

**MSTA**
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

STARVIEW

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VOL. 33 NO. 5



Road Test: 2014 Honda
Gold Wing Valkyrie ABS

Product Review: CES New Stuff

Experience of a Track Day
Mike's Sky Ranch

Road Test Quick Look

BMW K 1600 GTL Exclusive

By Nick Zarras Managing Editor

The BMW K 1600 GTL set the world on fire in March 2011 as the sport touring/touring motorcycle to beat for the last three years and created a new level of excellence in a motorcycle that could go from long distance touring to sport touring at a turn of a digital linked wheel. With the BMW K 1600 GTL Exclusive it raises the bar not only in performance but luxury touring style. I rode the standard K 1600 GTL in the past but the Exclusive sets a new standard of luxury and style. One of the most striking features of the BMW K 1600 GT Exclusive is the stunning four layers of Mineral White Metallic high-gloss paint which is accented with surfaces finished in chrome. The seats and upholstery are in Magnesium Silver. The GTL Exclusive's fuel tank molding and chromed exhaust system exudes a luxury feel in addition to the GTL's dynamic performance.

A nice new touch is the Keyless Ride system, eliminating using a normal key ignition. A FOB can be in your pocket and just press the start button lightly and the bike will start its test routine. Pressing it hard will shut it off. The Keyless Ride automatically releases the steering



lock, ignition, fuel tank lid and alarm system as soon as the key is within two meters of the motorcycle. A nice new feature is the Hill Start Control. It allows you to ride off effortlessly when stopped on hills. You just squeeze the front brake lever and an "H" shows up next to the gear indicator. Now your bike is locked in place. Just add throttle or squeeze the brake and it will release.

The long distance comfort has been enhanced with the rider's seat lower back support. The seat is also heated. The rear passenger now has an additional heated top case back rest. There are rear side arm rests. The rear seat is heated. The seat height options are: 29.5, 30.7 and 31.9 inches. The BMW K 1600 GTL has three hard case bags. In the top case I was able to fit my tripod, camera gear and extra fluids with plenty of room to spare. The top case on the Exclusive has a tail lamp for added visibility. The bags lock remotely with a

switch on the right handlebar. You can also lock them with the FOB or key. Standard features include central locking with alarm system, ESA II (Electronic Suspension Adjustment), DTC (Dynamic Traction Control), RDC (Tire Pressure Control), LED auxiliary lights, adaptive xenon headlight and ground lighting. The electronics display has a 5.7 inch TFT color monitor with a menu guidance system. The Exclusive has the full radio controls on the left kick panel. On the left grip area is a Multi-Controller thumb wheel to access all media and ride controls. On the left handgrip array is the cruise control, high beam flash/select toggle, electric windshield control, LED auxiliary lamps, and four way flashers. On the right grip is the start/kill switch, hard case bag automatic lock/unlock, and engine power control.

The audio system and the larger Motorrad Navigator integrates with zoom or voice command using the handlebar

multi-controller. It will automatically provide guidance to the nearest gas station at the residual range setting. Traffic congestion rerouting is also a feature. All interfaces are Bluetooth capable. The audio system is new and interfaces MP3, iPod, USB stick or CD and is displayed on the TFT. There is a waterproof storage bin for these devices. The alternator capacity is 580 watts.

On the menu you select your “spring” tension for single or dual rider, or dual with bags. Load capacity is 467 pounds. Next is selecting desire ride level at Comfort, Normal, or Sport. The K 1600 GTL Exclusive turns like a middleweight bike. Steering sensitivity decreases when you select Normal or Comfort ride modes. The K 1600 GTL engine is the standard Oil/Water cooled 1649cc 4-stroke in-line 6 cylinder, two overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder netting 160hp at 7,750 rpm and 129 lb-ft at 5350 rpm. 70% of maximum torque is available from 1500 rpms. There are three power setting modes: Normal, Rain, and Dynamic. Rain mode is the lowest and smoothest power delivery. Dynamic mode is the most aggressive. Normal is in between. In each mode the power delivery was very linear and controllable due to the single 52mm throttle body with six smooth tuned length intake runners. I kept it in Dynamic and Sport for most of the ride. The fully adjustable windshield provides a comfortable air pocket. I found ¾ up worked best for my six foot frame. I used the side wings to get more airflow.

I tested the ABS and DTC which measures front and rear wheel spin and bank angle. I found it well programed to limiting torque steer when power is added in the curves. With the front Duolever suspension, a Paralever rear suspension, ESA II, 52% of weight on the front wheel and plenty of ground clearance, the K 1600 GTL Exclusive will handle any spirited sport-touring. The front brakes dual 320 mm disk 4-piston fixed calipers, and rear single 320 mm double-piston caliper with the EVO brake system and BMW Motorrad Integral (part-integral) ABS provided linear and confidence inspiring decel-



eration. The shifting pressure was very light due to the clutch having a down shift smoothing slipper and drive torque individual mechanism. I was very pleased at how well this 794 pound bike turns at low speed. No matter what you ask of the K 1600 GTL Exclusive, it’s on road manners are very composed and precise.

On this day it hit 100 degrees and my run through Red Rock Canyon I did not feel any appreciable heat coming off the engine area. The heat management system pushes the engine heat under the bike. The ringed headlights are self-leveling low beams which keeps the beams level in a turning environment. The headlight uses the gyro from the DTC (dynamic traction control) to vary its degree of intervention based on how much the motorcycle is leaned. The K 1600GTL also was equipped with fixed LED Auxiliary Headlights mounted on the standard engine guards. My recorded mileage was 38 mpg of unleaded super gasoline. I consider this excellent mileage for a new 1649cc motorcycle. The 7 gallon gas tank (one gallon reserve) should give you a 280-338 mile range.

The new stunning BMW K 1600GTL Exclusive brings a level of comfort, convenience, performance and luxury style not seen in this market. My thanks to BMW Motorcycles of Las Vegas (702-454-6269, www.bmwoflasvegas.com) for use of this stunning BMW K 1600 GTL Exclusive. 🍷

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ON THE COVER

2014 Honda Gold Wing Valkyrie at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area Nevada

Photo by: Nick Zarras, Managing Editor

VIEW FROM THE TOP

Dennis Villarose | MSTA President



Well STAR 14 is in the books. A big 'Thank You' to all the volunteers who gave their time, to make it happen. Congratulations to all the award winners and to Doug Westly on winning the raffle bike. There were a few hiccups along the way, but overall a good experience. If you attended please fill out Harry's STAR survey. It lets us know what we did right and wrong. We work hard to get it right, and strive to do a better job for future STAR's. STAR 15 will be in Springdale, AK June 21-24, 2015. Bill &

Becky Wing and Bill & Gayla O'Brien promise routes on the best roads in NW Arkansas!!!

Well it's time to start planning for STAR 16, which will be on the East Coast. As stated at the member's meeting this year, we will be rotating STAR in the future. The rotation will be, West Coast, Central, and East Coast. By adding the Central section of the US, we hope for a larger turn-out. Many members have commented that riding 3-5 days to STAR is a bit much. So let's

make STAR 15 a blow-out and enjoy the awesome roads of NW Arkansas.

Any questions or concerns call me at 561-329-3257 or email me at ipnman2002@yahoo.com 📧

*Great Riders. Great Roads. Join Us!
Ride Safe, Ride Home
Dennis*

VP VIEWS

Ann Redner | MSTA Vice President



In May, our greater MSTA and my home state of Michigan tragically lost not one, but two members to motorcycle accidents.

Bruce Shott was out locally for a happy ride on a sunny day with his favorite pup in tow on the back of his CanAm. On a longer journey, Gary Gulick was in British Columbia, enroute to Alaska, a trip I'd heard him talk about multiple times.

I was fortunate to have shared rides with both Bruce and Gary, and attest they were skilled and passionate riders, comfortable riding solo as they were at the time of their accidents.

Each tragedy has bubbled up the harsh, unfair loss of MSTA brothers. It's

also brought up a few recollections of being "just darn lucky" in my own riding plus the reminder that avoiding this risk altogether would mean hanging up my helmet.

There are few guarantees in life, and frankly, more guarantees would likely negate our passions.

One of our assets in the MSTA is our ATGATT habits. Our actions quietly broadcast to fellow members and non-members that we love this passion of two (and sometimes three) wheels; yet take as many precautions as possible to minimize the risks that just can't be ignored.

Next time you pull on your protective pants and check the psi in your tires,

consider the joy and risks we take each time we turn that key. Honor Bruce, Gary, and those you've personally known who no longer turn that earthly key. Salute them by riding a good ride and setting this example to your fellow riders. You may never know whom here –and up above– may be watching.

Comments to the Executive Committee may be sent to vicepresident@RideMSTA.com. 📧

*See you on the road
Ann*



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Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month was in May but the lessons learned from the briefings are for year round. I attended two events, one at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada at a required briefing for all military, and the first MARS (Motorcycle Awareness and Rider Safety) BBQ event at BMW Motorcycles of Las Vegas, Nevada. Each brought in local riding instructors, local and state police, and agencies that deal with motorcycle accidents. One key issue that was briefed by the Clark County Nevada Coroner at Nellis Air Force Base was the pop up of Marijuana as a contributing drug in some fatal accidents. While it has some medicinal purposes, the rider has the added problem of not knowing the exact dose he or she is taking, how long it stays in the system and its side effects alone or with other drugs. Here is a primer for your review: http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/826552?nlid=59043_2841&src=wnl_edit_dail.

Get with your healthcare provider for a full education.

A military rider who was on a walker after his accident had a very important lesson to brief. He had an argument with his spouse and got on his bike to clear his head. While riding is known to help clear your thoughts when life seems to be going faster than you are, one side effect still exists. The brain tries to solve

unresolved issues. If you cannot resolve a conflict it occupies your thoughts and reduces your concentration. When I ride my mantra is not “uhmmm” but “FOCUS.” MSTA riders go through a pre-ride “get your head together” routine to focus on one thing, a safe ride. Riding a motorcycle is a lifetime blessing of great experiences. Riding with a proper focus will result in a higher probability of a lifetime of uninterrupted good memories.

This month we continue with the article “What the MSTA Staff Rides.” Our Feature Editor Pedro Gregorio gives us a great road ride review in “Cure for the Polar Vortex.” Indiana’s David Edinger takes us on a south of the border tour to the Infamous Mike’s Sky Ranch. In this issue we feature St. Louis/Southern Illinois Area Director Steve Long. This month’s Member Profile is Kurt Asplindh, Nevada, a new member who has helped me out with prior STARReview issues. This month’s Sweet Rides is from our Safety Editor Doug Westly on his Ducati Hypermotard SP. In Safety Strategies Doug Westly teaches some valuable lessons on suspensions. This month we have two different types of motorcycles in road tests. The main road test is the new Honda Gold Wing Valkyrie, a tough looking cruiser that is light on its tires, and very easy to ride. The Road Test - Quick Look features the BMW K

1600 GTL Exclusive, the epitome of show stopping luxury riding. The product test is six products from the 2014 Consumer Electronics Show for your electronic communication gear.

This is my second-year anniversary as the STARReview magazine Managing Editor. A special note of thanks to all the members of the STARReview staff, the EC and MSTA members. Their time spent creating articles, editing photos and text, performing road, riding school and product tests, and the continual interfacing with business supporters make STARReview our MSTA showcase magazine.

To feature your stories and events in STARReview, email me your articles and high resolution photos, with the best in portrait mode. Showcase your treasured 2011-2014 motorcycle (Sweet Rides), or 2007 or older motorcycle (Safe Money). I will provide you full editorial support. The embedded hyperlinks will link you to websites for travel planning information, and bikes and accessories to lust over without leaving your digital copy of STARReview. I want YOU to be the star in STARReview! So kick back with a cool one and enjoy this issue. 🏍️

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: *Ultimately, the safety of motorcycle riders and their passengers is their own responsibility. Nothing presented in the column supersedes, negates or relieves a motorcyclist and/or passenger from assumption of personal responsibility for their actions and safety.*

Suspension

When you first started to ride, chances are you didn't think much about how you were connected to the wheels of your motorcycle. You knew there were forks up front and a shock or shocks in the back, and that they helped smooth out the ride. Then as you became a more experienced rider, maybe you began to appreciate these bike components. However, have you ever taken the time to really consider the part your motorcycle's suspension plays in the dynamics of riding, and what it means to your safety?

Let's start by defining the motorcycle suspension for our discussion. Here we're discussing the front forks, rear shocks, their components and any other bike systems that might contribute to handling the gravitational and inertial forces impacting the motorcycle dynamics as you ride. In other words, the pieces of the bike that control the forward, rearward, up and down motions of the bike while in motion.

Among wheeled vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles are unique. As multiple wheel, single track vehicles, the physics affecting the machine in motion are different from multi-track vehicles. This is primarily due to one factor...lean. At any speed greater than a walk, a motorcycle has to lean in order to turn. This is so the bike and rider can balance the forces of gravity, inertia, friction and ground support during the maneuver. You can actually calculate the amount of lean a motorcycle needs using the laws of circular motion. It goes something like this:

Lean angle = v^2/gr , where **v** is the forward speed, **r** is the radius of the turn and **g** is the acceleration of gravity. There are various other factors, such as compensation for width of modern tires, center of gravity shift on the motorcycle during the turn, etc., but you get the picture. Lean angle is critical to a motorcycle and

we can control it (hopefully) given any set of defined factors.

Next, we have to recognize that the laws of physics mean that anytime we provide a control input to the motorcycle, there will be a reaction by the machine to that input. In terms of suspension, that means that every time we accelerate, we are effectively taking the weight of the motorcycle and shifting it to the rear, placing more load on the rear shock(s). Every time we roll off the throttle and/or apply the brakes, the slowing of the motorcycle shifts the weight to the front, increasing the load on the front shocks (and telelever link on BMWs, etc).

Finally, suspension is designed by the manufacturers to absorb shock transmitted from contact between the road and tires, respond to lean angle and inertial forces, support the weight of the motorcycle on the wheels/tires, etc. Your suspension is working very hard, all the time.

OK, so how does all of this impact safety? Here are just a few thoughts:

When you corner and lean the motorcycle, the suspension is taking unequal loads on either side of the bike. This is particularly true of the front suspension, which by its nature (to include single-sided front suspension systems like the RADD(tm) suspension on Yamaha's GTS1000, sold in 1993-1994) carries two forks, one on either side of the wheel. This means the front forks need to be in good condition and working as designed to absorb and control these unequal load forces.

When you accelerate or decelerate, the motorcycle's weight shifts backwards or forwards, respectively. The suspension has to control these inertial weight shifts, allowing the rider to remain in control. This includes not only the initial weight shift, but the return of the weight to its static position after the maneuver.

To figure all this out, here are some terms and simple definitions that you've probably already heard:

Pre-load: All motorcycle suspension springs front and rear, are designed to be under compression, even when fully extended. Pre-load is the amount of spring compression once the weight of the rider(s) and any other elements are added to the bike, while at rest.

Sag: Sag is the difference in compression between the springs being totally extended (while still under compression) and supporting the weight of the bike and rider. This element may or may not be adjustable, given any particular suspension system. On adjustable systems, pre-load and sag can be set to avoid "bottoming out", wherein the springs/shocks compress to their physical limits.

Damping: Damping is the system control for the rate at which springs/shocks compress. Again, some systems allow for external adjustment of the damping rate.

Rebound: Rebound is the rate/force with which springs extend when the weight is subsequently loaded from them.

You can start to see why good suspension systems and components are expensive. As motorcycle performance and demands increase, higher performing suspension systems are needed to keep these forces under control. At the highest performance levels (road racing, MX racing, trials riding, etc.), suspension systems are one of the most critical machine elements. The bottom line is that for our suspension system to work effectively, it must be able to cope with the forces we subject it to when we ride.

If we overload the bike, we increase the pre-load, perhaps beyond design limits, or beyond the current optimal adjustment. This decreases the amount of available spring compression and suspension travel, and can change the damping rate. We could bottom out the suspension under extremely dynamic riding conditions, transmitting excessive shock to the bike and rider, upsetting balance, traction (friction coefficients), etc. If we load the bike more heavily than usual, can we adjust the suspension settings to compensate for the additional weight? It depends on the bike and the adjustability (or not) of the system.

If we don't keep the suspension system in good operating condition (front fork oil leaks, etc.), then we degrade the sus-

more **SAFETY** on 7

STAR REVIEW

Volume 33, Number 5

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF MSTA
*Promoting excellence and safety in the
enjoyment of motorcycle sport touring.*

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MS Word documents, raw text files, 300dpi (or larger) .tif, .eps or .jpg photo files. If using a digital camera, be certain to use highest photo quality setting (largest file size). DO NOT embed/place photos in Word documents. Separate, original .tif, .eps or .jpg photo files are required.

STAR Review Submission deadlines

Issue No.	Deadline
33-07	9/6/14
33-08	10/11/14
34-01	11/15/14

Submissions can be sent via email to: Editor@ridemsta.com

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Welcome New Members

Canada

Wayne Knodel, Medicine Hat, AB
Steve Kowitch, Medicine Hat, AB

North Central Region

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Jason McGary, Peoria, IL
Scott Stewart, Elmwood, IL
Kevin Callaway, Birmingham, MI
Jason Fish, Ionia, MI
Laura Fish, Ionia, MI
Raymond Shamoun,
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Daniel Lewis, Valley City, OH
Willie Boeding, Rapid City, SD
Bill Hearne, Rapid City, SD
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Steve Shannon, Hot Springs, SD
Debbie Shannon, Hot Springs, SD
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Yellville, AR
Phil Miller,
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Choon Gan
Membership
Director

Southeast Region

William 'Bill' Goldsby, Athens, TN
W. Michael Minor, Knoxville, TN
Dennis Troutman, Collierville, TN

Ramblings

STAR 2014 is in the books, and I was fortunate enough this year to attend in spite of my schedule. June is usually a very busy month for me and my family. This year was no exception and I'm indebted to my wife for taking up the slack which allowed me the 6 days for STAR. It was a great event which I thoroughly enjoyed and I hope those of you who attended had a great time too.

The presentation I delivered at the members' meeting is now available in the MSTA EC Minutes sub-section of our MSTA forum Download section. The annual membership report is there as well.

Until the next time, ride safe.

Choon Gan

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➤ SAFETY from 6

pension performance, again potentially contributing to control failure.

If we exceed the performance capabilities of the suspension, (overloading, excessive control and/or inertial input) then the system may again not be able to effectively respond, causing control failure.

A good rider understands the critical nature of her or his motorcycle's suspension. A very good rider will be able to sense/feel the suspension system as it works, while the bike is in motion. This is particularly critical when dynamic

forces are being applied to the bike (accelerating, decelerating, turning, etc.).

If you haven't given much thought to your bike's suspension in the past, why not? Motorcycles are dynamic machines. Your bike responds to your input, but can only do that within limits. As the rider, you need to understand your motorcycle's systems, capabilities and limitations. You need to keep the system in good operating condition. The more you know about your bike, the safer you (and your passenger, if you carry one) will be! 🏍️

Ride Smooth, Ride Safe!
Doug Westly



2014 National Events

Date	Event	Location	Contact	Web Address/E-mail
JULY 25-26-27	BIG LYNN LODGE RIDE	Big Lynn Lodge Highway 226A Little Switzerland, NC 28749 800-654-5232	David Brickner 1044 Belvidere Lane Morganton, NC 28655 828-448-5429	brick@ncwireless.net
AUGUST 01-02-03	RIVER CITY RIDE	Holiday Inn Express 2449 Federal Drive Corydon, IN 47112 812-738-1623	Don "Moose" Parish 374 S. 850E Greenfield, IN 317-936-5818	mooseparish@sbcglobal.net
AUG. 22-23-24	MAIL POUCH FLY-BY	Holiday Inn 701 Pike Street Marietta, OH 45750 740-374-9660	Jon Campbell 731 Holbrook Ave. Lebanon, OH 45036 Home: 513-932-3341	ohiomsta@cinci.rr.com
SEPT. 05-06-07	OZARKS BS RALLY	Theodosia Marina & Resort Highway 160 Theodosia, Missouri 65761 417-273-4444	Ed & Linda Young P.O. Box 30 Mountain Grove, MO 65711 417-926-3075	www.ozarksbssrally.com magna@centurytel.net
OCT. 03-04-05	FALL COLORS RIDE	Quality Inn 540 N. Jefferson St. Lewisburg, WV 24901 304-645-7722	Syd Mayes 3408 Oxford Drive Sutherland, VA 23885 Cell: 804-721-3399	http://msta-se.com/fcr/ bldrman4@yahoo.com
OCT. 24-25-26	TEXAS HILL COUNTRY	YO Ranch Resort 2033 Sidney Baker Kerrville, TX 78028 830-257-4440	Vince Wells 5909 Colts Neck Drive Colleyville, TX 76034 817-988-3490	msta.thc@sbcglobal.com yoranchhotel@yoranchhotel.com



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Pedro's Speed Triple

Michigan

Pedro Gregorio shared his Cure for the Polar Vortex in the Michigan MSTA newsletter for May. It was 17 degrees the first Sunday of spring when he loaded his trusty Triumph Speed Triple on the trailer to head south to Pigeon Forge, TN in the Smoky Mountains. A new Elka rear shock was a Christmas gift to his bike and he was eager to try it out. Read the full story on page 16.



Pedro Gregorio at the Dragon

Bruce Schott passed away on May 11, 2014. Bruce joined the MSTA in August 2008. He participated in many rides, breakfast meetings and Michigan Squadron activities. He was always willing to lend a hand and always had a big smile on his face. Bruce will be missed.

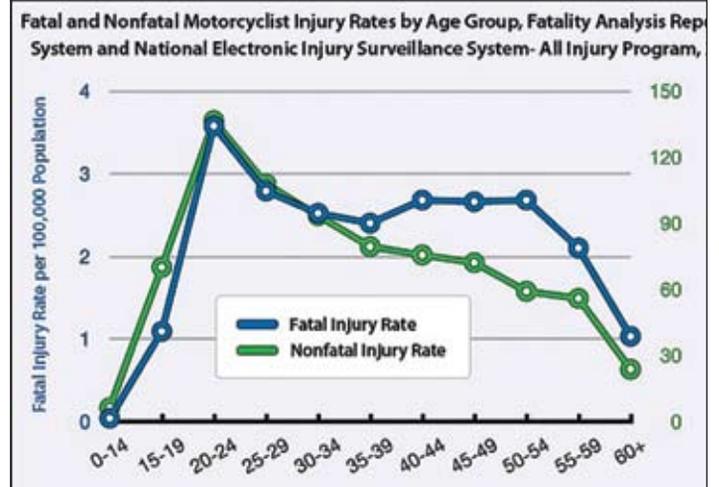


Bruce Schott and a trusty companion

Ohio

From the Ohio Rider newsletter comes an article on Riding Safer This Summer. It was reported by the AMA that in 2013 motorcycle fatalities decreased for the second year in a row. Also from the Governors Highway Safety Association was the report "Spotlight on Safety" that stated in the first 9 months of 2012 and 2013 motorcycle fatalities fell as well.

For the period of 2001 to 2008 deaths from motorcycle crashes had doubled according to the Centers for Disease Control. There was speculation that the rapid aging of the motorcyclist population (due to a high number of older entry level riders) was to blame for the rise in deaths. Most of the discussion centered around a lack of safety training. The CDC published a graph however that shows a sharp decline in fatal accidents after age 54. This follows a rise in fatal crashes between ages 34 and 44.



CDC Injury Chart

This trend was reversed dramatically in 2009 and has continued to improve, although the AMA "Spotlight on Safety" report offers no conclusions as to why. The best answer at this time is what the MSTA members apply, which is getting trained, wear the gear and ride sober. The CDC also adds that we should avoid tailgating and watch our speed on gravel and slippery surfaces. The CDC also reports that 60% of all non-fatal injuries in motorcycle crashes are to the upper body. Thirty percent of non-fatal injuries involve the feet and legs. It also remains the position of the CDC that helmets save lives.

Doug McPeek contributed an article about the "Hotdog of Motorcycles", the Suzuki DR650SE. Doug relates the Suzuki to a hotdog because it's simple and cheap, and the more you put on it, the better it is. He first became interested a few years ago when friends were talking about riding adventure and dual sport routes. He was familiar with the BMW's but they were also expensive and might not be a good idea to drop them on a trail, which seemed like a good trait to have for a dual sport bike. He also had ridden a V-Strom but it didn't

inspire confidence when things got slippery and also seemed a bit heavy to be dropping on the trail. A Kawasaki KLR650 was given a try but he found it vibrated too much to be a good all day rider. That left the DR.

Doug was able to track down a good low mileage unit at a reasonable price. He promptly switched out the Dunlop's on it for Continental Escape tires, giving it some better road manners. Next up was a seat upgrade to a Sargent day long saddle. After that it was time to deal with the exhaust, which was a mash up of a Keintech header and a GSXR muffler, which didn't fit right as it was the wrong one and way too loud. Doug replaced everything with a complete FMF system. Last on the list was a larger fuel tank. Doug replaced the stock tank with a Clarke 3.7 gallon tank, giving him 180 miles between fill ups. The finishing touch was a small windscreen.



Doug McPeek's Suzuki DR650SE

In this configuration it was a nimble back road hauler, good for most any surface except mud. It can carry hard luggage and travel state routes, back roads as well as handle rough roads, rocks and shallow streams. Top speed is around 100mph with usable power delivery. There are many more things that can be added such as brake and suspension upgrades, guards, luggage, lights, etc. Doug may be looking at adding a 19-inch front wheel which would allow better cornering and a little wider front tire. Or he may upgrade the stator for more electrical output.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Arkansas Colorado Kansas Louisiana
New Mexico Oklahoma Texas Wyoming

Colorado-Wyoming

Pete Jessen contributed an article titled "What do you do after work?" Pete's article is a good read; following are some excerpts from the article.

"After passing the Rifleman camping area, the vistas unwind and compete for my attention. The peaks are glorious in their third grade simplicity. The snow is amazingly deep at

this time, making most of the gnarly peaks look monolithic for just a few more weeks. Any kid could draw them!"

"SH119 is an endless venue of snowcapped views that scream for you to pull over and take one more photograph. It's a carpet of national forest laid right up to the Great Wall of the Rockies. No photos tonight. The image needs an early morning sun blast to capture its full essence."

Bob Maddocks did a review on Nikkalite Industries High Intensity Reflective Tape. This tape can be added to the back of your bike and is DOT and ASTM certified. It is 5 times more reflective than standard reflective tape and available in a wide variety of widths, lengths and colors. They are approved in all 50 states and are used on many government highway vehicles and emergency vehicles. They are available from <http://www.colebrothers.com>.

Charlie Thompson also did a review on the Sena SMH10 headset and SM10 adapter. His goal was to be able to get all the audio, GPS, etc. on his Gold Wing to his helmet as well as be able to talk to his passenger. Installation was easy with a clamp to hold it to the helmets. Charging is done with a standard micro USB connection and can hold a charge for 10 days standby or 12 hours talk time. Intercom mode worked well and can be left open or switched to VOX (voice activated) mode to save on the batteries. It worked very well paired by Bluetooth to his smartphone and was able to make and receive calls while riding. It also can work bike to bike as an intercom, even with other manufacturer's headsets. The adapter is used to connect the headset to the Gold Wing to get the stereo, GPS and other audio information from the bike. Overall it sounds like a great addition!

SOUTH EAST REGION

Alabama Florida Georgia Mississippi
North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee Virginia

Florida

Don Moe sent in an article he had put together in 2012, after the STAR gathering in Avon, CO. The article recounted the recommended ride on Tuesday, June 26th to the small town of Cedaredge, where they gathered for lunch at The Ole Bakery Café.

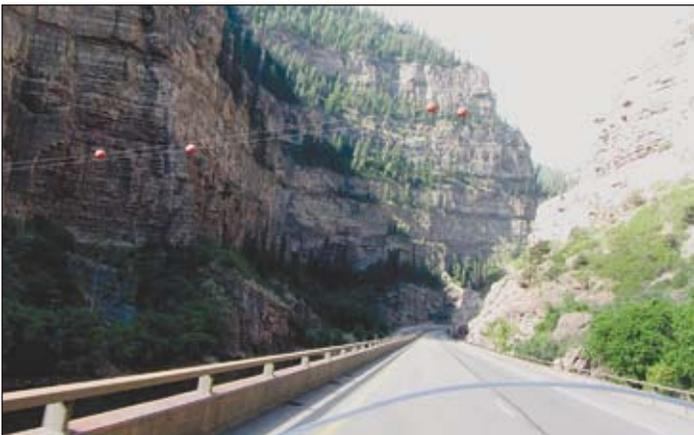


Glenwood Springs route from STAR 2012

After the first 100 miles they stopped at DeBeque, CO. for a 30 minute break and some refreshments. This first 100 miles took them through the scenic Glenwood Canyon area (a stretch of interstate not to be missed if you are ever west of Denver).



Glenwood Canyon



Glenwood Canyon approaching a tunnel

After the break, the next stretch of road was along the eastern side of Black Mountain, continuing on Highway 65 over Grand Mesa to Cedaredge. Don took some beautiful photos.



Grand Mesa



Bikes lined up at the lunch stop



Time for lunch and bench racing at the Ole Bakery Cafe

Finally it was lunch at the Ole Bakery Café. With so many motorcycles showing up it might take a while to get lunch! After lunch the group continued south on Highway 65 then east on Hwy. 92 to the town of Hotchkiss where they turned north onto Hwy. 133. This lead to Paonia State Park and through a portion of the Gunnison National Forest. After riding through Carbondale they reached Glenwood Springs and turned east to head back to Avon.

WEST REGION

Alaska Alberta Arizona British Columbia California Hawaii Idaho Montana
Nevada Northwest Territories Oregon Utah Washington Yukon

Nevada

Nick Zarras and Tony Suarez were out on a Honda Gold Wing Valkyrie run. (Read the full story on page 13.) They ran the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area then went up past the Mount Charleston National Park forest. Red Rock National Conservation Area was a conservative 85 degrees and Mount Charleston National Park was a cool 65 degrees, a break from the heat projected for later in the week. 🍷



Tony Suarez and Nick Zarras take a break



MSTA SANCTIONED EVENTS

Big Lynn Lodge Ride

Date: July 25-27, 2014

Location: Little Switzerland, NC

Lodging: Big Lynn Lodge
Highway 226A
Little Switzerland, NC 28749
1-800-654-5232

Event Coordinator: David Brickner,
phone: 1-828-448-5429,
email: brick@ncwireless.net.

River City Ride

Date: August 01-03, 2014

Location: Corydon, IN

Lodging: Holiday Inn Express
2449 Federal Drive
Corydon, IN 47112
1-812-738-1623

Event Coordinator: Don "Moose" Parish,
phone 1-317-936-5818,
email: mooseparish@sbcglobal.net.

Ozarks BS (Bull Shoals) Rally

DATE: September 5th - 7th, 2014

LOCATION: Theodosia, MO

LODGING: Theodosia Marina-Resort Inc. (TMR)
P.O. Box 390 - Lake Road 160-25
Theodosia, MO 65761

Phone: 417-273-4444 **Fax:** 417-273-4263

Email: theodosiamarina@gmail.com

Mention the MST A when calling

ALTERNATE LODGING:

The Apple Creek Cabins at: 417-273-4932,
is the closest backup, just a little over 1 mile
away (paved) and just across the bridge,
somewhat rustic.

NOTE: Check their CANCELLATION POLICY!

The Biltmore, a good resort, is a little over 5
miles away on good paved road, phone 1-888-
777-8964 for reservations. Several MST A'ers
have stayed here before, they have nice cabins at
good rates. You can check out their website at:
<http://www.biltmoreresort.com>

NOTE: Check their CANCELLATION POLICY!

Event Coordinators: Ed and Linda Young,
magna@centurytel.net,
417-926-3075

Website: www.ozarksbsrally.com

IMPORTANT:

Most everyone reserved their rooms at TMR for 2014, before leaving this year, and as of 10-6-2013 all motel rooms are full. You can call them at: 417-273-4444 to get your name on the waiting list, as we might have some emergency cancellations. If you have a place reserved that has an extra bed, and would like to share it with someone to split the cost, please let us know, and we'll try to find you a roommate.

The Corps of Engineers may not be taking reservations for the Corps campsites on the lakes edge, but they usually have plenty of campsites available that time of year you can rent when you get there. TMR also has some campsites just above the restaurant (on grass with shade) and you can reserve one of their campsites by calling 417-273-4444.

The Ozarks BS (Bull Shoals) Rally is an AMA Sanctioned, MST A members only event. (You can join MST A at the Rally.) If you are joining MST A for the very first time at the Rally, when you pay your \$30 Rally Fee, you will receive a one year free membership in MST A. (This is a one-time deal only, NO RENEWALS.) The first BS Rally was in September of 1998, and had 76 attendees, a record for a first time MST A event. The Rally usually has between 100 and 130 Registered Attendees, and many more are expected for the next Rally, September 5-7, 2014. Riders arrive throughout the day Friday to register and receive their "Ride Packets," which contain complete Rally information. There will be suggested "short rides" in the Ride Packet, for those that arrive early on Friday, and want to get in some extra riding. The Rally kicks off around 5:30 PM on Friday with a gourmet wiener roast, and lots of Tire-Kick'n and BS'n. There's always plenty of food and nobody goes away hungry.

Saturday morning around 6 AM, a special breakfast buffet is set up at Cookie's, next to the Motel and campground, and riders usually leave around 8 AM to ride some of the greatest smooth twisty roads found anywhere. You can ride a few miles or 300 miles, your choosing. You can even experience a unique ferry crossing of Bull Shoals Lake if you choose.

The first half of one of the BS Routes goes over Bull Shoals Lake on the Ferry, and ends back at BS headquarters, where you can enjoy lunch at Cookie's, or you can eat at a variety of good places along the various routes.

After more great twisty roads in the afternoon, riders start coming in around 4 PM or so, to get rested and have plenty of time for some more Tire-Kick'n and BS'n, before the gourmet banquet around 7 PM. After the banquet and

door prize drawing, folks usually gather around the park area for more BS'n till all hours.

Cookie's will open around 6:30 AM on Sunday morning. You can order from their really good breakfast menu, and folks can visit, say good-byes and leave at their leisure throughout the day.

Mail Pouch Fly-By

Date: August 22-24, 2014

Location: Marietta, OH

Lodging: Holiday Inn
701 Pike Street
Marietta, OH 45750
740-374-9660

For more info see the event pre-registration form on page 27 in this issue.

Event Coordinator: Jon Campbell, phone: 513-465-4755, email: ohiomsta@cinci.rr.com.

JUST FOR FUN RIDE

JIM's BIG ADVENTURE (JBA) 2014

DATES: Sunday August 24 through Thursday August 28, 2014 (4 nights)

LOCATION: Woodland Park, Colorado

LODGING: Woodland Country Lodge, 723 West US Highway 24, Woodland Park, CO 80863

PHONE: (866) 687-4466 or (719) 687-6277)

Please book by phone for the special JBA 2014 rate!! The Country Lodge in Woodland Park is nestled in the shadow of Pikes Peak. Guests enjoy deluxe rooms, indoor swimming pool, hot tub, continental breakfast, outdoor deck, food & bar service, fire pit, and more. Riding opportunities are many.

WEBSITE: <http://www.woodlandcountrylodge.com/>

COORDINATORS: Dog and Mary Jane Maddocks, Colorado Springs, Colorado,
PHONE: 719 465-3458



ROAD TEST

2014 HONDA GOLD WING VALKYRIE ABS

By Nick Zarras Managing Editor

The cruiser is still one of the most profitable segments of the market. Last year I tested the F6B which provided a bagger profile on a lighter platform than the Gold Wing. In the past Honda entered the cruiser arena with their Valkyrie and in 2003-2004 the Valkyrie Rune (F6C) with a more powerful version of the basic Gold Wing platform. Those models were discontinued but the Gold Wing platform evolved to create the **2014 Honda Gold Wing Valkyrie ABS (GL 180C)**. The Valkyrie is a unique variation of the Gold Wing. There is no reverse gear, cruise control or rear air suspension. There is no windshield. But there are a lot of suspension and styling upgrades that set it apart.



The styling of the Valkyrie is more

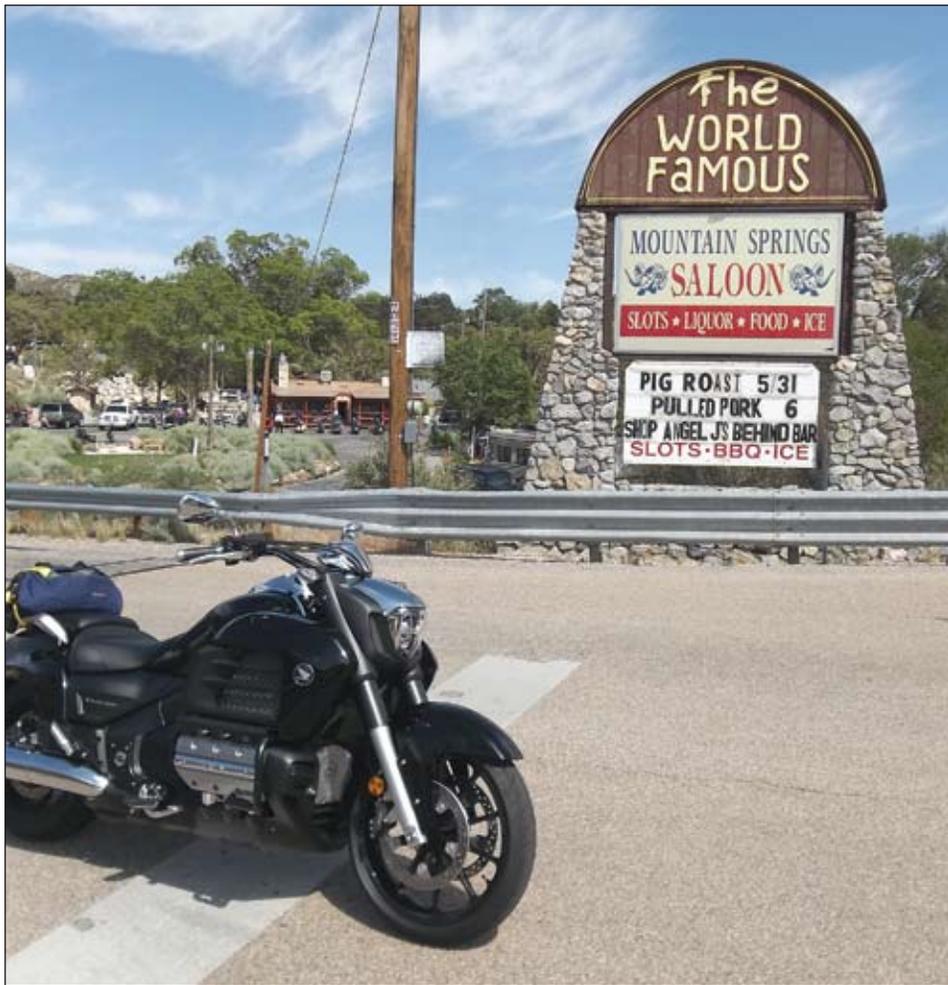
aggressive than the F6B and is geared for a younger crowd. The purists have mixed reviews. Chronologically I don't fit into the younger crowd category but I like the styling. It is edgy and very masculine. The Valkyrie came in black and not only stands out but draws a crowd. The 28.9 inch height seat was a comfortable height for me and probably for most riders. There are aluminum grab bars for the passenger. You can customize the look by removing the rear seat when riding solo. The instrument panel is a vast departure from the analog gages in



the Gold Wing and F6B. It is a simple blue backlit digital display with time, total miles or trip 1 or 2, a large MPH display, a bar gas gage, and a bar like tachometer at the bottom. There are the traditional led warning lights, with the neutral light being the only gear indicator. There are no media accessories, or heated grips.

The Valkyrie is not a lightweight motorcycle weighing in at a reported 752 pounds but it is 90 pounds lighter than the F6B and 181 pounds lighter than the Gold Wing. When you start the Valkyrie you immediately notice the dual three-into-one exhausts with slash-cut muffler. They are highly styled and freer flowing. While louder than a Gold Wing, they are quieter than a mainstream cruiser's pipes. The basic engine is the same as on the F6B thus very smooth. The lower weight is immediately apparent as with the Valkyrie's lower center of gravity, it rotates off the

more **ROAD TEST** on 14 ↪



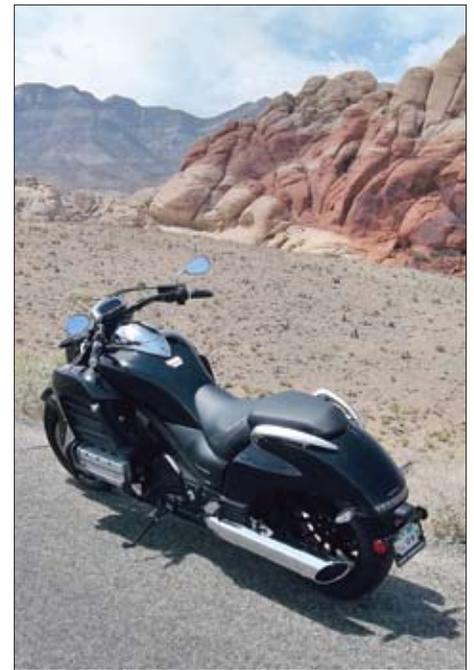
The next stop was the World Famous Mountain Springs Saloon. This is a favorite stop for the local cruiser riders. It was the private party house for a prior Nevada governor. The road there has long sweeping turns for a great ride. At the saloon the Valkyrie attracted a lot of attention.

On the next day I rode with Tony Suarez, a fellow MSTARider. Tony took my action shot. We rode another loop in Red Rock National Conservation Area early in the morning then rode up to Mount Charleston National Park to get away from the heat and enjoy the mountain scenery. The mountain roads climb to 9000 feet which is perfect to test the high altitude performance of the motorcycle. On the constant mountain curves the bike was light on its tires, and with so much torque you just keep it in 3rd, 4th, or 5th gear. On the curves brakes were optional. On the way back it was a crisp clear day and the light handling of the Valkyrie and beautiful weather made it a most enjoyable test experience.

On the highway the 5 mm longer trail i.e. wheel base increases its on the

road stability. The new suspension and lighter weight helps turning performance. You feel the higher rpms as the Valkyrie does not have an overdrive. The change in gear ratio results in faster acceleration in passing situations where on the F6B I would downshift to 4th. The power train is very smooth with great throttle response and the gearing is set perfect for the Valkyrie. I did not miss the overdrive. The transmission is classic Gold Wing with the Honda first gear notch then very smooth 2nd-5th gear shifts. Wind blast was not a problem up to a 65 mph normal cruise speed. The large light array provides decent wind protection. Above that speed, for my seating height, additional wind protection would be desirable. Braking on the highway was smooth and confidence inspiring. The Valkyrie has larger dual 310mm front discs, and the same rear single ventilated 316 mm disk as the F6B. Seat comfort was acceptable during the short trips.

On another day I rode a night run to test out the LED headlight. The low



beam provided a wide three lane fog light pattern with adequate coverage on and to the road's shoulder for up to normal highway speeds. The high beam was much more powerful and had an excellent reach both in distance and in height for highway signs. The rear LED tail lamp is a horizontal bar that is bright and more easily identifiable than the standard cruiser circular like tail light. When I stopped for fuel I found it unique that the gas release key slot is in the lower left fairing.

The Valkyrie has unique styling, much lower weight, more spirited performance. While the newer rider and the purist may differ in how they like the styling, I found the Black version very appealing. The non-ABS version also comes in Blue Metallic and Dark Red Metallic. I also loved the suspension upgrades that result in a very light on the tires feel. It is a very worthy remake of the old Valkyrie. It will draw a crowd, handle the twisties, and be easy to ride over distance. The Valkyrie has a six gallon tank and I observed 41 mpg on the test and with its 6 gallon capacity (warning light at 1 gal.). You have a 246 mile range to empty. So Honda you hit a home run on this one. My thanks to Carter Powersports (tel: 702-795-2000, www.carterpowersports.com, 6275 S. Decatur Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89118-4316) for the use of their Honda F6B Deluxe. 🍀

*Ride Safe my friends...
Clear skies, clear roads...*

Cure for the Polar Vortex

By Pedro Gregorio, Feature Editor

Seventeen degrees Fahrenheit! That was the temperature on the first Sunday of Spring when I put my Speed Triple on the trailer, a very cold seventeen degrees. This winter had been a doozy and by “doozy” I mean a freeze-your-cojones-off kind of winter. At first I loved using my new snow blower to clear the white stuff that kept falling from the sky. But it kept falling, and falling, and falling. By the end of March, I was more than ready to go find some warmth and get the riding season started.

Last year my baby and I spent the first week of spring in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina and I enjoyed it so much that I thought I should make it an annual event. The best way to celebrate the start of spring in Michigan seems to be to leave the state. The weather around Pigeon Forge could be a crap shoot this time of year but the chances of a Michigan strength polar vortex were pretty rare. I wasn't



the only one ready for some excellent riding. I had bought the Speed Triple an Elka rear shock for Christmas (what, don't you buy your bike Christmas gifts?) and was dying to see how it felt. The stock shock, even after revalving and respringing just wasn't cutting it so I decided to spend the money on a high quality aftermarket unit.

My favorite roads that are within an easy day's ride of Pigeon Forge were all ingrained in my mind: Foothills Parkway, Deal's Gap, US129, Rt.28, Cherohala Skyway and Rt.360. The week started off cool but gave me three glorious days of riding capped off by a 60 degree, sunny Thursday when I had almost 300 miles of the best

riding this area has to offer. I've said it before and I'll say it again, for all of the fanfare that Deal's Gap gets, I really do prefer every other road around it. Eleven miles of 2nd gear corners don't really turn me on. What does turn me on are roads with rhythm and flow. I absolutely love roads that flow



The Curvaceous Rt. 68

smoothly and quickly, preferably in 3rd gear at rpms in the heart of my torque curve. I've waxed poetically to anyone willing to listen about the Cherohala Skyway between Robbinsville, NC, and Tellico Plains, TN, but there are three other roads that you MUST ride when you come down here.

The 18-mile long section of the Foothills Parkway connects Rt.321 near Townsend, Tennessee, with US129. It was my route to and from my home base every day. During the high tourist season this amazing road can get clogged with cars admiring the beautiful views but this time of year that was not an issue. What this meant for me was that every morning and every afternoon I was able to experience the bliss of carving perfectly arced and smooth curves at my own pace. I never sighted any wildlife bigger than a squirrel so maybe the wail of my Arrow exhaust kept the deer at bay.

Once I hit US129 and turned right I enjoyed the view of Chilhowee Lake on my left and the lazy sweepers before the road turned inland and gave me a few delicious kinks up to the intersection with Rt.72. RT.72 didn't have many entertaining curves but did give me a few long straightaways to play with. Making a left on US411 and a few miles down the road, another left put me onto the 2nd must-ride road: Rt.360 to Tellico Plains, TN. The combination of low and high-speed corners makes this a curve lover's dream. But wait, the best is yet to come.

When I got to Tellico Plains I followed the signs to Rt. 68 south. In my opinion this road wins the M.V.A.C.A. (Most Variety of Amazing Corners Award.) From tight 2nd gear narrow curves to wide, very fast sweepers this one does it for



McCaysville, Georgia

me. Plus, any road that takes me to a place called Ducktown, TN, gets bonus points. Just over the Georgia border is McCaysville where I enjoyed a scenic lunch sitting next to the fast-flowing Toccoa River. I had forgotten what sixty degrees felt like. Then it was time get back on my bike and do it all again in reverse.

So whether we have another Polar Vortex next winter or not, you can show winter who's boss by beating the tourist hordes to the Smokies and experience some of the best and most deserted twisty roads you've ever ridden. You can bet I'll be back. 🏍️

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Letters and comments to the MSTA Executive Committee can be sent to:

vicepresident@ sporttouring.us

The Infamous Mike's Sky Ranch

By David Edinger, Indiana

I think it started with an article in Peter Egan's book, *Leanings*. About a Baja dirt bike touring company that picked you up at the San Diego airport with the bikes loaded and took you direct to Ensenada Mexico with one night of the trip at the infamous Mike's Sky Ranch which is famous for off roaders of all types. This has been on my bucket list ever since. My buddy Phil Panarisi said, let's go to Mike's this year. I am 56 and not getting any younger, so I called Bruce at Go Baja Riding and set a date last fall. He said I needed 6 guys to lock in a date, so I started stirring the pot with old riding buddies. We got two out of San Antonio (Juan and Brian), one out of DFW (Clay of the North Texas Norton Assn.), three including myself out of Indy. Two of us are MSTA (Motorcycle Sport Touring Assn.) members including Dave Edwards and myself. So it was set. I told him we had decades of dirt riding experience and two of us had ridden with Malcolm Smith, but that skill wise we were mediocre. Next thing I see is he has posted this as experienced riders only and one of the most difficult courses in Baja, ouch. Four others joined us, a retired Israeli (Kainan) who has traveled the world on bikes as much as I have, a very fast Canadian (Pete), another from Massachusetts who had been twice before (Tim an ADV Rider), and finally a very fast rider from Utah (Steve). So the stage was set.

Phil, Pete, and I flew in the night before, we wanted to ensure our gear arrived. Clay drove there so he could see fam-



ily and bring his beloved WR450F. Kainan rode in on a GS. The next day we loaded up, and headed to Mexico, the truck picked up the rest of the riders at the airport and we met at the border. We didn't exactly fly through but we got through eventually. Then on down the coast to Ensenada. After a free Margarita and a few more some of us went downtown, which is very nice and touristy, then dinner, day one was easy.

Day two, riders meeting, bike inspection, deposits paid, lots of anxiety and off we went. This was a 12 hour, 180 mile riding day, the longest by far of my life and easily the toughest. Mountains, pine forests, deep sand, lots of rocks and ruts and a few creek crossings. At least four hit the ground the first day, some a few times. Juan had not ridden dirt much in the past 10 years since he left San Antonio. After my call he bought new gear and a used bike, but only practiced once. Being out of practice, vertically challenged and not drinking enough water, he crashed 6 times that day, and hit the proverbial wall. We had to get him re-hydrated and a short break. Later at lunch in the middle of the desert next to the support truck, an ice cream truck pulled up playing Ole Suzanna.

Strangest thing ever....

We arrived after dark to Mike's Sky Ranch, we were beat! We had some beers, steaks cooked on a grill, cigars, some bench racing and bed.

Day three, started with a bang. Juan had hurt his hand and decided not to ride and to go see a doctor, good thing he did. It was the most difficult section of the three days, steep up and down hills, ruts, big loose rocks. It humbled us all, at the end



of it was a goat trail on the side of a hill ending in a creek crossing followed by a little steep incline. I was exhausted, more than any point so far. I had to lay against a rock, catch my breath and lower my heart rate. After that needed break we started with another creek crossing which had a large vertical rock to get over at the edge, not everyone made it, I did.

We then worked our way toward the beach, a nice lunch sea side. Then we did some beach riding which was nice but it had multiple sections of what we called the purple rocks, mostly about 8" egg shaped rocks. They kicked our behinds. One guy went down and I got stuck once and needed Brian to help get me out of the self-made rock rut and up the hill where I needed to rest before hitting more deep sand.

As we got close to the hotel, we had an amazing view from high upon the ridge and decided on one last challenge. We rode to the top of a small volcano. It was an incredible view of the Pacific. Then down to the hotel, more beer, cigars, and bench racing. Everywhere we went in Baja there were stickers of racing teams, hotel windows, bathroom mirrors, everywhere! Later we loaded up in to a pickup and headed to dinner. After that the party continued for about an hour, but I headed straight to bed, of course catching some flak for it, but we still had one more day....

Day three, Juan re-joined the fray. We started early because it was going to be another long one. It consisted of mostly riding along some amazing shoreline on gravel roads, more hills, more rock, and more deep sand....Baja baby!

We went back to the beach side place for breakfast after a couple hours of riding. Bruce who goes by Bruno when south of the border all of a sudden had clutch problems and laid it over in the sand and tore the clutch apart several times

unsuccessfully trying to fix it with all of us standing around observing. So at this point every time he had to stop the bike, Bruno had to kick start it in neutral, run next to it and pop it into second. Better him than me. Bruno is something else, he is big and strong, raced Ducati motorcycles, buggy's, trucks, dirt bikes, seems like everything. He is a true racer. He has raced and still races Baja, it's in his blood. He has more stories than even Phil has. He was a good host, owns the company and leads every ride. He encouraged everyone and never once said a negative comment, at least to our face.

As we sat along the shoreline with light at the end of the tunnel ahead, MSTA member Dave Edwards said, "You know, this is more than a motorcycle ride, this is about character building". He is right. For some of us in not the best shape or unable to ride in the last 5 months due to a brutal winter-we had to dig deep, not give up, and take that Advil three times a day.

So after watching Bruno, soon to be Bruce bump start his bike through Ensenada traffic after four hours of doing it in the backcountry we finally made it to the hotel.

Bruce had two rooms for us to shower, change, and pack for the trip home. On the bus they gave us what was left of our deposit, all or some. They fed us some sandwiches and tortilla soup made by the sister of one of the support team which consisted of Cesar and Ricardo, amazing guys.

So then a couple hours together in the bus headed for San Diego, another interesting border crossing. Some good razing, and stories, but you could tell everyone was beat, but happy to have done it. Once at the hotel, most headed straight to bed for an early morning flight, four of us limped out for a last bite. At that point I checked my bucket list item number XXX! 🍷





The Experience of a Track Day

By Michael Snyder, Texas

As MSTA members we all have one thing in common; we love to ride. Riding however can be categorized into several different facets of our lives. Some tour many miles a year, some ride on weekends and others ride to events. Then there is the small portion of us that thoroughly enjoy the adrenaline rush, sounds and smells of the track. There is just something that gets your blood moving early on a Saturday or Sunday when that first bike starts up and you think to yourself “Here we go.” While I have done a track day here and there since 2008 the last couple of years I find myself yearning for the sounds, smells and culture almost constantly. About a week out from any planned event I find myself thinking back to the last event and running the laps in my head searching for something I can do better. I watch my videos looking for proper body position, gear selection or line around the corners playing them over and over to find that one or two things that I missed the first

time. Don’t get me wrong, I am not the fastest nor the smoothest nor do I have great body position, but something I do have is drive and passion to improve my riding. Each time I go on track, I work on technique and becoming a better rider not only on the track but also on the street. I am a firm believer that the laps one does on the track relate directly to the miles one rides on public roads. I am a safer rider on the street because of my experiences on the track.

Living in Texas we are blessed with 6 tracks that are all less than a day’s drive, each offering their own special characteristics. From the fast and flowing 2.9 mile Texas World Speedway to the tight and twisty 1.3 mile Motorsport Ranch Cresson there is every combination of turn, elevation change and pucker factor available.

We are also blessed with a variety of track day vendors to facilitate our track day experiences in various forms. Some vendors offer open days where you just go ride the track; others have experienced racers on hand to help you out;

and others offer the full blown track day school.

I often get asked by friends and neighbors “What’s a track day?” First it is not racing nor do you need a “dedicated track bike” to enjoy the experience. At any given event you will likely see a sport touring machine and occasionally a Gold Wing or two and maybe even a group of Harleys at select venues. There are some attendees that come with the mentality that they are on the last lap of a MotoGP championship race and filled with testosterone (this actually is a rare occurrence). But once a pink bike passes them and they see the pony tail, they tend to act normal again. Not sure why, but some get their ego hurt when a girl goes past. To me it’s really cool to see the number of female attendees that typically show up. It’s definitely not a guy only thing. Next thing people wonder about is crashing. Yes it happens but 99% percent of the time it is a single bike incident typically from someone riding over their head or beyond the capabilities of the bike. I have heard

comments about not wanting to bring out a “street bike” because someone else will cause them to crash. Although there are exceptions and yes people have been hurt by others, if you ride within your limits and have some courtesy, you likely won’t have any issues. I have actually had more people near miss me on the street during group rides than I have had on the track. However, I can assure you I don’t know of anyone who wakes up in the morning and says, “Yep I’m going to crash today.”

So how does one learn how to ride the track or get started in the track experience? It’s really simple, do a Google search for a vendor in your area. As I stated earlier we are blessed here in Texas with a variety to choose from but I want to focus on one vendor who has a dedicated attitude towards making better riders. RideSmart Motorcycle School is just that, a motorcycle school which chooses to use the track to increase rider proficiency. But it is more; it really is a family of sorts, albeit dysfunctional at times. You often see the same people, and with this, your friend list grows. You get to know some interesting people with similar interests as you, even beyond motorcycles.

RideSmart is very much a niche program that combines the experience of an open track day with the availability of professional instructors. If you browse their website at www.Ridesmart.info and click on the “About” section, you will see the following statement:

“RideSmart is a motorcycle rider’s school, which provides instructional assistance for a wide variety of skill levels. From the street rider, up to the most experienced licensed racer and everything in between, our focus is to bring you the most comprehensive set of tools available. We aim to help you increase your riding proficiency and safety, whether you ride on the street, or chase time at the race track. From our Level 1 entry group, through the RideSmart Advanced Riding Course, we strive to get you on the track and teach you the skills required to become a faster, more comfortable, and more confident rider. RideSmart motorcycle school provides structured classroom

outlines that are followed up by on track mentoring. Our instructors and associates are professionals to the highest degree. Their goal is to maintain a strict safety regiment in regards to you, the student. We welcome every type of rider to come



Danny Schiffner doing tech inspection

and explore your options on the track with the RideSmart team.”

While RideSmart is a school and they have mandatory classroom instruction for Level 1(Beginner) and Level 2(Intermediate) participants, you will still get plenty of open track time. The typical day starts at about 06:00 AM,

when registration opens and those bleary eyed riders start to rise from the tents, trailers and toy haulers and the front gate opens for those others who don’t camp out the night before. Shortly after, they open for technical inspection where an instructor will go over your motorcycle and check for safety issues and compliance with the RideSmart rules. Of note, there is no requirement to drain antifreeze and have everything safety wired. RideSmart does require a motorcycle in good overall condition, fully functional, with glass and mirrors taped over to prevent breakage.

At about 07:30 AM there is a mandatory riders meeting and while I can’t honestly say it is the most worthwhile use of time for someone who has attended **multiple** times, it is an absolute need for the first timers. RideSmart owner Dave Wonders will start out by talking about the day and the expectations. Then Dave will have all the “newbies” stand up front while he stresses safety and the importance of what they call “ramping up”. After Dave speaks, the lead instructors will give their welcome and introduce the track marshal and any onsite vendors available.

One policy that I really like is about run offs. It is really simple, if you run off the pavement you are required to come see the track marshal. This policy is not to have riders get yelled at or chastised but rather to give the rider a quick

more **TRACK DAY** on 22 ☞



Dave Wonders during riders meeting

break and to find out why the rider ran off the track? Dave explains during the riders meeting that in the 13 years RideSmart has been in existence, they have learned that it's not the first time run off that causes someone to crash but rather the repeated act. And when it happens once, you are probably riding above your abilities and will likely happen again, perhaps with a worse outcome, if you don't know why. This is often a self-check exercise. However if a corner worker sees you run off track repeatedly, they will black flag you, which is your indication to pit in and hang your head in shame. What's really cool is that the school logs all runoffs and crashes at each track and will provide that information to students to give credence to an instructor's comments to "take it easy here" or "watch out for this."

After the riders meeting Level 1 and Level 2 participants go to separate classrooms, while Level 3 participant, mostly experienced racers and accomplished track riders, head out for the first session of the day.

In the classroom a review of expectations for the level you are riding is discussed while Level 1 participants receive tons of introductory information about the track and how to ride "in control" with discussion of why this works on the street. Emphasis is on teaching proper body position with classroom and static bike demonstrations, the proper way to visualize and build a line around any corner, throttle control, braking, etc. This really is the meat and potatoes when it comes to becoming a more proficient rider.

Level 2 is an extension of Level 1, with emphasis on refining the skills and technique you learned in level 1, while introducing you to new skills like trail braking, setting up passes, corner speed improvement, etc.

Level 3 is designed for riders who want to advance their track skills further and/or obtain a CMRA (Central Motorcycle Roadracing Association) Licensing School. Both are offered by RideSmart for an additional cost at select venues.

It takes a lead instructor's recommendation to move up in levels, however the school does not require a rider to move up. You can stay in whatever level you are comfortable riding. The only excep-



tion is that all first time attendees must complete the level 1 curriculum at least once. Throughout the remainder of the day the on track sessions rotate every 20 minutes between levels with classroom instruction in between and even a lunch break built into the day. RideSmart staff will provide lunch at all venues with the exception of Texas World Speedway, where food service is available.

Dave Wonders and the staff at RideSmart are so dedicated to helping newer riders become better they offer a 50% off for first time attendees with free boot and leather rentals for those who don't have their own. You bring the bike and your DOT approved helmet and they will assist you with the

rest. The first time out can be rather confusing and intimidating for a new attendee but there are plenty of people who will go out of their way to make you feel welcome. I personally always try to help and make myself available to the "newbies" and help out where I can. Trust me, you can spot them in the crowd, but heck we were all there at one point along this journey.

Even if you don't think a track school or track day is for you, I do encourage you to go just once and see what you're missing. We are never too old, too young or too good to learn more about our chosen passion, and at least for me, track days are the most fun on two wheels I have ever had.

1 Randy what is your background and how did you get teamed up with RideSmart?

I started riding the street in the early 70's when I was 15. By the early 80's, I started track riding and then racing until the early 90's. Family life got in the way, and I did not return to the track until 2007. Hooked again, I rode with most all of the track organizations and finally settled on RideSmart because of their commitment to safety and instruction. I started teaching again, and thoroughly love the time I spend at the track teaching.

2 RideSmart calls themselves a "school," is the curriculum certified in any manner?

In Texas, anyone that offers motorcycle instruction must be certified by the Texas Department of Public Safety. We submit the curriculum to the Motorcycle Safety Unit of DPS, and each instructor must also be certified by DPS.

3 Let's say I get a ticket on the street, can taking your school qualify me for dismissal?

The Ride Smart curriculum qualifies for citation dismissal under state law. We are an approved course under the motorcycle operator training and safety program approved by DPS under Chapter 662, Transportation Code.

4 What are the requirements to become an instructor and how do you choose them?

We want to see instructors that have at least 3 years motorcycle experience on the track. We want instructors that are doing it for the love of the sport and to convey their knowledge to riders that are new to the track. We don't require they be a racer, but we do require they are passionate about riding and want to help the riding community, be it street or track.

5 How does the RideSmart program differ from an open track day?

In an open track day, you go out and ride the track in 20 minute sessions. In between your time on the track, you don't receive any instruction. RideSmart is a school, so when you are not on the track, you are in class, receiving valuable instruction about the track (and about street riding, too!)

6 Can you tell us a little about how the new rider program works?

Level 1, which is required for all riders on the track, consists of the classroom instruction and track sessions. First, we have some classroom where we talk about flags, the track environment, safety, bike prep, etc. We'll take you out on the track initially at a slow pace and show you "the line", which is the safest and the most efficient way around the track. Then, it's back to class. Throughout the day we talk more about the line, body position, passing skills, throttle control, braking, speed, inertia, environmental issues, and much more. We don't just teach about the track, because we know you are on the street, too. We give you a colored jersey to wear during some sessions, and you work directly with an instructor for that session. We'll watch to see that you are applying what we are teaching, and help you further apply those skills and techniques.



10 Questions with RideSmart Lead Instructor Randy Joy

7 How much uninstructed track time versus instructed track time will I get at one of your events?

On average, you work directly with an instructor for one to two sessions (out of 6). The sessions where you do not work directly with an instructor, we expect you to "work on" skills and techniques that have been outlined in class.

Note: The RideSmart instructors are constantly watching all participants for safety and technique. During the classroom sessions they will usually start by talking about what they observed in a general manner during the previous session.

8 In the article I mentioned "ramping up," can you explain the RideSmart philosophy and teaching technique used to help riders maintain control.

"Ramping Up" is one of the cornerstone teaching techniques of track riding. Everything must be done in small, incremental steps. If you have been taking a turn at X mph, and someone suggested you double that speed, a crash is inevitable. Taking the turn at X+1 mph, or a slight increase, gets you comfortable. Then, increment it again...X+2 mph. Each small steps gets you comfortable and proficient at a given level – whether it be speed, braking distance, lean angle, or any other facet of track riding.

9 Why is it required that everyone does Level 1 on their first outing with RideSmart? Many riders have been on the street for years before their first track day and that should transfer directly to the track right?

Though street and track both are on motorcycles, the techniques we teach for the track are foreign to most street motorcyclists. You will be surprised at how much you will learn from one day at the track – I have had experienced street riders, and even instructors, tell me they learned more in one day at the track than 20 years on the street. The great thing is that the track techniques easily transfer to the street, making you a safer rider.

10 What do you as lead instructor hope the students take away from attending one of your track days?

To sum it up in one word: CONFIDENCE. Knowing that if you get in a jam on the street, the skills you learned on the track will make you more confident and let you get yourself out of that jam.

In summary RideSmart is more than just a track day, it is a motorcycle riding learning experience. No matter how many times you go to the track or ride on the street, we as riders are constantly refining our skills and there is no better place than the controlled environment of the race track.

If you are interested in learning more about RideSmart visit www.ridesmart.info or search YouTube for RideSmart 1 to watch the action. Worth noting here, there are multiple videos available with cruisers, baggers and big ole touring machines that have attended the events. 🏍️

Special note: All images courtesy of Blair Hartsfield, Hart-Photography.com"

Sweet Rides

2013 Ducati Hypermotard SP

By Doug Westly, Safety Editor

Let's get something straight right now. The Ducati's Hypermotard SP is not for everyone. First off, it is not a beginner's bike. The bike reacts to rider input so quickly that it takes an experienced rider to manage it, otherwise over-controlling the bike is a real possibility. Newbies need not apply. Next, the riding position is unlike other "normal" sport bikes. While you sit upright and comfortable, the feeling is more like a giant dual-sport on steroids than a regular sport bike. Nevertheless, if you're into sport bikes and are looking for something different, I invite you to strap on the Hypermotard SP. My past stable of sport bikes has included V-4s, inline 4s and V-twins. I've gone from a Honda 996 Superhawk to a CBR Repsol 1000RR, onto a Ducati 749 and 1098. I've done track time on the last three of those, as well as a track-only, race-prepped CBR600RR. However, none of those offer the handling and responsiveness of the SP. Take all of the characteristics of the SP and add in one more nice surprise...comfort, and the SP is one fun bike!

The SP is Ducati's top of the line motard. You sit on top of the bike, not in it. The handlebars are wide, and because of it the bike reacts very quickly to rider input. You're also sitting on Ducati's 821cc Testaretta 11 degree V-twin motor. In case you've ever wondered, the 11 degree refers to the period during the crankshaft rotation when all the valves of the cylinder are open. No one ever said a Ducati is simple. On the SP, add to that a full super bike suspension, with Ohlin's rear suspension, fully adjustable front Marzocchi forks, and radially-mounted Brembo brakes on lightweight, forged Marchesini wheels, sheathed in Pirelli Supercorsa SP performance tires. The entire package weighs just 377 lbs. dry... and that's before you start adding and subtracting components. Carbon fiber almost everywhere helps the weight as well. The engine in its stock form only puts out 110 hp, with about 70 lb/ft of torque. However, the combination of the low rpm power band of the Testaretta motor with the light weight of the bike and quick handling make for a superbly accelerating, braking



and handling motorcycle. On the track it runs out of steam at about 155 mph, but it accelerates as quickly as any other superbike, and I will trade the top 20 mph or so for untouchable cornering performance any day!

When I bought the SP, I was looking for a bike that would do three things. First, it had to offer the aforementioned comfort so that I could ride all day, yet still have it perform like a sport bike. Next, it had to work as my teaching mount when I instruct MSF sport bike classes. Finally, the bike had to offer enough performance for my track riding sessions. The stock SP took on the first two requirements without a problem. For the third, I made a couple of modifications. I replaced the stock, low-piped exhaust with Termignoni's full, high-piped, titanium race version. This came with a new, race-programmed ECU and hi-flow air system. Next, I replaced the stock lead-acid battery with a lightweight, Shorai lithium unit. Between these two modifications, I took another 15 lbs. off the bike, and added approximately 10% in the performance curve. Now the bike weighs in at just over 360 lbs. and is producing over 120 hp, with an equal increase in torque. It's not just about horsepower, but rather the horsepower to weight ratio that really matters.

Once you commit to the SP, there is another learning curve; electronics. Ducati has worked hard in its current lines to provide the most sophisticated electronics packages available, to help the

ride characteristics of its bikes. In the SP, that means a full Throttle by Wire system. If you're not familiar with TBW, it means the throttle is not directly connected to the fuel management system. Instead, the on-board ECU reads the throttle input and makes the adjustments to the engine and power delivery. This allows almost endless adjustability to the bike's performance. There are three different riding modes on the SP, rider-selectable from the handlebar controls. These modes include "Race," "Sport" and "Wet." In Race mode, the system offers full engine hp with super sensitive throttle input. In Sport mode, the full hp is available, but the throttle sensitivity is slightly reduced. Finally in Wet mode, the ECU chops the power to about 70 hp and decreases throttle sensitivity even more. Add to the TBW Ducati's full traction control and ABS systems. These systems are adjustable for sensitivity as well, and can be set to certain levels for each mode, all programmed by the rider. For instance, in Wet mode a rider may want full traction control and ABS sensitivity, while in Race mode the ABS will be turned way down and the traction control may be turned off all together to allow for rider-controlled wheel spin when exiting corners. To top it off, you can go between any of the modes at the touch of a button while riding. Remember when I said a Ducati is neither simple nor a beginner's bike? The owner's manual has 44 pages devoted just to electronics settings.

more **SWEET RIDES** on 25 

Kurt Asplindh

Hometown/State? I grew up in San Leandro, Ca. and moved to Las Vegas, NV in 2007.

What was your first motorcycle? My first motorcycle was a 1976 Suzuki RM125. I received it as a 15th birthday present from my parents.

Current motorcycle? I own a 2007 BMW R1200GS. This isn't your typical stock GS. I have added several bits and pieces over the years, and it's finally getting to where I like it. It has a custom set of wheels from Woody's Wheel Works, AltRider protection parts, Machine Art Moto cylinder head covers and front and rear fender extenders, Jesse luggage, Garmin Montana GPS, Clearwater "Erica" and "Darla" Lights. Every "light bulb" has been replaced with LEDs and the headlight has an HID conversion kit. A custom windscreen, saddle by Seat Concepts, Doubletake mirrors, Ohlin's shocks and ZipTy foot peg extensions make my rides more comfortable.

What is your all-time favorite motorcycle? I don't know if I have an all-time favorite motorbike, but I have been an Adventure Bike guy since I saw my first Honda Transalp in the late 1980s.

How long have you been riding? I have been riding motorcycles for 37 years.

When did you joined MSTA? I joined the club in April of 2014.



How did you hear about the MSTA? I met Nick Zarras through the local BMW dealership in Las Vegas, Nevada. Nick introduced me to the MSTA.

Who (what) was your biggest influence in motorcycling? In the mid-1980s I discovered the Paris to Dakar Rally and saw Gaston Rahier ride a huge BMW across the desert. Even though it was a race, watching Mr. Rahier ride gave me the desire to travel by motorbike and see the world.

Where are your favorite places to ride? Canada and Alaska were fantastic. I also love riding in the southwest USA. Exploring Death Valley, the California Eastern Sierras and Utah never gets old, for me. I would love to ride my bike in Iceland, someday.

Describe a memorable motorcycle adventure? In 2008 I finally rode a motorcycle to Alaska by myself. It was an amazing ride, an incredible journey. I loved being able to start and stop riding when I wanted. Some days I would ride 200 miles, some days I would ride 500 miles. Some days I would start at 3:00 AM, others days at noon. I would get to an intersection, look at the map and make a decision on which way to go. I really want to ride back to Alaska on different roads and go see things I didn't see on my first trip.

Best motorcycle advice or tip learned through the years? Good clothing makes all the difference when traveling by motorbike. I use KLIM gear, as it works for me better than anything I have used before. And water proof boots are a must.

What turns you on about motorcycles or riding? Motorcycle riding is like being in a movie, to me. Driving a car is like watching the movie. The temperature differences, the smells, the challenge of fighting the wind or rain, waiting for a flash flood to pass, all make the ride so much more interesting and entertaining. Riding my GS up a hill that might be a bit steep or have loose gravel as a base, is fun. Doing the same thing in a car is just plain boring.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of motorcycling? I enjoy ultra-light tackle trout fishing. Photography was my profession for 27 years. Now I take photos for fun. (And my camera gear is a lot lighter.) 📷

➤ SWEET RIDES from 24

So how does it ride? Well, it takes a little getting used to, quite frankly. I spent the first 1000 miles just figuring out suspension settings, as well as traction control and ABS settings for each of the riding modes. I also had to learn new body positions for cornering. You quickly figure out that small rider control inputs result in immediate response. Because you sit more upright, you also learn to get over the front end during hard acceleration, or the bike will rear up like a spurred bucking bronco. Because it gets front end light under full acceleration, it is prone to a little front end lift and head shake coming out of corners. Combine that with some rear wheel spin and things can quickly get interesting. I'm waiting on

a new Ohlin's race steering damper system to arrive, to help cope with the head shake. I may go with some rear sets as well. On the other hand, now that I've got a couple of thousand miles on it, as well as a couple of track days, all I can say is "OMG!" I haven't had this much fun on a bike...ever. I can (and do) ride it all day on the back roads and after 300 miles get off wanting to ride more. Then I'll take it to the track and absolutely thrash much higher horsepower super bikes through the corners. Yeah, I move over on the long straights to let some of them go by, but it doesn't matter. When they are hard on the brakes for the next corner, I'm past them again, throwing the SP over into the corner and accelerating out the other side. As is often said, anyone can go fast in a straight line. The fun is in the corners! 🏍️

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This column is to honor the State Directors whose drive and personality improves the quality of life of their state MSTA members.

This month STARreview magazine features Rhode Island State Director Jonathan “Earthdude” Hirons.

Nicky: What prompted you to join the MSTA and how long have you been in a member?

Jonathan: I joined the MSTA (the HSTA back then) after seeing an advertisement for it in the back of one of the many motorcycle magazines I have subscriptions to, in June of 2005. I have been a member for almost 9 years at this point.

Nicky: Tell me about your first bike? What motorcycle do you ride to events now?

Jonathan: My first bike was a 1982 Honda Nighthawk CB450. I was fortunate enough to buy it back from the person I sold it to years ago. It is currently in the back corner of my garage awaiting a restoration. My current ride is my stone cold reliable 2001 Honda VFR800FI Interceptor, which has now been ridden in 26 of the 50 states.

Nicky: How long were you a member before you became a State Director and what prompted you to volunteer for the position?

Jonathan: I was a member for two years before I became the state director, and at STAR 2007, in Asheville, NC, former President Dave “Brick” Brickner was what prompted me to volunteer for the position. There were no state directors or chapters anywhere up here in New England, and he convinced me to do it.

Nicky: What were your goals for your state once you became a State Director?

Jonathan: My goals were to try to create a chapter of MSTA members here in Rhode Island, and try to get them to attend STAR with me, and attempt to get a regional event or perhaps a STAR up here in New England in the future. I succeeded in doubling the membership from 2 members to 4 members in Rhode Island by 2009, but fell back to the original 2 members by last year, and my good riding buddy sold his bike and did not renew



his membership this year. Unfortunately, a career change and some other issues have kept me from focusing on my duties as State Director for the past few years, but I am planning on rounding up some new members this year now that we are finally thawing out up here in New England.

Nicky: What does it take to be a State Director in respect to time and effort?

Jonathan: The phrase “you get out of it what you put into it” has been used before to describe this job, and I couldn’t agree more. I enjoyed trying to get new members to join by arranging small group rides and leaving the ITR’s (Invite To Ride brochure) at the local hangouts for like minded riders like the rest of our membership. Unfortunately I did not receive many responses. It is difficult to put a finite number of hours on the time it takes to be a state director. At my most active I was putting in a couple of hours a week on organizational duties and 1 or 2 days a month on an “organized” ride from April until October.

Nicky: What do you find to be the best way the members can help the State Director?

Jonathan: The best way a member can help the State Director is to show up regularly for

scheduled events and volunteer to help out with the setup, organization, or cleanup after said events.

Nicky: What is one of your best memories as a State Director?

Jonathan: One of my best memories as state director was being able to brag that the Rhode Island chapter had 100% attendance of its membership at STAR 2009 in Staunton, VA. All two of us! But seriously, it was leading a ride for all four of our members in the fall of 2009 through the foothills of Eastern Connecticut. We started with a 40 mile jaunt for breakfast, which was the beginning of what turned into a 384 mile day that basically did a huge loop from the Providence Metro Area in a counterclockwise circle around Hartford, CT. We started shortly after sunrise, and I rolled into my driveway as the sun set on what had been a quintessential southern New England autumn day.

Nicky: What one recommendation can you make to MSTA members who are thinking of becoming a State Director, Assistant Director or Co-Director?

Jonathan: The one recommendation I would make to anybody who is thinking of becoming a State Director, Assistant Director or Co-Director would be to seek qualified psychiatric help! But seriously, if you have experience in organizing events, or wish to get involved, volunteer to help out at a local event or a national event to see what is involved. The job of State Director can be both amazingly rewarding and painfully frustrating, often within hours of each other. But sitting at the established “hangout” after the bikes are parked and having an adult beverage with fellow motorcyclists and recounting the day’s riding makes it all worth it!

From all of us at STARreview and MSTA we thank Jonathan “Earthdude” Hirons and his fellow Rhode Island MSTA member staff for all their efforts at making Rhode Island a great place to ride. 🍷



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CES New Stuff

Even when a rider is not on the motorcycle, normal mishaps tend to play havoc on the rider's cell phone. At the 2014 Consumer Electronic Show there were a large amount of cell phone accessories. The key focus from the manufacturers was on the Samsung S3/S4 and the iPhone. New products are coming out for the next generation Samsung and iPhones but this product test will be the key products from this time frame.



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This is one that definitely caught my attention the KX NUGUARD S. It has three layers of x-orbing protection that combine into one ultra-thin .28-inch layer protective shield with advanced energy x-orbing technology to protect against damage. The first layer is to keep dust and dirt away while keeping the screen clear. The second layer is a military grade kinetic energy 3H hardness scale rating x-orbing protection. The last layer is a



KXs NUGUARD IMPACT X-ORBING SCREEN PROTECTION



KX NUGUARD CASE for iPhone 4/5

self-adhesive layer that provides a bubble-free look. This protection can be removed without damage to your phone. During the demo I saw them hit the phone with a hammer, and use the phone as a cutting board. I was sold, and it is very inexpensive, much cheaper than replacing a new screen, not to mention the cost of multiple normal screen covers. A must buy.

One of the problems with owning a phone is dropping it. The NUGUARD KX kinetic energy x-orbing case provides impact gel protection without the bulk, allows easy port access. It is military drop tested certified MIL-STD-810G US and comes with a lifetime warranty. It comes in multiple colors. To see the KX case in action go to www.newertech.com/kx or <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xuf5Aa98AaA>.

EKUSA PRODUCTS

(www.ekusa.com)

With so many items tied to you on a ride, you sometimes drop your cell phone. If you're lucky there is no damage. ICAT has a 4 in 1 retention system that provides an impact resistant case with an integrated lanyard and large clip. It not only prevents loss of your cellular phone but keeps it close at hand for easy retrieval. It comes with both a clip and wrist lanyard. The case also allows you to stand up your cell phone. The one I tested is for the iPhone 5/5s. The case is very



ICAT 4 IN 1 RETENTION KIT

strong, and the lanyard options allow multiple types of carry. This company has been in business since 1985.

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DriCAT 3 in 1 Retention Kit

travel come rain or shine. In rain we wear waterproof gear, but how do we protect our cell phone? We normally tuck it away but when we need it or if we have it out to use it as a GPS or link to our Cobra iRadar 230 Detector (STARReview magazine 3304) there is a problem.

This system consists of a waterproof IPX7 impact resistant case, with a dual lanyard system with both a lanyard clip and wrist lanyard. The case encases the cell phone and also has an option of an iBob Floater so that if you drop it in the water while boating the case has enough positive buoyancy to keep your cell phone afloat. You can shoot photos through it, receive calls, and listen to music. It would be my option as a case for all seasons. Due to its full coverage it is larger in size, but well worth it. The one I tested was for a Samsung Galaxy S3/4 and was rugged and took whatever water you wanted to throw at it.

STICK AND FIND

(SNF, www.sticknfind.com)

This is a really neat item. How many of us get that extra quarter mile walk in the morning as we go out to our bike and say: where are my keys, wallet, phones, tablet, remote, suitcase or purse. This unit consists of 2 Black Finder Stickers which for this test were for iPhone, iPad, iPad Touch, and Android devices. The sticker is less than an inch in diameter and weighs .15oz. It sticks onto a device and has a range of 150 feet (45 meters) and has a CR2016 battery life of over a year.



You can track the device using a downloadable 3 in 1 APP. The Radar Display mode looks like an aircraft radar and sweeps to track up to 20 items within a 150 foot radius. The Virtual Leash mode sets an alarm for when your item goes out of range. The Find It mode gives you alerts when it comes within 300 feet of you. Sounds like a great app for finding your bike at STAR or to find your kids when you are the only chaperone. It works with iPhone 4S/5, iPad 3/4, iPad Mini, iPod Touch 5-Gen, and any Android device that supports Bluetooth Smart (like Samsung Galaxy S3/4/5 Note 2/3). They also have administrative beacons for business applications in 1 year micro Beacon, 1 year Beacon, 3 year Beacon and HQ Beacon. A key item is there is encryption available so only you can access your beacons. They come in six colors and additional beacons can be purchased.



EnerPlex Jumpr Max Power Bank

EnerPlex Jumpr Max Power Bank

(www.goenerplex.com)

Battery power for your cell phone, computer pad, notebook, or GPS can go out at the most inopportune time. On your stock bike you usually have a charging system setup. But on a rental bike you may not have the opportunity to have a hot lead. One of the neat products is the EnerPlex Jumpr Max Power Bank. It provides 10,000 mAh lithium ion battery power to a 1 & 2 amp output. It comes with an assortment of connectors to suit your needs. With 10,000 mAh that can recharge the average phone four times and can increase the life of your tablet or computer by 85-200%. I used it on my quad 16 inch laptop and it gave me another hour of useful time. It would be invaluable to extend the life of my GARMIN GPS on a test ride where no hot lead was available. The unit recharges

from a USB hookup. Most cell phone battery wall chargers have USB ports on them.

In closing, an ounce of prevention and a plan B goes a long way to diminishing the detractors of that perfect road trip. 🏍️

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STAFF RIDES

I chose my Ninja 1000 ABS primarily because it is one of the few sport touring bikes that has the capability of being lowered enough so that I can reach the ground!

It was first lowered as much as possible, but we have raised it UP a couple of times, getting much closer to original manufacturers specs! It feels so light weight and it is um ... quick! Just put the first 1000 miles on, and I LOVE it!!! And it has ABS and traction control! So far it seems like a wonderful solution for "short" riders!

Dianne Park

MSTA PR Director

Ninja 1000 ABS



Geoffrey Greene

Secretary and Ride for Kids Coordinator
BMW F650GS

My #1 bike is a BMW F650GS (single). I chose it because it reportedly got outstanding fuel economy (it does), was reasonably comfortable (it is), and being a big dual sport/small adventure bike, would take me places that none of my other bikes would go while still carrying me across the country as required. It put a smile on my face when I got it, and five years later, I'm still smiling.



Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

STARVIEW VOL. 33 NO. 5

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