



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 9 Issue 5

Events in May

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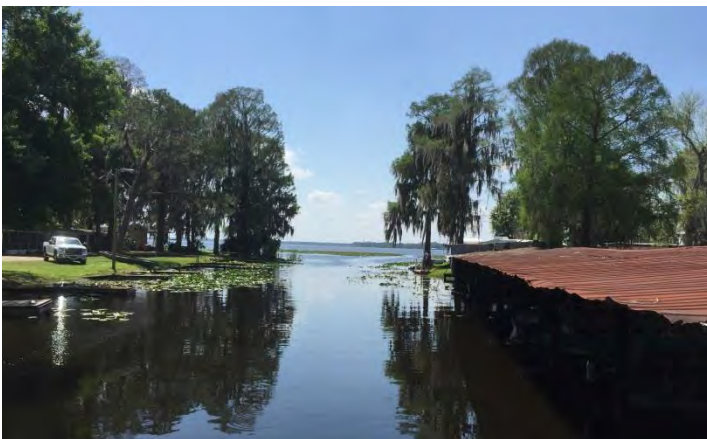
Feature Article

Wizard's Wild Weekend 10th Anniversary Gathering

By Ellen Kocher

I attended this MSTA Just-for-Fun event, April 1 - April 3 in [Cedar Key](#), Florida. Kevin Healey, a/k/a Wizard, organizes this yearly event. Kevin is a longtime rider who has formed friendships through the years with motorcyclists living all over the country. In fact, as an aside, a few years ago when I bought a used F650GS as a second “fun” bike, Kevin told me that he rode an F650GS when he traveled to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Some of those friends who accompanied Kevin on that “Haul Road” trip also attended Wizard’s 10th anniversary gathering.

A number of MSTA riders and others from South Florida followed a route planned by Jim Park that took us from Wellington, Florida, on back roads to Cedar Key (300+ miles). We left Friday morning and headed north. Yes, north! No “fooling” on April 1st. Cedar Key is not in the Florida Keys but instead almost directly west of Ocala, except that Cedar Key is on the Gulf of Mexico, not in the center of the state. Here are a couple pictures taken at our lunch stop at Cherry Pocket on Lake Pierce in Lakes Wales.



Van led one group, initially of seven bikes, and I led the second group, initially of six bikes. Re-grouping occurred after our lunch stop. Jim’s route took us through orange groves where the smell of orange blossoms

permeated the air, on canopied roads that provided some shade from the sun and heat, and on roads with sweeping curves. We arrived in Cedar Key with just enough time to check into our rooms and get ready for the Friday evening meal.

What do we do at Wizard's Wild Weekends? Well, we always do a lot of eating! For this special anniversary gathering, Kevin and Deborah Healey rented the Cedar Key Community Center for Friday and Saturday. They arranged for a catered buffet dinner both evenings. No worries about enough table seating in restaurants this time! Yum! The food was excellent.

I'll provide some background info as to exactly why this 10th anniversary was special. The usual weekend for Kevin's ride is the first weekend in December. Several years ago (in 2012) Kevin and Deborah were severely injured in a horrific crash as they led the group ride to Cedar Key. Two young fellows with total disregard for traffic laws decided to pass our group. They were speeding in the left lane of a two-lane highway, and their car reached Kevin and Deborah, who were riding two-up, just as Kevin began turning left. The high impact crash left Kevin with a severed leg and other broken bones and Deborah with multiple injuries to her left leg. When the paramedics arrived, they commented that Kevin survived at the scene only because one of our quick-thinking riders took off his webbed belt and used it as a tourniquet on Kevin's thigh.

Needless to say, what followed has been years of multiple surgeries for Deborah's mangled leg in an effort to save it. Kevin has had to learn how to function without his left leg and to walk with a prosthetic leg. Prayers have been offered at every stage of their recovery which has required the expertise of some truly skilled surgeons.

This weekend celebrated Kevin and Deborah's survival and moving forward with life. Kevin's positive outlook has been an inspiration to all who know him and to the new friends made the past few years. The Friday evening dinner was titled a "Meet and Greet" by Kevin and Saturday's evening gathering called a "Celebration of Recovery." For both evenings, prior to heading to the buffet line, we all stood as Kevin played a video of the National Anthem sung by Lady Gaga at the Super Bowl in February. A marvelous rendition! What did we do before YouTube? The adjacent photo shows Kevin, daughter Faren, Deborah, and even their dog Roxy sneaking in the photo.

Poster-sized enlargements of photos depicting various events including motorcycling journeys of Kevin and his friends were placed on walls around the room. They were an interesting tribute to a lifetime of friendships made and inspirational to those of us



reading the inscriptions. Even the few of family had interesting, if not amusing, stories associated with them! Kevin is an excellent narrator and teller of tales!

A Saturday morning lunch ride to another location is planned for Wizard's weekend. This year the ride was to [Salt Creek Restaurant](#) in Suwannee, Florida. Some adventurous riders went on this 100+ mile ride but I stayed behind in Cedar Key this year. After being up way too late on Friday evening, then listening to the thunder and rain before it was time to awake on Saturday, I needed more sleep! The weather had improved by the 10:30 am rider departure time but a late breakfast was on my mind instead.

Okay, so what else is there to do in Cedar Key? Since once in Cedar Key, you can park your motorcycle at your motel/condo/B&B and then walk around town, some of us stop in at the Big Deck on Friday and/or Saturday evenings for an alcoholic beverage or two or more! Across the street from Big Deck is the Black Dog bar where you can engage in a lively game of darts, listen to the singer/guitar player, maybe sing along, and after more beers or drinks, walk or stumble back to your room.

This year since I didn't go on the Saturday ride, I finally made it to Tony's for their famous clam chowder. It was perfectly seasoned and I was glad I'd ordered a bowl and not just a cup. I'll definitely return to Tony's again next time I'm in Cedar Key. Nearby was the Cedar Key Historical Museum which I understand should be on my list of places to see. That will have to wait until "next time" though.

Of course, water activities are the heart of Cedar Key. Offshore and inshore boating and fishing opportunities abound. With Saturday's gloomy and windy day, being on the water wasn't the best choice this year. However, in recent years a number of our riders took advantage of various boat trips, and others rode over to Cedar Key's small airport and ended up taking a short flight for a bird's eye view of the town. You always see a lot of folks riding around on golf carts they rent by the hour, half day, etc. We could tease and say they're practicing for when they move to The Villages in Florida! Before dinner on Saturday evening, I saw fellow rider Dan Barnett finishing up his ride on



an electric bicycle he had rented. That looked like an interesting activity to try in the future.

Oh, yes. I almost forgot about the cats. Lots of cats in Cedar Key. I thought that hanging around the Hemingway House in Key West was the place to see cats. Maybe, but there's no shortage of cats in Cedar Key.

The sunsets in Cedar Key are spectacular. Not so this weekend but that's another reason to return time and time again. Watching the sun sinking below the horizon on the Gulf of Mexico and seeing the sky changing colors is a photographer's dream. You will see cameras set on tripods with folks anxiously waiting to capture the setting sun. A couple years ago Jim Park took some sunset pictures that included a kayaker in the foreground. Just stunning!



Our usual Saturday evening dinner at a local restaurant cost each of us \$25 but this year with the use of the Community Center, Kevin asked us to contribute \$25 for each evening which included our buffet dinner and a small amount towards the fee for rental of the Community Center. We were asked to pay the total on Saturday evening. With cash in hand our names were written on an envelope and we put our \$50 inside, assuming we'd attended both evenings. At the end of Saturday's gathering, Kevin surprised us by making a special request. From the box of envelopes, Kevin called our names individually and the envelopes were returned to us. When we turned them over, a yellow sticker had been placed on the back of the envelope challenging us to Pay It Forward. Kevin and Deborah had pre-paid for these two catered evening dinners and the hall rental and did not want to be reimbursed! In appreciation, we were encouraged to donate our cash to someone in need or to a cause with special meaning to us. What a great idea! "My Pay It Forward \$\$\$" were donated the same week I returned from Cedar Key.

Sunday morning dawned without rain in the view. Time already to pack up our motorcycles, say goodbye to friends traveling in other directions, and decide on a route to return home.

A common thread when attending a gathering of motorcyclists: lots of hugs, sharing of stories, making new friends, and of course eating! This definitely happened in Cedar Key.

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.

Road Trip!

Becky and I will be road tripping during the first week of May. We're riding first up to North Carolina so she can attend a [Women's Rider Conference](#) in Little Switzerland. From there we are parting company. She will ride home and I'm riding to Birmingham, for work meetings with the [Barber Racetrack](#) folks before turning for home.

It's Spring. That means road trips for a lot of folks. With road trips comes preparation. Here are some thoughts for preparing you and your bike for that upcoming long distance journey:



Monument Valley, Arizona

Photo: Don Moe

- 🔧 Maintenance! Is the bike ready? No, it won't make it those last thousand miles before you think the cords will start to show. If needed, replace the tires, both of them.
- 🔧 Brakes. Check them. If the pads are getting close, change them! Why worry during the trip? If you don't know how to inspect pads, find someone who does. Or look it up. Easy to do and a critical safety item on the list.
- 🔧 Fluids? Is this starting to sound like a T-CLOCK check? That's because basically it is the same thing. Are you due, or close to an oil change interval? Same applies to that chain condition, or your final drive service. Just Do It!
- 🔧 General Bike Condition: Cables, hoses, fasteners, wheels, all that stuff.
- 🔧 Equipment: Now we're talking safety equipment. That means tools (and knowing what to take, not those stupid "all-in-one", prepackaged kits. Take what you need and what fits your bike. Don't forget the tire patch kit (I prepare the old-fashioned strings and glue, just because they still seem to work the best and are the most versatile, but there are other solutions out there). Along with that comes a miniature air compressor and tire gauge.
- 🔧 First Aid Kit: Please don't set off on a journey without one. How big and complete is up to you, but something as simple as a splinter can ruin your riding day.
- 🔧 Rain Suit: One-piece or two-piece. It is up to you. A rain suit is not a convenience on a long trip. It is a necessity. I prefer two-piece, just because of the more flexible combinations.
- 🔧 Finally, a SPOT. If you don't know what a SPOT is by now, you aren't a real rider! Get it and learn to use at least the basic features. It's a great way for the family to keep track of you as well. A note on SPOTs: Do not attach them to the bike. Keep it on your person. If the unthinkable happens and you are lying in the ditch, you may not be able to crawl back up and reach your bike-mounted SPOT to hit the emergency beacon.
- 🔧 Finally, the Rider: Are YOU ready? Physically, are you in shape? Mentally, are you prepared for the journey?

One Final Thought: We're all going to put a lot of miles on our bikes this year. Let's look out for ourselves and one another. Ride your own ride and know your limits. And as always: ATGATT!

Ride Safe in 2016!

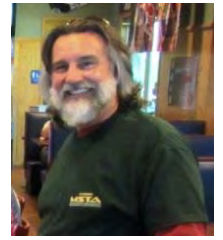
Doug Westly – Safety Editor

Florida News

South Director's Report

AHHHH... SPRING HAS MADE ITS WAY THROUGHOUT THE SOUTHEAST, AND WE HAD SEVERAL REASONS TO GET OUT AND ENJOY THE SEASON!!

We had two lunch rides, and two Just-For-Fun rides!! The first weekend in April found us in Cedar Key, amongst 75+ terrific riders and friends of Kevin Healey!! This was the 10th anniversary of his gathering and they just keep getting better every year! You'll read a lot more about this party below! And visit our National site to view over 100 photos of this "happening"... www.ridemsta.com >> Photos >> Just-For-Fun Event Photos >> [2016 Cedar Key Event](#).



Van VanSteelant

The next weekend found Teresa and the Central gang returning to an old favorite – [Lake Harris Hideaway](#) in Tavares! You'll read about that feast below as well!!

The next weekend, for the adventurous, we had a Just-For-Fun event in Helen, GA!! Several Florida members made the trip, and were blessed with spectacular weather and great roads. You'll read a little something about the North Georgia Classic elsewhere as well... *[Ed: Not yet. An article is planned for the June issue of the newsletter.]*

And last, but not least!, we had the South Lunch ride this past weekend to a new-to-us destination in Nokomis, FL. We dined at [Pop's Sunset Grill](#), and it was tremendous!! Thanks to Pete for the recommendation, and a few key suggestions on routing! Seven Eastsiders left early Saturday morning and joined 10-12 others from around the state for a great time, service and food! We had several riders who rode over 200 miles one way, and yours truly parked the 'busa back home with 435 new miles on the clock!! I couldn't think of a better way to spend a beautiful day – great friends, nice roads, fun bike, shared joy!! You don't know what you're missing when you don't make it to one of our events! Don't believe me, (yeah, I'm a little biased!), then read what your fellow members wrote about the other events that happened this month. And then catch up with the new photos just added to our State site. Click on the PHOTO link, and then on the "chain link" in the lower right corner. That will take you to 190+ shots of our events, dating back to '03 right up to last week!! Check 'em out!!

Oh, in addition to the beautiful water side dining experience, we had a very successful 50/50 raffle! We raised \$82.00, and thanks to the repeated generosity of Don Williams, (yeah, him again!!), we added all \$82.00 to our total!! We now stand at \$663.50. I promise we'll do something for the club with our funds before the end of the year. As always, a BIG THANKS to all who participate!!

What's Next??

We offer up our last two lunch rides until October!! On Saturday, May 7th, Teresa will bring the Central Gang to another favorite, [Gator Joe's](#), on the northern shore of Lake Weir! This is a very biker friendly destination, with a stunning view of the lake from nearly every table!

On Saturday, May 14th, join the South Gang for a "fare well" lunch at [Lightsey Fish Co. and Seafood](#), on the western side of Lake Okeechobee! We have dined here several times over the last 15 years, and this will be our last opportunity to enjoy this location. They will relocate to downtown Okeechobee by late June, as their site has been purchased by the [Guy Harvey Outpost](#) for redevelopment and major additions to the water front. This

is where the \$5million in development money went after the Pahokee initiative fell through. We'll keep an eye on this project for future events...

And one of the premier gatherings of historic motorcycles happens the next weekend, May 21st. Once again, the cream of the crop is invited to display their prized possessions at the [Riding Into History](#) event at the World Golf Village, just outside of St. Augustine!! Check out www.ridingintohistory.org for details and more!!

You will be able to check out the June-September BRUNCH destinations very soon. Though the dates have been chosen and posted, both Teresa and I need to finalize our dining choices and get them added to our website ASAP!! www.flmsta.org

Membership News

Holy Cow Batman, I have news!! Mind you, we are going back to mid-December for this report, so there's a good chance that you have taken care of renewing your membership already. And we have FIVE new members to welcome!!

WELCOME TO THE CLUB!!

Frederick Blackall, Jupiter
Frederick Christ, Miami
Robert Croot, West Palm Beach

Kevin Healey, West Palm Beach
Howard Jacobson, Port St. Lucie

This is the total list of "expired/about to expire" members:

Charles Anoff	Boyd Harrell	Stephen Phillips
Mark Buerger	Don Jones	Bill Royal
Cliff Burke	Pete Kauk	Rick Sapir
Michael Burkett	John Kyle	Jon Selby
John Cali	Mark Lewis	Kostas Sfakiotakis
David and Diana Cassell	Rick Lucas	Robert Shields
Scott Elsbree	Roger Magill	Mark Turkel
Marius Espeleta	Jim McClure	Doug and Becky Westly
Larry Fitch	Jim and Dianne Park	Ed Zaslow
Neil Fogelberg	Donald Perry	

I did receive my updated renewal packet last week, which was 4-5 weeks after I renewed online. This is nearly normal, and I believe that you are told about this time frame at the time of renewal.

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!

You've registered for STAR 2016, right...??? This is going to be a terrific event!! First time in New England, and a perfect spot for our first visit! Plan to ride around the surrounding areas! I've heard from some that they're going to use STAR as the kick off for their trip up through the Canadian Maritimes! Go online NOW and sign up!! And get your room reserved NOW too!! Then start planning your route(s)...

You know about the TWO bikes on offer for your one raffle ticket, right...??? You have until May 15th to buy the discounted tickets of \$8.00. Go to www.planetReg.com/MSTARaffle2016 and get you some... Only

members in good standing are able to win either bike, so get that renewal done ASAP!! You can do both on our National site!!

If you have a destination or event or hidden gem that the rest of us should see or know about, PLEASE send the info to me to include in future planning!! I keep looking for new ideas to add to the legacy of events that we have enjoyed for years. And don't think your idea has to appeal to everybody... if you like it, that's enough. We'll put it out there and see what happens!! You'll never know if you never try!!

Have you signed up for [beINsports](#) on you satellite or cable service?? That's where ALL 3 road race series have landed for TV coverage!! We are talking LIVE coverage for many of the races!! They have MOTOGP, World SBK, and our very own MOTOAMERICA series!! It took 13 seconds for DirecTV to add the channel/sports group to my service (ch.620). Yeah, I am paying a little more each month, but far less than venue tickets and travel costs!! The coverage and reporting is top notch, and all inclusive. The fact that MOTOAMERICA landed this TV contract is amazing!! And, unlike last year's 1-2 week taped-delay schedule, the races are either live or same day broadcast!! I'm in heaven....

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Thanks to Tom Blake for the Central FL ride report for April.....

“The weather was absolutely gorgeous, making for one of the most satisfying rides – probably of the year. Despite the gorgeous weather, however, turnout was low at just 7. This was surprising given the exceptional conditions, great destination and fine assortment of back roads. It was still cool at lunch time so the sunny table we commandeered next to the water at the southernmost section of the long dock was perfect. The wait staff was pleased to be able to get in some extra exercise walking back and forth to our table. Not long after we got there, the placed filled up pretty quickly. So getting there around 11:30 was advantageous. We had a very good chat including some discussion about the city of Detroit, the rebel Michigan squadron (MSTR), Uber vs. cabs and other critical topics. Their burgers and fried bologna sandwiches were quite tasty. Service was excellent and friendly despite the long walks. And then as we were leaving, we discovered an assortment of really nice and interesting vintage UJM and Euro bikes in the parking lot. So we spent some more time walking around, enjoying the weather and banter as we checked them all out.”

Central FL May 7th Lunch Ride

Saturday May 7th, 11:30 - 1:00,

[Gator Joe's](#), ([map](#))

12431 SE 135 Ave.,

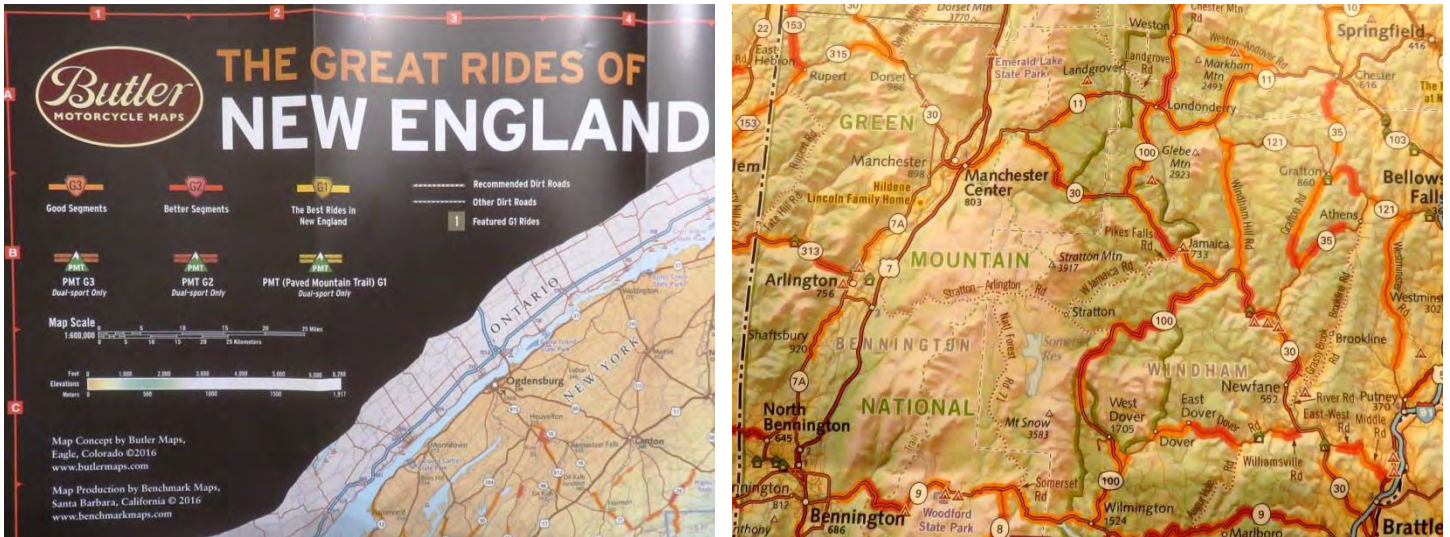
Ocklawaha 32179

Teresa Vipond, DeLand
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Member Comments

New Motorcycle Map of New England

Members attending STAR 2016 in Vermont may be interested in the newly released New England map from [Butler Motorcycle Maps](#), which highlights the best paved motorcycle roads in much of New England as well as paved dual-sport trails. Here is a small excerpt of the area around Stratton Mountain:



— Submitted by Don Moe

May 2016 is Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month

Motorcyclists have all the same rights and privileges as any motor vehicle driver on the roadway. During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month in May - and during the rest of the year - drivers of all other vehicles and all road users are reminded to safely "share the road" with motorcyclists, and to be extra alert to help keep motorcyclists safe.

Please use [these are marketing materials](#) to:

- Spread the word about increasing motorcyclists' safety, and
- Support and enhance your motorcycle safety awareness programs.



— Submitted by Jim Park

Florida Rides This Month

Important Note

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

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **May 7th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Where: [Gator Joe's](#) – 12431 SE 135 Ave., Ocklawaha, FL 32179 ☎352-288-3100 ([map](#))

Description: To finish out our lunch ride season, we'll return to an old favorite. Although they will not reserve a table, they usually have plenty of seating, and they know we're coming. Join Teresa and the Central gang for the last lunch of the season!! Next month, we start our BRUNCH ride schedule!!

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **May 14th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Where: [Lightsev Fish Co & Seafood](#) – 10435 FL-78, Okeechobee, FL 34974 ☎863-763-4276 ([map](#))

Description: I can't remember when we were last here... So, let's start a new memory with the last LUNCH ride until October!! Summer time is coming...

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

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 Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **June 11th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Where: TBD

Description: We start our BRUNCH ride schedule!!

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

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **June 18th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Where: TBD — likely around Lake Placid

Description: Place holder for the June brunch ride.

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

Upcoming Regional Events

Mountain Moxie

When: Fri.–Sun., **May 6th – 8th**

Where: [Mountain Moxie](#), Little Switzerland Inn, Little Switzerland, NC 28749 ([map](#))

Description: [Moto Girl Café](#) presents the largest women's weekend motorcycling conference on the US East Coast! Mountain Moxie is a 3-day event dedicated to women who love motorcycling and the men who ride with them.

Contact: Robin Dail, motogirlcafe@gmail.com or ☎919-324-5876

More Info: motogirlcafemountainmoxie.com

Riding Into History Bike Show

When: Sat., **May 21st**

Where: Riding Into History Annual Show at the World Golf Village, St. Augustine, FL ([map](#))

Description: Spectacular vintage bike show worthy of your attendance. More details coming!!

Contact: info@ridingintohistory.org ☎904-677-9452

More Info: RidingIntoHistory.org

AMCA Lucas Oil Vintage Motorcycle Classic

When: Fri.–Sun., **May 27th–29th**

Where: [Barber Motorsports Park](#), Birmingham, AL ([map](#))

Description: One of the premier antique-motorcycle activities held anywhere in the world. It offers the chance to share an appreciation of classic machines and the people who ride them.

Contact: ☎256-509-9095

More Info: Check out the [poster](#)

Tri-STAR Rally

When: Fri.–Mon., **May 27th–30th**

Where: [Alleghany Inn](#), 341 North Main Street, Sparta, NC 28675 ☎336-372-2501 or 888-372-2501 (for reservations) ([map](#))

Description: Named Tri-Star because you're only a few miles from the States of Virginia and Tennessee. So come and enjoy the scenic beauty and miles and miles of great twisty mountain roads.

Contact: Geoffrey Greene, hawkgtrider@aol.com or ☎865-659-4755

More Info: msta-se.com/tristar

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](#).

The MSTA National website has extensive event information:

- 🏍 For the sanctioned events: [click here](#).
- 🏍 For Just-For-Fun events in 2016: [click here](#).
- 🏍 For STAR 2016 in Vermont: [click here](#).

National MSTA 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 another perspective related to the safety article.

This [second hyperlink](#) offers several good suggestions.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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