



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

May 2024 - Volume 17 Issue 5

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Feature Article

What a wonderful way to spend a weekend!!

By Van VanSteelant

[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!]

Over the weekend of April 18-21, depending on the day, we had 13-15 riders gather for our Just For Fun event wrapped around the annual Riding Into History bike show. Several "local" riders made day trips to join the out-of-towners at the Quality Inn & Suites, on the banks of the St. Johns River, in Palaka, FL.



*Sunset view from the
Quality Inn on the St. Johns
River*

The hotel worked out perfectly, as several good restaurants were within walking distance. And the convenient bar associated with the Beef O Brady's made for regular happy hours after the helmets and keys were stashed in rooms. The weather was terrific, the view off the deck across the river was pleasant, and the camaraderie was to be cherished!!

Many of us arrived on Thursday (made my first visit to a Buc-ee's on the way) in order to take advantage of the day-long lunch ride that Roy Clark planned out for us on Friday. Eleven of us enjoyed the 400+ corners over the 200+ mile ride!! Yes, there are corners in Florida!! And Roy knows where they are!

With a group this big, we relied heavily on our Senas. With a curvy route and spirited pace, we did get "elongated", but regrouped at appropriate stops along the way. Our lunch stop at the Eagles Nest Bar & Grill, on the shore of Orange Lake, was picture perfect and delicious!!

After the group photo op, riders divided up for the rides back to the hotel. A few couldn't resist the opportunity for an ice cream stop in Micanopy. Others chose a more direct route back. Our group saddled up for the rest of the curves that Roy had planned. And we weren't disappointed.

Until... We had a rider go off in a left-hand corner and glanced off a group of trees that have been growing for decades very near the apex of the corner. Fortunately, his injuries were not life threatening. EMT response was rapid and professional, and the rider was taken for repairs. EMT



*Lunch at the Eagle's Nest on
Orange Lake – What a view!*

emphasized the rider's ATGATT was why they were heading to the trauma center rather than the morgue. FHP made arrangements for the bike and stopped by the hospital to catch the rider up with the details. After a few days for surgery and care, and a brief stay at a rehab to hone their OT & PT skills, arrangements with the family were made to bring them home for further recovery.



Social hour with a view back at the hotel

Our time spent at the scene required shortening the remaining ride back to the hotel. Uneventful and lots of Sena conversation along the way back. We regrouped and shared the news of the day with others after we had our dinners. And plans were made for our visit to the RIH show the next day...

We stopped for a scrumptious breakfast and rolled into the Show shortly after the gate opened. It was obvious that the new

venue for the show threw the organizers for a loop because there were few efforts to enhance the aesthetics of the bikes on display in the parking lot. Having attended several RIH shows at the World of Golf facility, the Classic Car Museum in St. Augustine was certainly a significant

Fantastic collection at the Classic Car Museum in St. Augustine



compromise...The bikes were beautiful as usual, but the "show" will have to be rethought.

On the other hand, the air-conditioned car museum was a welcomed relief from the 90° day! For a minor additional charge, one could peruse their collection of 1900's to early 2000's vehicles! Sparked a lot of growing-up memories!!

After a shower and another riverside happy hour, our final dinner gathering was a blast! The staff were attentive and offered several helpful hints regarding the menu. None of us had room for another bite!! Our "waddle" back to the hotel gave us one last chance to recap the weekend and share our plans for Sunday. A few lucky ones were heading to more curvy roads in GA/NC while a few more were heading home to prepare for work on Monday...

It had been years since we put a JFF weekend together for the membership, and this one was a winner. I need to thank Jim Park, Dennis Villarose and Roy Clark for their significant contributions of time and planning to bring this all together. **THANKS!!**

And thanks to all who joined us for the festivities!!

Hope to see many of you at the next one...

–Van



Some great motorcycles on display at the Riding Into History event

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 October 2017 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]*

Why It Goes Wrong By Doug Westly

So it happened. You weren't hurt, but your motorcycle is now lying on its side, with its tongue figuratively hanging out. As you pick yourself up, you start wondering what happened.

Motorcycle crashes are rarely the outcome of one factor. Regardless of whether it is a single vehicle crash (only the motorcycle and rider involved), or a multiple vehicle crash involving the bike and rider.

Analysis of motorcycle crashes indicates it is usually a combination of factors that results in the incident. For instance, a decreasing radius curve doesn't call a crash. However, a curve with a decreasing radius, combined with excessive entry speed and/or improper braking can certainly result in the rider and bike going down. In fact, crash statistics tell us that the majority of single vehicle motorcycle crashes occur in curves or turns.

At intersections it is usually the left-turning vehicle intercepting the motorcycle's path of travel that results in the crash. But again, it is not just one factor that results in the incident. Was the motorcyclist paying attention to possible hazards before and during the intersection travel period?

When we start looking at motorcycle crashes, there are certainly those that are truly accidents. Maybe the motorcyclist rounds a corner and in the middle of the turn hits a patch of oil on the road that he/she can't see. Maybe the deer simply jumps out of the woods without warning. There is little we can do about these types of events.

However, a lot of crashes could be prevented if the rider simply paid attention to the surrounding riding environment. If they recognize a dangerous curve is imminent, then takes appropriate prior action, such as slowing down, taking a proper entry line, using their head and eyes to follow through the turn, etc., it may prevent an incident. When the rider is approaching the intersection, are they paying attention to the other vehicles in or approaching the intersection?

When it comes down to it, we participate in a risk-intensive sport. There are inherent dangers that exist every time we get on our motorcycle. If we are going to be safe on our bikes, then it is incumbent upon us to take advantage of training and experience, as well as focusing on our riding and the surrounding environment.

The next time you get on your bike, think about not only where you are going and how you are going to get there, but also how you are going to remain safe on the road. Make sure you are focusing not only on the route, but also your surrounding riding environment. Try to predict potential dangers. Stay alert to cues that may indicate a potential threat. Remember that if you can eliminate just one or two of the contributing factors, you may just prevent the crash that could be waiting for you.

Ride safe! – Doug Westly





South Director's Report

Just another month of lovely riding...

Those of you who have taken advantage of the weather and fine dining destinations know how sweet it is to be here in Florida!!

Our three lunch rides covered a large triangle of Florida! Tom entertained a large turnout at Drifters Riverfront Bar and Grill and Becky stood in for a frolicking Doug at Pancho's Villa Mexican Restaurant. You must check out their reports and photos below!!

The South Lunch Ride had to make a sudden mid-week course correction! The golf side of the Sandhill Resort didn't let the hospitality side know that 150 golfers were to descend on the Grill at the very same time as our reservations!! After their panicked call and effusive apologies, a search for an alternative destination landed us at 3 Gens Grill & Bar in nearby Sebring. And what a find!! Nothing special inside or out, but the staff, service and food were fantastic!! We have a new place to add to the repeat list!!

We had 20 riders gather in the ample parking lot and then take our seats at the long table!! Don M and Ellen met the other three Southies there. Van, Buck and Mike S enjoyed the usual back roads under beautiful skies. And many others from far and wide made the most of the riding weather. The West Coast, East Coast and nearby were all represented! And we had a first with the winner of our 50/50 raffle. Dorothy chose the winning ticket from the hat, and it was hubby's Dennis' ticket!! \$48 to them and \$47 added to the East take of \$75 and West take of \$17 adds \$139 for a new total of \$589.



The South ride at 3 Gens Grill in Sebring had a great turnout with good food and service – beautiful weather!

As always, a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate! We will soon be covering another yearly GoDaddy renewal, so our funding level is much appreciated. A separate email will be sent with the details.

Just a thought.... If you have changed rides in the last year, let us know what you think of the new sled!

What's Next??

We will have a full year of rides, to the east, west, south and even a chance of a few more northerly rides. The three of us are kicking around several ideas for the pending summer months in addition to the rest of the year. Stay tuned and check the calendar often!!

The **South Lunch Ride** to **Lightsey's Seafood in Okeechobee happens May 4th**. The **East Central Lunch Ride** lands at a new-to-us location on **May 11th at The Port Steak & Seafood in Poinciana!** And be sure to get to another new-to-us location, **Gloria's Restaurant in Bowling Green (really!) on May 18th for the West Central Lunch Ride**. Our schedule will allow you to enjoy the **Tri-STAR Rally in Sparta, NC** over the **Memorial Day Weekend!!**

Get ready for our summertime **BRUNCH** rides, beginning in June!!

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 four new members to the FLMSTA: Robin Bergeman of Sun City Center, David Lounsbury of Apopka, Joy Melton of Sebastian, and Tresia Nelson of Crescent City. Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

Eve Blazsur	Becky De Shazo-Westly	Norman Nelson	Larry Solomon
David Sumner	Doug Westly		

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Robert Fischer	Elaine Kendall	Thomas Longo
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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!!

With 3 OR 4 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 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





East-Central Ride – Drifters Riverfront Bar & Grill, Astor, FL – Tom Blake

Based upon good reviews from some of our members, especially Dennis V, we visited *Drifters Riverfront Bar & Grill* in Astor for lunch this month instead of The Funky Pelican in Flagler Beach. Turns out the reviews were accurate. Drifters was clean, looked great, and the food and service were really good. Definitely worth a future return.



19 riders showed up at Drifters in Astor from all over the state – cool weather and nice riding – fantastic!

The weather was coolish and made for extra nice riding. Nineteen showed up (all but two were members) from as far away as Vero, Lake City and Jacksonville – fantastic! Several thanked me for holding lunches north of Orlando (which I have been pleased to do every other month this year). The 50/50 grossed \$90, and Jim B from the Jax area held the winning ticket. Way to go, Jim! Thanks to each of you who rode in. Great to see you. I hope you enjoyed the day as much as I did!

Next up: The *Port Steak & Seafood* right on Lake Hatchineha east of Dundee is a new-to-us destination with a lot of potential. Paved parking, menu weighted toward seafood. Come join us there on May 11th for the last EC **lunch** ride until October.

West Central Lunch Ride – Pancho’s Villa Restaurant, San Antonio, FL – Doug Westly



A beautiful day for riding for the West Central riders to Pancho’s Villa Restaurant in San Antonio

Saturday April 27th was a beautiful day to ride out to San Antonio FL for the month’s West Central FL MSTa lunch gathering. Everyone took advantage of it, too. A total of 10 riders showed up at Pancho’s Villa Restaurant on Pennsylvania Ave in the central part of town. We were one of two motorcycle groups in the

restaurant, the other being a Harley gathering that came in behind us. The food was great and \$17 went home with the winner of the 50/50. Lots of tall tales floated around the tables as well.

If you missed out on the April lunch ride, make sure you join the rest of the West Central riders on **Saturday, May 18** at 11:30 AM at **Gloria's Restaurant**, 4816 US Hwy 17N, in **Bowling Green, FL** for our next gathering. Doug is back from his Colombian jungle motorcycle expedition, so you'll be able to find out everything you ever wanted to know about riding in Colombia!

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 South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 4th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**
Location: **Lightsey's Seafood Restaurant & Fish Co.**, 1506 S Parrott Ave, **Okeechobee, FL**
☎ (863) 763-4276 ([map](#))
Description: Always a favorite! Join us to see why!!
Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, or ☎ (561) 386-2594

MSTA Florida East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 11th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**
Location: **The Port Steak & Seafood**, 16000 Lake Hatchineha Rd., **Poinciana, FL** ☎ (863) 949-4835 ([map](#))
Description: New-to-us destination. Lakefront dining with views from every seat. The menu is weighted toward seafood. Prices look reasonable. Paved parking. Recommended.
Contact: Tom, tblakel@cfl.rr.com, or ☎ (321) 794-6147

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 18th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**
Location: **Gloria's Restaurant**, 4816 US Hwy 17N, **Bowling Green, FL** ☎ (863) 375-9955 ([map](#))
Description: Another new-to-us location!! Looks like good home-cooking style food and reasonable prices. Join us, won't you?!?
Contact: Doug, flwingrdr@msn.com, or ☎ (813) 928-1663

MSTA TriSTAR Rally

When: Thursday-Monday (Memorial Day Weekend), **May 23-27, 2024**
Location: Alleghany Inn, 341 N Main St, **Sparta, NC** ☎ Hotel phone: (888) 372-2501 ([map](#))
Description: Over Memorial Day Weekend! The name of this Rally says it all! TriSTAR is named for its unique location in Sparta, NC, which is a quaint town located just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Sparta NC is a stone's throw from Virginia and Tennessee so riders can enjoy the beauty of all three states in the same ride. Sparta is a small town with a population of about 2000. Despite its small size, there are plenty of things to do when not riding.
Contact: ridemsta.com/nc-tristar

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 any updates.

MSTA Florida East Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 8th, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**

Location: **Mulberry Lane Cafe**, 3440 N Harbor City Blvd, **Melbourne, FL** ☎ (321) 426-7149 ([map](#))

Description: New to us, but has excellent reviews. A great place for breakfasts. Not only a café, a bakery, too. Paved parking. **NOTE: New times!** Trying a new approach to our BRUNCH rides. Details will be found in the Ride Announcement!!

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

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 15th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Log Cabin BBQ**, 480 W Hickpochee Ave, **LaBelle, FL** ☎ (863) 675-3418 ([map](#))

Description: Simple and tasty!! We had a great time here a while back!!

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

MSTA Florida West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 29th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Location: **Sunrise Eatery**, 5883 Gall Blvd, **Zephyrhills, FL** ☎ (813) 782-0401 ([map](#))

Description: This place looks fantastic!! You won't leave still hungry...

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

MSTA-BMWRA Canaan Valley Rally

When: Saturday-Wednesday, **June 22-26, 2024**

Location: Canaan Valley Resort State Park, 230 Main Lodge Rd, **Davis, WV** ☎ Hotel phone: 304-866-4121 ([map](#))

Description: Head for the Mountains! The mountains of West 'almost heaven' Virginia! Experience some of the best twisty roads to be found anywhere and some of the best adventure riding to be found in the eastern US. Come to Canaan Valley and share those experiences with hundreds of other sport touring and adventure riding enthusiasts and enjoy the amenities that the Canaan Valley Resort has to offer. Stay in the Lodge, rent a cabin, or camp all within the park confines. See old friends and make new ones as you enjoy socializing around the fire pits or taking in a nice swim after a day of riding. Enjoy great food at the on-site lodge or at one of the local restaurants. Lots of activities for the family too! You'll find everything you need to make this an unforgettable rally experience.

Contact: ridemsta.com/wv-canaan

Coordinator: Patrick Mogavero 859-620-6352 patrickmogavero@gmail.com

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](#).

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/

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Classified Ads

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!