



# Squadron News

September 2011

Editor – Gregg Mitchell

## **MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT!**

Saturday, **September 24, 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!*

**If you are planning on doing the Fall Colors Ride in West Virginia, September 20 – October 2, this is a meeting you want to attend. We will be discussing the details and arrangements for this ride at some time during the meeting!**

## **Cheese, Crackers, and Old Whine**

*By Russ Weik – Texas MSTA Member*

I arrived at STAR 2011 too late Monday to connect with friends for a community ride. Tom was making a last minute repair to his bike in the parking lot so we joined forces to explore some local roads. Twenty miles into the ride, I'm feeling very familiar with the roads. A rest stop at Shady Valley and it all comes together. I was here twenty years ago and had spent the better part of a week riding "The Snake," although, they had not attached the name as a marketing tool to hwy 421. I slipped into reminiscing about the fun of my younger days, strafing these curves with little traffic and uninterested police. Those were some good ole days. I was wondering if this would be my last time to come to Tennessee. I have enjoyed so many of these great roads and yet feel there are so many

more just over the mountain. Was I running out of time?

For our evening meeting the EC went over the details of our club. I would have excused myself, slipping out for a beer, and never returning had Michael not mentioned the Garmin door prize at the end. I stayed. Choon is up next with his demographic power point presentation about MSTA. My mind centers on a graph that looks like a pig-in-a-python of our member's ages. I'm there, right in the middle, right on the high point. The future looks all down hill run from here, for me. One hour later, I find that the Garmin drawing was rigged. Isn't that what all losers say? So, I step outside to nurse my last beer. It's only 10:00 PM, and I find Gregg holding court in the drive. No one can tell a story like Gregg. I've heard some of them before, Riders of the Corn, Keith's Das Boot, Dracula's Sprocket Teeth, Gregg's Record Fifty Yard Crawl, and How Not to Patch a Tire. Each time, some of the perpetrators are present to defend their positions and embellish the stories with semi-truths. I will miss hearing those stories.

Tuesday morning arrives and with the help of some Aleve, I stumble down to the nearest caffeine fountain to begin the awakening ritual. The breakfast conversation quickly turns to who has had the latest by-pass surgery, who has been through chemo this year. So many of us have had a round of skin cancer, it no longer drums up sympathy. My mind turns to years when we talked about faster bikes and the hot waitress at the pub the night before, but not this year. We pack up for our day's ride and I wonder how many more times, if any, will I get to ride these roads?

I ride the day in a lethargic mood wondering how all this fits together. My Gixxer is in her element on the twisty pavement, yawning at my inputs, as if to ask, "Is that all you have old man?" Will this be my

last sport bike? Should I reconsider the sports car mentioned in the “Mature Rider Seminar”? On returning to the hotel I sponge a beer to ease the kinks in my muscles. I like to think it is healthier than Tylenol. I see Don Clark in the lobby and ask about the weather in California, how’s the wife and kids, grand kids, and great grand kids. The small talk is going well when he says he just made his reservation for STAR in Avon, Colorado. “What”? I say to myself, trying to keep a good poker face. This guy is 95; still riding coast to coast, drinking like a teenager, buys green bananas, and shows no sign of retiring before midnight. The thought occurs to me to break into his room and steal his drug pack, but if he found out, he would whoop my arse.

I have a good night’s sleep. The arthritis is manageable, the sciatic nerve is dodging the herniated disc, and the motocross shoulder has locked in like a Snap-On socket. My joints still sound like a bag of marbles but life is good. We saddle-up for a new road called the Dragon’s Back. (Some people have no shame.) Choon is a magician with a Garmin and 30 minutes later we are in the curves. Things are going so good, even a hay baler waves us around. Then we come upon the sign, “15

MPH curves next 3 miles.” Gixxer looks over her shoulder to see if the same rider is on board today. “Yeah, it’s me, girl.” I didn’t have the heart to tell her I had dreams about an S1000RR last night. After lunch, Choon dials up more good roads. Wow, I could do this all day. Let’s do “The Snake” on the way back to the Holiday Inn. At dinner, I’m selling a side trip to The Tail of the Dragon, Cheroholla Sky Way, and the Devil’s Triangle. And next month I should dust off the BMW and pay a visit to daughter in San Fran. Maybe I can get my Texas buddies to do an Iron Butt ride when the temperatures ease up. I think I need to come back to this area in a couple years, after all, Don convinced me I have another 30 years to ride. Hopefully, I can be a role model for those on the left side of Choon’s chart that they have much more time to ride too. Just about every medical report says, “Close relationships lengthen your life span.” MSTA, “They are my kind of people.”

## **Another Tire Story – Of a Different Sort**

*By Hal and Donna Kramer*

Donna and I were getting ready for STAR 2011, so like all good riders, I headed out to the garage to check tires. Last thing I needed was an “I think” tire with my wife on the trip as well. Let’s see, tread looks good with at least 50% remaining on both tires. No nicks or cracks can be found anywhere and the treads are clean of any debris. Oh yeah, tire pressure. Hmm, only down a little, so better add just a bit to bring it up to spec. Looks like we’re good to go, right? Okay, check that off my list.

We started the trip headed to Lexington, KY to see our daughter, Kelly, for her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. (The next day we would leave Lexington to Johnson City for STAR.) So there we were, buzzing down I-64 at a constant 70mph, all going smoothly, and a nice, sunny 80 degree day as well. The first leg of our vacation was clicking off without a hitch.

Suddenly, about 2/3rds of the way there, we heard this loud and rapid thump-thump-thump! I checked the left mirror, but saw nothing. I didn’t need to check the right mirror; Donna had just looked and yelled, “It’s a flat on the trailer!” Oh, I forgot to mention, we were headed to STAR as MST/TA members (Motorcycle Sport Touring/Trailer)ing



Association). Luckily, an entrance ramp was approaching, so I was able to bring the Durango and trailer to a stop at the end of the ramp – well clear of the 70+ mph traffic zinging by. We jumped out of the ‘Rango to check what happened. It was not a pretty sight. The entire tread was peeled off the carcass of the tire about halfway around the circumference with much of it lying in chunks somewhere behind us. Steel cord strands were sticking out all over like a giant brillo pad. Remarkably, it was still losing air slowly, so I could see the aluminum wheel was saved. Whew! But the aluminum fender was looking like a different story. The back side had gotten caught in the flapping tread chunks as they were peeling themselves off the tire, and was bent more than 90 degrees into the tire! Uh oh, this looked like a disaster!

While I was surveying the damage, Donna had her



could force through my gritted teeth was, “We fix it!” “We do? How?” she asked. Of course I wasn’t exactly 100% confident that was going to happen, but it was too early to admit defeat in front of my wife.



ever ready cell phone out, and was about 2 seconds from dialing “911”. “What do we do now?” she asked, her finger ready to hit send. The only reply I

So, out came the 2 jacks and lug wrenches, unloaded the VFR which was on that side, and grabbed the dead blow hammer I had thrown in at the very last minute. Got the trailer jacked up, and the wheel and tire finally came off after a struggle. The tough part was bending and beating the fender back to gain clearance for the spare to be mounted. Many bangs, a few curse words, lots of sweat and, the spare was on. I managed to bend the fender back far enough to clear the wheel travel, but it wasn’t pretty.

We completed the rest of the trip to Lexington without any more surprises, just an hour later than planned. The next day I found a Goodyear dealer and had two new tires mounted up before continuing to Johnson City. The dealer believes the tire failure was due to “old age”. Old age? Heck, the trailer is stored inside, tires looked in fine shape with plenty of tread, were properly

inflated for the load, and were a mere 17 years young! Come to find out, trailer tires are generally considered to have a service life of 10 years,

regardless of mileage. "Ohhh, I didn't know that." I do now.

So the moral of the story is, for all you MST/TA'ers, consider changing out your trailer tires after 10 years. You might save yourself the headache of destroying a fender and save time on the road. Not to mention, you can avoid having to prove that you "can fix it" in front of your wife.

**A special thanks to Russ Weik, Hal Kramer and Donna Kramer 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 **2011 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 2011**

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. We are winding down the 2011 schedule at this point, with only ONE event remaining.

### **LAST CALL FOR THIS EVENT**

## **FALL COLOR RIDE**

### **MSTA REGIONAL EVENT**

**September 30 – October 2**

**The Inn at Snowshoe**

**S.R.66 / Snowshoe-Cass-Greenbank Road  
Snowshoe, West Virginia**

You can register for this MSTA event both on-line and by mail-in form as noted below. Either way, this is a "no frills" event – NO door prizes, NO meals – Just great people, roads, hotel and scenery! Registration is a paltry \$10.00.

Make your reservations at the Inn at Snowshoe by calling

**877-441-4386**

Make sure you mention the MSTA to get the special room rate.

On-Line Registration Form:

<http://www.planetreg.com/E711104213152>

Printable / Mail-In Pre-Registration Form:

[www.msta-se.com/FCR/reg.pdf](http://www.msta-se.com/FCR/reg.pdf)

Snowshoe, WV is a pretty "fur piece" from Michigan, so we're planning a little different approach for this ride – similar to what we have done in the past for our MoArk Adventure Ride.

On Thursday, September 29, Michigan Squadron Members will travel to Marietta, OH. We'll be staying the night here at The Super Eight Motel and a group dinner at 7:00 PM is being arranged for those who arrive in time to take part. Following dinner – around 9:00 PM there will be a mandatory Rider's Meeting at the Super Eight, at which we'll discuss the next day's ride and arrange our riding groups. Hal "Cisco" Kramer is planning on joining us for these activities. On Friday, our groups will ride a twisty, turn filled route from there to Snowshoe. Saturday, we'll do an event route and Sunday will be a quick 200 mile return to the trailers for the homeward pull back home.

If you're interested in joining us, you need to get the following done – without delay

1. Make your reservation for the MSTA event and room reservations for Friday and Saturday evenings at The Inn at Snowshoe.
2. Make your Thursday night reservation at the **Marietta Super Eight**, 46 Acme St.  
**Call 740-374-8888 for Reservations**
3. Contact me to get your name on the distribution list for Route Maps and further information regarding the trip.

E-Mail - [MI\\_MSTA@earthlink.net](mailto:MI_MSTA@earthlink.net)





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## MEMBERSHIP INFO

### Welcome to the MSTA

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

**Pete Ackerly - Williamston**  
**Rohit Seshadri**

### Current Squadron Membership 162

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>

### Ted Gillary – Beverly Hills

When you have a moment – check out the Michigan Squadron web site for late breaking information

[www.msta.us](http://www.msta.us)

**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](mailto:mi_msta@earthlink.net)

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

<http://www.sporttouring.us>

**September 24, 2011 – Saturday 8:30 AM**  
Michigan MSTA Monthly Meeting  
**Karl's Cabin Restaurant**  
Gotfredson Rd, Plymouth, MI  
Just north of M14

**September 30 – October 1**  
**Fall Color Ride**  
MSTA Regional Event  
And Michigan JFF Ride  
Details on page 5

**October 8 – Saturday**  
**MICHIGAN – Fall Color Ride**  
Ride starts from Mobile station at Sashabaw and Walton (WALTON MOBIL, 4290 W Walton Blvd, Waterford, MI 48329 (248) 674-4077). This will be a leisurely paced ride up to Vassar across to Frankenmuth for lunch at the Tiffany's Restaurant and back down to the Past Tense Cider Mill in Lapeer, MI.

#### **Kickstands up at 10:00AM.**

There will be breaks stops on the ride up in Lapeer, Vassar and of course Frankenmuth and on the way back in Lapeer.

ALL are Welcome.

This is a rain or preferably shine ride!

Contact the event organizer, Steve Meiners if you plan to join in.

[usmeiners@netscape.com](mailto:usmeiners@netscape.com)

Please patronize the following businesses owned by your fellow MSTTA Squadron Members, whenever possible



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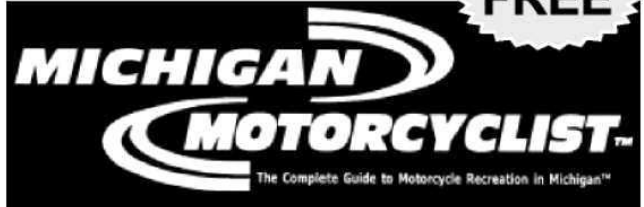


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