

The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association Volume 9 Issue 1

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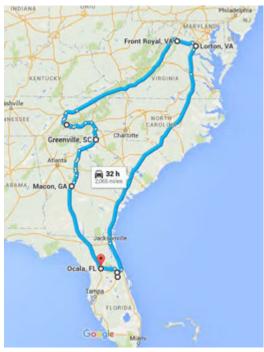
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Happy New Year to All



Orlando > Skyline Drive > Blue Ridge Parkway > Tail of the Dragon > FL

Feature Article

Blue Ridge Parkway Motorcycle Trip September 2015

Amtrak Auto Train FL to VA, Skyline Dr, BRP, Dragon, Ride back to FL

By Jeff, a.k.a. extrapolator

[Ed: Under the handle "extrapolator," the author posted this ride report to the "The Open Road » Ride Reports" section of the Sport-Touring.Net Forum on October 13, 2015. It has been slightly edited for publication. All photos by the author unless stated otherwise. Faces blurred by author. Refer to original article for more photos. Click on photo for larger version.]

For those who may not realize that the ZX14 can be a sport tourer...

On Friday, Sept. 4, 2015, two buds and I rode to Sanford, FL where Amtrak's Auto Train departs for Lorton, VA. The Auto Train is an overnight train trip that takes you and your motorcycle for \$302 each (cars \$60 more I think). It departs at 4 pm and arrives at 9 am the next morning. Dinner and breakfast included. Our train was an hour late leaving, but still made it on time somehow. I assume some kind of magic was performed while I slept.

You can choose a chair, a two-person cabin, or a larger fancier cabin. One bud decided to sleep in a chair, while the other and I shared a cabin. The cabin is teeny, tiny. Only one person can stand in it and nowhere to even walk around; the other must stay seated or wait outside the room if one wants to stand up. And when both are seated your knees are almost touching. When it's bed time you pull down the bunk's bed, and then climb two stairs to get up there, and then secure a net from the edge of the bed to the ceiling, so you don't fall out while bounding down the tracks during the night. The amount of room left once there are two beds is so small that you have hardly any room for any stuff. I had to put my luggage on the bed with me. We hung some things from a hook on the wall using bungees I brought



along. It wasn't as bad as I'm making it sound, but don't expect to bring much with you! Found a pic ... this is all there is!

No pics, but the next car in front of ours had quite a few dining tables, which were spacious like a normal 4-person dining table should be, so we spent a lot of our awake time there. Also, the view out the train window was not as interesting as I thought it'd be. Pretty boring actually. Not sure what I was expecting. Bigfoot?

When the train stopped in Lorton at 9 am the next morning, we unloaded our bikes and rode 70 miles to Front Royal, VA at the north end of Skyline Drive, a limited access, slow speed (35 mph) scenic road through the lower Great Smoky Mountains of VA, similar to the Blue Ridge Parkway but shorter mountains and lower elevations. Our bikes at the first scenic overlook we decided to stop at on Skyline Drive:



The south end of Skyline Drive runs right into the north end of the 469-mi, also limited access, also slow







Overlook #2 somewhere on Skyline Dr. A nice Harley dude offered to snap our pic:

Then we rode the entire 109-mi Skyline Dr to Waynesboro, VA and stayed at a "Quality" Inn there.



speed (45 mph), scenic, Blue Ridge Parkway. So the next morning Sunday, Sept. 6, we began riding the BRP, headed for the very southern end of it in Cherokee, NC. Here's our first scenic overlook on the BRP:





Sunday night we stayed the night in this little five-bed bunkhouse (center of photo) at Willville Motorcycle Campground in the little town of Meadows of Dan on the BRP. Spartan room, but clean, and friendly folks. This seemingly little cabin has **five** single beds! Man and his daughter there on the porch next to us, with their bike parked under the shelter:

Poor bikes had to sleep outside:



Part of Willville's camping area (a little stream behind me here):







Willville's nice big pavilion with picnic tables and fireplace, and to the right in the background is the campfire area, with quite a few bikers staying in tents:



Monday morning breakfast is at the <u>Mabry Mill</u> <u>Restaurant</u> right on the BRP close to Willville:



Monday after breakfast we crossed from VA into NC on the BRP and ate lunch at the <u>Switzerland Café</u> in Little Switzerland, NC (bike at left wasn't with us):





Monday mid-afternoon we stopped at the Mount Mitchell overlook:

Another BRP scenic overlook, no idea which one. Yawn, ho-hum, another fantastic view of miles of mountains and valleys:



Tuesday noon we stopped at the highest point on the BRP, over a mile above sea level:



By Tuesday afternoon we had completed the entire





Monday night, we had two cabins at the <u>Blue Ridge</u> <u>Motorcycle Campground</u>. Also Spartan, but clean rooms ... just fine for sleeping and then resuming the ride:



Tuesday, another overlook; it's starting to rain for the first time:



BRP ... which was my main goal ... and then headed for Deal's Gap, which is where the Tail of the Dragon starts. There's a single gas station with 14 motel rooms





and a restaurant. We got room number lucky 13. Another nice, clean place, although no cell coverage! We stayed here two nights.

Ridin' the Dragon:



At the north end of the Dragon is a scenic overlook where many of the tired racers, I mean riders, stop to rest and talk:



... and the Fontana Dam, which is surprisingly



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And again ... we rode it a bunch!



Cheoah Dam is nearby. Stopping on a bridge? Sure, why not:



dilapidated; lots of cracks and shifted concrete = scary! This thing is way, way bigger than it looks here ... it's a looooong way down to that water:

After Deal's Gap, we stayed in Maggie Valley, NC for our last night. And after racing, I mean riding, the



Dragon, I was checking my bike over and found that I had worn thru the rubber to the belt on the rear tire. And my front tire also getting very smooth and weird shaped, so my fun in any more curves was over until we could ride (delicately) over to Greenville, SC to get new ones installed ... but since we headed home after that I didn't get to enjoy them in any curves. Next time \bigcirc ...

After new tires, we rode straight thru from Greenville back to FL and got home at midnight Friday, Sept. 11. About 8 days in total, and exactly 2,020 miles.

Here's a 2.5-min video that our FJR rider put together:



Click on screen image to start or open this link in your browser:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=39Vue3NUGd8



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.

Lane-Splitting and Other Maneuvers

Awhile back we talked about <u>lane-splitting</u>, also known as lane-sharing or "white lining". I think it may be time for an update, as well as a little commentary on other motorcycle maneuvers we commonly see here in the State.

First off, lane-splitting is still illegal in Florida. It is amazing that I even have to remind everyone of this, but we're seeing more and more riders doing it here in the Sunshine State. State statutes specifically say that with the exception of two motorcycles, two motorized vehicles cannot share the same lane of traffic. End of



Photo: Los Angeles Times

story. You can't lane-split. However, this does bring up an interesting question...

Since you can share a lane with another motorcycle, can you legally pass that motorcycle in the same lane? Technically, according to Florida Statutes, NO. FL Statute 316.209(2) says, "The operator of a motorcycle shall not overtake and pass in the same lane occupied by the vehicle being overtaken." This means that while you can ride two abreast (which is not a good idea anyway), it is illegal to pass another motorcycle in the same lane of travel.

BTW, these restrictions do not apply to police or other emergency personnel using motorcycles as official vehicles in response to an emergency situation (Statute 316.209(5)). So don't try to tell your local motor cop that he or she can't do it!

You CANNOT deliberately do wheelies or stoppies on public streets! Again, according to specific statutes, the vehicle's wheels must maintain contact with the ground at all times, other than when ground irregularities may cause momentary loss of contact, beyond the control of the operator. If you get pulled over for throwing a wheelie or stoppie, it is a considered a moving violation. Here is the fun part. A first offense is a \$1,000 fine. A second offense is a \$2,500 fine and a one year revocation of your driver's license. A third offense is a third degree felony, a \$5,000 fine and loss of your driver's license for 10 years (FL Statute 318.14(13)(a-c). It is not worth it. Don't do it.

Now, we don't have anyone in MSTA that does any of this, right? Surely our members are more mature and safe in our riding than to pull these kinds of stunts? Really? What makes us immune to this kind of riding antics? Admittedly, probably 95% of our riders would never think about trying these or any other of the multitude of stupid maneuvers out there. HOWEVER, I have seen one or two of these in an MSTA group ride over the years.

We like to characterize ourselves as enthusiasts of our sport, and I think rightfully so. Overall, I think MSTA makes a great ambassadorial group for our sport.

Just don't let your enthusiasm (and ego?) overcome common sense and concern for safety out there. You could end up paying in more ways than one.

Ride Safe in 2016!

<u>Doug Westly</u> – Safety Editor



Florida News

South Director's Report

OK, ENOUGH ABOUT THE WEATHER....

Especially when you consider how wonderful the weather was for our two lunch rides in December!! LOTS of you made the most of the opportunities, which made our last lunch rides of the year big hits!! The Central ride to the <u>Jolly Gator Fish Camp</u> drew members and riders



Van VanSteelant

from Jacksonville to Boynton Beach! Catch up with Teresa's report a little later. I will say that the six "southies" really enjoyed ourselves!! A big THANKS to Don Moe for leading our 430+ mile round trip ride!!

The next weekend found us at Capt. Hiram's, where 35(!!) of us took over the north end of the restaurant and the most of the parking lot!! The Southies numbered 14+!! We were also joined by our MSTA President, Dennis Villarose, who was "in town" for the holidays. Dennis gave us an update on upcoming membership changes and latest on STAR 2016 in Vermont! It was a pleasure to have him with us!!









As you can imagine, with two large turnouts, our 50/50 raffles were big hits! Our winners were Jenkin Davis, \$22; and Don Moe, \$68!! Our take of \$90 brings our total to \$687.50!! A huge THANKS to all our participants!! We have received a few more suggestions for how to spend our growing "bank". The consensus



so far is to throw a membership party at a location central to the majority of the members. We may make it a Just-For-Fun weekend to make it even easier for more members to attend! Let me know what you think, soon...

What's Next??

The calendar has gone through a major update, all the way through to December, 2016!! You now have plenty of warning to make your plans and set some dates aside to make the most of your riding next year!! The South Lunch destinations have been chosen. The South Brunch areas have been chosen. The Central dates have been chosen. And lots of additional events are posted throughout the year!! I will be adding even more in the next few weeks... Send in your suggestions... Check out our website www.flmsta.org for all the info!!

In January, we have four events to consider. Beginning January 8-10, make your way to the Miami Convention Center for the 2nd annual <u>Progressive International Motorcycle Show!!</u> Look for discount tickets from numerous sources. The Central Lunch ride happens on January 9th. Join Teresa at <u>Mary's Kountry Kitchen</u> in Tavares. And on January 23rd, join Van for the South Lunch ride to <u>Stan's Idle Hour</u> in Goodland!! But wait, there's more... On January 30th, make your way to the 10th Annual <u>Dania Beach Vintage Motorcycle Show</u> where you'll find 350+ vintage bikes collected for serious judging and awards!

Looking to February, we have the Central Lunch set for February 6th; and the South Lunch set for February 20th. I'm working on another event for February 13th, but I need a week more to finalize the deal. Stay tuned!!

Membership News

Believe it or not, I did receive an update from our beleaguered Membership Director!! The info is for October/November only. I do hope we get back to normal soon. Poor Michael has had a real baptism by fire during his first six months on the job!

Please welcome new members:

Eric Kuritzky, Orlando Joe and Becky Wolf, Sebring The following memberships are about to expire: (remember the time frame)

Mark Buerger Neil Fogelberg Jim McClure III Mark Turkel
John Cali Don Jones Donals Perry Van Van Steelant

Jim Cavanagh Roger Magill Bill and Nicole Rorke Doug and Becky Westly

Scott Eisbree Steve Marcum Kostas Sfaklotakis

The following memberships have expired: (remember the time frame)

Alan Berry Bruce Lyon Fred and Betty Thayer

Mike Ewanus Camel Ridgdill Paul Towkach Jose Iglesias Larry Snell Ronald Winn

As a heads up to all, be sure to forward any new email addresses or changes to Michael Tissandier membership@ridemsta.com He then forwards the info to the various State Directors, VP's, and EC, as well as our newsletter editor.

Random Ramblings!

...a huge thanks to all the contributors to the Gator Tale this year!! Without you, we got nothing to read!!

...a huge thanks to all the raffle participants throughout the year!! Stay tuned for how we'll spend most of it.



STAR 2016 is finalized for the end of June, 2016. Registration is now open, and more info has been emailed to all of you! Make your plans NOW!! New England is a terrific place for us to ride and play!! I'm going this year!!

Get your receipts/info into the Dan Clark Safety Fund ASAP to qualify for the refunds that will handed out around STAR next year. Full details are under the Membership drop down on our national site.

I had a terrific opportunity to ride 500 miles of Florida's two lane roads to Tampa and back for Christmas. I liked my return route better... Though it was the busiest travel time of the year, I could count the number of cars I encountered over the nearly 375 miles of rural two lanes on less than two hands!! A lovely ride, a lonely ride. Had me thinking about a SPOT device. I even had one occasion where the words "no service" were where I normally see two to five bars of cell service strength....in Florida! Got me thinking about all the thousands of miles I've ridden solo since 1976, when you just relied on the kindness of strangers and happenstance. Got me thinking about a SPOT device...

ALL THE BEST TO ONE AND ALL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!!

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Thanks to Tom Blake for the following December Central Ride Report...

"We had a great turnout today at the <u>Jolly Gator Fish Camp</u> - about 24 folks all together. There were about half a dozen from the Tampa area, five from the east-central area, about eleven from the West Palm and a couple from up around Jacksonville. We filled the air conditioned indoor dining area pretty much up. Service was excellent – our server was getting compliments and good tips from all quarters. There were a lot of choices on the menu and I didn't hear any complaints about the food. We were all sitting around talking about our rides and it got a little noisy. The small Harley crowd that was there got up and took their beers elsewhere. Mark this place a keeper.







It would be hard to complain about the weather either, with temperatures in the mid 70's to start and a high of maybe 81 or so on the way home. My GPS estimated 1 hour 40 minutes ride time from West Melbourne via Deer Park, Christmas, Chuluota and Geneva. But we got to Geneva so early that we stopped there for



about a 15 minute break and still got to the fish camp 10 minutes early. One in our group was complaining about the low fuel mileage he was getting. You just can't please everyone. Isn't that right, Percy?

To mix things up a bit, the east-central group came home via Mims, Titusville, Kennedy Space Center and Merritt Island. It took a while longer but was much more scenic as the last half of the ride was along the Indian and Banana Rivers and then the ocean. We traded turkeys, buzzards and scrub oaks going over for pelicans and palm trees coming home."

Central FL Lunch Ride

The January ride is on the schedule for Saturday, the 9th, at Mary's Kountry Kitchen. One more new place to try:

Mary's Kountry Kitchen 15945 County Rd 448 Tavares, FL 32778 352-343-6823

The reserved table will be ready at 11:30. One online review describes it as 'a gem in the middle of nowhere.' From the adjacent photo, it looks like there's plenty of paved parking.

Starting in February, I'll make reservations at some of the eateries that were enjoyed on previous rides. And your suggestions for new and old places are always appreciated.

Teresa Vipond, DeLand MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Florida Rides This Month

Important Note

Always remember to check the Florida MSTA <u>Event Calendar</u> 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.

Progressive International Motorcycle Show

When: Friday, Jan. 8th through Sunday, Jan. 10th

Where: Miami Motorcycle Show, Miami Beach Convention Center, Halls C – D, 1901 Convention

Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL \$\mathbb{\textit{2786-276-4350}} \text{(map)}

Description: IT'S BACK!! Full info at www.motorcycleshows.com. Directions, show times, tickets

(discounts!!), show features, etc.!!

Directions and Parking Information. Facebook Page.

Contact: \$\mathbb{\alpha} 800-331-5706

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **Jan. 9**th, 12:00-2:00 pm

Where: Mary's Kountry Kitchen, 15945 County Rd 448, Tavares, FL 32778 352-343-6823 (map)

Description: The reserved table will be ready at 11:30. One online review describes it as 'a gem in the middle

of nowhere.' Plenty of paved parking.

Contact: Teresa Vipond - termayn@gmail.com or \$\mathbb{\textit{2713-504-5763}}



MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., Jan. 23rd, 12:00-2:00 pm

Where: Stan's Idle Hour Restaurant, 221 Goodland Dr., Goodland, FL 34140 239-394-3041 (map) Description: It's been a few years since we were last at Stan's!! So, join us for the return trip to a sturdy

1. It's occin a few years since we were last at stair s:: 50, join as for the retain trip to a

destination!! Lots of parking, lots of outside seating, and good eating!!

Contact: Van - <u>busavan@flahsta.org</u> or **2**561-386-2594

10th Annual Dania Beach Vintage Motorcycle Show

When: Sat, **January 30th**, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Where: Frost Park, 300 NE 2nd Street, Dania Beach, FL (map)

Description: It's located south of Ft Lauderdale Airport off US1. Mark your calendars for the biggest Vintage

Motorcycle show in South Florida! Over 350 antique bikes will be judged under the trees at beautiful Frost Park in Dania Beach. There will be live music, vendors, bike parts swap meet, food, Harley skill team demonstrations, motorcycle field games, Roller Derby Girls, vintage bicycle display, kiddy play area and more! The event is FREE to the public with a fee to enter bikes and proceeds benefit Stray Aid & Rescue and Southeastern Guide Dogs. So bring the whole

family for a day of sun and fun!!!

Contact: Go to daniabeachvintagebikeshow.com for ALL the info!!

Future Florida Events

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., **Feb. 6th**, 12:00-2:00 pm

Where: TBD

Description: Place holder for the February lunch ride!! Stay tuned!! Contact: Teresa Vipond - termayn@gmail.com or \$\frac{1}{2}713-504-5763\$

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **Feb. 20th**, 12:00-2:00 pm

Where: OK Corral Gun Club, 9449 NE 48th Street, Okeechobee FL 34972 **28**863-357-2226 (map)

Description: We are trying something a little different this month!! This place is multi-functional -- great lunch

fair, event center, gun club and range, training facility and more!! Join us for lunch, and stay around to try your hand at sporting clays or static range shooting!!! Check out their website for ALL the info/rental pricing: www.okcorralgunclub.com. Direct any specific questions about the

club options to the General Manager, Channing Boyd at cboyd@okcorralgunclub.com.

Contact: Van - busavan@flahsta.org or \$\infty\$561-386-2594



Member Profile

We would like to publish profiles of our members, on a strictly voluntary basis of course. If you would like to participate, please send an email (or a letter) to the <u>editor</u> of our Florida newsletter and answer as many of the following questions as you feel appropriate. Please send an attachment with a suitable photo of you with your primary or favorite motorcycle. If you prefer to send by regular mail, please find the mailing address <u>below</u>.

Member Profile Questions:

Hometown/State? Who or what was your biggest influence in motorcycling?

What was your first motorcycle? What are your favorite places to ride?

Current motorcycles? Describe a memorable motorcycle adventure?

What is your all-time favorite motorcycle? What is the best motorcycle advice or tip learned over the years?

How long have you been riding? What turns you on about motorcycles or riding? When did you join the MSTA? What do you get out of your MSTA membership?

How did you hear about the MSTA? What are your hobbies and interests outside of motorcycling?

Thank you for your participation.

For additional Florida events and information, <u>click here</u> to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page.

MSTA website information on upcoming sanctioned events: <u>click here</u>. For Just-For-Fun events: <u>click here</u>.

National MSTA www.ridemsta.com

Florida MSTA www.flmsta.org

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



This month's Mystery Hyperlink provides additional information related to the safety article.



CLASSIFIED ADS

2012 BMW R1200GS Rallye Edition. 23k miles.

Located in Tampa, FL.

Excellent condition. Never down, never off-road. Used as an on road tourer, with Michelin PR4s. Experienced, older rider, motor-cycle instructor and industry professional, original owner. Exceptionally well-cared for. Cleaned after every ride. No dents, scratches, etc. Parked/stored in climate-controlled garage. Perfect running condition. All dealer services at maintenance intervals.

Options include: GSA panniers and trunk, GSA wind wings, SW-Motech bars powder-coated to match frame, Clearwater LED lights, headlight shield, radiator shield, cross-pipe shield, large off-road pegs, Centech AP-2 fuse panel, Mudsling inner rear fender, upgraded battery, battery pigtail. Items currently installed but NOT included in sale (to be uninstalled): ZUMO 665 GPS w/XM

(will leave GPS mount on bike), radar detector, wiring and controller for heated rider gear.



Bike is ready to ride anywhere. Selling anticipating new bike in 2016 and I've got a couple of other bikes to ride in the meantime. Currently retail value w/o extra options is over \$14k. **Price for MSTAers: \$13,500** firm. Clear title, no loan. Available for local pickup or buyer to arrange shipping. No shipping or pickup without cleared payment. No overseas sale. Will assist with any shipping arrangements. This is a great bike and will make someone an awesome ride.

Call Doug at **2813-928-1663**

2013 Triumph Trophy SE. Silver. 75k miles. Located in Jupiter, FL.

Excellent sport-touring motorcycle. Very good condition. Toured extensively around the USA and Canada in 2013 & 2014. Michelin PR4GT tires. Experienced, older rider, original owner. Well maintained by Triumph dealerships at proper maintenance intervals. Minor scratches. Parked in storage garage. Perfect running condition. Bike is ready to ride anywhere. Extended, two-year, unlimited-mileage warranty valid until January, 2017.

Stock options include: top case; heated rider & pillion seats; heated grips; panniers; touring windscreen.

Included options: Triumph Service Manual; Corbin heated saddle with rider's backrest; Triumph Comfort Seat for rider; Triumph tank bag; Triumph pannier liners; GPS mount on dash.



Mounted accessories include: FIAMM horns; R&G Racing's Adventure Bars; Kuryakin highway pegs; R&G radiator cooler guard; R&G rear axle slider; R&G front axle sliders; R&G exhaust header pipe grill; R&G exhaust protector; front and rear fender extenders; red Hyperlites in rear; Garmin Zumo 66x mount attached to left handlebar; Throttlemeister throttle lock; Scotchlite reflective sheets on side cases. EBC brake rotors & pads on front.

Notes: Photo is not current. Clearwater Lights shown in photo are not included. XM radio has not been activated.

Current retail value with stock options is near \$11k. **Price:** \$10,500. Clear title, no loan. Available for local pickup or buyer to arrange shipping. No shipping or pickup without cleared payment. Will assist with any shipping arrangements. No overseas sale. This will be an awesome ride for someone. I now ride a 2015 BMW R1200GS Adventure.

Contact Don at \$\, 561-746-7714

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

