

History of Michigan Human Powered Vehicle Association

By Michael Eliasohn - St. Joseph, Mich.

Some people just ride bikes. Others are interested in how to make them better, faster, more practical, or just different.

It's for the latter that the Michigan Human Powered Vehicle Association exists. "Show and tell" at its annual meeting Feb. 10 included two-, three- and four-wheel "bikes," plus a presentation about a human powered helicopter to be built by University of Michigan engineering students.

There's similar variety at the MHPVA's Michigan HPV Rally. The June 10-11, 2000 rally, the 17th annual, drew 40 entries, from Michigan (of course), Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Minnesota, Florida and Ontario. Most, but not all of the entries were two- or three-wheel recumbents, a mix of manufactured and homebuilts. A week later, MHPVA member Ron Drynan conducted the Hartland HydroFest, the first gathering of pedal-powered boats in Michigan.

The history of the MHPVA goes back to July 1982, when Monroe County Cycling conducted its first annual River Raisin Tour. The author of this article, then living in Cass City, and Terry Gerweck of Monroe, one of the RRT organizers, had both built recumbent bicycles and decided to invite other recumbent riders to participate. The result was six recumbent riders rode 31 or 62 miles in the RRT.

I and Terry organized the first HPV rally the following year, on the evening before the RRT. The MHPVA was formed at a meeting that followed the rally. The MHPVA has always been a chapter of the International Human Powered Vehicle Association. In 1989, the MHPVA hosted the International Human Powered Speed Championships, which attracted about 100 land and water vehicles, from the U.S., Canada and France.

The MHPVA, affiliated with the League of Michigan Bicyclists, has about 75 members, from several states and Ontario in addition to Michigan.