



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 10 Issue 3

Events in March 2017

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Contact Information:

South Florida Director:

Van VanSteelant – busavan@flmsta.org

Central Florida Director:

Terese Vipond – termayn@gmail.com

Safety Editor:

Doug Westly – flwingrdr@msn.com

Florida Gator Tale Editor:

Don Moe – editor@flmsta.org

Feature Article

A STAR So Far

Lessons learned on a 5500-mile trip to STAR 2012

By Bob Shields

[Ed: This article originally appeared in two parts in the September and August 2012 editions of this newsletter and is republished here to encourage our readers to plan a trip to Colorado to attend STAR in June, 2017. The articles are edited slightly in this version. Photos by author except as noted.]

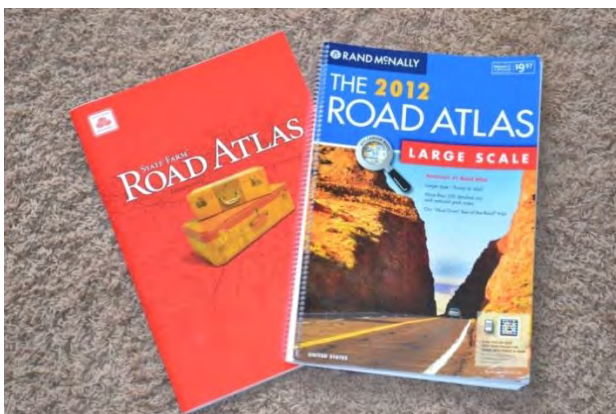
Part 1 – Preparation

My trip to Avon, Colorado for the 2012 STAR event started well before mile one in Lakeland, Florida. This was to be my longest trip yet on a bike and my first trip out West. Most of my riding and overnight trips have been restricted to Florida and the Southeast with a few trips up the East Coast and into the Midwest. This was, to me, an epic journey. I wanted to make the most of it.

Getting There – The Route

Months before the start date, I started to prepare for the trip. It's amazing how much time goes into planning a multi-state route. I pulled

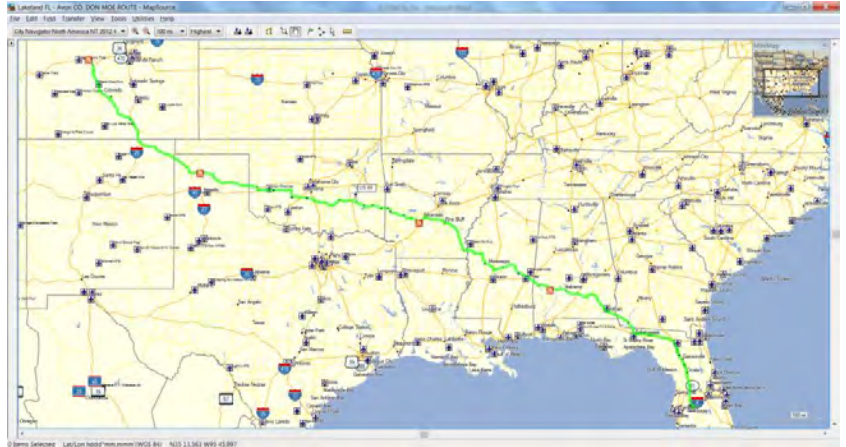
out all of my map books, bought a [Butler Motorcycle Map](#) of Colorado, bought the updated Garmin MapSource, and started searching the Internet for information on great places to ride between Alabama and Colorado. I had already decided to take the direct and speedy route out of the state of Florida, which is basically I-4 to I-75 to I-10, if you're leaving from Lakeland. Lots of I's. From Alabama on, I tried to mix in some back roads and twisties to make things fun.



I found paper map books to be a big help in the planning stages for a multi-state trip. I used the 2012 Road Atlas-Large Scale-from Rand McNally. The Large Scale map is very detailed and was available for \$10 at Wal-Mart as long as you get the version that has their store directory. It's a bargain. This is a large map book, so it's a little big to take with you on the bike, but the Large Scale map uses a spiral notebook binding, so if you want, you can rip out the pages that you need for the trip and they would fold up nicely in a map pocket.

I used my Garmin MapSource program along with the map book to get the general direction for my ride to Colorado. I planned for four days out to Colorado and four days back with a distance of about 1,950 to 2,200 miles each way. The distance and days limited many of my back road options as I was looking at 500+ mile days, on a K1200s and a 'Busa, and in hot weather.

Once I had my general route out and back, I passed it on to the three most traveled guys I know for their input: Bill Royal, Jim Park and Don Moe. They provided a few tweaks and suggestions and I was off and running. My route would be just over 2,100 miles out and a little over 2,200 miles back not including detours or other side trips (and there are always detours and side trips).



Now that I had the route basically down, I needed to make hotel arrangements. I planned on using the Choice Hotel chain as they had such a great MSTA discount and I knew that I would likely be able to get at least one night free if I stayed with the same chain throughout the trip. I tried to space the hotels out about every 500 – 600 miles along the route to keep travel time to around 10 hours a day. Jim Park warned me that there was a good chance that I would not get to stick to my entire planned route each day as there are often weather, traffic or other issues that require you to go off the planned route and directly to the next hotel. He was right. I don't think we had a single day that was on the planned route the entire day.

All and all, I was happy with the route. We managed to hit some very nice back roads but still managed to get to each days destination in a reasonable period of time.

The Gear

My plan was to ride my BMW K1200S for the trip. It leans more toward the sport side of sport-touring but it is the biggest rig I have. I picked up a Sargent seat for my bike a few months back and it came with a backrest. I figured that I could find a nice roll bag to attach to the backrest and then use my side cases for the items I did not need to access often. This really worked out great. I found a great deal on a bag made by MotoPak out of Canada. I think I paid under \$45 on eBay (winning bid-no reserve-sucker!) and this bag is well made, big and came with all the straps and covers I would need for the trip.

I read as much as I could about travel in hot temperatures, and for the most part I found sound advice. The difficulty about this trip is that I would be riding in the hot wet South and then in the hot dry West. I knew that Florida and Alabama are hot and humid, but Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas are what they call #%cking hot. Holy sh#t, I was not prepared for #%cking hot! It was like putting a blow dryer on high and holding it ten inches from your face. I can find no better description than #%cking hot...sorry.





In the South, you wear mesh riding pants and jackets and high tech underwear and shirts to help move the moisture and sweat away from your body. That works. You could grow mushrooms in your pants in the right conditions in Florida. Out West you crave the moisture and want to do whatever you can to retain it to keep you cool. But nothing will hold the moisture for more than 15 minutes when there is only 9% humidity and three digits on the thermometer. Cotton holds moisture and is better in the dry West. I could have saved a lot of money on high tech shirts and underwear and just bought good ole Fruit of the Loom tightie-whities and tees and I would have been better off.

What about the socks? A company called RoadGear (they were at STAR) sells the Coconut sock. This is one of the best riding socks I have ever used. They are not thin... pretty much the same thickness as a cotton sock... but they really adapted well to the South and Western environments and they did not stink... at least relative to what you might expect from a sock stuck in a boot for about 10 – 12 hours a day. The rest of me smelled like a high school wrestling mat by the end of the day, but my socks were fresh...

like coconuts! [Ed: These socks are no longer available on RoadGear's [website](#) nor elsewhere.]



RoadGear also sells the best strap that I have ever used. It's called the Rok Strap. I'm talking about the strap used to hold down gear on a bike. If you use a bungee cord or other strap on your bike, you should check these out. I used them to hold down my roll bag and other gear and they were outstanding. They are a mix between a bungee cord and a strap. They adjust and fasten easily for a wide range of uses. I bought two extra sets at STAR. [Ed: Rok Straps are available from [Revzilla](#).]



Hydration, hydration, hydration. If there is anything that you need while riding in the hot summer, it is hydration. I always thought Bill Royal was a little crazy with that small refrigerator contraption that he strapped to the back seat of his bike before a long trip, but he really has something there. I was surprised how few options I found for storing H₂O on a motorcycle. At the end of the day, I fell back to my good old Camelback. When we stopped for a butt and gas break, I bought a large water jug of cold water and filled the Camelback to the brim and the poured the rest over my head, down my back, down my pants and in my boots. I got a few good stares standing out in front of the 7-11, but felt great for about the next 15 minutes in the heat. That's as long as I would stay wet out West. Some Camelbacks have an option of an insulated drinking tube. With the sun pounding down on your back, the water did tend to heat up pretty quickly, especially the water in the exposed drinking tube. I recommend the insulated tube.

I found a water bottle that I could use with a helmet prior to the trip but decided not to take it at the last minute. I really wish I had taken at least one. Hey, it would have been useful for dripping water down my neck and as a backup to the Camelback. They were actually pretty hard to find. I wanted a bottle that had a long enough straw that I could drink without removing my helmet. I found them on the Internet at a sports store that caters to lacrosse. The straw fits above or under the chin bar of the helmet. They work great with a full face helmet and are less than \$5. Made by Mueller. [Ed: The Mueller bottle is available from [Amazon.com](#) or [Walmart.com](#)]



Two items did not disappoint in the hot weather, but people shy away from them due to the cost (or perceived cost). One is my Arai helmet and the other is my pair of Held summer gloves.

Dennis Villarose turned me on to Arai when we were at Bike Week during an MSTA Spring Fling ride a few years back. I was also put off by the cost, but we spotted an Arai Profile demo helmet at the J&M booth for 99 bucks. I could not pass it up. I still have my Profile but also have an Arai Quantum II. These helmets simply have the best air flow of any helmet I have had. My face shield was closed and the vents open the entire trip to Avon and I was very comfortable from the neck up. In fact, out west, I could not handle opening my face shield at anything above first gear. The dry, hot wind was just that brutal. You can find the Arai helmets at discount if you just look for new old stock. I picked up my Quantum II for just \$220 new right before the trip.

I wore a pair of Held summer gloves that I have had for a couple of years. They have vented leather, good knuckle guards, kangaroo leather, gel palms and Coolmax and Kevlar interiors. They offer great protection and are as comfortable as can be, even in the 100+ weather. I got mine for about \$80 at a Held booth at the Barber Vintage Festival. I think the current summer model is the Held Airstream or Air Hero. [Ed: [Revzilla](#) has a good selection of Held gloves.]



I would have paid full price for the Arai helmet and the Held gloves. They performed that well.

Part 2... The Adventure

Lesson 1: Get out of Florida the quickest way possible

Normally I try to minimize my traveling by Interstate on the bike. It just ain't the MSTA way. But on this trip we had about 2200 miles to travel each way and a schedule to keep. The plan was 4 days up and 4 days back and it was going to be hot.

Van had plans to come up to Lakeland the night before the first travel day so that we could get an early start in the morning. When riding out of Florida in the summer, it's best to get out as early as possible to limit the amount of time in the heat of the day, so that was our plan. We also understood that over the last decade or so we had seen plenty of Florida back roads and didn't really need to sightsee in the Sunshine state. We decided to travel by Interstate and travel as far as we felt comfortable for day one.



Our trip out of Florida would be one of our longest planned legs at about 610 miles without detours. It was basically straight up I-75 to I-10 and then a turn northwest outside of Tallahassee and up to our first stop at the

Comfort Inn in Thomasville, Alabama. This was one of our more expensive hotels but it was pretty much an arm pit. There is nothing very exciting to say about Thomasville or the Comfort Inn, but it did serve its purpose as the first stop outside of Florida.

Getting out of Florida the quickest route possible was a good idea. A nice easy day and a little over a quarter of the way to Avon.

Lesson 2: Stake out restaurants within walking distance from the hotel

Not only was the Comfort Inn an arm pit, but the choices for places to eat within walking distance were limited to one, Sonic. I have nothing against Sonic but would have enjoyed a nice meal and beer in a decent restaurant over the burger and tots at a picnic table in a parking lot.

I think we did pick up a couple 40-oz Buds at the gas station on the walk back. We even drank it from a brown paper bag. It sure impressed the local girls.

Next trip I will do a better job of finding food (and beer) within walking distance of the hotel.



Lesson 3: Ride the challenging roads at the beginning of the day

This was really pure luck. When I routed the trip I knew my general direction (go west young man) and that I would likely travel 2100 – 2300 miles up and back, or about 500-600 miles a day. Once I had the general route I started re-routing here and there to make sure I hit some back roads. It just was pure dumb luck that we found some pretty nice roads at the start of each day.

From Thomasville back to I-10 had some sweet curves and new pavement for the first 60 minutes or so. Our second stop was in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. The morning route from Arkadelphia to Dumas, TX was spectacular. In fact Van and I were commenting on how nice the riding was in the area south of Hot Springs, AK over to west Oklahoma. It would be a great area for a rally. The ride from Dumas into Avon was very nice as well as the ride out of Avon and down to Taos, NM.



All of our nicer roads tended to fall in the first half of the day when we had a fresh load of caffeine, a stomach full of free off- brand corn flakes and clean skivvies. We couldn't have planned that part of the trip better. When the day got long and we were tired, the roads tended to straighten out.

Lesson 4: Off route...recalculate

I'm all for being spontaneous and wandering a bit. Hey, I had a Garmin and a waypoint for the next hotel. But after taking so much time to plan the route for this trip, I wish I would not have deviated from the route unless I

was just trying to get to the next spot sooner. It seems every time I decided to make a major change in the route, it wasn't pretty.

On the way from Thomasville to Arkadelphia, I decided that we should deviate from plans and cut up this nice highway that ran along the west side of the Mississippi River. On the Garmin, it looked like we would be running on a slow curving waterfront road for a few hundred miles. There would be cool breezes off of the river and quaint little cafés where we could have a nice sweet tea and the waitresses would call us sweetie pie and pumpkin. Well it turns out that the winding road (US 65) was as straight as an arrow and right through flat farm land. The river had a 60-foot tall Lake Okeechobee-esque berm that hid the river and those cool breezes the entire way. The travel was hindered by 45 MPH and 55 MPH limits just to make the ride a little more painful and there was some kind of nuclear fallout which was wreaking havoc on my radar detector. As soon as we would hit a nice pace the radar would go off and the fear of sitting in a Mississippi hoosegow with Billy Bob set in. I slowed back down to a respectable 55 MPH. Our café turned out to be a gas station-convenient store-BBQ restaurant combo. The sweet tea was good but no one called me sweetie pie.

A slight re-route was fine, but any major deviation yielded more disappointment than excitement. If you put the effort in to plan a route, it's a good idea to stick to it.

Lesson 5: Driving Across Oklahoma and the Pan Handle of Texas sucks!

People warned me about how unimpressive, hot and just blah the trip would be from Oklahoma through the pan handle of Texas, but I had no idea. It was straight and beige the entire way. We did have nice clear weather and it was kind of neat to be able to see far enough to see the curvature of the earth and the giant windmills outside of Dumas (pronounced dumb-ass), but after 10 minutes I had been there and done that.

The one good thing about the Texas Pan Handle was the high speed limit and the lack of anything in your way to make you slow down. We hauled ass.

If you have time in your trip out west to route around South Oklahoma and the Pan Handle of Texas, do it. Don't be a Dumas.

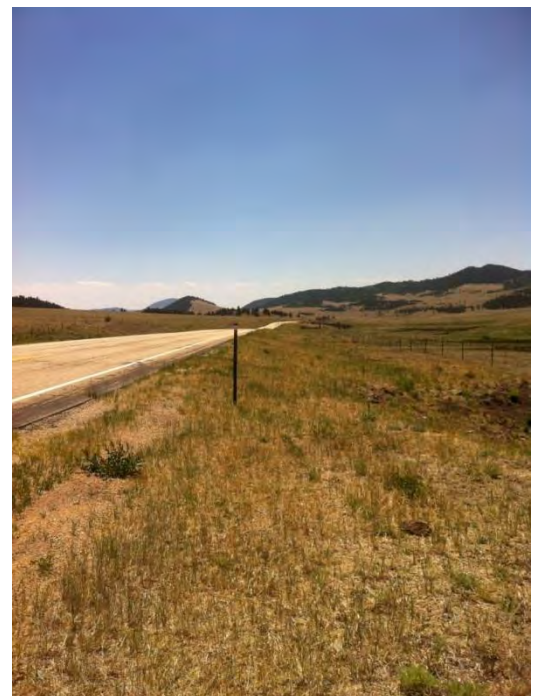
Lesson 6: A Day of Rest

2200+ miles to Avon in 100+ degree weather and I just could not take a day off. I think I rode 1100 miles in the 4 days I was in Avon. No rest for the weary. Two of the days were 300 plus mile days on unfamiliar mountain roads at a spirited pace... I wish I would have just taken one day off to rest. It would have made the long ride home a little more enjoyable.

Remember to plan a day of rest if only to give your butt a rest.

Lesson 7: Ride at your own pace...ride at your own pace...

I don't know how many times I hear, read or think this but still there is that temptation to "catch up" to the people ahead of you and ride a little over your head. I had a few times on this trip that I fell a little behind the



riders in front of me due to the limited passing zones in the mountains or caution in some of the curves or they just plain out rode me (bastards!). Instead of maintaining a reasonable pace on unfamiliar roads, I found myself going much faster than I should have to get around traffic and catch up.

At one point I was in a straight section and running over 100 MPH (not condoned by MSTA). I glanced to the left side of the road and saw a deer. If that deer had moved 10 – 15 feet to the right, I would have been a dead man. I took a breath, slowed down and caught up with my friends just 15 minutes later at a gas station.

Your riding buddies and buddettes will wait up for you if you fall behind. Don't get yourself killed trying to keep up.

Lesson 8: Touring vs. Sport touring vs. Trailering

I think there is a difference between touring and sport touring. If you ride a sport bike a long distance on highways, that's touring. If you ride a Goldwing at a quick pace on some challenging twisties...that's sport touring. I think I'm a sport-touring kind of guy. I'm not sure I get a thrill out of the 10-hour days, especially if I don't have time to stop and enjoy the scenery and if the temperatures are over 100 degrees for half of the day.

Van and I were debating over whether we should trailer the bikes at least out of the south but I pooh-pooed the idea as I thought that it would take away from the adventure. If the trip was in the spring or fall, I think I was right, but I don't think I will ride that far in that part of the country ever again. It just sucks the life out of you. I will proudly trailer to my next summer STAR.

Lessons 9-15 (Quickies)

- 9: Bring some decent tools.
- 10: Don't over pack.
- 11: Bring paper maps (or lap top) for a better perspective of the route.
Van would ask me each day where our route was taking us and I would just point to the GPS and tell him it was in there. I should have had the map pages that I so carefully plotted at home.
- 12: Take a shower in all of your gear. You'll do laundry and have a bath at the same time.
- 13: Make sure that you understand your electronics before the trip (damn GoPro).
- 14: Get gas when you can. We both had 5-gallon tanks on our bikes and missed a chance to get gas in the Texas Pan Handle on the way home. We made it on fumes to the next hole-in-the-wall town and barely did the speed limit to conserve gas. RV's, school buses and donkeys were passing us and giving us the finger. It was 108 degrees and we were in the middle of nowhere. Visions of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* danced in our heads.
- 15: Heat rash, adult diaper rash, monkey butt, saddle sores, crotch rot, swamp butt... No matter what you call it, it's nasty. Bring plenty of powder, ointment or crème and don't share with a friend.

It was an epic trip. My longest trip yet. There were a lot of lessons learned. I think I got this down for STAR 2013.

A special thanks to Van for partnering for the ride.

[Bob Shields](#)

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.

MSTA Track Day - The Wrap-up!

If you weren't at the MSTA Track Day this past Friday, Feb 24th, you missed out! We had over 30 MSTA and COG (Concours Owner's Group) riders there. The weather was beautiful! Ken Condon (Author of "Riding In The Zone") and his two assistants, as well as Becky and myself were there to provide instruction and safety for the day.

I'm sure there will be a separate article or two popping up about the event, so I won't spend any more time on descriptions. I would like to pass along some observations as an instructor and the Safety Guy.

First off, congratulations go out to MSTA as a whole! Ken remarked several times on how the MSTA and COG riders were already a step above his usual non-sport bike classes. He said the riders had no difficulty understanding the concepts presented in the classroom, or putting them to practice on the track.

There were a couple of recurring themes during the day. We noticed a couple of riders who tended to ride near the edge of their control envelope. Fortunately not over the edge, but it makes me wonder if that is the way they ride all the time. Riding near your edge on the track is one thing, where (like on this day) you are trying to find and expand your skills and riding envelope. It is something else entirely if you push it like that on the street.

More than a couple of the rider discovered their head turns were coming too late. As speed increases, your head turn to look into and thru the corner has to become earlier, in order to pick up the sight line and corner exit. This is as true on the street as it is on the track.

Visual fixation became noticeable as well. If you think back to your MSF training, you were taught to keep your vision moving ahead. Again, what works on the track also works on the street. Don't get caught fixating on a single point along the sight line.

A few riders commented on how surprised they were at the way they could handle the bike. They didn't believe their big sport tourers could turn as quickly as they did, particularly on the tight back turns at Jennings GP Raceway. They discovered their bikes have a lot more maneuverability than they thought. Again, this may pay real dividends the next time they round a curve and find an oncoming vehicle half over the center line. Practice, practice, practice.

One final thought: Tires and brakes. We were encouraged that so many showed up with brand new rubber and brakes. It tells us they really were thinking about what they were going to be doing. How about it? Have you thought about your tires and brakes lately?

The MSTA Track Day was a resounding success! All the riders said they wanted to do it again next year. Everyone (including the instructors...we are always in learning mode) learned a lot and had a blast! If you missed this Track Day, don't miss next year's! Just ask anyone who went... 😊

Doug Westly – Safety Editor
radmoto@hotmail.com



MSTA and COG Participants

More photos [here](#).
Photo: Jim Park

Florida News

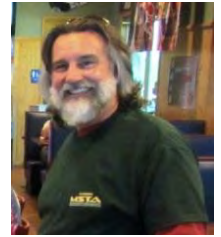
South Director's Report

“WELL THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL....”

‘Cepting here, buckaroo!!

Just another wonderful month for Florida members and their steeds! We had three opportunities to add some miles to the ODO, and many of you did just that! The Central Lunch Ride to [Lake Harris Hideaway](#) took place on Feb. 11th, with Teresa's report to follow. The very next weekend, we held the South Lunch Ride, back to an old favorite, the [Nav-A-Gator Bar & Grill](#). As I was away visiting my sister in Idaho and scaring a few people with my snow skiing prowess, Don Moe stepped up and filled in as ride organizer and leader!! The day turned out to be perfect weather wise, and nine riders from all over southern Florida enjoyed lots of gab and grub!! And along the way, they were joined by Jim and Dianne, “riding” in their Polaris Slingshot weekend rental!! Gonna have to watch that Dianne... Hollywood wrap-around sunglasses and a silk scarf may be just around the corner!!

The last event of the month just wrapped up on Feb. 24th. The First Inaugural Sport Touring Track Day, put on by MSTA/COG, was a big hit!! I asked for a few words from any participants, and here's what came my way:



Van VanSteelant



Photo: Jim Park

I have no/zero “chicken strips” left on my tires. Didn't know I could scrape pegs at 80 MPH, either!! (Turns out he just needed to hang off a little further...) Yep, that was the fix!! — Jim Park

If you were there, you know it was GREAT. Ken Condon and crew, Doug Westly and crew, the instruction, the weather, the track, the lunch, the unlimited water, the fun - all Great. If you missed it for some made-up excuse, kick yourself. — Dan Igoe, GoVFR

Freakin' awesome! Is that enough? 👍😊👍 — Robert Shields

I didn't make this event, but these sentiments are exactly what I took away from my track days going back a few years!! Let's hope the powers that be can see their way to organizing another track event like this one once again!!

What's Next??

As I promoted last month, we have our RTE dates set for the whole of 2017!! Realize that nothing is set in stone, and we have already moved an April date to accommodate the popular [North Georgia Classic](#). So, be sure to check our RIDES calendar often to insure you never miss one of our events!!

For March, we once again have multiple riding opportunities!! Starting March 4th, join Teresa and the Central Gang for lunch at the [Latin American Café and Restaurant](#), 17433 E Colonial Dr., in Orlando!! She has a table for 12 reserved for 11:30AM.

The next weekend, meet us in Ocala for our first Just-For-Fun Event of the year!! From March 10-12, we will hang out at the [Quality Inn](#) when we aren't riding over hill and dale!! You've missed the cut off for the discounted room rate, but don't let that small detail stop you from being part of the fun!! Hit up our website for all the info and phone numbers!!

The following THURSDAY, March 16th, make your way to our Annual Daytona Lunch Ride! This year, Teresa has picked a winner of a lunch spot!! [Brian's BBQ Restaurant](#) is just minutes away from the Track in DeLand!! After lunch, you still have choices... Teresa and Tim live nearby, so they know the area and roads really well. They have planned out a ride route for those who'd like to see a bit of rustic Florida, and CURVES!! Of course, the vendors Trakside will be happy to see you again if you still have some \$\$ burning a hole in your riding pants....

Last, but not least, the South Lunch Ride will happen on Sat., March 25th. We return to an old favorite, BUT, in a brand new location!! Join us for lunch at [Lightsey Fish Co.](#) in downtown Okeechobee!!

Whew!!! You guys will wear out our website www.flmsta.org trying to keep up with all we have to offer in March!!

Looking into April, we have our usual two lunch rides, and the big closer, the [North GA. Classic](#), which runs Apr. 21-23 in Helen, GA. Look ahead, and make your plans and reservations NOW!!

Membership News

I'll say this one more time... 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!! Don is part of a multi-member team nationwide who have stepped up to wrestle the membership rolls into a lean, mean, manageable process!! Believe me, they took on a hydra-headed monster and seem to have tamed the beast down to a human-friendly Pitbull!!

Here's what we know today...

In February, we had no new members join the MSTA from Florida. Looks like we need to spread around a new batch of our Invitation-To-Ride quad-folds!! Remember that for each new member you recruit and who provides your name and/or membership number on the application, you will receive a \$10 STARBUcks coupon that you can use towards event registration fees and membership dues, as well as Gear Box items when it is reestablished.

We thank the following Florida members for recently renewing their memberships:

Chuck Headrick Jim & Dianne Park

This Florida membership has expired since December 1st:

David Sytsema

These Florida memberships will expire soon:

Clifford Burke Frederick Christ Frances Headrick
Howard Jacobson Ken & JoAnna Murray David & Leslie Noyes

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and to continue supporting their MSTA.

Special Announcement!

We have just released the link for our Florida State Storefront!! 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.

And now, they can offer us T-shirts with pockets!!

Random Ramblings!

A BIG THANKS to Don for stepping up and handling the South Lunch Ride! It's very rare that I have a scheduling conflict. Now, bike issues are another matter! 😊

We have so much fun planned for the rest of the year!! If you've never ventured to one of our events, consider changing that lapse real soon!! My first star was in Avon, CO. I rode with a great buddy from Reno, NV after shipping my 'Busa from Florida. That was in 2006... My first event in Florida was a lunch ride to Okeechobee. I rode solo. That was in 2001... My first event ever was a lunch ride in Connecticut. I rode solo. That was 1990... Try it, you'll like it!

YOU ARE PLANNING ON ATTENDING [STAR 2017 IN COLORADO](#) (PDF), RIGHT... The links for registration and the raffle bike are posted on the National site, in a recent email sent to all members nationwide, and right here!! Get 'r done!!!

Registration <http://www.planetreg.com/star2017>

2017 Honda Africa Twin <http://www.planetreg.com/mstaraffle2017>

There are several good reasons why the MSTAs have held rallies in Colorado repeatedly over the decades... #1-Amazing riding!! If you've never ridden west of the Mississippi River, you are in for a stunning experience!! Join us for the fun!!

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT VanMSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Central Florida March Lunch Ride:

Saturday, **March 4th**, 11:45 AM – 1:30 PM,

[Latin American Café & Restaurant](#)

17433 E Colonial Dr

Orlando, FL 32820

(east of Orlando near Bithlo)

Here's a sample of the typical online reviews...

The food is really good and the staff is always friendly. It doesn't look like much from the outside but definitely worth stopping in.

We have a table for 12 reserved at 11:30 AM. Sat. March 4th.

Note: We may not be able to lead the ride on March 16th due to a family obligation. If we can't lead the ride, I will make up a route sheet for those who want it.

Teresa Vipond, DeLand
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Member Comment

Bob Shields contributed this short report from his experience in Jennings.

MSTA/COG Track Day at Jennings GP

A few years ago I bought an SV650, leathers and gear to participate in track days, but sadly I could never find the time so I sold the bike, but kept the leathers and gear just in case. When the MSTA track day was announced, I was giddy with excitement. I think I was the first to sign up. A track day where I could ride my sport-touring bike with little to no bike prep, no way!

This was literally the best day of riding I've had in 10 years.

Being able to ride your bike at your pace on a great track with no traffic to worry about, no sand in the corner, no intersections, no distractions... just time to work on your skills. Freaking awesome! I learned more about my ride in a day on the track than I have learned in years on the streets. This was a great event! A big thanks to Doug and Becky Westly, Dennis Villarose and Ken Condon and his crew. I hope this becomes an event that we do once or twice a year.



Photo: JenningsGP

Florida MSTA Apparel

We have just released the link for our Florida State Storefront!! 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 MSTAs [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., **March 4th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Where: [Latin American Café & Restaurant](#) – 17433 E Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32820
☎ 407-568-6998 ([map](#))

Description: *Here's a sample of the typical online reviews...*

The food is really good and the staff is always friendly. It doesn't look like much from the outside but definitely worth stopping in. We have a table for 12 reserved at 11:30 AM.

Contact: Teresa Vipond termayn@gmail.com or ☎ 713-504-5763

MSTA Daytona Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **March 16th**, 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Where: [Brian's Bar-B-Que](#) – 795 N. Spring Garden Ave, DeLand, FL 32720 ([map](#))

Description: We have a winner!! We are moving our destination to DeLand this year. Its proximity to the track allows you to make the most of the vendor activity AND enjoy a fantastic lunch with friends old and new!!

Plenty of room and great food!! And for those looking for a little Florida riding, Teresa and Tim will be leading a ride after lunch to points north and west of DeLand!! They are local to the area, so you can be sure to enjoy the ride!!

The Midway will open Friday, March 10th, and run through Saturday, March 18th.

Racing goes on all week!! Check out www.daytonainternationalspeedway.com

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **March 25th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Where: [Lightsey's Fish Co & Seafood](#) – 1506 SE Parrot Ave., Okeechobee, FL ☎ 863-763-4276 ([map](#))

Description: Well, they have moved into new digs, and the place looks terrific!! Same attitude, same indoor/outdoor seating options. Just lost the marina views... Bring your appetite!

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., **April 8th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Where: TBA
Description: Place holder for the April lunch ride.
Contact: Teresa Vipond termayn@gmail.com or ☎713-504-5763

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **April 15th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Where: TBA
Description: We have two brand new options for this month's ride. I need more info from one of them before I can confirm the destination. Stay tuned!!
Contact: Van busavan@flmsta.org or ☎561-386-2594

Regional Events

Daytona Just-For-Fun Event in Ocala

When: Fri-Sun., **March 10-12, 2017**
Where: [Quality Inn](#) – 3434 SW College Road, Ocala, FL ☎352-854-3200 ([map](#))
Description: We have put together a GREAT weekend of fun and frolic for our members, far and wide!! This is a great lead in to Bike Weeks!! And, on the following Thursday, we have our MSTA Lunch Ride!
Stay tuned for further event details and ride ideas...



Room rates are greatly discounted for this time of year. Until Friday, February 24, we had a block of 10 rooms at \$99 a night, before taxes, for March 9th-12th in the event that anyone from out of the area would like to arrive on Thursday for a good night's sleep and an early start the next morning on Friday, the 10th. This includes a hot breakfast, heated pool, 24-hour fitness center, Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, and cookies and milk from 8:00-9:00 PM each evening.

Keep in mind that not only are these dates at the start of Bike Week in nearby Daytona Beach, it is also the heart of our tourist season so rooms may start to disappear quickly. Just call the telephone number above and reserve as soon as you know you can make it. You can cancel 24 hours prior to the date of your reservation. Just refer to the MSTA block of rooms when you make your reservation.

[MSTA Daytona Lunch Ride](#)

When: Thurs., **March 16, 2017**

Where: [Brian's Bar-B-Que](#) – 795 N. Spring Garden Ave, DeLand, FL 32720 ☎386-736-8851 ([map](#))

Description: We have a winner!! We are moving our destination to DeLand this year. Its proximity to the track allows you to make the most of the vendor activity AND enjoy a fantastic lunch with friends old and new!! Plenty of room and great food!!

And for those looking for a little Florida riding, Teresa and Tim will be leading a ride after lunch to points north and west of DeLand!! They are local to the area, so you can be sure to enjoy the ride!!

The Midway will open Friday, March 10th, and run through Saturday, March 18th.

Racing goes on all week!! Check out the activities for the 76th Annual Bike Week at [DaytonaInternationalSpeedway.com](#)

[Norm's Dual-Sport Ride](#)

When: Thurs.-Sun., **March 30-April 2, 2017**

Where: [The Gateway Inn](#) – 64 White Oak Lane, Dillard, GA 30537 ☎706-746-3585

Description: A weekend of fairly easy Dual-Sport riding. Mostly two-track, lots of gravel, some rocks, some dirt. Weather should be mild/cool. Soil in this area is sandy/loamy and drains quickly so there isn't much slippery mud. Most routes include areas that do not favor large bikes, so we don't recommend riding a bike over 600cc.

Location: Dillard, GA

Forum: ridemsta.com/mstaforums/general-discussion/norm's-dual-sport-ride-dillard-ga-march-30-april-2/

[North Georgia Classic](#)

When: Fri.-Sun., **April 21-23, 2017**

Where: [Quality Inn](#) – 15 Yonah St, Helen, GA 30545 ☎706-878-2268 ([map](#))

Description: Event motel will be the Quality Inn in Helen Georgia with all rooms recently renovated. A block of rooms is being held at a \$89 rate for this event until April 7, 2017. Call 706-878-2268 and mention MSTA for your reservation

Location: Helen, GA – Excellent street riding in the north Georgia mountains.

Website: msta-se.com/helen/

Forum: ridemsta.com/mstaforums/north-georgia-classic/2017-north-georgia-classic/

STAR 2017

STAR 2017 – the annual rally of The Motorcycle Sport Touring Association (MSTA) will take place in Colorado Springs June 11-15, 2017



STAR 2017 (our 35th anniversary STAR!) will be headquartered in the beautiful Hotel Elegante, [just off of Interstate 25](#), in southern Colorado Springs:



Due to the usual heavy demand when we have a STAR in Colorado, the hotel is extending our special rate to cover dates before and after STAR.

Online STAR 2017 REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

www.planetReg.com/STAR2017

A few STAR 2017 Highlights

- 🏍 Spectacular 14,000 ft Pikes Peak only a short ride from the hotel.
- 🏍 Beautiful Garden of the Gods city park – another short ride.
- 🏍 Fabulous scenic mountain routes including rides to Independence Pass and Aspen, Cottonwood Pass, Mount Evans, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Leadville, Rocky Mountain National Park – and more! Colorado Springs is in the nexus of Pike, San Isabel, Arapahoe, White River and Roosevelt National Forests.
- 🏍 Proximity to scenic wonders like the Great Sand Dunes National Park.
- 🏍 Superb dual sporting – close to the hotel – Rampart Range (the dual sport playground of the Front Range) and the Gold Belt Scenic Byway through Victor and Cripple Creek, plus more exciting dual sport venues.
- 🏍 Full support by one of Colorado’s premier motorcycle dealers, Apex Sports – just a short trip from the hotel.
- 🏍 A beautiful and vibrant downtown area a short distance away, with a diversity of night life.
- 🏍 Many nearby restaurants and micro-breweries, including the hotels own award-winning restaurant and bar.
- 🏍 Many museums and historical sites within and surrounding Colorado Springs.
- 🏍 Great shopping in Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs.
- 🏍 A climate that is very comfortable all summer.
- 🏍 Many, many non-riding sight-seeing venues like, Seven Falls, Royal Gorge, Pike Peak Cog Railway, US Air Force Academy, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Manitou Cliff Dwellings and more! If there ever was a STAR to bring the family to, this is it.
- 🏍 A very motorcycle friendly community.

If you are on the MSTA email list you will get an email with a link to the registration site. For those who prefer to register by mail, print out the registration form at this link and mail it in with your payment (check or CC): ridemsta.com/srblog/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Star-17-Application.pdf

Can anyone attend? **YES** – You do need to be an MSTA member to attend, but your registration is discounted equal to a one year membership! Contact us to get your discount code or if you have questions:

☎ 970-667-0460

✉ hhemstreet@planetreg.com

Want to know more about visiting the Colorado Springs area?

🏍 View photos: www.visitcos.com

🏍 Download the visitors’ brochure: www.visitcos.com/order-official-visitor-guide

Want to talk about or plan with other members – join us on our MSTA STAR 2017 Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/groups/cospringsstar

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 sanctioned events: [click here](#).
- 🏍️ For Just-For-Fun events in 2017: [click here](#).

National MSTA ridemsta.com

Florida MSTA www.flmsta.org

More Contact Information			
Don Moe Newsletter Editor 300 N. Hwy A1A, Apt. J-206 Jupiter, FL 33477 ☎️ 561-346-1009 editor@flmsta.org	Paul 'Van' VanSteelant South Director 217 S.E. 3 rd Street Boynton Beach, FL 33435 ☎️ 561-386-2594 busavan@flmsta.org	Teresa Vipond Central Director Deland, FL ☎️ 713-504-5763 termayn@gmail.com	Vacant Northeast Director ☎️

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



This month's [Mystery Hyperlink](#) is related to the safety article.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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