

**Touring Northern Minnesota** Birmingham to Grand Rapids, MN By Vivian Johnston



I was craving a long trip. I had to cancel riding with our group to the Mid South Odyssey and I had some open time. Good weather was forecast for regions north - the south taking repeated beatings of heat, thunderstorms and rain. I have done northern lower and upper peninsulas of Michigan many times, and been up and around the coast of Lake Superior, but had never ventured into northern Minnesota. I considered Lake Huron, Superior, Michigan and Erie tours, but had done them before. After consulting old Shamrock Tours from Road Runner Magazine, the State of Minnesota website, a book entitled RIDE Minnesota, Rand McNally Minnesota Atlas and Google and settled on tourina Northeastern Minnesota. usina Grand Rapids, MN as a home base. I booked a motel in Grand Rapids in advance, as it was

# <u>Michigan</u> Sport Touring Report

July 2016

Editor – Ian Orr

the week before July 4 and wanted to make sure I had a motel there.

<u>**Day One</u>**: A quick trip on I-75 to Harbor Springs, MI to visit mom.</u>

Day Two: A long trip to Ironwood, MI. Obviously driving along Lake Superior is an attraction, but there are many lovely roads, lakes and communities within the interior of the UP, so I mixed the coastal routes with interior ones. My routes included backroads from Harbor to the Bridge, HWY 2 along the north shore of Lake Michigan to 33, then 2 at Curtis, North on 77 through Germfask, 28 to Munising. From there the scenic Lake Superior route to Marquette, south west to Negaunee. Ishpemina. Champion and Michigamme (41/38), north on 41 to L'Anse and Baraga, and west to Ontonogon. From there I picked up 64 past Silver Lake to South Boundary Rd (this is a very long narrow winding road which follows the southern boundary of the Porcupine Mountains; beautiful, but sections were in bad condition and there is not much room to swerve to avoid creatures). This road ends at 510 or East Boundary Rd. which takes the rider to Hwy 2 and Ironwood. This day was chilly, due to a strong cold north wind off of Lake Superior), but a "superior" day - sunny, clear and dry. I stayed in a small, clean, independent newly renovated motel. Indianhead Motel, on Hwy 2, within walking distance to a good restaurant. A perfect start to my trip (about 380 miles)

**Day Three**: I headed directly to Duluth via Hwy 2, wanting to stop at Aerostitch to pick up rain gloves and boots. Fun stop. From there I headed north along Lake Superior to Illgen City where I picked up MN 1 which heads northwesterly towards the Boundary Waters area, deep into the

Superior National Forest. This forest has been regrown, is healthy and beautiful-lakes, marshes, bogs, ferns and pine surround you. There are some small communities and many outfitting and camping/resort sites, but very few people or cars. After hours of riding, I arrived at Soudan (a town with a huge underground historic mine which can be toured). This area is part of the Iron Range which supplied most of our nations iron ore needed for the steel production for WWII. As I was running short on time, I headed Grand Rapids, towards leaving MN1 (regrettably just before a very challenging part of it) and towards Grand Rapids. Another town I passed through, Hibbling, is the birthplace of Bob Dylan. I arrived in Grand Rapids about 5 pm local time after traveling roughly 400 miles. The Super 8 was very new, good breakfast, very nice rooms, fresh cookies in the afternoon and a great restaurant and bar adjacent to it for which I received a free drink and food discount coupon every night!

Day Four: I combined different parts of Shamrock Road Runner tours and from RIDE Minnesota to come up with a tour north and northwest of Grand Rapids. I followed 38 north to Effie, passing the Laurentian Divide marker (water flows north to Thunder Bay and Lake Superior and the other side, south to the Mississippi River, Gulf and Atlantic, seeing an Eagle and again more beautiful lakes, bogs and landscape. managed to outrun a very black sky and heavy downpour and constantly adjusted the order of my routes watching the movement of storm clouds. I also went to the headwaters of the Mississippi River. I saw it as a mere small creek; it does grow to a good sized river by the time it reaches Grand Rapids, but still nothing like what most of you think of as the mighty Mississippi.

**Day Five**: I combined several routes recommended in my resources to tour the area south and southwest of Grand Rapids. I didn't hit all of the great ones, but most did not disappoint. 84 from Chickamaw Beach to Longville was particularly nice and again beautiful lakes, such as Leech Lake, were everywhere and many small lovely resort towns. Most traffic and people were not on the roads; they were on the lakes fishing, canoeing and picnicking on their pontoon boats.

**Day Six**: Time to head home. I planned another long, but scenic drive from Grand Rapids to Escanaba, so I could see more of Minnesota (southwest of Grand Rapids) and through parts of Wisconsin I had not seen before. I traveled mainly back roads. I was on 2 for a short time, MN 48 to 77 to 13 to 70 in Wisconsin and then 2, 69 and 95 to Escanaba, staying at a nice independent motel (Hiawatha Motel) and walked to downtown--a 1.2 mile walk to Hereford & Hops Brewery. I didn't mind at all a nice long walk after all that sitting and riding for a cold refreshing beer and good burger.

**Day Seven**: Home from Escanaba via 2 and I-75. I was glad I left early, as there was little July 4 traffic as I was returning on Sunday July 3.

**Total trip**: 2,418 miles. I fully enjoyed and recommend touring Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. It is not that far from us and it is a beautiful area. There are many roads that I didn't have time to ride, like the Gunflint Trail northwesterly from Grand Marais, MN. I will work that one in to my next trip around Lake Superior. Thank you to all my Facebook friends who followed me on this trip. It helps a solo rider to know people are following you, are interested in your journey and are encouraging you. I would be happy to share my resources with anyone considering touring this area.

# First Impressions Motus MST & MST-R

By Jim Murray



Like many sport touring riders, I have gravitated toward European made machines because there was nothing made in the US that fits my riding style. Many years ago I had said that if Harley Davidson built a sport model I would at least have to try it out. When they started selling the Buell line I went into a dealership wanting to look the bike over and talk to a salesperson. Everyone was too busy selling leather chaps and t-shirts to assist someone that looked out of place at a pirate convention, so after being ignored for an hour I left and never looked back.

Fast forward a couple of decades where Buell is no longer a part of Harley Davidson, and Polaris is making Victory, Indian, and the 3 wheeled Slingshot and there is a newcomer startup in Alabama called Motus.

The Motus is a sport touring motorcycle built around a newly designed V4 engine that is a pure American pushrod powerplant with excellent power and torque specifications. I had gone to their web site over a year ago and expressed interest in a test ride. At that time the nearest dealer was in Maryland.

Two months ago, Motus announced a new dealer, Motohio in Columbus, OH, and Motohio reached out to me regarding a demo day with test rides. I immediately put my name on the list and set an appointment for Saturday morning at 10:00am on my calendar that was firm with no negotiating. My main contact at Motohio was Mike Solace who it turns out is a long time MSTA member. During my emails back and forth I made it clear that I was particularly interested in the R model and that I ride 2 up a large portion of the time so I wanted to test ride that way if possible.

I left Michigan Friday after work, riding 2 up across Ohio to Columbus, and spent the night at the Holiday Inn Express. Saturday morning we made a short 10 minute ride to Motohio and I immediately started filling out the waiver forms that included a guarantee with my credit card for accidental damage. I tried to quantify my liability and they explained that Motus had never charged anybody's card but they wanted me to "buy in" to the responsibility for the machine. I agreed.

Lee Conn, president and CEO of Motus was leading the test rides. Before we headed out to the machines, I asked many, many, technical questions and he was reluctant to share some of the info at first. The list of equipment on the machines was a who's who of the best suppliers. Brakes are Brembo. Forks and shocks are Olins. The seat is Sargent. Handlebars on the T model are Helibars. Luggage is Givi. Exhaust is Akrapovic.

I started out the test ride on a Red MST model. Starting the engine brought a beautiful sound to life. The exhaust note is throaty and unique. The instrumentation is a single electronic display that takes a minute to boot up upon startup. If you shut down for less than 10 minutes, it will come right back, otherwise you will need to wait for it to boot up again. The main display has a large analog style tach, with a digital speed display and a digital gear position indicator. I started out as the first rider behind Lee, and we rode through the urban traffic for a few miles until we turned onto a more rural road. Lee guickly accelerated up to speeds exceeding the posted limits. The route we took was not particularly challenging, but there were some reasonable sweepers. A couple of the tighter had substantial gravel on turns the pavement, so caution was exercised. I felt the back end step out one time during the exit from a turn. The combination of torque and power is absolutely magical. The T model makes 123 lb ft of torque and the R model makes 126 lb ft. The gearbox seemed a little clunky compared to most other bikes I have ridden. It definitely liked some revmatching on downshifts and trying to find neutral. The clutch was very predictable and felt strong. Brakes were as good as the power, and rarely required more than a light single finger to apply. The Heli-bars, while not adjusted to me, put me in a very upright position that could easily be ridden a long distance. At one point on the test ride I saw an indicated 107 mph, so Lee wasn't just putting around. About halfway through the

ride. Lee had me switch bikes to a white R model that also had sport handlebars. The seating position was much different with the lower bars, and much more conducive to spirited riding. Power on both bikes was sublime, and I honestly couldn't tell much difference on the test ride. Upon returning to the dealership, I noticed the only "issue" I could complain about. The R model bike had some low speed chatter in the rear brake and I mentioned it to Lee. His response was that the bike had a ton of miles on it and probably needed the brakes serviced. The odometer was showing 24k and change, and a quick look showed plenty of pad. I can easily see that these machines could have been abused badly in their short life with riders of unknown origin and skill level beating them up.



We all grabbed a bottle of water to hydrate and we debriefed a bit about the ride and discussed options available that are not communicated on their web site. They now have a 47 liter top case available in addition to the listed 30 liter model. They claim it holds (2) full face helmets. Also, colors can be mixed and matched between the T and R models. That increases the available colors dramatically. Delivery is currently 5-6 weeks. Factory delivery in Birmingham is available and saves the ~\$750 shipping cost. I asked about the possibility of a 2 up test ride, and Mike checked the schedule and said he had an open slot in the next group and would talk to Lee. The short story is Lee loaded side cases onto the white R model and let me go out with Denice riding pillion. As the group got ready, I offered that I would ride tail gunner as I was riding 2 up. This proved to be a bad call. The first test pilot following Lee was wearing a Harley Davidson branded jacket, and he was slooooow. Lee quickly picked up on this and shortened the route to keep on schedule. A couple times I laid back just so I could accelerate briskly, and even 2 up went over 100mph in 3rd gear rather effortlessly. Denice had a month earlier had knee surgery, but said the riding position was very comfortable. She also commented on the feel of power delivery being very strong.

In conclusion, The Motus MST and MST-R are a welcome addition to the marketplace. They are a premium product with excellent components and an awesome powerplant. They are a hand built machine with a price point that will guarantee rarity and exclusive status. They do NOT have a high strung engine that requires frequent adjustments and expensive service intervals. The only engine service requirement is oil and filter changes at 6000 miles. The filter is a very common automotive filter that can be purchased at any auto parts store for \$6, and oil is Mobil 1 synthetic. The hybrid rear sprocket has a lifetime warranty, and the chain has a 2 year guarantee.

Would I buy one? I just might. The price is pretty high, but the machine is very cool and fun to ride. If I take the plunge, MSTR members will likely be the first to know.

### Motorcycle Insurance By Maury Feuerman

One of the things that I find fascinating about insurance is that there appears to be a lot of very intelligent and highly educated people that have difficulty understanding some of the most fundamental concepts of insurance. Insurance, in my opinion, can best be described as a simple promise to accept the transfer of a risk for the payment of money! What kind of risk? Well just about any kind!

Everything that we touch, see, buy, own, sell or do involves some form of risk. In

each case there is usually someone out there that will accept the potential loss of one of these things for a price. Be it our health, enjoyment, ownership of something or even loss of an opportunity.

The real problem comes in defining exactly what the risk is or potential loss may be and knowing what the right price is to charge for it. Customers constantly ask me if something is covered because they have coverage on their motorcycle. My usual response is "What does your insurance policy say?"

Although most people only know that they have coverage and what they are paying, the truth is that virtually every policy defines a different risk. It does not serve any purpose to say I have a Ducati Multistrada and I pay "X" number of dollars each year for insurance. The bikes are different, the limits are different, the coverage's are different and the underwriting of the individual is different. Every single policy every written varies by dozens of different criteria.

You will also find that every company includes different coverage despite the fact that they are often called the same thing. For example some motorcycle insurers will cover you while doing a "track day" with no questions. Others will allow you to "operate your street motorcycle on a closed track only if it is not in preparation for racing or testing the bike" another policy states that the vehicle "cannot be ridden on a track for demonstration purposes". Some insurers will allow it only if it is "not in the course of organized racing". So I guess so long as nobody is keeping track of who is in first you have coverage?

The purpose of this article is to emphasize that if you really want to know what you have and what you can and can't do under your insurance, <u>**READ YOUR**</u> <u>**POLICY!**</u> There is a portion of everyone's motorcycle policy called the "Insuring Agreement". This is for lack of a better explanation the basis of your contract with your insurance company. It will explain the basics of what is and what is not covered. Other parts of your policy will address these things in much greater detail but it does pay once in your lifetime to read these few pages. With that said I think that the industry standard for customers that actually read their policy prior to having a claim is less than 1%. So when it comes to motorcycle insurance if you take just a few minutes and read a few pages you can be smarter than 99% of the people out there riding today!

### A special thanks to Vivian Johnston, Jim Murray and Maury Feuerman for the articles featured this month.

**Remember...** It doesn't pay a reward, but your articles will be appreciated by your fellow members and the newsletter editor, and you will also earn points toward the **2016 MOTY Award!** 



# MSTR Heads Up

Here's a listing of some of the upcoming local events and meetings within the next few weeks.

If you know of a local motorcycle event in Michigan or Ontario the MSTR would be interested in send Ian Orr an e-mail at <u>Communications@mstriders.com</u> with the details.

### MSTR EAST Breakfast Meeting

#### Saturday, July 23, 2016, @ 8:30 AM

East breakfast meeting is at **Doc's Sport Retreat** in Livonia, MI. Doc's is located at 19265 Victor Parkway. East of I-275, north of 7 mile road and across from Dave and Buster's. Gregg Mitchell will be moderating this meeting.

### MSTR WEST Breakfast Meeting

#### Saturday, Aug 13, 2016, @ 10:00 AM

West breakfast meeting is at the **Alibi Bar & Grill**, 1394 E. Riverside Drive, Ionia, MI (<u>www.alibionia.com</u>). Please send an email to Gala (<u>gschip@me.com</u>) so she can plan on providing breakfast for everyone who attends. Bart will be moderating this meeting. Breakfast will be available for \$11 plus tax & tip.

### Iron Butt Association Local area rides

If you like to ride long distances on your bike check out the following local IBA pre-approved ride organized by MSTR & IBA member Jim VanDenBerghe:

Saturday, August 16, 2016: <u>MIO SS1K</u>. The link includes a thorough description of the ride, a mandatory sign-up form, registration information and Jim's contact information.

There were also three rides which took place before the newsletter was published:

#### <u>Great Lakes Challenge</u> <u>Great Lakes Challenge plus SSK Add-On</u> <u>Great Lakes SS3K</u>

### 10th Annual BMW MOTORADD Days

Canadian Tire Motorsport Park August 19-21



Celebrating our tenth year! Join motorcycling enthusiasts from all over as they gather at the annual BMW Motorrad Days, August 19-21, 2016 at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park<sup>™</sup>. Online ticket purchase is now open!

Visit <u>www.bmw-motorrad.ca</u> to buy your BMW Motorrad Days 2016 tickets before July 31, 2016 and you will be automatically entered in the "WIN A SUMMER ON THE R NINET SCRAMBLER" early bird contest for your chance to win a 3 month/7,500 km loan of a 2017 BMW R nineT Scrambler!



# MSTR 2016 Rides

One of the goals of the MSTR is to organize a few multi-day rides each year specifically for our members in

some of the premier riding areas in the Midwest and Southeast. With the exception of the MoArk and MR2 events all MSTR rides are limited to those who are current members of the MSTR. The full 2016 schedule is still in development. There are many rides scheduled and a few still being planned. Others will be posted here and on the MSTR website as the year unfolds.

### 2016 MSTR Mileage Program

#### All year

The MSTR will run an informal mileage program for MSTR members to track and compare yearly miles with their other members. To participate you need to do nothing more than record your motorcycle's mileage(s) for 2016 and then starting periodically send a mileage update to lan at Communications@mstriders.com with the subject "Mileage update". Every time you send me an update I'll send an acknowledgement. If you don't hear back within a couple of weeks then I didn't get your e-mail. Go to the MSTR website (www.mstriders.com/) and visit the Events page for additional details.

## 2016 MSTR Life's a Beach Grand Tour

#### Michigan April 1 – December 1

Get your motorcycle ready: oil change, new tires, scheduled maintenance completed and recreation pass on your Michigan registration. The Life's a Beach Grand Tour, has been open since April 1.

All of this year's checkpoints are at public beaches on the great lakes in Michigan. As in the last 2 years, I have 8 checkpoints in the lower peninsula and 6 in the upper peninsula. I have also picked 1 or 2 nearby points of interest as suggestions for extra credit. Those can be visited for 1 point each, or any other unique Michigan tourist trap, business, museum, point of interest or restaurant will also qualify for extra credit, with a maximum of 3 extra credit points per checkpoint. Additionally, since this is the Michigan "Life's a Beach" grand tour, I'm offering 10 extra credit points for anyone who gets a photo of him/herself relaxing on the beach (sitting in a collapsible camping chair, holding a camping cup, while wearing his/her riding gear). I will also organize a ride to a local beach for a group photo of same after a Saturday breakfast meeting during summer. And, if we include a group photo of everyone who wears an Aerostitch in that repose, I have no doubt it would qualify for a cover photo for next year's Aerostitch catalog.

If you want to participate send an e-mail to Keith at <u>keith.danielson@wowway.com</u> or if you signed up for Keith's Grand Tour last year, he'll send you the rider information packet via e-mail. If you're not able to make the ride this year you can just delete the email.

Leamington Flat Track

Leamington, Ontario July 30 Cat Herder – Phil Bolichowski Phil Bolichowski will host a lunch at a local restaurant and a ride thru the county to the Learnington Fair Grounds to attend the Flat Track races.

Leamington Fair Grounds 194 Erie Street N Leamington, Ontario Canada

Lunch at 2 PM in Windsor Race starts 5 PM till 10 PM

Contact Phil Bolichowski for more information.



#### Marietta, OH August 26 – 28 Cat Herder – Gregg Mitchell

Join us in Marietta, OH to ride some great roads in SE Ohio & West Virginia on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup>. Possible pre-rides on Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> from the Bob Evans in Perrysville, OH will be announced later and we'll ride back on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup>. We'll be staying at the following motel

> Microtel Inn & Suites 506 Pike Street Marietta, OH 45750 Phone: 740-373-7373

Should they fill up, or if you want a little less expensive room, there are plenty of other motels nearby. There will be a **Mandatory "Rider's Meeting"** held at the hotel every evening, beginning on Thursday 25<sup>h</sup> at 9:00 **PM**, where we'll set up the riding groups, review the routes and prepare for the next day's ride.

If you want to participate - here's what you do:

1. Make your hotel reservations at the hotel without delay. There is NOT a block of rooms being "Held".

#### **VERY IMPORTANT!**

2. Let me know that you're planning on being there – Maps and directions will be distributed by email ONLY to those whose name I have on record as attending.

#### VERY, VERY IMPORTANT!

3. For MSTA members who have signed up for the Mail Pouch Fly By and are staying at the MSTA event hotel: If you are planning on riding with us you MUST attend the **Mandatory "Rider's Meeting"** held at the Microtel every evening, beginning on Thursday 25<sup>h</sup> at 9:00 **PM** – you will not be able to "phone in" your participation.

Contact Gregg Mitchell at the following:

1 of 4@mstriders.com 248-760-0841 (cell) 248-377-8170 (work)

# TOTM Tip Of The Mitt

#### Bellaire, Michigan September 15 – 18 Cat Herders – Peter Stephan, John Cirner

Come and join us in Bellaire, Michigan for some of the best scenic riding around northwest Michigan. Starting from the Inn you may choose to ride the Pinky Finger Route through Northport, or maybe the Ring Finger Route through Cross Village is more to your liking. And yes, you brave souls might want to ride the Middle Finger Route up to St. Ignace. We have routes available from last year or you can make up your own. We'll be staying at the following motel:

#### Bellaire Inn 728 E Cayuga St, Bellaire, MI 49615 Phone: 231-533-7777

There will be a pre-ride on Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> starting out from Leo's Coney Island in Hartland, Michigan (on Highland Rd near US23). Arrive early for breakfast with kickstands up no later than 9am.

If you want to participate - here's what you do:

1. Call Debbie, at the Bellaire Inn, to make reservations. Most rooms are double beds, so line up a partner if you wish. Please be patient. The property is managed by one person. You may have to leave a message initially. Make sure you mention you are a member of the MSTR. NOTE: there are cancellation charges if cancel several days before the event. Make your reservations soon since the Inn fills up quickly.

#### **VERY IMPORTANT!**

2. Let Peter or John know you're planning on being there – Maps and directions will be distributed by email ONLY to those whose names they have on record as attending.

Contact Peter at the following: <u>rideamotorcycle@gmail.com</u> 248-250-1772 (cell) Contact John at the following: <u>jcirner@charter.net</u> 248-396-5882 (cell)

# MSTR Newsletter & Website

The MSTR Newsletter and Website (<u>www.mstriders.com/</u>) belong to you, the members. Both of them can only be as good and as interesting as you make them. 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 and/or website to:

Ian Orr: Communications@mstriders.com

# MSTR Photo Gallery

The MSTR maintains a SmugMug photo gallery (<u>https://mstriders.smugmug.com/</u>) to allow members to upload and download pictures of various club events. Upload and download passwords are sent out to participants for each event. Click on the above

link or visit the MSTR website and select the MSTR Photo Gallery link to check out all the events pictures.

# MSTR Dealer Members & News

#### BMW Motorcycles of SE Michigan www.bmwmcsem.com/

BMW Track Day, Grattan Raceway July 25, 2016

Registration starts at 7:30AM. Tickets are \$165 dollars which includes instruction, full day of track riding, and lunch. Please call Samantha or Audrey at 734.453.0500 for your tickets!

**BMW of Grand Rapids** 

www.bmwmcgr.com/

#### Ducati Detroit www.ducatidetroit.com/

### **Fox Powersports**

www.foxpowersports.com/

Gingerman Raceway August 19, 2016

Regular track day is \$170. Fox Day: \$110, includes lunch, drinks & gate fee.

Genthe Honda Powersports www.genthehondapowersports.com/

### **\$\$\$** Expensive Curves Ahead **\$\$\$**



Submitted by Jac Brown



#### Random history picture – where, when & who?

Please patronize the following businesses owned by your fellow MSTR Members, whenever possible.





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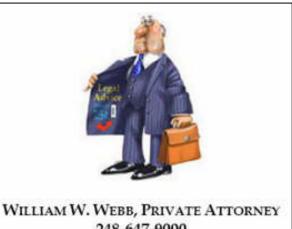


#### Chip Ashton

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1140 Shady Lane & Waterford, MI 48327



248-647-9000 Author of the <u>The Traffic Ticket Maze</u> http://statebar.net/trafficticket.pdf



#### WELCOME TO CLS

CLS is a family owned business founded in Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1899. From then forward we have striven to be the best provider of linen services which was soon followed by uniform services, mats, mops, custom apparel, and facility products. We offer both rental and purchase options for all of our products as well as a range of laundry services for our linens and uniforms. Our goal is and always has been to provide the highest level of customer service with integrity.