



# Michigan Sport Touring Riders

## March 2026 Newsletter

Editor - Peter Stephan

In this issue!  
Ride the Natchez Trace  
6 Go for a loop  
Bridges - Grand Tour

### “North Cold, South Warm” The Nanchez Trace Ride

By Vince Ursini

Rich, one of my riding buddies, who had relocated south of Nashville (Columbia area) called and stated: “Vince, you and the wife should come down this weekend, it’s gonna be in the 70’s.” I took one look at the schedule, looked at to weather to see rain and a temperature of 35F. Confirmed in 5 minutes. “We’ll be there Friday afternoon, after a quick Thursday visit to be with the Grandkids in Indy”. We packed up and tossed the Multistrada onto the truck bed. Off we go!

It rained the entire trip from Indy to Nashville and the temps were “concerning”. We were happy to get to our final destination after all the construction traffic and had a terrific dinner prepared for us including venison back strap, steak and fried green tomatoes. It was delicious.

The next morning, just as Rich said, the sun came out and it was 65 F by 9:00 a.m. Rich on his KLR and I got started off shortly thereafter. The girls planned to meet us at our lunch destination. His house is 15 minutes to great roads. As we took off, Rich got a buzz from his neighbor, who was very interested in joining us for the day. So, we double backed to pick up Mark on his Africa Twin. The “three Amigo’s” were complete, and we rifled thru the countryside looking at some of the most pristine farms and surrounding rolling hills. Barndominiums to dream of were everywhere. Wow! The roads were smooth, challenging, and fantastic.

Our first coffee stop was a famous little gas station out in the country. As we sat there drinking our coffee, every exotic car known to man came rifling by; McLarens, Ferrari’s, Lamborghini’s, Corvettes and Mustangs. Turns out there was a car show of some kind on a farm nearly 2 miles up the road. In addition, the loud rumble of 20 Harley’s came rolling by. I was



hoping we wouldn’t get stuck behind those guys this day, as some of them had a hard time negotiating the 90 degree turn at the stop sign.

### Club Meetings & Events

#### **Eastside Meeting**

Saturday, March 28, 9 AM  
[Senate Coney Island](#)  
34359 Plymouth Rd. Livonia

#### **Westside Meeting**

Saturday, April 11, 11 AM  
[Alibi Bar & Grill](#)  
1394 E. Riverside Dr. Ionia

### **2026 Membership**

#### **Forms**

#### **[2026 MSTR Renewing Membership Form](#)**

\$25 to renew for 2026

#### **[2026 MSTR New Membership Form](#)**

New members may join for \$25. The form includes the release form for new members to join in 2026 rides.

Learn more about MSTR  
HERE: <https://mstriders.com>



After another hour or so of rolling hills and trees reaching out over the roadways, we turned onto the Natchez Trace Parkway. Ahh, so this is where that is ! I honestly didn't know that we could go from his house to Biloxi Mississippi on that route (and one day soon we might just do that). What a beautiful rolling roadway. Unfortunately, the speed limit was like 45 mph and as we did double that rolling around curves (because it was so fun), I was getting concerned about encountering unfriendly law enforcement. Strange, we did not see a cop all morning long. Might have been related to the Veteran's Day holiday and the fact that the Fed's, who patrol that parkway, may have had the day off. Yeah !



We stopped for a drink and restroom break at the Lovelace Café and Hotel. What a cool place. People were lined up outside the door to the restaurant but since we were meeting the girls later, it was just shopping for Hams & Jams here. But the live music was setting up and some really cool artisan items, pottery and gifts were available for browsing.

Another hour of riding fun and we hit Franklin, Tennessee. A pretty popular spot on a 75 F day. When we saw the bikes lined up on the side of the street we knew we were in the right spot. The "Bourbon Sisters" (otherwise known as the wives) had already reserved a table for us thankfully. We sat in the sun for a couple of cold drafts, great barbecue, and people watching. The house band cranked out some Waylan and Willie tunes. What else would you expect those starving Nashville artists to sing in the South? A group of kids had assembled near the road and were edging on fancy cars and bikes to rev up their motors and "make some noise". I too was one of those young people when I was their age.



We continued on for a couple of more hours finding winding roads, getting lost while following a few creek beds. It was a beautiful day of riding thankfully on a last-minute invite. Great way to wrap up the riding season.

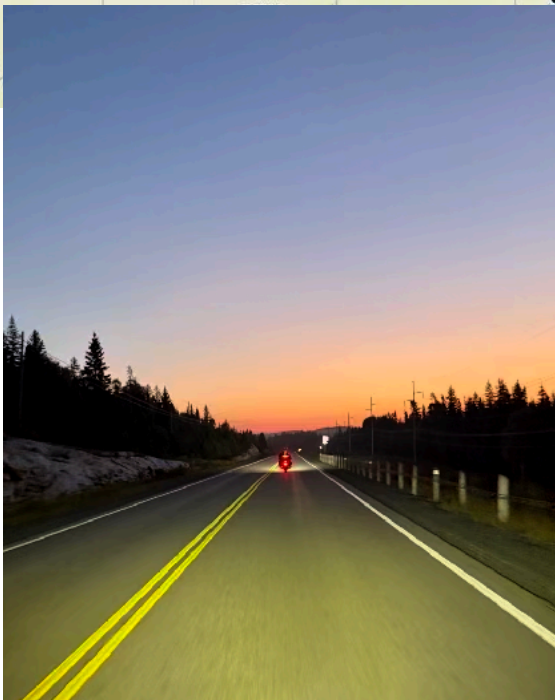
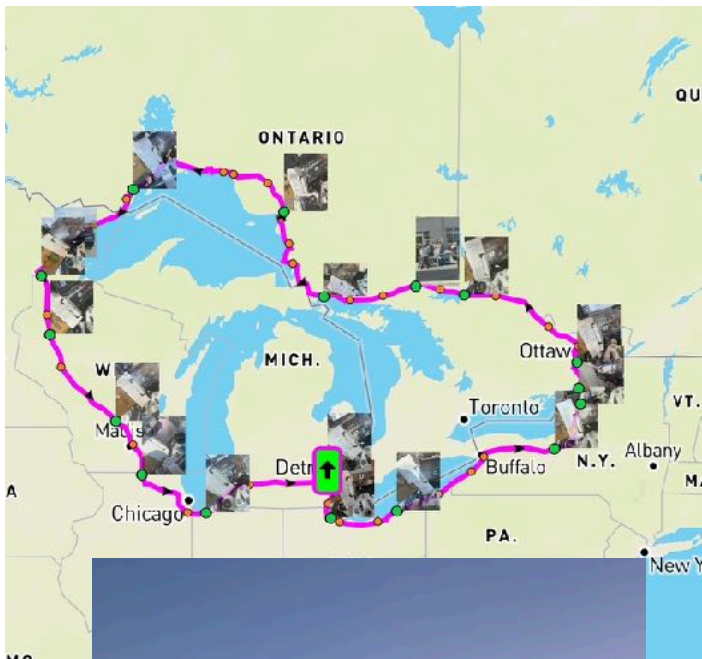
The very next day the temps dropped to 45 F. The Multi was put away hot in the bed of the truck the night before. After a few fond goodbyes we headed back north. Once we crossed into Indiana to see some friends, it started to snow and got down to 25F slapping us right in the face. Pretty cold ride back home and was thankful we took the truck and didn't attempt to ride down. Got that beautiful day of riding in with some great friends and new experiences.

Awesome!



# Six Skilled Riders, Five Great Lakes, Three Days, One BIG Loop

By Jennifer Ott



In September 2025, six of us set out to do something most riders talk about and few actually finish: an Iron Butt Association sanctioned GLC ride (Great Lakes Challenge) which circumnavigates all five Great Lakes: Ontario, Erie, Huron (including Georgian Bay), Superior, and Michigan. The rules are simple and unforgiving: Complete the full loop (2,535 miles) in under 100 hours. This means riding 700+ grueling miles sunrise to sunset. You don't want to ride in the dark above Lake Ontario or Lake Superior, you just might run into Bullwinkle or Bambi. The scenery is urban to the east, west and south of the Great Lakes. It's spectacular to the north with the roads lonely and scenic.

You share the road with many logging trucks. Be quick on the throttle; Those trucks will drive right up your backside. However not so quick that you find yourself on the side of the road with a friendly Canadian OPP officer. Do more than 50kms per hour (30mph) over the limit and your bike will get a ride on a flatbed truck.

I rode my 2025 R1300GSA, flanked by a perfectly mismatched crew: a BMW R1250GSA, a BMW R1250RT, a Yamaha FJR1300, a BMW K1600GT, and a KTM Super Adventure that bled oil the entire trip. That KTM didn't miss a mile, but it did generously coat the rest of our bikes in oil splatter, a free rust prevention treatment we did not know we needed.

Overnight stops were strictly functional and well-timed: Smiths Falls, Ontario; Wawa, Ontario; and Morris, Illinois. We ate at Tim Hortons for breakfast and lunch, mainly for speed and efficiency and found a nice mom and pop place for dinner each night before falling into bed each, exhausted.

## **2026 Event Schedule**

### **Missouri-Arkansas (MoArk)**

\* April 15 – 18, 2026 (standard)

April 12 – 18, 2026 (extended)

### **1/2K Ride**

Saturday, May 2, 2026

### **Ladies Day Ride & Stockbridge All Clubs Day**

Sunday, May 3, 2026

### **Michigan Renegade Mountain Ride (MR2)**

\* May 10 – 15, 2026

### **Don & Jan Pennington's Summer Sizzle BBQ**

Sunday, June 7, 2026

### **Hocking Hills Twisty Tour (HT2)**

\* June 18 – 21, 2026

### **Up North Camping Ride V (UNCR)**

\* July 9 – 19, 2026

### **Barn Burn Raid (BBR)**

\* August 12 – 16 (standard)

August 9 – 16, 2026 (extended)

### **Tip Of The Mitt (TOTM)**

\* September 10 – 13, 2026

### **Fall Color Ride (FCR)**

\* September 23 – 27, 2026

### **Last Fall Ride (LFR)**

\* TBD, 2026

\* Multi-day events include travel days to and from the event.

The riding itself was spectacular. We had clear, sunny skies the entire route, which is almost unheard of on a loop like this. We watched sunrises break over ocean-sized lakes, and sunsets disappear behind endless pavement and forests. Somewhere along the way we spotted a moose and a coyote, reminders that when you ride this far, this long, you pass through real wilderness, not just lines on a map. We carved through the North Shore of Lake Superior and stopped at Betty's Pies in Two Harbors, Minnesota, where the pie absolutely lived up to the hype. Later, we sailed straight through Chicago, traffic behaving for once, as if the city knew better than to slow us down.

Poor KTM, the rider's bike finally gave up in Illinois at a rest stop. Something other than the oil leak. We left him with a U-Haul rental secured to get him and his bike home.

This was a successful ride for me, completing it in 85 hours. This is an example of how I log these types of miles, working full-time. This was my first time riding with the GLC gang, but it won't be my last. This year's ride is already booked for September.

It's not about speed. It's about discipline, fellowship, planning, faith in your machine, and trust in the people riding with you. Long days, short nights, shared laughs at fuel stops, and the quiet satisfaction that comes from doing something genuinely hard and doing it right.

Six riders. Five Great Lakes. One Big Loop.

Five Iron Butt Certs Earned.

*I am the first woman to ever ride this run with this amazing group, who have successfully completed this ride nine years.*



Special thanks to Vince and Jennifer for the articles and photos featured in this issue.

**Remember:** All published articles earn entry into the year-end newsletter drawing AND your fellow members and newsletter editor appreciate you! You will also earn points toward the **2026 MOTY Awards!**

## MSTR Dealer Members and Members' Businesses



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# 2026 Michigan Grand Tour

Keith Danielson, Creator and Organizer



The eagerly anticipated MSTR grand tour for 2026 is here!

This year's theme is bridges. What could be so interesting about bridges, you say? We just ride around on our motorcycles and cross over countless bridges every time we go for a ride. Many are small and barely noticeable – we may not even realize we just rode across a bridge. Some are slightly bigger, but still nothing to give a passing thought to. Some are bigger still and may reveal a bit of a view, and some are spectacular in their own right. Besides size, some are really new, while some have been around for some time, and some may be over 150 years old.

Bridges help us cross over obstacles. Many of those obstacles involve something that in the past would have required a ferry. Some bridges save time by making a straight path to avoid what would have required a long circuitous route to navigate around a deep rift in the landscape. All were built to make getting from one point to another easier and more efficient.

The ***MSTR 2026 Michigan Bridges Grand Tour*** will allow you to explore and learn about some unique bridges. Some are pedestrian bridges – yes, that's pedestrian, as in walking, some were for automobiles but are now only for pedestrians, and some are still used for transportation. Additionally, I've found a couple of extra credit bridges that used to be for horse and wagons and foot traffic that you can visit.

As in the past, there are 14 different bridges selected as checkpoints. To document your visit to a checkpoint, all you need to do is take a picture of your motorcycle with the grand tour sign and the checkpoint behind it. If riding two-up, you can take one picture as above with your passenger in it. At the MOTY banquet we'll have the usual awards for Grand Tourer, Baby Grand Tourer, and Troll (for those who have to stay below the bridge). You can also earn up to 42 extra credits for special recognition as a Grand Tourer PRO. Extra credits can include other Michigan bridges, attractions, scenic spots, historical spots, unique restaurants (McDonald's

doesn't count), or whatever else you find that is uniquely Michigan. This year, I'm also suggesting three bridges that are not located in Michigan that I think you'll find very interesting. One is one of the oldest suspension bridges in the USA, and two more are less than an hour from that, and can be a great destination on one of our favorite riding events of the year.

As in the past, all you will need to do is sign up at a meeting, or request the information directly by emailing me at [keithmdanielson@gmail.com](mailto:keithmdanielson@gmail.com) to receive the detailed information for the grand tour.

The *2026 Michigan Bridges Grand Tour* will begin on March 28, and runs to December 21. It's done at your convenience, in any order, by yourself or with friends, and as quickly or slowly as you like. There are no prescribed routes, just 14 checkpoints. It's basically an excuse and a destination to go for a ride on your motorcycle.

I hope you'll enjoy the *MSTR 2026 Michigan Bridges Grand Tour*!