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SPACE COAST

Scooter riders making trek to Bike Week

They may not be straddling Harleys or clad in leather, but local scooter riders are embarking on "Scoot to Daytona," an hourlong ride to Bike Week, which runs through March 10, **1B**

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Scooters join in at Bike Week

Riders say they are welcome by Harley brethren

BY SUSANNE CERVENKA
FLORIDA TODAY

TITUSVILLE — They aren't clad in all leather, but local scooter riders have their own counterculture, and they're taking it to Bike Week.

About 20 bikes from the Space Coast Scooter Crew met for lunch and shop talk at Scooter's Deli in Titusville before em-

barking on the "Scoot to Daytona," the hourlong ride up to Bike Week, which runs through March 10.

While Bike Week, a 10-day festival centered on the Daytona 200 motorcycle race, is more known for Harley riders, scooter riders say they are welcomed with open arms by most of their two-wheel brethren.

"We're cut from the same cloth," Space Coast Scooter Crew president Ryan Egan said. "I have Harley guys wave at me all of the time."

Scooters are becoming more fashionable as an option to combat skyrocketing gas prices,

Online

See the official Bike Week Web site sponsored by Daytona Chamber of Commerce at www.officialbike-week.com or Space Coast Scooter Crew's at www.scootercrew.org.

Scooter Crew members said.

"It's a craze that, right now, is starting to get a lot of momentum," said Joey Mall, scooter rider and owner of Scooter's Deli.

Egan said he was first drawn

to scooters by their low gas mileage. Scooters can garner 50 to 100 miles per gallon, he said.

Scooters also are cleaner, Egan said. He doesn't worry about the burns and dirty clothes that sometimes came from riding his old motorcycle.

But it was the scooter culture that caused him to trade in his motorcycle for his Vespa GT 200.

Egan started Scooter Crew two years ago with five members. The club has since grown to about 50 members and now has a sister group in Ocala.

Scooters attract a broader range of personalities in people,

Egan said.

There's the conservative group that likes to meet and talk about their latest upgrades.

Scooter riders, especially those like Karen Raney who favor the vintage models, can be a rowdy bunch.

"The Harley people are conservative as far as I'm concerned," said Raney of Sanford, who is taking her Stella scooter she named Evergreen up to Bike Week.

Raney said she and her husband rode scooters in the 1970s and motorcycles later on, but

See **BIKE WEEK, 6B**



Susanne Cervenka, FLORIDA TODAY

On the move. Jim Tillman, left, of Oviedo, and Ron Bauer, of Gainesville, share stories about their scooters Saturday morning before heading off to Bike Week in Daytona Beach.

Event ends March 10

BIKE WEEK, from 1B

had given up two-wheel vehicles until about three years ago when they walked into a motorcycle shop and fell in love with the Stellas.

Evergreen is a 2003 Stella, but Raney has customized it to look vintage.

Customizing their rides with everything from stickers to stereos and Bluetooth cell phone in-

terfaces is also popular for scooter riders, said BJ Strass, editor of the online scooter magazine ScooterRiderOnline.com.

Scooter riders can add thousands of dollars of accessories to scooters that themselves can range from \$800 to \$9,000 for top-end models.

"It's just limited by your imagination," Strass said. ■

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