



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

January 2024 - Volume 17 Issue 1

In January 2024 Issue:

- Page 1 – [Feature Article](#)
Page 3 – [Safety Talk](#)
Page 4 – [Florida News](#)
Page 9 – [Florida Rides](#)
Page 9 – [Future Florida Rides](#)
Page 10 – [Florida MSTa Apparel](#)
Page 10 – [Classified Ads](#)

Contact Information:

Florida State Director:

Van VanSteelant – busavanflmsta@gmail.com

East Central Florida Area Rep:

Tom Blake – tblake1@cfl.rr.com

West Central Florida Area Rep:

Doug Westly – flwingrdr@msn.com

Florida Gator Tale Editor:

Kim Longacre – editor@flmsta.org

Feature Article

Touring Tip: Just A Ridin' In The Rain

By James T. Parks

[Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the February 2019 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]

[Editor's Request: If you have ridden somewhere interesting at any time and would like to share your experiences and some photos from your journey with other riders, please contact editor@flmsta.org to publish an article. Thanks!]

Many, if not most, of us consider riding in the rain a necessary inconvenience when we're caught out in it while going from point A to point B. The experience is frequently made more burdensome because of



inadequate riding gear, reduced vision of scenery and road

hazards, loss of traction, increased navigational challenges and fogged glasses and face shield, just to name a few. Often, we discover too late that we forgot to pack defogger, rain mittens or some other item critical to reducing the discomfort and increased risk of riding in the rain.

It's my contention, however, that riding in the rain is often less pleasant than it really has to be, partially because we avoid doing it unless forced to ride in the wet. But like most of motorcycling's other acquired skills, practice almost always leads to a better riding experience. In that vein, here are my top 10 tips for improving your rain riding proficiency and, yes, even enjoyment:



1. Expect Rain: Even if the sun is out, and there's not a cloud in the sky before leaving home, expect the possibility of rain during any ride that lasts more than a couple of hours. That means riders should almost always pack rain gear. And, by the way, most textile riding gear that says it's rain resistant, or even waterproof, usually isn't in long, soaking rainfall. So, pack your rain gear!

2. Trust Your Tires: One of the biggest phobias of inexperienced riders, once pavement becomes wet, is that their tires will rapidly lose traction. The soft rubber composition of motorcycle tires (especially compared to car tires) means that most of them retain about 80% of their dry pavement traction. The presence of oil, antifreeze or any one of a number of other chemical substances on rain-slick roads, however, can significantly compromise traction. If wet pavement appears to have a reflective sheen, these chemicals may be present.

3. Avoid Plastic Stripes on Pavement: Pedestrian crossings and some other road markings are actually white plastic strips adhered to the pavement. These stripes become slippery when wet. The same is true for metal road surface coverings, tar snakes, wooden planks at railroad crossings and other similar road materials not made of asphalt or concrete. If these hazards cannot be avoided, then ride over them at a right angle, at moderate speed, with the bike perpendicular to the road surface.



4. Treat Your Face Shield: Recently, I was caught in the rain without any treatment for my face shield. The rain accumulated in drops, diminishing my ability to see down the road in what already was a low light situation. I regularly use plastic polish to keep the surface of my face shield slippery, allowing water droplets to be largely blown away by the wind. I've used Rain-X on occasion, but it is designed for glass and doesn't work well on a plastic face shield. It's a good idea to treat your shield before beginning any ride. If your shield fogs up, don't open it completely, because that will enable rain droplets to deposit on the inside that are hard to clear without stopping and removing the helmet to do so. Make sure all helmet vents are open and only crack the shield slightly to increase airflow and exhaust condensation.

5. Inspect Rain Gear Integrity: Over time rain gear can lose its ability to repel water. I learned this lesson once, the hard way, when my dated rain gear began leaking during a daylong ride in heavy rain. The combination of riding wet in the wind caused me to lose body heat, become chilled and then sick enough that I couldn't continue riding the next day. Nowadays I replace worn rain gear regularly and buy suits with heavy gauge material.

6. Be Visible: I will never understand why some OEMs make black rain gear, particularly the jacket. It's hard enough to see riders in rainy, low light conditions, without making them virtually invisible to human sight. If your rain gear top isn't especially colorful or visible, wear a high-viz vest on top of it. Because most other vehicles will have their lights turned on in the rain, reflectors also will improve other motorist's ability to see and avoid you.

7. Slow Down: Although a relatively small amount of traction is lost on clean wet pavement, it still makes sense to ride more carefully in the rain by avoiding: (1) excessive speed; (2) steep lean angles; (3) close proximity to other vehicles; and (4) aggressive stopping maneuvers.

8. Don't Push Your Luck: It's one thing to ride in rain, but quite another to ride into a thunderstorm or even a heavy downpour. Because your riding risk factors are already heightened in rainy conditions, know when to get off the road and take shelter. Remember, your rubber tires won't provide any protection in the event of a lightning strike, and there's nothing between you and flying debris picked up by high winds. Common sense should tell you when it's time to "fold 'em."

9. Practice: Here's a radical idea: go riding in the rain, even when you don't have to! As is true with most other motorcycle riding skills, practice improves ability, confidence and enjoyment of the experience. The same is true for riding in the rain. Practice effective rain riding techniques close to home so they will be second nature when you need them on a road trip.



10. Learn to Enjoy the Experience: The rhythmic pitter-patter of raindrops, while ensconced in a warm dry cocoon, can be both enjoyable and relaxing. It only can be so, though, after mastering tips 1 through 9 above. I've heard of some motorcyclists, who enjoy rain riding so much, they actually look forward to rainy days in the saddle.

Long story short, a rainy day doesn't mean that your two-wheeled adventure has to stop being safe and enjoyable. —James T. Parks

Safety Talk

IMPORTANT NOTICES: *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. [Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the February 2018 and January 2023 editions of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]*

New Year's Resolutions

By Doug Westly

Everybody makes them. Sometimes they're kept, sometimes not. How about some New Year's Resolutions that could save your life?

These are mine...

- I will always check my bike before I ride. That includes
- checking the tires, tire pressures, brakes, drivetrain, lights,
- controls, etc. I will also check my wife and riding partner's
- bike, as that is part of our agreed division of pre-ride duties. Nothing is more important to me than her safety! (Yes, she cross-checks me as well.)
- I will also check myself. Am I ready to ride? Is my mind on my riding, and not distracted? Am I rested and not tired? I promise to walk away from a ride if I am not ready. I have nothing to prove.
- I will always wear All The Gear All The Time (ATGATT). I will routinely inspect my gear, particularly my helmet, to ensure it will protect me if needed.
- I will ride responsibly and safely. That means cooperating with other traffic. I will not be a squid on the public streets.
- I will carefully decide with whom I ride. My riding partners should demonstrate the same care towards riding that I do. I will not ride outside my comfort zone. I will ride my own line and ride.
- I will practice good riding techniques. I will focus on my riding. I will stay alert to possible hazards (Remember the MSF's Search-Evaluate-Execute strategy?).
- I will seek out more rider training in 2024. For me, that means my annual RiderCoach refresher and this year probably another track school!
- I will always maintain my motorcycles. That means following the maintenance schedule in the Owner's Manual. It means regularly cleaning my bike, not just to show it off, but also as a means to detect possible problems or maintenance issues.
- I am an experienced rider. I recognize that newer riders may look to me or watch how I ride. I will do my best to present a good example of a mature, safe rider. At the same time, it is also my responsibility to show newer riders that safe riding is also fun riding.
- If I see unacceptable riding behavior or unsafe riding techniques, I will take it upon myself to address these issues. I will do it politely and positively. I recognize that, as much as possible, we should all watch out for each other.



Ok, none of us are perfect. I'm sure there will be times when I'll forget something. The important part of this is that I recognize how much motorcycling is a part of my life, and how I want to be able to continue riding. These resolutions are how to make that happen.

How about you? Ready for another year of riding in 2024?

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



South Director's Report

Well, once again, winter riding seems to agree with you all...

We had one lunch ride this month, attended by 25-28 riders! We may have missed a few with the sign in sheet... We try to make our events available to as many members and friends as possible. It helps that some of us think a 350+ (even 400+) mile round trip for lunch is just the best way to spend a day among friends! Join us, won't you?!?

All that said, we are still working on increasing our opportunities for our more northern members. We'll be in touch about possibly starting with simple meet-up rides. No expectations or formalities. 2024 will hopefully see us doing better for all our members.

Meanwhile, the nearly 30 riders who attended the Holiday Lunch Ride enjoyed a wonderful day for many reasons. Temps were perfect! The Family Restaurant made all the accommodations required to keep us comfortably together AND did a spectacular job serving us our delicious choices with smiles and efficiency!! Wow! And then there was the gathering under the tree!!



Group pic at the New Year's Holiday Lunch ride

We wisely moved our gang back outdoors to run our 50/50 raffle and hand out the prizes for the Scavenger Hunt. We were able to split \$111.00 with raffle winner Bob Shields, and brought our 2023 total to \$428.00!! After deducting for the gift prizes and the GoDaddy email marketing for 2023, we start 2024 with \$124.00 As usual, a follow up email to the members with more details will follow shortly.



Holiday Lunch ride to Peck's totaled nearly 30 riders!

Now for the Scavenger Hunt! Doug, with capable assistance from Becky, outdid himself this time!! He chose four locations along likely routes to Lake Wales to hide tokens for redemption of gift cards at the Holiday Lunch. The logistics and the wonderfully cryptic clues sent "just in time" were thoroughly thought out! All in, hundreds of miles were traversed in order to make our last lunch ride of the year one to remember.



Carl Swofford of the Southies only found the "you missed it" consolation notice on the Scavenger Hunt.

The North and West tokens went neglected, and the East token was missed by mere feet on the way to lunch, but retrieved on the way home. The South token was visited at least twice, as Mike Brennan nabbed it before Carl Swolford(along with the nine other riders in our South group ride!) only found the "you missed it" consolation notice! The bonus token was nabbed by Denny Mitchell, as he pieced the clues together to Doug's satisfaction, and took home the final prize.

Though actual participation by those who attended was light, those of us who played along really appreciated all the work and miles put in by the Westly's!!! We hope to coax Doug to offer up another adventure in the future. Greater participation would surely help our cause!

What's Next??

We had our annual Just For Fun New Year's Lunch Ride to Peck's Old Port Cove. Fortunately, they survived the December 16-17 weekend storm with minor clean up. The turnout was spectacular!! Though chilly in the morning, the weather remained clear. The ride home found everyone smiling under blue skies and temps in the 70's! Thanks to Doug for setting up this annual adventure, despite dealing with tender knees that required 4 wheels to attend! His full report will be in February's Gator Tale.

We moved the **East Central Lunch Ride to Harborside in Winter Haven to January 13th!** Our first new-to-us destination for the New Year!! We'll have the **South Lunch Ride to The Rusty Putter in Ava Maria on January 20th**, another new-to-us location. And be sure to get to **Solomon's Castle in Ona on January 27th for the West Central Lunch Ride**. You just might see a few Southies in attendance there as well!

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...

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 added 2 new members to the FLMSTA:

- John Bettua of Odessa
- Chuck Fritz of Punta Gorda

Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

Stephen Evans Mike Halburnt Don Mroczenski Hugh Palmer Tod Powers
 Victor Salisbury



These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Thomas Batchelor	Frederick Blackall	Michael Brennan	Roy Clark	Robert Croot
Michael Demario	Randolph Freyer	Larry Gonzalez	Raymond Harcourt	Robert Henry
Garth Jenkins	Tim Lynch	Don Moe	Wade Osborne	Wayne Semenick
Bob Shields	James Siler	Alan Spears	Dennis Villarose	Donna Villarose

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and 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 done quickly and securely 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 the new member of our new membership team, **Scott Snedden, 11484 Waterwood Dr., Tyler, TX 75703**, and not to the address of any prior membership director.

If you only want to update your phone, email, bikes, or other details, you can do so quickly via PlanetReg.com/MSTAupdate. **Please include enough unchanging information to assure the correct member is updated in the database.**

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please pass along one of our brand-new **Invitation-To-Ride Tri-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 touring package 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!!

How can you not like the "winter" down here... Cooler temps and longer rides await!!

With 3 rides a month, you have plenty of chances to invite a friend along and introduce them to our group!! More ITRs are available now... You know what to do...

We've had a great year trying out new-to-us locations! We will continue to support our local, small business restaurants. Please send your recommendations to any of the ride coordinators.

Hoping you're living the life you love, and loving the life you live...

When you can...

Join one of our monthly rides!!

And invite a friend to ride along!!

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

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Director

Florida Rides This Month

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 East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 13th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM (RESCHEDULED)**

Location: **Harborside, 2435 7th St SW, Winter Haven, FL ☎ (863) 293-7070 ([map](#))**

Description: Due to the likelihood of nasty weather on Jan. 6th, we have rescheduled the ride to the 13th!! New Year/New-to-us location! A roomy lakeside restaurant with great views and a varied menu but weighted toward seafood. Inside and outside seating, plenty of paved parking.

Contact: Tom, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎ (321) 794-6147

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 20th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **The Rusty Putter**, 6005 Anthem Pkwy, **Ave Maria**, FL ☎ (239) 867-4846 ([map](#))

Description: A new-to-us location in a beautiful setting – the Panther Run Golf Club! We have been pleased with previous outings to golf club restaurants, so we'll try this one!! Join us, won't you!?

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, or ☎ (561) 386-2594

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 27th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Solomon's Castle**, 4533 Solomon Rd, **Ona**, FL ☎ (863) 494-6077 ([map](#))

Description: We begin the year with Doug's efforts to create more opportunities for the Central members!! There's a chance a few Southies may appear!

Contact: Doug, flwingrdr@msn.com, or ☎ (813) 928-1663

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 MSTAs [Event Calendar](#) for any updates.

MSTA Florida East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 3rd, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Deland Fish House**, 310 E International Speedway Blvd, **DeLand**, FL ☎ (386) 740-0069 ([map](#))

Description: Another new-to-us destination. Varied, reasonably priced menu with plenty of seafood options. Paved parking. Bike-friendly.

Contact: Tom, tblakel@cfl.rr.com, or ☎ (321) 794-6147

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 10th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Sebastian Saltwater Marina Restaurant**, 1732 Indian River Dr, **Sebastian**, FL ☎ (772) 918-4229 ([map](#))

Description: A waterfront destination for a change!! We were here last year around this time and said we'd return....

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, or ☎ (561) 386-2594

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 24th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Shamrock Inn**, 8343 E Orange Ave, **Floral City**, FL ☎ (863) 494-6077 ([map](#))

Description: One of our local rider's favorites.

Contact: Doug, flwingrdr@msn.com, or ☎ (813) 928-1663

For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see the Florida MSTAs website's Events page. The Florida MSTAs chapter also has a presence on Facebook with upcoming events and past photos: [click here](#).

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!! Shopping finds online... We found some fun motorcycle t-shirts you can order online. Click the image for

this particular t-shirt. There are other fun motorcycle t-shirts online at <https://teespring.com/shop/motorcycle-tshirts>.



These MSTA websites have extensive event information:

National MSTA RideMSTA.com *SE Regional MSTA* MSTA-SE.com *Florida MSTA* FLMSTA.org

We're also on Facebook: facebook.com/FLMSTA/

More Contact Information

Kim Longacre Newsletter Editor editor@flmsta.org	P. 'Van' VanSteelant FL State Director ☎ (561) 386-2594 busavanflmsta@gmail.com	Tom Blake East Central Area Rep ☎ (321) 794-6147 tblake1@cfl.rr.com	Doug Westly West Central Area Rep ☎ (813) 928-1663 flwingrdr@msn.com
--	--	---	---

Classified Ads

2018 Kawasaki Ninja 1000 ABS For Sale



- Corner carver AND a long-distance companion!
- One owner
- Stock bike
- 16,872 adult ridden miles
- 1043 cc 6 speed
- Side bags with trims/keyed to the bike
- 1 year-old battery
- 1500 miles on Dunlop RoadSmart IV tires
- 1500 miles on dealer oil change
- Asking \$9675.00

Van, FL State Director

busavanflmsta@gmail.com / (561) 386-2594

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org. Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!