



Squadron News

December 2011

Editor – Gregg Mitchell

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT!

Saturday, **December 17, 2011**, 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
Late arrivers are always welcome!

SMOTY Awards Dinner

Our fifth Annual "Squadron Member of the Year" awards dinner will be held following the International Motorcycle Show, on Saturday, January 7, 2012.

All Michigan Squadron Members and their guests are invited to attend. We'll be gathering at Karl's Cabin in Plymouth at 6:00 that evening.

We'll be recognizing those members who have managed to attend all of our monthly meetings, those who have attended the most events and of course our Squadron Member of the Year.

Reservations will be required and must be submitted prior to December 28, 2011.

Reservation forms have been emailed to all members and will be available at our upcoming Saturday meeting. You can also request a form by email – mi_msta@earthlink.net

We have seating for 110 people available and there is a possibility that this dinner will be sold out. Get your reservations in as early as possible. In the event of a sell-out, we plan to make some arrangements for others to attend the awards portion of the ceremony.

I'll be looking forward to seeing all of you there!

The Loneliest Road in America America's Back Bone

By Russ Weik, Texas MSTA Member

Highway 50, the Lincoln Highway, was one of the first coast to coast roads in the United States. Some historians trace its origin to 1821 and the Sante Fe trail. It runs approximately 3073 miles from Ocean City, Maryland to Sacramento, California or more if you count the overlay with other highways to San Francisco.

The section from Delta, Utah to Fallon, Nevada, which closely parallels the Pony Express route, is called, "The Loneliest Road in America." That was enough to entice me in 1987 to explore it for my first time. I needed to make business trip from Denver to Sacramento and I had a red Eldorado company car with a white interior. I looked like an Eight Mile Detroit pimp. People would stare at me at the fuel stops. It still amazes me that that Cadillac engine did not cut itself in half, which that series was prone to do, while crossing the desert. The skinny pedal was buried in the carpet most of the time. One word: luck.

I have ridden this road several times since on various motorcycles. There are only three ways to cross Nevada east and west; I-70, the extraterrestrial highway 375, and highway 50. Each of them takes a full day commitment. Hence, another nick name for the road, "All Day in High Gear." If you stay on 50, gasoline may be available in most towns, although some fuel stops are unmanned credit card only facilities. If you decide to venture onto a side road, you may be faced with some rather large distances between services. One word: fuel. Nevada's landscape is the most consistent of any state I have traveled. If you love sage brush, this will be heaven for you.



slowing approached on the opposite side of the road. This is a very large bird up close and he expressed absolutely no sense of fear as we stared at each other for a moment. In fact, my mind began calculating the mil thickness of my leather jacket versus the length of his talons as I began to wonder if he was thinking, "My prayers have been answered, this motorcycle just brought lunch."

You would think a desert would be hot and the low spots can be very in the summer. However, there are more than seven passes near the 7000 feet altitude. So, be ready for many temperature changes when traversing this road. While fueling late one night in Austin, Nevada, I asked the attendant about camping

possibilities, since all four of the motels exhibited "No Vacancy" signs and it was getting cold. He directed me to the Bob Scott camp ground 5 miles east of town. "You can't miss it." Well, I did. Rode right passed it. Sensing that, I retraced my route about a mile and found the sign, barely visible in my Pia lights, half covered in sage brush. It was a self-service camp ground, no lights, no gate, no park ranger. I suspect any camp ground along 50

Hour after hour you can recede into your helmet to resolve the problems of the world. Most of the journey is straight, taking very little effort to keep the bike on the road. It can lull you into a trance which will lead to a sudden awakening when a switch-back appears on your climb to a summit pass. When starting down the other side, it is easy to get focused on the immediate path of the front wheel. Be sure to look up at the ribbon of highway as it runs down the valley and up the next mountain pass, and then estimate your time of arrival at that point. Signs in the valleys will warn you of low flying aircraft. This is where the military does its low level super sonic, advanced radar testing, and pilot training. One word: duck. Nearby is Nellis Air Force base, where all those airplanes the government says don't exist, really exist and Revell has models to prove it.

The tallest structures in the valley floor are the roadside reflector stakes. I was fortunate to spot an eagle sitting on one. So, I very



would be similar. The sites were actually pretty good, the grounds were clean and well kept and the minimal equipment was in good repair. My stay was blessed with a full desert moon. Later, when the moon set, the sky filled with stars. More than I can ever remember. If you have never experienced a clear desert night, you are missing a truly beautiful sight. Some unexpected night time entertainment broke the peace about 2:00 AM when a coyote-rabbit (or was it a road runner) chase came through the center of the camp ground. It made a pretty good ruckus as the two sides fought for dinner or survival. That's when I began to second guess my wisdom of tent camping in a wilderness. For the rest of the night Smith & Wesson shared my sleeping bag. One word: survival.

East of Fallon there is about a two mile stretch of gray colored mud flats were you can hike 200 yards out to pick up dark stones to make a message to the passing motorists. Or you can rearrange some else's stones and avoid the hike. West of Eureka are five large grave yards, locally called Death



Valley. These are left over from the pioneer westward movement days. The desert and Mother Nature are very unforgiving for foolish decisions. One word: water. One of my curiosities was the routing of the highway east of Fallon through the middle of a naval missile test range. I believe the road was there first, so building the range to straddle the highway makes no sense to me. One word: politics.

Most of the road's residents survive on the mining of minerals in the mountains or the mining of tourists passing through. Gold, silver, copper can be leach-mined by laying down a huge rubber mat (several acres) then piling on several stories of ore and setting acid sprinklers on top. The acid selectively dissolves the desired mineral and the mat routes the solution to an electrolysis process reconstituting the pure metal. This may seem expensive but the volumes they mine at the current price of metals makes for a lucrative business. You may miss seeing a mine in plain sight because the tailing mounds are so large, they blend into the scenery. If time



allows, take one of the mine tours. The equipment is amazingly huge. The tour vans and support vehicles, wisely, travel behind the dump trucks, keeping a sharp eye on their location.

Most of your time on this road will be rewarded with large panoramas, offering many views of more than a hundred pollution-free miles. This is one of the endearing aspects that draw me to the west. I have seen six separate rain cells across the desert at one time. I have seen a complete freight train running across a valley from engine to caboose. On this last trip, I spotted an artist making a painting of a storm. He had come from Logan, Utah, some 200 miles away to paint. Over the course of this afternoon, he



had produced six great canvases as the storms changed their color while expending their energy.

This is a “manly” trip, minimal cell phone coverage, minimal distractions, minimal civilization, and lots of time for solitude and reflection. I suspect this route is used frequently for riders on a quest to get their Iron Butt Boy Scout badge. Whatever your excuse to make this trip, allow the desert to pull you in and share its magic. Then think about the pioneers who made this same trip in a covered wagon at three miles per hour. One word: beautiful.



Post Meeting Workshops UPDATE!

By John Cirner

The idea came to me years ago when hanging out in the parking lot of Kerby’s Coney Island after a HSTA (back in the old days) breakfast meeting. I observed the collective group of riders standing around in small sub-groups talking about all things motorcycle related. In the summer months the gatherings didn’t last very long as our eager members wanted to take advantage of our limited riding season to ride. As the meetings moved into the winter months and fewer riders actually rode to the meeting the same phenomenon would take place ... but for longer periods of time well after the meeting had ended.

Let’s face it, as we go into bike hibernation and wait for spring to come back around here in Pure Michigan we all seem to look for outlets to feed our motorcycle withdrawal. It might be reading every motorcycle publication we can get our hands on or watching recordings of last seasons WSB or MotoGP races, or if we are lucky enough to have a heated facility work on upgrades to our bikes. For most of us spring can’t get here soon enough. In the meantime we drag ourselves out of bed on chilly Saturday mornings in the middle of winter and join up with a bunch of our riding buddies for breakfast and bike talk (and the jokes).

Over the years that I have been a member of the MSTA I have had the good fortune of meeting and riding with some guys (and gals) that have more experience than I do. Whether it’s on the track or group rides to new areas (new to me) or simply taking on a bike service or modification projects there are resources in this group that have really accelerated my learning curve. I have yet to meet a MSTA member that isn’t willing to help out or share their experience with motorcycling and motorcycle-related topics.

That leads us back to the topic of why workshops work ... because Michigan MSTA members love all things motorcycle related, and are eager to learn and

share their knowledge. Going back to our first workshops starting in 2008 we have covered some great topics and learned things you just can't find in books. Ian Orr shared all his short cuts and tips on how to pick out a GPS unit and use it successfully to get from point A to B ... not to mention getting rid of the 50 waypoints along the way! Bill Webb enlightened us on picking out radar detectors and dealing with the guys handing out riding performance awards as well as saving more than a few riders (including yours truly) points and money for said awards. Thank you Mr. Webb!

We have had great turnouts for workshops on how to puncture a motorcycle tire and repair it on the side of the road and how to accessorize your electrical system without frying the whole bike. Thanks to Paul Duffy and Bob Kiessel we can now run electric vests, gloves, MP3 players, GPS units and more without having to own a BMW. A number of us, including some seasoned veterans, got together and shared our tips on organizing and practicing safe group riding. We learned what things not to do and important stuff like getting information about fellow riders in the event something does go wrong and nobody thought to ask where that rider that just left the scene in an ambulance left their car keys. Emergency contact information is also a very good idea.

We have also had the good fortune of having a couple guest presenters put on workshops for our group. Brian Van, founder of Sportbike Track Gear, (find him at www.sportbiketrackgear.com) brought in some of his best gear for street and track riding. Brian and his son Max entertained us with his on-track product testing experience and insight into some of the best stuff in the market. Brian and his organization are a great resource for us and he has gone out of his way to assure his customers are educated and prepared for the inevitable motorcycle mishaps. Team Cirner has made a small investment in his company over the years and I can assure the group that you will not find better pricing or customer service than the team at STG.

Mark Cortis, a personal friend and instructor to numerous MSTTA members, put on a presentation to the group on personal protection. Mark is a NRA Certified instructor that has a realistic "Put your life first" philosophy about personal protection. Mark

preaches that there is nothing you will undertake in life that is more serious or more important than your CPL training and is dedicated to providing you with the real world training you need to carry a concealed pistol with confidence. Mark instructs his students on the legal, emotional, and motor skill aspects of defending yourself with a firearm and has a non-intimidating patient teaching style that works well with all personality types. Mark can be reached at www.wildwestacademy.com. I have had several requests from the MSTTA group to bring Mark back for another workshop.

So where are we going with workshops in 2012? As some of you may have figured out by now our adopted clubhouse, Karl's Cabin, has become a very busy place on Saturday mornings after our group meetings. It's common to see gatherings of gals anxiously waiting outside the door with party decorations, gift wrapped presents, and cakes, ready to take over our real estate. Last year I made every attempt to "reserve" the room until noon for the first four months of the year for workshops but somehow they still managed to have the next group (party of 50 your table is ready) standing outside the door by 10:30AM. We had to rush and cut short workshops this year to accommodate our hosts.

This year I made the same request to reserve the room after our meetings and I was met with the same challenge. Saturday mornings are not a good time for the MSTTA gang to tie up the space when Karl's has a number of other events lined up. They are more than willing to accommodate us in the event we would like to schedule time either later in the day or on Sundays. This quite simply will not work. Don't get me wrong, I completely understand their position and it is a business so we can hardly get in the way of their paying customers. They have been gracious enough in the past to accommodate us but their meeting room is prime real estate for other events on Saturday afternoons and a group of bikers sitting around for hours drinking coffee is not in their best interest.

So is this the end of our rather successful workshop program? No way! I propose that we simply need to plan a little further ahead, find members with the space to accommodate us (Gregg and Al Goldstein have offered their shops) and get the group to move to Plan B. There are workshop topics that many have suggested that would actually work better "off

site” such as suspension setup, performing valve adjustments and working on electrical systems – advance class. We even have club members that are certified in the area of personal protection, gun safety, and getting a CPL that would benefit from holding class at a range or other location.

If you have attended a workshop in the past and believe it was beneficial, or are interested in organizing a workshop this off-season, let me know and we can work together to make it happen.

A special thanks to Russ Weik and John Cirner 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 **2012 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 2012

One of the traditions of the Michigan Squadron of the MSTA is to organize a few events each year specifically for our State Squadron. These events are not sanctioned or official events of the MSTA, but are limited to those who are current members of the MSTA. The full 2012 schedule is still in development. There are a couple of events that have been scheduled. Others will be posted here as the year unfolds.

MoArk Adventure 5

April 11–15, 2012
Missouri / Arkansas

This event is a “curve-chaser’s” delight. Three days of riding (1100 tire shredding miles) in the Ozarks, to start your riding season out.

This ride begins in Park Hills, MO. We’ll meet there for dinner on Wednesday April 11. We’ll be staying the night at **Rosener’s Inn** and we’ll have a rider’s meeting there around 9:00 PM following

a dinner at The Branding Iron Bar-B-Q.

To make a reservation at Rosener’s for

Wednesday night, call **573-431-4241**.

On Thursday, we’ll be taking a twisty route from Park Hills, MO to Russellville, AR. We’ll be staying Thursday and Friday nights at **The Best Western in Russellville**. To make your reservations, call **479-967-1000**.

On Friday we’ll be riding on some of the best roads in Arkansas that are north and west of Russellville.

We’ll return to Park Hills, MO from Russellville on Saturday and gather for dinner afterwards at Bandana’s BBQ in St. Louis.

If you plan on making this trip, make your hotel reservations and let me know that you’ll be joining us.

Event Organizer: Gregg Mitchell

mi_msta@earthlink.net

Michigan Mountain Madness 2012

May 20 – 25
Ironhorse MC Lodge
Stecoah, NC

A Michigan Squadron Hallmark - May in the Smokies! Ride Headquarters will be at the Ironhorse Motorcycle Lodge in Stecoah, NC. We’ll be riding on the best roads found in Western NC, North GA and Eastern TN for **five** glorious days. If you want to attend this event, do not delay making your reservation. The entire property is open for our group to reserve for the time being.

RESERVE NOW to insure you have the spot you want at the Lodge.

To learn more about this event and how to make your reservation, point your browser at the following link

<http://ironhorse.msta.us>

Event Organizer: Bill Webb

billwebb@england.edu

Get informed of all the National and Regional MSTA Events at the National web-site and Forums

<http://www.sporttouring.us>

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December 17, 2011 – Saturday 8:30 AM
Michigan MSTA Monthly Meeting
Karl's Cabin Restaurant
Gotfredson Rd, Plymouth, MI
Just north of M14

January 6 - 8, 2012
International Motorcycle Show – Novi, MI

January 22, 2012 – Saturday 8:30 AM
Michigan MSTA Monthly Meeting

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Welcome to the MSTA

Please join me in welcoming the following new members to the Michigan MSTA Squadron:

Carl Berry – Plymouth
Vince Cardinale – Royal Oak
George Johnston - Howell

Current Squadron Membership
167

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 MSTA Website. Online renewal is also available at:

<http://sporttouring.us>

Jack Doyle - Howell
Kimble Inghram – Gladstone
Mike Osmer – Plymouth

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

Derek Pelowski – Plymouth

The MSTA Michigan Squadron and Newsletter belong to you, the members. Both of them can only be as good and as interesting as you make it. Take the time to 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_msta@earthlink.net

MICHIGAN SQUADRON MILEAGE AWARDS

LAST CALL to get your 2011 mileage reported to Ian Orr for the Michigan Squadron Mileage Contest. We need to get as many members as possible to participate in this. There are SMOTY Points at stake and there will be recognition of the winners at our Annual SMOTY Banquet in January. So send your information in to Ian as noted below without delay at the following email address.

mi.msta@comcast.net

Your name: Remember, many e-mail addresses don't show your name.

Your total mileage:

(Only the mileage while you were an active MSTA Member – NOT including track day mileage)

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