their product. Are we afraid of upsetting these companies who make these machines that we all pay our money to buy or is it because these big publications are not too happy about upsetting some of their big clients? I certainly hope not. The Motocross guys screamed for years about the heavy Motocross bikes on the market, you see what happened. They've got exactly what they want, light weight machines that perform, as they should. All the manufacturers that make Motocross bikes can produce lightweight sport touring motorcycles. The problem is, will they do it?

For the moment take a look at this. The Blackbird, this bike is not too far off from being the 550lb Sport Tourer that we need. Ok it's got a bit too much weight on and the ergos are a bit uncomfortable. With a bit of redesign it could make the Sport Touring Motorcycle that would meet the 550lb limit. The Honda claim for Dry weight is 492lb which means ready to ride it would most likely be 600lbs. Its got the motor (no doubt about that), talk about smooth, this motor is undoubtedly the smoothest, its got the brakes for a Super Sport Tourer, got the chassis, redesign the body work, make the riding position more upright, maybe a single sided swing arm, makes changing tires easy and chain adjustments are very quick and easy. A shaft drive would be the best option but sometimes this adds a bit too much weight, I'm sure the Honda R&D could sort that problem out in a heartbeat. Design the saddlebags to be detachable and when off the bike we don't want any obtrusive looking mounting hardware and no gaping holes. It should look like it never had saddlebags on it. When you look at a Blackbird, it's a smooth Aerodynamic design, no wild colors/flames or gimmicks, just one classy looking Motorcycle. That's the way the Sport Tourer should look. I'm sure it would have Fuel Injection, the DOT/EPA would require it, make sure that the ECU is programmed properly so we don't have to buy a Power Commander to sort out the air/fuel mixture. A service interval of 16-20000 miles would be just about right. OK, you might say they've got the ST1300, nice bike but we don't want the 727lbs ready to ride. There is going to be a lot of riders that will say, I love my ST1300, I'm sure they do and it's a fine motorcycle but it's not a Super Sport Tourer. Quality and finish of the ST1300 is above anything on the market in its class but it has too much weight.

The ST1100 has a production run 13-14 years; the ST1300 will, most likely, be around as long. The Blackbird is the one that Honda could make the Super Sport Tourer.

To give you a little hint at what Big Red can do, have you ever heard of the RVF750, probably not? This particular bike was brought out in the early 80s and it was a little jewel. In the early 90s this bike was making 165hp and weighed 135kg. Needless to say this was a rocket. I don't care if the Super Sport Tourer is 750 or a 1000cc bike, when you get that kind of power who cares. They can do it. Sooner or later, I was hoping sooner, Big Red will produce the Super Sport Tourer but probably not until there is enough demand. Personally I think if they do the bike will create the demand.

Here is another option, Yamaha YZF-R1 dry wt 382lbs, assuming ready to ride at 492lbs. A redesign into a Super Sport Tourer, if they could make it meet the 550lbs requirement how would you like to have your hands on this baby? The FJR is really not very far off the mark, MCN says 627lbs ready to ride, still a bit too heavy. The FJR is a nice machine but quality and finish isn't quite up to Honda standard. The FZ-1 that's a different story. This bike is very close to being the SST, it will handle better than the FJR and it definitely has the motor.

Consider this, BMW 1150GS, Ugly, maybe, remember beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I've been fortunate enough to have a little bit of time on the GS. This bike is comfortable; it's an easy ride. You can ride this bike all day and its no problem. Ok, it doesn't have the big time power that we all like but it does have the comfort. Granted it shakes a bit but at a reasonable speed it definitely handles as well as a lot of sport bikes. What the GS needs is 12-15 HP; this would give it some punch at 80mph and make the bike what it should be. And get this, it's getting close to the 550lbs ready to ride. If I lived in Europe, I'd have one these in my garage. You might think that's strange, Europe has all of those high speed motorways/autobahns, why a BMW GS. You're correct, they do have those roads but for that I'd have the Honda Super Sport Tourer I mentioned. The GS is definitely one tough bike; it just depends on how you use it.

There is no bloody reason why we don't have a 550lb, with bags, ready to ride Super Sport Tourer. I can just hear the PR/Press/R&D people now, no way possible without pushing the price up to an unimaginable level. That's a load of Bravo Sierra. It will not happen unless we the buying public scream loud enough. Don't get me wrong, my ST1100 is a proven Motorcycle with a production run of 13-14 years, 83000 miles and it's fantastic but it weighs way too much.

I guess the optimum would be to have 1. BMW GS, with a bit more hp, as your multi purpose machine, 2. The Honda Super Sport Tourer for those super roads, 3. The VFR as your short range bike.

Maybe one of these days, the Manufacturers will forget this dry weight BS and list the weight of their product as ready to ride with a full tank of petrol and build the Super Sport

Ride Safe & Smart

Phil Ridgdill



A "View From The Top" picture of the parking garage levels where STAR03 bikes were mostly parked
Photo courtesy of Sam Ulbing

So You Missed STAR?

Continued...

(Continued from page 1)

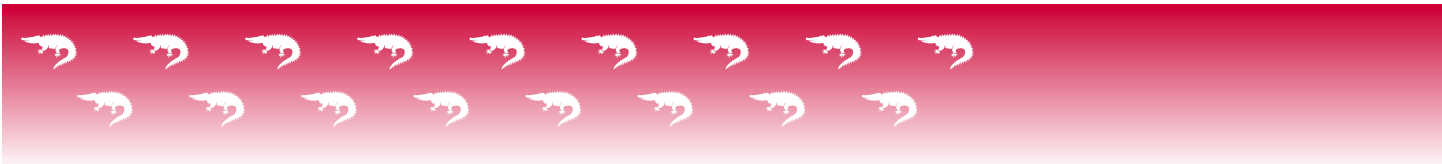
perfect it was. Towards the last two days, it did start to get hot and muggy, but there wasn't even a threat of rain until a day after the event was over. I rode my ST1100 up in two days, arriving on Saturday and back in three days arriving back home in Florida on the following Saturday and the only rain I got was on the first day up, for about an hour after I left home. After that it just cleared up and left one big smile on my face riding up the back roads of Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia and finally West Virginia. There was plenty of other news at STAR. As you may already know, our club President of the last four years, Fred Ziglar, has retired from his position and his "new best friend" Dave "Brick" Brickner has moved into the President's position. Backfilling Dave at the VP spot is Jon Campbell, former Ohio State Director and backfilling his position is Bill "Woovis" Swartz. These folks work tirelessly to make our club what it is so please be sure to drop them a line thanking them some time, or better yet, go to an event and thank them in person. They all deserve it. Other news from STAR - well, it's a good thing they don't give out awards for accidents at STAR... The Florida contingent did its best to win that if they did. Russ Sage low-sided his SST1100 on the first day of the event. Russ was taken to a hospital for a check-up and was back at the hotel by that evening, and while his injuries weren't serious, they did send him home early to recuperate. His ST fared less well but Russ promises to resurrect it only this time with a different color (I think he got tired of folks calling his bike "pink"). One of the other Florida riders with him at the time stopped to turn around and render assistance to Russ and managed to drop his bike in the gravel scratching it up pretty bad but no injuries to the rider. And one more Florida rider managed to clip the back end of another rider's bike as the lead rider made a sudden turn when he spotted another downed ride from another state. Again, no injuries there, just slightly damaged bikes. There were a few other bikes from other states that went down, the most serious injury of which was a pair of broken ribs when the pillion wife landed on her husband driver... Hmm, there's a LOT of jokes I can see in that, but I think I'll refrain for now :-)

On a much sadder note the club did suffer a very tragic loss at STAR03. Long time HSTA and STOC Club member Dan Clark, from Des Plaines, Illinois was killed when his ST1100 failed to negotiate a turn and hit the guardrail. Dan was ejected over the embankment and apparently died before the rescue squad could arrive. It's unclear whether other riders were with him at the time, but initial reports seem to indicate that there was no reason for Dan to have failed to make the turn leading to a strong suspicion that he may have suffered a heart attack leading to the subsequent loss of control. In any event, it was a tragic loss for his family and the club and our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to the Clark family.

As for the riding in WV, all I can say is SPECTACULAR! I thought I knew what twisties were from living in New England but let me tell you, I hadn't ridden really twisty roads until I rode the likes of the Blue Ridge Parkway on my way up. And then, after 100 miles in three hours I thought I would get a "break" - no way! The back roads up from Boone, NC into Virginia and finally WV were even hillier and twistier than the Blue Ridge! What an awesome day of riding that second day of the trip up there was. I hope to have a trip report with more details maybe in next month's newsletter (but I am hoping YOU will write an article about your ride there instead!), in the meantime it felt like I got a month's worth of riding in just one day. I am still smiling from that one day.

So if you missed STAR 03, all I can say it what a loss for you. Maybe reading about it here will motivate you to plan to make next year's STAR. Of course, it'll be in a different place then. And in fact, that place was announced at this year's STAR. You will have to really want to go to make this one though because STAR04 will be held in Mammoth Lakes, CA! He He He—long distance rider award here I come ;-) That's a 2649 mile ride for me and I really want to go. I hope you will too!

Ride Safe
Bill Royal



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 July 12th - **HiJackers Restaurant, Bunnell Airport, Bunnell FL.**, Lunch at 12:00 noon. Located on SR 100 west of I-95 at the Bunnell Airport, convenient location and easy to find. The last time we came here Temp was in the 20s in Jax, hopefully a bit warmer this time, foods good and prices are quite reasonable. This is our first lunch ride after STAR so I hope we see everybody as I know we all have a story to tell about our trip to WVA. This is close for the guys/ladies in Central FL & the gang from the Melbourne area.

♦ **HSTA Florida South Lunch Ride** - Saturday, July 26th - **Jack's Diner, Frostproof, FL.** Lunch at 11:00 AM—Note time change to hopefully get us headed home before typical afternoon thunderstorms. Jack's is located on Wall St, west off of US27 Alt - right in the center of Frostproof. For details/questions, contact: Bill Royal—wgr@sprynet.com or (813)633-8155

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

Date	Event	Location	Contact
Aug. 22-24	Mail Pouch Fly-by	Marietta, Ohio	Jon Campbell (513) 932-3341 jcampbell7@cinci.rr.com
Sep. 05-07	Ozark BS Rally	Theodosia, Missouri	Ed Young (417) 926-3075 magna@fidnet.com
Sep. 26-28	Byway Boogie	Hot Springs Village, Arkansas	Robert Bashaw (870)460-9570 Robert.Bashaw@ocse.state.ar.us
Sep. 13-15	SE-Star	Dillard, Georgia	Trey Hall (615) 574-9927 strey1100@aol.com
Oct. 03-05	River City Ride	Corydon, Indiana	Don Parish (317) 936-5818 mparish@hrtc.net
Oct. 10-12	FOF X	Parkshills, Missouri	James Radcliff (314) 213-5854 jradcliff@frenchgerleman.com
Nov. 01-03	Texas Hill Country	Kerrville, Texas	Jim Poulos (817) 268-4620 jamo1935@aol.com



Don't forget the

12th annual Ride to Work Day

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