



Sport Touring News

April 08

Editor: Gregg Mitchell

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT!

Saturday, April 26, 2008, we will be meeting at **Karl's Cabin** restaurant in Plymouth, MI. Karl's is located on **Gotfredson Road, just north of M-14**. From I-275 / I-96 take M14 West towards Ann Arbor. Gotfredson Road is exit # 15.

The meeting begins at 8:30 AM
However late arrivers are always welcome!

Indy Dealer Expo 2008

by *Chuck McKinney*

Its that time of year again for a trip to see the new after market products shown at the annual Indy Dealer Expo. This was the 40th annual event and it seemly is still as big as ever. In fact, the whole RCA dome floor (our Ford Field) was dedicated to and called the International Exhibit Hall. There had to be over 150 plus companies on the floor. Every square inch was covered with machines from China and Taiwan. They had ATV's, four wheeler's, scooters, moped's and bikes of all kinds. It's now a full invasion of products from them. In addition there were products mostly leather riding apparel from Pakistan and hardware from Europe.

There was a new section this year for companies or products that were brand new or had not been displayed before at the show. In addition the show organizers selected the "Kickstart Winners", these were the top 10 products of the year chosen from an entry of 25. So what was new, stood out

or was significant at the show this year. Of course all the 100's of regular gear and gizmo's were there, too.

I would say the most significant product this year was the Vectrix Electric Bikes (www.vectrixusa.com). They make three products, a scooter with a two tire front end that has an ingenious steering system that cambers over on turns. What I would call a moped style bike and futurist looking sportbike. These are all ZED vehicles (Zero Emission Vehicles) and freeway-legal.

These bikes are much the same as gas-powered bikes in looks. But these bikes are powered by DC motors powered by NiMH batteries using a system much like what Toyota uses with their Prius. They claim 40-60 miles between recharges, plugs into any 120v outlet and recharges in approximately 2-hours. They also claim a speed of 0 to 50 mph in 6.8 seconds. They are built with all the top equipment, Brembo brakes, Marzocchi forks, Sachs shocks, and come with Pirelli tires.

Going green here to with the Vectrix has its price. They demand a high price, MSRP in the range of \$11,000. So, like many green vehicles today the payback probably would take well over 100K miles. It's more about having it then anything.

Let's take a look at the other items of interest. For the track day group Park Tool (www.parktool.com) had a great portable workbench for the pits. It folds up rather compactly, is light yet sturdy and runs around \$100.00.

Heroic Race Apparel (www.heroicracing.com) has some outstanding race suits for men and women. They feature pre-curved elbows, shoulder, hip and knees. They have kevlar threading, stainless steel elbow and knees covers, with CE protection. They have bib entry, stretch in the right places for maximum comfort. They rival the best suits priced at \$2800 and up all for \$1450.00 or less.

Woodcraft (www.woodcraft-cfm.com) was there with their new body panels, Armour Bodies. This is great stuff, it is rather flexible, retains its shape from mild crashes, is repairable, and comes fitted for most popular bikes and the top line comes primed ready to finish. There is the Signature Series that runs around \$650.00 and the Pro Series runs about \$850.00.

Akuma had their new Stealth helmet. It has a fully rechargeable integrated power system which powers built-in LED's. They are in the front and also act as map reading lights and in the back the LED's are for safety at night. The other new thing in helmets this year, photochromatic visors. They change from clear to tinted in about 90 seconds.

McCuff Industries (www.mccuff.com) brought their NO Spill Motorcycle Fill device. It's a simple device that is used on any gas tank to eliminate splashing or spilling while refueling. It's made for a material that will not absorb gasoline, so no smell after using it. Although it is, a little heavy as its made from a rather dense material.

Lastly, Bazzaz Performance (www.bazzazperformance.com) had their plug-and-play engine management system that allows riders to adjust fuel, quickshift and traction control. Easy to use, reliable technology from top level racing. This system is the upscale Dyna Power Commander.

Through the years, I've made a few contacts at the show, of interest is Pit Bull. They are selling me their products at wholesale. So, I'm planning on

making a group buy in early April for anyone that wishes to purchase a Pit Bull stand. The price won't get any better than this. In general, pricing is somewhere between \$90 to \$110.00 depending on the stand you want. This would normally be somewhere around \$140.00 to \$160.00. I'll plan on just dividing the shipping amount which is somewhere around \$10.00. Anyone interested should contact me via email (tracynchas@aol.com) or by phone 248 646.2199 to get pricing on the stand you have an interest in. I will place the order in April, you can get them from me when they arrive or I will deliver them at the April meeting.

RACING SCHOOL IN MARCH

by Bill Webb

Is it Nuts to Take a Road Racing School at Grattan in MARCH ? You Decide.

For those that do not know of my vast track and racing experiences, prior to the road racing school, I had been on a track with the California Super Bike School and with Sportbike Track Time. Two track experiences, not exactly your highly experienced track person. That said, you must take this article with a grain of salt and view it with a raised eye-brow.

In the course of reading about how a person must complete an approved road racing school to become licensed to race with organization such as WERA or CCS, I read about the Team Chicago Road Racing School. The Team Chicago School began at the end of the 1992 road-racing season when E.J. Fasson, owner of Grattan Raceway, asked Dan Schmitt if he could put on a free riders' school in the spring of 1993. Approval to conduct the School—with Dan Schmitt at the helm--was secured from the AMA and CCS and the School started at Grattan in the Spring of 1993. Dan still runs the School today.

My motive was to learn something to improve my riding, learn more about track etiquette, get that little taste of what racers do, learn more about how to safely prep my bike and, of course, to have

a fun \$30.00 track day. Mat Mladin is not quivering at my graduation.



My wife thought I should be committed for wanting to go on a race track on Saturday when we were having a mini snow storm on Thursday. Others sent their regrets that the weather was forecast to be so cold. Blah, blah, blah. It was still thirty bucks, I had paid it and I was going. My enthusiasm chilled just a bit when I was waiting for the Grattan gate to open at 7AM Saturday morning and there were only two of us in line and the temperature was a balmy 19 degrees. And I don't mean Celsius. Hmm, I contemplated, was this driveway too narrow to back-up my trailer and get out of here before I was identified as one of two morons that didn't know enough not to come when it was 19 degrees? Too late, no backing out. The gate opens and to my surprise, within 30-minutes, the Grattan parking lot was full with trailers and the associated activity.

There were similarities to what you might expect at a track day, but this was, after all, a road racing *school* so, after registration and group assignment, we attended five schooling sessions, each lasting about twenty minutes. Track etiquette (how to behave so you don't get butt-packed or have your fellow riders want to stone you), the nuisances of the different flags, a tech session on how to make your bike safer and pass inspections, suspension setup techniques (handled by Race-

Tech), techniques for setting your lines through the turns, etc. It was all good stuff irrespective of whether a person wants to be a competitive racer or just be a better rider.

Classroom instruction was finished about 10AM and then you go with your assigned instructor to walk the entire track. My instructor was an experienced racer from Toronto and a really nice chap. In walking the track, the instructor suggests good lines for the turns and every unusual aspect of the track is explained, a very worthwhile exercise.

On to riding, but first I must digress for just a moment. As a pilot, I was trained to use checklists for everything. So, I have a checklist for what to take for riding events. Everything was carefully stacked-up at the door, leathers, tools, glasses, suitcase, etc. So, jumping forward, the fifteen minute call was given for my group, it is time to get those leathers on and get ready for my first riding session. Boots, where are my boots, I couldn't have forgot my boots. Oh, no, I forgot my boots. Well, my car is a Park Avenue, it can store a Ford Focus in the trunk, there must be something in here. At last, my son's leather work boots, spackled with paint. A quick removal of the paint with the pocket knife and I declare them motorcycle boots. At a hundred miles per hour and 300 feet, you couldn't tell the difference.

So, unlike Sportbike track time that has you enter the Grattan track near turn three, we are positioned like professionals would be positioned in the "hot lane" (next to the straight-away) and given a final reminder of what the painted "blend line" is and how they will shoot us down with a mini-gun if we cross that line. I may be exaggerating a little, but they make clear that crossing the blend line is a serious infraction. If you were to violate the rule and cross that blend line going 45 as you are pulling onto the track and someone is coming-up behind you going 170; well, you get the idea. I was left with the impression that it was a much safer procedure to enter the track from the hot lane than entering the

track near turn three where sight-distance is limited.

They make clear that to graduate you must do three things: 1) complete the class and track sessions, 2) that you not crash—that is an automatic disqualifier, and 3) that your instructor be willing to endorse that you have demonstrated the techniques that they want you to learn. We did not have to come within so many seconds of a Mat Mladin track time. With that in mind, the first session on the track is at a very easy pace, they contend that twice around, even when the track is cold, should bring the tires to an adequate temperature. And, like Sport Bike Track time in the novice section, each time around the track positions are rotated so a different member of the group is leading with the instructor always remaining in the number two position. That way, your instructor can give you coaching as to how to improve.

By mid-morning, the temperature came up to the 30's and by after lunch was in the low 40's. What is the wind-chill at 125 mph when the temperature is in the 30's or low 40's? While it was something that caused me some worry, it proved to be a non-issue. With the super thin cold-killer undergarments and my leathers on top, I was perfectly warm all the time at any speed. Maybe if I had reached John Cirner's speed in the straight-away, that could have been different, but at SV650 speeds, I was comfy.

In my group was an experienced rider on a GSXR-1000. The funny part was he would pull away from me so fast in the straight-away one might think my bike was malfunctioning. But then, by the end of the turns coming to the straight-away again, I was right behind him. So, the little SV650 easily rules in the turns but is instantly non-competitive in the straights. It's more fun ruling in the turns anyway and that's the story I'm sticking with.

If you are not familiar with Grattan and want to get a feel for the track, here is a video <http://youtube.com/watch?v=LcVxaAKLQMI>

So, at the end of the day, things were learned about riding techniques, bike preparation, track-etiquette. It was a hoot. Plus, I have this road racing license to frame. Hopefully, some of you will consider signing-up with me next year. And don't forget your boots. Three cheers to Dan Schmitt's Team Chicago Road Racing School.

Whoa, Bro!

by Ann Redner

Well, who ever thought that the simple value of your current membership could result in a motorcycle trip halfway around the world? It never crossed my mind. But then again, I never dreamt that George Perry, our national treasurer, would call one day out of the blue to say that I'd won a gift certificate to the tune of \$5500 toward a motorcycle tour with Ayres Adventures. Wow. I mean, *Whoa, Bro!* My ship has arrived. Rather, my wheels in South America have arrived. And so it has happened. As part of our club's 25th Anniversary celebration, the club gave away this gift certificate, good toward any tour with Ayres Adventures. I was not the first winner, but rather, the first winner who would *accept* the prize. Why other names before me elected not to accept this prize, I'll never know. *It must have been meant for me.*

My dream has been to tour South America by bike, so the choice of destination was a no-brainer. Deciding *which* South American adventure to choose, however, took thoughtful consideration. Being able to realize this dream now instead of 10 years from now was entirely unexpected.

I've settled on a 17-day tour through parts of Peru, Chile, northern Argentina, and Brazil; with a departure in late March, '08. Who knows—when you read this, perhaps I'll be crossing the Atacama desert or threading switchbacks coming down through the Andes mountains.

While this Ayres Adventure will be far more comfortable than the travels of Ché Guevara and Alberto Granado (see [The Motorcycle Diaries](#) by Ernesto Ché Guevara), I'll ride through some of the same mountains, lush forests, and dry desert. And instead of riding two-up on "The Mighty

One" (an old, cranky Norton 500) as did Ché and Alberto, I'll be riding solo on a modern-day, quite reliable BMW F650.

At this moment, I'm days away from catching a flight for Cusco, Peru, where the adventure begins. Next time you hear from me, it'll be post-trip, through a story relaying some of the trip's highlights. It's all happening on behalf of our HSTA, the simple point of maintaining a current membership, Ayres Adventures... and, I believe, the higher power that had a hand in this uncanny orchestration.

I thank the few of you before me who declined acceptance of this once-in-a-lifetime prize; and my thanks and appreciation go out to our HSTA and Ayres Adventures for making this possible—both of which understand the commitment to “dreaming the ride” and... riding the dream.

A special thanks to Chuck McKinney, Bill Webb and Ann Redner for the articles featured this month!

REMEMBER.....

It doesn't pay a reward, but your articles will be appreciated by all your fellow members and your local editor AND you will earn points toward the **SMOTY Award!**

If nothing else - you'll get to see your name in print, somewhere other than on the Post Office bulletin board!



MICHIGAN SQUADRON RIDING EVENTS 2008

One of the traditions of the Michigan Squadron of the HSTA is to organize a few events each year specifically for our State Squadron. These events are not sanctioned or official events of the HSTA, but are limited to those who are current members of the HSTA.



SPARKLER "3"

**Come celebrate your independence at the next Michigan "SPARKLER"
July 10 – 13, 2008
Beckley, West Virginia**

Phone or email your intent to attend before May 1, 2008 to:

Bob Proctor at (248) 842-8843 or
bobproctor@comcast.net

Then find a roommate and reserve your room at the event hotel:

Country Inn & Suites by Carlson
2120 Harper Road
Beckley, WV 25801
(800) 456-4000
or (304) 252-5100

This is the Inn with the “rocking chair front porch” where we've stayed before.
Room Rates (double): \$89 Thursday, \$102 Friday & Saturday

Block of rooms being held under the name
“**SPARKLER**” until May 31st.

(All rooms at the Inn are now smoke free)
Mandatory rider's meeting Thursday, July 10th
9:00 PM at the hotel.

Come enjoy southern hospitality and fantastic sport touring roads with us
in West Virginia!

NOTE: There will be a group ride organized down to Beckley from Marietta OH on Thursday July 10. See the entry in the HEADS UP section of the Newsletter

WOMAN'S RIDE

August 8 - 10, 2008

Hocking Hills, Ohio

Event Organizer – Jan Pennington

Please contact Jan Pennington if you wish to participate in the event.

eMail - janpennington@comcast.net

Phone - 734.482.8188

NOTE:

Riders of the male persuasion are also welcome on this event – provided you meet one of the following requirements –

1. You are accompanied by a woman pillion rider.
2. You are riding pillion with a woman pilot.

M.O.B. - 2008

Michigan's Ohio Blitz

Sept. 19 - 21, 2008, SE Ohio

Event Organizer – Gregg Mitchell

Details to be announced!

HAZARDOUS TOUR

Hazard, KY, Oct. 2 - 5, 2008

Event Organizer – Gregg Mitchell

Details to be announced!



H
E
A
D
S

U
P!

April 26, 2008 – Saturday 8:30AM

Michigan HSTA Monthly Meeting

Karl's Cabin Restaurant

Gotfredson Rd., Plymouth, MI

June 8, 2008 – Sunday – 2:00 PM

Pennington's Bar B Que

Ypsilanti

June 13 – 15, 2008

Demo Days – Open House

Triumph Detroit

June 20 – 22, 2008

RCR 08 (aka "STARlite") – Carrollton, KY

HSTA Regional Event

Event Hotel – Comfort Inn

141 Inn Road, Phone 502-732-6661

Special rates are available

July 10, 2008

PRE-SPARKLER RIDE

Marietta OH to Beckley WV

Make your reservations for the night of July 9

Super 8 Motel - Marietta

46 Acme St Washington Centre

I-77/Exit 1/Rt 7W to 1st Light

Phone: 740-374-8888

We'll have a riders meeting at 9:00 PM on the 9th to distribute route sheets and form up the riding groups for the trip to Beckley on the 10th.

Groups will leave the Super 8 at 8:00 AM or thereabouts.

August 22 – 24, 2008

Mail Pouch Fly-By – Marietta, OH

HSTA Regional Event

Pre-registration forms will be available at our monthly meetings and are also downloadable from the following web site:

<http://www.freewebs.com/trophyrider>

Please note that the event headquarters will not be the Best Value Motel as in past years. For 2008 the Event Headquarters will be at the **Holiday Inn** – Marietta.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Welcome to the HSTA

Please join me in welcoming the following new member(s) to the Michigan HSTA Squadron:

Fred Thompson – Brighton
Donna Thompson - Brighton

For the individual(s) listed below - this will be your last Michigan Newsletter if you don't renew within the next 30 days **AND advise me with a call or email**. If you feel this information is in error - call me. If you wish to renew and need a form, let me know and I'll send you one or print out the copy at the HSTA Website -----
www.ridehsta.com

We're going to miss you if you don't renew

Art Laycock - Southgate

Our policy regarding "Prospects" is to provide them with a "local" newsletter for 3 months following their introduction to the club. Under those guidelines this will be the last newsletter for the following individual(s):

Roger Eagleston -- Chelsea

If you have decided to join the HSTA, please let me know so I can continue sending your monthly newsletter to you.

Current Squadron Membership – 105

The HSTA Michigan Squadron and Newsletter belong to you - the Membership. Both of them can only be as good and as interesting as you make it --- so take the time once and awhile and contribute. If you've got something to say about a ride, your bike, perhaps a trip you're planning - whatever -- send it in for the newsletter –

To:

Gregg Mitchell - MI_HSTA@voyager.net



1daveo@comcast.net
248-360-2184

SPECIALIZING IN

- Custom or Restoration Paint Work
- Plastic Repair

MIDWEST
MOTORCYCLIST
The Complete Guide to Motorcycling in the Midwest™

Product tests, ride reports, event coverage, interviews, industry, regional & local news and a comprehensive event schedule - we cover it all. Pick up your FREE copy at your local motorcycle shop or visit our web site at
www.MidwestMotorcyclist.com