



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 12 Issue 4

Events in April 2019

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Feature Article

The North Georgia Classic in Helen

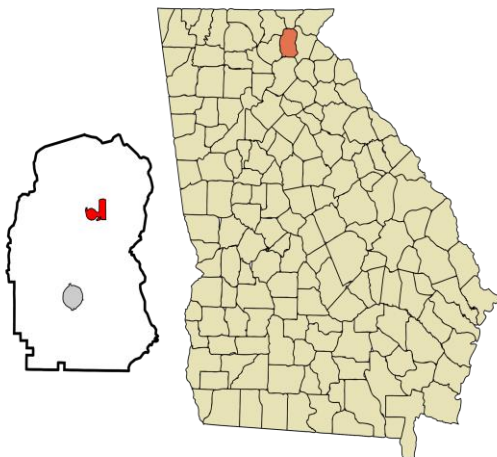
What to Expect - Places to Go

By Tom Blake

[Ed: Although this article previously appeared in the 4/2017 edition of this newsletter, the content may encourage our readers to attend the North Georgia Classic Just-For-Fun event this year. Photos and maps by author except as noted. Updated by author.]

The NGC is coming up April 26th thru 28th. There's no registration. You don't even need to be an MSTA member. It's one of the best Friday-thru-Sunday get-togethers going in one of the best riding areas in the southeast. I encourage you to go. You can even take non-MSTA friends along. Here's a link to the event posting with all the pertinent information on the MSTA's Southeast Region website: msta-se.com/helen/

I typically arrive late on Thursday afternoon, a day ahead of the rally's start. By dinner time, several more eager riders have pulled in. Motorcycling stories ensue in the parking lot and several of us decide to walk the short distance downtown for some good German or Mexican food and a libation or three. The next morning by 8:30 or 9:00 the temperature is up to a reasonable 50F and those undulating and curvaceous mountain roadways are beckoning.



Unlike in Florida, there are excellent ride options in almost every direction. But, given the short duration of the event, I've whittled down a long list of possibilities to what I consider the top tier of rides to recommend along with some to and from options. I admit that I can be a bit of an adrenaline junky at times and each of these rides can feed that addiction. But they can be equally enjoyable at whatever pace you feel comfortable with.

My list includes 1) [Wayah Rd](#) to the Nantahala Gorge and lunch at the [River's End Restaurant](#) at the [Nantahala Outdoor Center](#) (NOC); 2) the [Cherochala Skyway](#); 3) [Tail of the Dragon](#); 4) US 60 between Morganton and Suches; 5) [GA 180](#); 6) US 129 over [Blood Mountain](#); and 7) the [Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway](#).

NOC via Wayah Rd. Always at the top of my list is lunch at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in NC and going by way of Wayah Rd promises a good challenge. I like to include US 76 over to Clayton early on. It's curvy but not overly challenging. It's a good road to begin re-adjusting your mind and muscle memory on for mountain riding... getting the *rhythm* of the mountains at moderate speed. The quickest way to 76 is to take GA 17 north over the mountain from Helen. It's plenty twisty and steep with its share of tar snakes so you may want to take it easy the first time over. A more laid back alternative is to turn right on GA 356 from just north of Helen. Ride past [Unicoi State Park](#) and go left on GA 197 past picturesque [Lake Burton](#) to 76.

Either way, I begin thinking about safe corner entry speed and lane position, pondering what the optimum track through the corner to the exit should be and trying to hit it precisely, keeping the engine in its power band and applying throttle and braking inputs smoothly. It's an iterative process of mistakes and refinement that continues the whole time I'm up there. It's all about technique and precision, not outright speed.

At Clayton, turn north on US 23/441 toward Franklin, NC and then take US 64 west.

Wayah Rd heads north from US 64 about 4 miles west of 441. The road meanders past an LBJ Jobs Corp campus then climbs steeply up the mountain before descending past very picturesque [Nantahala Lake](#) and onward to US 19/74 in the [Nantahala Gorge](#). Take 19 east about 8 miles along the river to the NOC. Estimate about 3 hours plus breaks for the whole journey.

Wayah is a good workout with plenty of second gear switchbacks, dips, climbs and twists. Downstream of the lake, it also has some abrupt turns onto bridges that come into view



Wayah Road to US 19/74 and the Nantahala Outdoor Center



On Wayah Road before heading up the mountain

(Photo)

suddenly – not a time to be carrying too much speed. And not all the pavement is in the greatest condition. It’s not, by any means, a dangerous ride but it is prudent to ride a bit conservatively and stay alert. By contrast, the ride along the Nantahala River in the gorge is utterly relaxing as you meander along the river’s rapids.



One of the many switchbacks along Wayah Road

(Photo: Google Earth)



Sunset on Nantahala Lake



US 19 along the Nantahala River

(Photo: Google Earth)

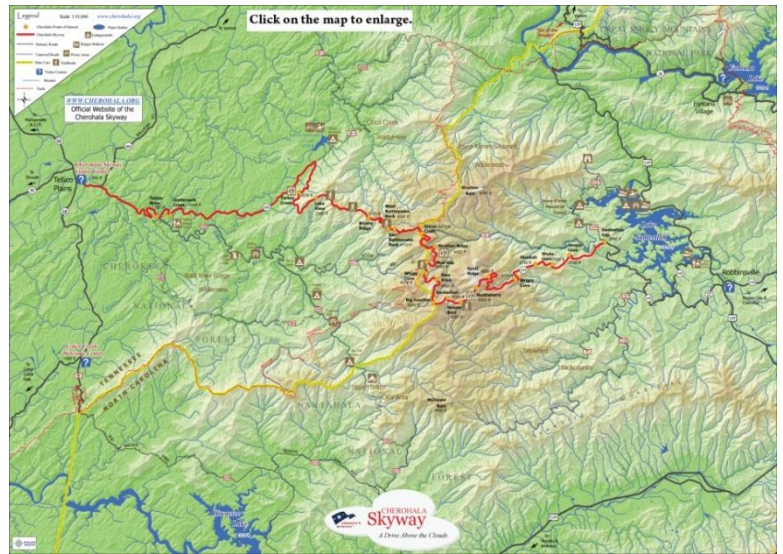
The Nantahala Outdoor Center’s setting is picturesque and inviting. In fact, this is one of my favorite places in the world. I never miss a chance to stop. After a hearty and warming lunch at the River’s End Restaurant overlooking the river, I usually pop in next door to the well-stocked outdoor gear and apparel store for a quick look-see. Then walk over the foot bridge and down by the water to soak in a bit of the place’s tranquility. There are often kayakers practicing their skills in the rapids below the bridge.



The Nantahala River and Outdoor Center

Restaurant is in right, foreground; the outdoor store is beyond the foot bridge on the right. The river is usually teeming with white-water rafters, especially during summer months.

That done, some may want to head for the **Cherochala Skyway**. This is one of the most exhilarating rides in the eastern US. To get there, point your bike west on 19 and as you come up out of the gorge, turn right on US 129 and head for Robbinsville. Just a little north of town, turn west on NC 143 and you will soon be on the Skyway. The Robbinsville end of 143 is very technical. But then it opens up and allows you to build good speed as you ascend the mountain. Depending upon conditions, you may ride up into a cloud and then come out into clear skies near the summit.



Map of the Cherochala Skyway

(Map: Cherochala.org)



On the Cherochala Skyway

(Photo: Internet)



More Cherochala Skyway

(Photos: Google Earth)

The route number changes to TN 165 as you descend into Tellico Plains. From Robbinsville to Tellico plains there is close to 50 miles of superb tarmac and stunning views.

There are numerous pull outs for great views although, truthfully, you may be having too much fun to stop. In Tellico Plains, take a break and gas up, if necessary, at either of the convenience stores. Other smiling riders are usually there and anxious to share stories.

You have options for leaving (or getting to) Tellico Plains. One is the Skyway, of course. A second is to head south on 68 and then GA 60 – perhaps all the way through Suches, GA via Copperhill and Morganton (described below). Or a third is to take 68 to TN 123 which becomes GA 294, and that takes you to US 64 west of Murphy. The latter is a lot of fun.



AmericaRidesMaps.com

A fourth is to go north and east through the Tail of the Dragon and then back south on US 28. Stay away from the Dragon on weekends – it's way too crowded. And now, the sports car folks are spending their weekends out there and don't seem to mind crossing centerline in blind curves. It is also heavily patrolled on weekends.

For the Dragon, head east on TN 165 about a mile. Turn north on TN 360 which squiggles along the west side of Tellico Lake to US 411. Turn right on 411 for just under three miles to TN 72. Turn southeast on 72 which roughly follows the eastern side of Tellico Lake until you T-bone into US 129. All very pleasant. Turn right on 129 as it meanders along the north side of Chilhowee Lake and then the southwest edge of the [Great Smokey Mountain National Park](#). The climax is the Tail of the Dragon's 318 curves in 11 miles to [Deal's Gap](#). The climax, literally, is the Tail of the Dragon's 318 curves in 11 miles to Deal's Gap. Lots of puckering, braking, looking over your shoulder to see where the road goes, cornering and accelerating! And roadside picture takers are out for a buck.

After the obligatory stop and perhaps food or fuel at Deal's Gap, turn east on US 28. You will find 28 to have all you could want in a mountain highway. Follow it across [Fontana Dam](#) and all the way to US 19/74. Just keep an eye out for the Swain County deputy. Turn east on 19 about 4 miles and then south on 28 again at the gas station. Below the gas station, it becomes extremely (but pleasantly) gnarly for a ways and finally comes into Franklin, NC where you can hop on US23/441 south into GA. Or take US 64 west and then south on Hwy 175 to Hiawassee. Estimate 3 hours plus break time.

GA 60 between Morganton and Suches is an experience you just don't want to miss. The road surface is good, and you can carry good speed. I love this road! It is exciting from end to end. The northern section nearer Morganton has some excellent higher speed sweepers. The center area meanders through pictorial meadows and farmland. In the mountain approaching Suches things tighten up. It has everything and is on my 'to do' list every time I'm in the area. In fact, it's so much fun that I usually ride it multiple times.

There is one decreasing radius curve to warn you about. It's a right-hander if you're heading north, with a side road joining it mid-curve from the west. It's about two-thirds of the way up from Suches. I was carrying good speed through that sucker one day when a pickup heading south popped into view mid-curve. Fortunately, the



Even more Skyway

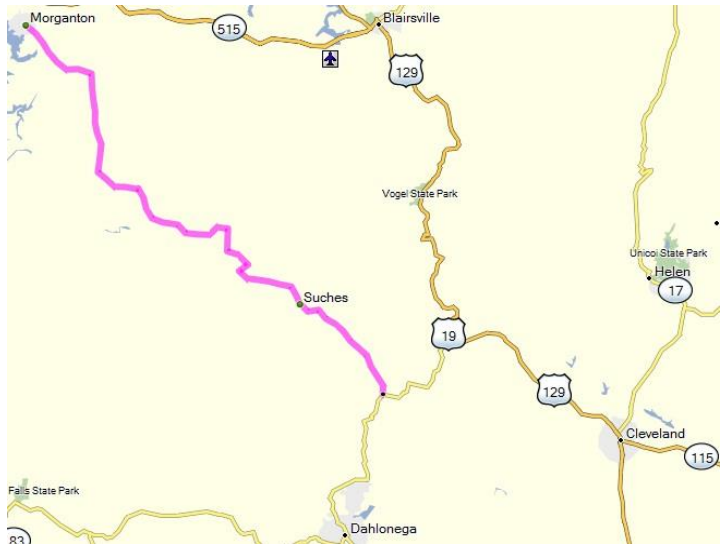
(Photos: Internet)



Tellico Plains, TN to Franklin, NC via the Dragon, Deal's Gap and Fontana Dam

pickup stayed in its lane. I was so focused on my line that I didn't flinch and to accommodate the tightening curve, I had the presence of mind to lean even further over by pressing on the right handgrip. Close!

Suches is most notably known to motorcyclists as the location of the Two Wheels Only (TWO) campground and the western terminus of GA 180. [Two Wheels of Suches](#) is the rebirth of TWO under new ownership. The entrance and main parking area are now concrete. Inside (M & F dinners, all meals on weekends), the café is clean and uncluttered. The coffee and food are good. Outside, the property is clean and nicely manicured and has cabins and camping spaces. There's usually a crowd of motorcyclists around - either camping, eating or just sitting on the porch taking a break and enjoying the mountain air. Gas is available at the convenience store across the street.



GA 60 between Morganton, Suches and US 19



Two Wheels of Suches before the upgrade
(Photo: Google Earth)



On 60 looking north to the 180 cutoff and the convenience store
(Photo: Google Earth)

From Suches, you can head south on 60 to US 19, take GA 180 east (see below) or turn around and go back toward Morganton. South of Suches, 60 is an entertaining road - a paradise of twists and turns. The views off the mountain are spectacular if you are of a mind to peak. Then turn left on 19 to 129 and attack Blood Mountain (also below) or to head to Helen by way of Cleveland. Or go right to Dahlonega, a small college town with a gold mining past and a variety of interesting shops and eateries in the town square.

GA 180 is another good ride. It's called Wolf Pen Gap Rd between Suches and US 129 adjacent [Vogel State Park](#). The section near Vogel is steep and gnarly



GA 60 south of Suches
(Photo: Google Earth)

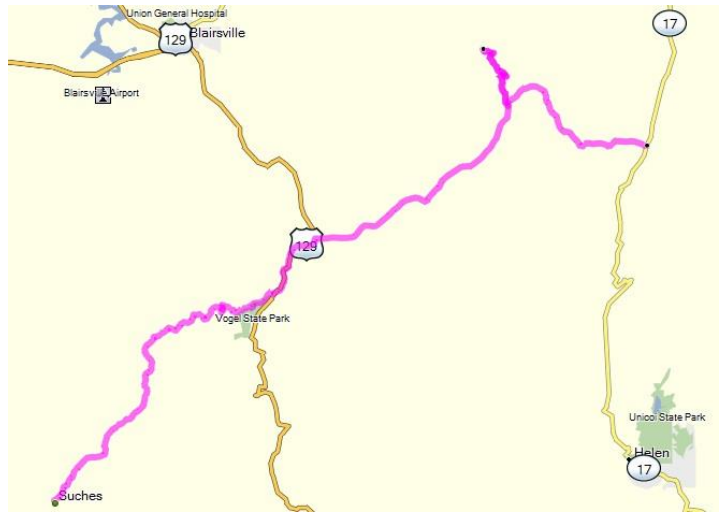
and will demand your attention. Then turn north for a couple miles on 129 and east again on 180. You can follow the eastern section past the 180 Spur, all the way to US 17 south of Hiawassee (north of Helen).



Wolf Pen Gap Road (GA 180) on the mountain above Vogel Park
(Photo: Internet)

[Brasstown Bald](#) is the highest point in GA and the visitor center can be accessed via the very steep and squiggly 180 Spur to the north. There's an observation tower at the summit with great views outside and local history exhibits inside. It's said that on a clear day you can see Atlanta from up there.

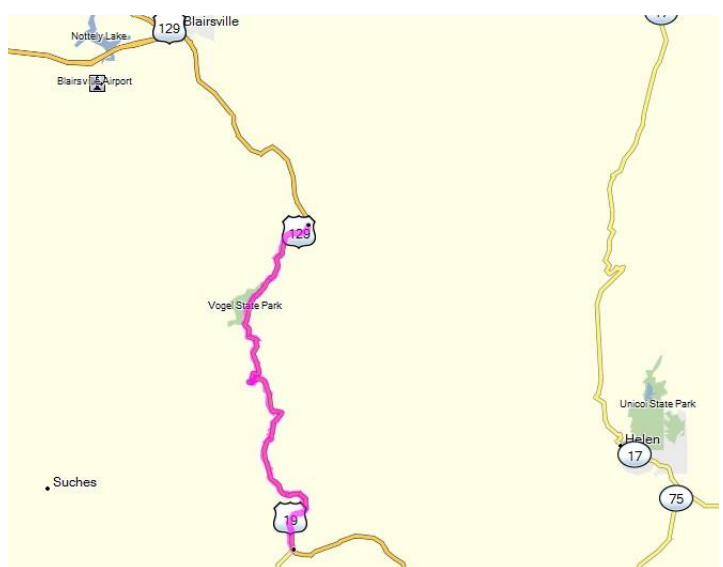
US 129 over Blood Mountain is great fun. It's steep and curvy including numerous lower gear switchbacks. On weekends, there's always a crowd of motorcyclists on it so it's also patrolled. Up at the summit, the Appalachian (hiking) Trail (remember *A Walk in the Woods* with Redman and Nolte) crosses 129 running right through [Neel's Gap Store](#). The store has a good selection hiking gear and apparel and other interesting goods. The tree in front, amusingly, has hundreds of discarded hiking boots dangling by their laces from its limbs. There's usually a crowd of friendly hikers around as well as riders catching their breath. And, if nothing else, you can just take a break, enjoy the mountain air and listen to bikes speeding up to the top. Access Blood Mountain on the north end from Blairsville or from GA 180 where it intersects 129. From the south come through Dahlonega, with its gold mining history, Cleveland or Suches.



GA 180 between Suches and GA 17, and the 180 Spur (north) to Brasstown Bald



Brasstown Bald Observatory (Photo: Google Earth)



US 129 over Blood Mountain – 180 to 60 highlighted

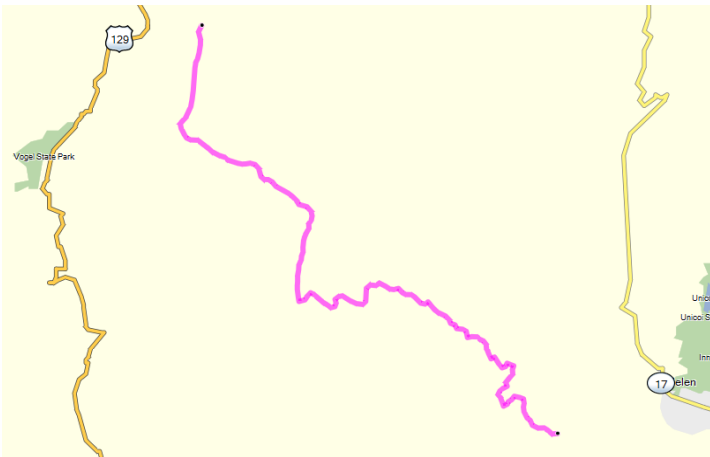


Front of Neel's Gap Store



Hiking trail approaching from the east

Now finally, the icing on the riding cake — the [Richard B. Russel Scenic Highway](#), aka GA 348 It is just thrilling! While only about 14 miles long, it's the perfect exclamation point to a great day of mountain riding. I prefer to run it west to east because the eastern descent out of the mountain has an excellent road surface and is just an incredible succession of fast sweepers. Access it south of Blairsville from GA 180 about a mile east of US 129. It terminates at GA 75 ALT just west of Helen.



GA 348 – the Richard B. Russell Scenic Highway



Descending the Richard B Russell Scenic Highway (Photo: Don Moe)
That little spec of yellow way out ahead of Don is yours truly.

I do live to challenge curves. But for me, it's all about technique, concentration, precision and smoothness - not reckless speed.

Be aware: All these roads are also a bonanza to fitness-minded bicyclists. Be prepared to meet them anywhere including mid-turn.

So back in *Alpine* Helen now... it's time to get to the hotel, put the bike to bed, change into street clothes and begin the tall tales in the parking lot. Continue with friends through dinner at a nice restaurant in town

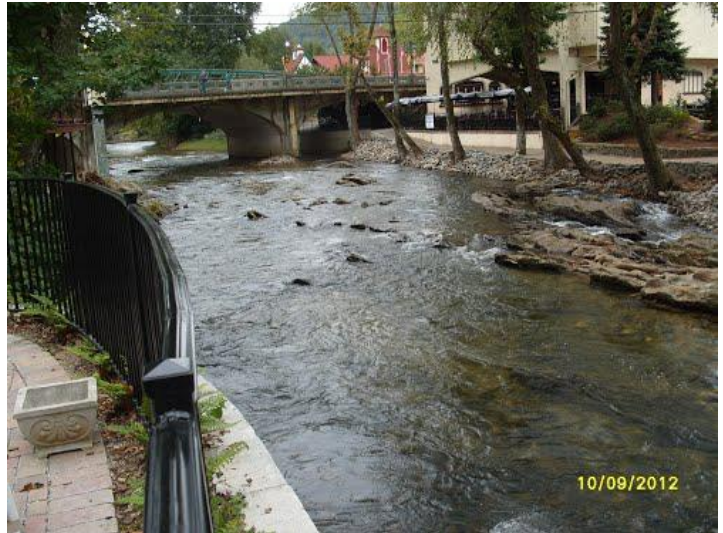


The Quality Inn host hotel

and wash it all down with your favorite elixirs. Then it's back to the hotel for more camaraderie. And finally, to bed.

Next morning... ready to ride, you may get invited to ride along in a small group or vice versa. Some of our riders are real hotdogs, others not so much. Try to match yourself to folks who ride at a pace that's in your comfort zone. Or, select your own new route or combination of routes and get going. If you get into a group that rides faster than you feel comfortable with – back off and let them know you are going to go off on your own. This is supposed to be fun.

Final notes... if you are a fan of mountain riding, that general area is arguably the best place to ride in the southeastern US. April is the perfect time of year to be there if you don't mind that the vegetation hasn't greened up yet. Winter temperatures are moderating but still cool. It's too early yet for the crowds that make driving through towns impossible and out on the highways maddening. Helen is a small community, so



Downtown scenes in Helen

walking to and from a variety of decent restaurants, watering holes and other attractions is easy.

The only downside is that April can also be unpredictable weather-wise. 2016, 2017 and 2018 were perfect – no rain, no fog, cool mornings, lower 70's by afternoon. 2015 was just a little cooler daytime due to overcast. Rain threatened but did not impact riding. It was a last-minute decision on my part not to cancel the room that year. And it was a good decision because we had a great time. My recommendation is to book early (just make sure you can cancel, if necessary) and keep an eye on the forecasts. Don't forget, forecasts do change as the target dates get closer. So, don't panic and cancel too early.

Officially, the event runs Friday thru Sunday. For me though, it's about an 11-hour slog up and back. I love mountains and mountain riding and want to make the most of it. So, I prefer going up Wednesday or Thursday and coming home Monday or Tuesday. But whatever works for you. I'm looking forward to the 2019 NGC. Hope to see **you** there this year, too.

Guten Tag,

Tom

SAFETY TALK

IMPORTANT NOTICE: *Ultimately, the safety of motorcycle riders and their passengers is their own responsibility. Nothing presented in the column supersedes, negates or relieves a motorcyclist and/or passenger from assumption of personal responsibility for their actions and safety.*

Surviving the Roundabout

Some people call it a traffic circle, although technically the two have slightly different characteristics. Whatever you want to call it, they are becoming more prevalent in U.S. road planning every year. There is a good reason for this increase. Statistically, roundabouts are more efficient than either 2-way or 4-way stop intersections. They move traffic faster and are safer. They actually reduce types of crashes involving serious injury or death by 78-82% (Source: AASHTO Highway Safety Manual). Common sense tells us why. If there is a crash in a roundabout, it usually happens at slower speeds and with lesser angular impacts. Pretty simple physics.



Regardless of size, shape (there are oval, teardrop, peanut-shaped roundabouts, as well as some other oddities out there), roundabouts all have three characteristics, at least here in the U.S.:

1. Counterclockwise flow around a center island or marker.
2. Entry Yield Control: Vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to traffic already circulating.
3. Low Speed: Roundabout curvature results in lower vehicle speeds, usually 10-25 mph.

Roundabouts do offer different types of safety challenges to motorcyclists, among them:

- 🏍 Drivers not seeing the motorcyclist trying to enter or already in the roundabout. Not a big surprise...
- 🏍 Drivers changing lanes in a roundabout, in preparation to exit the circulation.
- 🏍 Drivers simply not knowing what to do in a roundabout, including entry protocol, lane positioning, exiting, etc.

So how do you survive the roundabout on two (or three) wheels? Here are 3 simple rules to follow:

1. Always assume traffic in circulation, or about to enter the roundabout does not see you.
2. Always assume traffic in the roundabout is going to unexpectedly change lanes.
3. Always assume drivers don't have a clue as to how to navigate a roundabout.

This last one is really important. We don't have a lot of roundabouts in Florida. Combine that with our aging driver demographic, foreign drivers, tourists, etc. and you get a potentially dangerous riding situation.

In short, whenever you come upon a roundabout in your riding adventures, take the time to slow down and look at all the traffic in and around the roundabout, before entering the counterclockwise circle of vehicular chaos. Look for confused drivers, vehicles getting ready to change lanes, and even drivers in the circulation who will stop for other cars to enter, though that is the exact opposite of the traffic rules!

Roundabouts can be fun, but they need to be carefully analyzed as you ride them!

Ride Safe!

Doug Westly – Safety Editor

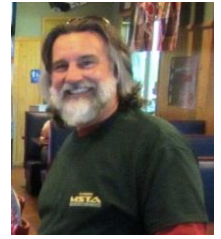
See our [Mystery Hyperlinks](#) for further articles on this topic.

Florida News

South Director's Report

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING...

What a March we had!! You need to check out Tom's extensive report below to read about all the fun we had to begin the last 31 days!! A **HUGE** thanks to Tom for his double duty efforts this month. And to top it off, he also made the ride to Solomon's Castle to chill with the Southies!!



Van VanSteelant

Chill was the word for the morning start of the Lunch Ride to Solomon's. In the steady 50's all across the state made for a perfect ride! Our "just right" sized group made our way under a clear blue sky, making good time that allowed for the slight compensation needed to ride the last 10 miles into the Castle parking lot. We hit the expected hard road bed, with oil tack on one side, wetted down on the other. As the road was "closed" to through traffic, we were able to pick the side we liked! I again thank the members who shared the "local knowledge" of the road closures which allowed me to give fair warning and route suggestions. Ah, teamwork!!



Solomon's Castle

Photo: Don Moe

As usual, Solomon's was a delight. Despite the surrounding road conditions, the place was full of visitors and hungry bellies! The 25 of us took up most of the patio seating, spreading out over 5 tables. Tall tales were shared, luncheon edibles were consumed, 50/50 raffle tickets were bought, and one lucky winner took home \$60!! Jeff Molnas got a good ribbing from Rich Peabody about joining the MSTA, now that he had the funds!! Combined with the Central raffle, we added \$115.00 to our total!! We paid our annual domain renewal with GoDaddy this month, so we stand at \$1,582.00. A BIG thanks for the large turnouts and participation!!



↳R: Buck Jones, Don Williams, Van, Tom Blake, Don Moe

Photo: Brian Dickerson

What's Next??

We are back on schedule, with the Central Lunch Ride taking place first on **April 6th**! Join Tom for a trip to the Smokehouse Grill, Westgate River Ranch Resort. It's a new favorite, so Tom stopped by on his way home from Solomon's to set up our reservation for **11:30AM**. Mark your calendar now to enjoy this unique property and our great company!! I suspect a contingent of Southies will be there to swell the ranks!!

Two weeks later, on **April 20th**, the Southies will be entertained at Jaxon's, in Lake Placid. It's been a while since we enjoyed their back patio fronting the lake. If you haven't ridden the Highlands County roads in this area, you are in for a treat! Full details at www.flmsta.org.

Membership News

If you are receiving the *Gator Tale*, but not my announcements, **PLEASE** email me ASAP to correct my files. I believe I'm up to date...

My heartfelt THANKS to Don Moe for his efforts EVERY month to bring our Florida membership up to date with all the news about our new and renewing members!!

Here's what we know today...

We welcome three new Florida riders who joined the MSTA in March:

James Clement Victor Salisbury Eckart Schneider

We thank these six Florida members for renewing their memberships in March:

Frederick Christ David & Leslie Noyes Carlyle Swofford

These eight Florida memberships will expire soon or have recently expired:

Alan Berry Rebecca DeShazo-Westly Bill Royal Doug Westly
Eve Blazsur Kurt Heide Robert Sauer Ed Zaslow

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and to continue supporting their MSTA. If you have a question about when your membership expires, please contact the membership committee at membership@ridemsta.com. Renewing or joining can be quickly and securely done online at PlanetReg.com/MSTArenew or PlanetReg.com/MSTAjoin respectively. If you use a pre-printed form from STARreview or an ITR, be sure to mail it to Beth Hemstreet, 5560 Stone Church Court, Loveland, CO 80537, and not to the address of a prior membership director.

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please pass along one of our Invitation-To-Ride quad-folds! For each new member you recruit and who provides your name and/or membership number on the application, you will receive a coupon for a raffle ticket for the motorcycle drawing at our next STAR event. Any new or current member who joins or renews as a Sustaining Member will likewise receive a coupon for a raffle ticket for each year of the new membership term.

Random Ramblings!

Those of you who joined us for the Solomon's lunch know that we lost a great inspiration and life-loving friend in "**Jenks**"... Jenkin Davis passed away in early March, surrounded by family. He was 88 years young! Many of us have remarked that we just hope to be as active and positive as he was. For example, he **rode** his favorite Goldwing into Alaska and back, at age 84!! He would regularly join our lunch rides, always with a big smile under his helmet. And those who chatted with him over a healthy meal were always made better for it! So, don't shed a tear because he has passed on; SMILE because you were fortunate to know him and able to share a ride with him. Godspeed my friend.

A BIG THANK YOU to all of the participants who have turned out for the first three months of events!! It's truly rewarding to see the parking lot full of bikes and the tables full of smiling faces!! And we have had several new faces to look at too!! If you have recruited a new member, thank you!!

Ride well! Ride often!! Do it safely!!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report - March 2019

Bike Week, FL MSTAs Central and Bike Week Lunches

March offered several good riding opportunities in central Florida. Topping the list for some... **Bike Week**, which ran officially from the 8th through the 17th. Daytona was ground zero, but Deland and other towns capitalized with their own 'parties'.

Some things were different. The Honda demos were based in Deland. There were no vendors downtown along Beach Street. When I was in Daytona Thursday afternoon, the streets were not clogged with Harleys. Many that were there, however, were not lacking for loudness – in both noise and styling. On the plus side, Mother Nature cooperated nicely.

Some riders were unable to attend the Thursday Bike Week lunch. So, we did our normal Saturday ride on the 9th as well. This year it was to colorful and idyllic **Three Banana's** (aka 3 Banana's) in Crescent City. And WOW, did we have a nice turnout. Twenty-three showed up, including some who were in town for Bike Week. Expecting no more than fifteen, I was totally *stoked*. Thank goodness we had reservations and arrived early enough to find all the extra tables we needed out on the porch. The hungry multitudes quickly queued up outside as we ate. Some of them finally came in and, seeing we were done eating, politely prodded us to get the *heck* outta there. I guess we got caught up in all the camaraderie. The 50/50 raised a whopping \$110, of which \$55 went to our friend Eckert. My thanks to Bobi and Doug for their help with tickets and money.



Tom Blake





Our **Bike Week Lunch** on the 14th was FL MSTA's chance to welcome out-of-state visitors - old friends and new. No doubt, some had to dig out to get down here for season-opening festivities. Whatever it took, we're glad they came. Green vegetation and warmth had to be very welcome changes.



The lunch was held again at the **1884 Restaurant** and Bar in the small, old Florida town of Eustis. Twenty-five showed up, six more than last year. Visitors came from Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, N Carolina, S Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Association president, Dennis Villarose was there as was past president Dave 'Brick' Brickner. Several current and past state directors and other *officials* showed up. Most of the crowd were regular

folks, members and prospective members, whom we were equally glad to see.

The restaurant staff did a good job, there were positive comments about the food, and it was certainly an attractive place to eat. Still, when asked, the consensus was that next year we should hold the luncheon closer to Daytona, maybe somewhere along the St John's River. Several places sprang quickly to mind. So, 1884 will become, once again, a likely Saturday lunch destination.

Related to **STAR 2019** (Saturday, June 22nd – Wednesday, June 26th): Dennis said single-king and two-queen rooms at the host hotel, Holiday Inn Bristol Conference Center, are still available. The front desk number is (276) 466-4100. If you haven't registered for STAR or booked a room yet, it's time to get a move on. If you are worried about committing too early, don't be. The hotel allows cancelations up until 6 pm of the day before you are due to check in (their time). Also, Doug Westly informed us that the Honda demo rides will start Saturday morning and run through 2pm Wednesday.

Returning to Florida... on **Saturday, April 6th** we head back to the **Smokehouse Grill** at Westgate River Ranch Resort just off SR 60 between Yeehaw Junction and Lake Wales for an **11:30** lunch. Turn at the sign and follow the road all the way south to the Grill. Like last year, **we do not have reservations**. So, sit down time is scheduled to beat the rush. Early arrival is suggested. See the **Florida Rides This Month** section of the newsletter for additional details and the calendar at flmsta.org/rides for details and any late updates.

Safe Journeys,

Tom Blake

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Florida April Lunch Ride

Sat., **April 6th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

[Smokehouse Grill](#) ([map](#))

Westgate River Ranch Resort, FL 33867

Florida MSTA Apparel

As a reminder, our Florida State Storefront is open online for your MSTA-branded apparel! Go to mstaflorida.qbstores.com. We have made arrangements with the supplier for our National Gearbox to allow our State membership to buy shirts, hats, etc. with our State logos directly from the source!!! No muss, no fuss!! Order yours today!!



They offer both embroidery and digital print options. Click onto the Embroidered Apparel or Shop By Logo for each option. Don't hesitate to contact Queensboro directly with any and all questions. They are very customer friendly. They also offer Polo shirts and T-shirts with pockets!!

Florida Rides This Month

Important Note

Always remember to check the Florida MSTA [Event Calendar](#) and/or your email for updates on scheduled rides. Changes in times, dates, and especially locations are often out of our control and with short notice.

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **April 6th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Where: [Smokehouse Grill](#), Westgate River Ranch Resort, FL 33867 ☎863-692-1321 ([map](#))

Description: We had a large turnout here last January on our initial visit. To say the least, it was eyebrow-raising to see the large Takoda Village “Luxe Teepees”, airstrip and even grazing buffalo and emus out there in the middle of nowhere. The Grill had ample room, was clean and comfortable, service was friendly, and the food was tasty. Everyone was favorably impressed. This time we should be able to take over the quieter screened-in deck overlooking the water. They’re located between Lake Wales and Yeehaw Junction adjacent to the Kissimmee River.

Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **April 20th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Where: [Jaxson’s](#), 443 Lake June Rd, Lake Placid, FL 33852 ☎863-465-4674 ([map](#))

Description: I was reminded that we haven’t enjoyed this laid back venue for quite some time...So, here we go!! Located on the north side of Lake June, smack in the middle of truly fun roads. We usually get to take over the outside seating where we can raise a ruckus and enjoy ourselves! Don’t miss out on this gem!

Contact: Van, busavan@flmsta.org, or ☎561-386-2594

Future Florida Rides

Note that the future ride events are included to facilitate longer term planning. The destinations and/or dates may be changed just before the ride dates. Please check the Florida MSTA [Event Calendar](#) for possible updates.

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **May 11th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Where: [Lake Harris Hideaway](#), 11912 Lane Park Rd, Tavares, FL 32778 ☎352-343-3585 ([map](#))

Description: This is an old favorite that we never seem to get tired of. It sits at the edge of Lake Harris with covered, on-deck seating and a gorgeous view of the lake. They carry a good selection of appetizers, burgers, sandwiches, melts, salads and sides at reasonable prices.

Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **May 18th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Where: [Capt Hiram’s Resort](#), 1580 US-1, Sebastian, FL 32958 ☎772-388-8588 ([map](#))

Description: THE LAST LUNCH RIDE OF THE SEASON!!

Join the Southies for a return to a real winner! Lots of space, right on the river, at the end of a scenic ride!

Hint: early arrivals will find parking by the front door...

Contact: Van, busavan@flmsta.org, or ☎561-386-2594

Regional Events

Norm & Doug's Dillard Dual Sport Just-For-Fun Event

- When: Thurs.-Sun., **April 4-7, 2019**
- Where: Dillard, Georgia ([map](#))
- Description: A weekend of fairly easy Dual-Sport riding. Mostly two-track, lots of gravel, some rocks, some dirt. Weather should be mild/cool 50-75 degrees Fahrenheit. There are a number of suggested routes to choose from and your hosts, Doug Pippin and Norm Kern will help you load your GPS. Soil in this area is sandy/loamy and drains quickly so there isn't much slippery mud. That said, there are areas that do not favor the large over 1000cc bikes.
- Lodging: [The Gateway Inn](#), 64 White Oak Ln, Dillard, GA 30537 ☎706-746-3585
\$70.00/room with 2 queen sized beds
When you call to make your reservation, tell them you are with the MSTA group.
The hotel is holding 20 rooms until March 24.
- Contact: Norm at nkern@kernvideo.com or
Doug Pippin at doug.pippin@bellsouth.net or ☎828-490-8529

MSTA North Georgia Classic Just-For-Fun Event

- When: Fri.-Sun., **April 26-28, 2019**
- Where: Helen, Georgia ([map](#))
- Description: For years this event has been an MSTA favorite based in the town of Helen, which looks and feels much like a Bavarian village in Germany. This area offers some of the best riding in the southern Appalachian Mountains.
- Lodging: The event and lodging details have just been released. As in the past, the hosting venue is the [Quality Inn](#) in Helen. A block of rooms has been set aside at the \$99/night rate until April 10th. Check the [event webpage](#) for updates.
- Contact: Andray Hubble at jandrayhubble@mindspring.com or ☎256-572-2719

2019 Leesburg Bikefest

- When: Fri.-Sun., **April 26-28, 2019**
- Where: Downtown Leesburg, 510 W. Main Street, Leesburg, FL 34748 ([map](#))
- Description: "The World's Largest 3-Day Motorcycle and Music Event packed into 30 blocks with 55+ Concerts, 200+ Vendors, 6 Hotbody Contests, Amazing Bike Shows, Stunt Shows, 8 Venues and lots of fun!"
- Information: Visit the event's website: leesburgbikefest.com

Just For Fun — Wizard's Wild Weekend

When: Wed.-Sun., **May 3-5, 2019**
Where: Cedar Key, Florida 32625 ([map](#))
Description: **MSTA Member, Kevin Healey, has reorganized his famous weekend of adventures in Cedar Key!! Below is a brief outline of the weekend's events. A full length email went out March 11th with all the nitty gritty and hotel info.**

If you did not receive that email, contact Kevin at 011wizard@gmail.com

Use this Link: <http://forums.delphiforums.com/MCTourer/messages/?msg=57079.1>

In the event you are new to this little gathering, here is a brief overview. My nickname is Wizard – hence the Wizard's Wild Weekend – we are anything but wild. To be clear, you should know that we gather for Wizard's Wild Weekend in Cedar Key, Florida!!! This year's dates are Friday May 3, Saturday May 4 and depart Sunday May 5, 2019. If you have not been to Cedar Key – well, you haven't lived!!! Everyone needs to be in Cedar Key at least ONCE in your lifetime. In case you're in the dark on this unspoiled treasure...it is NOT in the Florida Keys! Surprise! It's right on the Gulf of Mexico – 65 miles west of Ocala – 135 Miles North of Tampa – just to give you a rough idea.

Planned activities include:

- Dinner gathering Friday night, May 3rd
- Breakfast Saturday Morning at Annie's Café.
- A lunch RTE on May 4th to Peck's Old Port Cove
- Our official dinner together on May 4th is at 6:30pm at The Island Room.
- After dinner we will adjourn to a local bar for a brew or two.
- Casual Goodbye Breakfast Sunday morning, May 5th.

Contact: Kevin Healey at 011wizard@gmail.com

MSTA Regional TriSTAR

When: Fri.-Mon., **May 24-27, 2019**
Where: [Alleghany Inn](#), 341 N Main St, Sparta, NC 28675 ☎888-372-2501 or 336-372-2501 ([map](#))
Description: The event and lodging details have not yet been released.
Lodging: In the past, the hosting venue was the Alleghany Inn in Sparta. Check the [event webpage](#) for updates or contact Geoffrey.
Contact: Geoffrey Greene at hawkgtrider@aol.com or ☎865-659-4755

For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page.
The Florida MSTA chapter also has a presence on Facebook with upcoming events and past photos: [click here](#).
We welcome articles and comments from our members for publication. Contact the editor at: editor@flmsta.org.
The MSTA National [website](#) has extensive event information:

🛵 To join the MSTA or renew your membership: [click here](#).

🛵 For the Events in 2019: [click here](#).

National MSTA RideMSTA.com

Florida MSTA FLMSTA.org

More Contact Information

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ALL GRAPHICS WERE PROVIDED BY THE CREDITED AUTHOR, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

This month's Mystery Hyperlinks are related to the safety article

[Mystery Hyperlink #1](#)

[Mystery Hyperlink #2](#)

[Mystery Hyperlink #3](#) (includes [Video](#))

[Mystery Hyperlink #4](#) (for Florida & includes [Video](#))

CLASSIFIED ADS

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org