



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 9 Issue 7

Events in July

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Feature Article

Two Cool Towns Road Trip

By R. Doug, Clemmons, NC

[Ed: This article was originally posted November 10, 2014 in the Ride Reports section of the Sport-Touring.org forum at:

<http://www.sport-touring.org/index.php?topic=1961.0;all>

It has been slightly abbreviated and edited for publication. All photos by the author unless stated otherwise. Click on the photos for larger versions or the links for more information.]

Contrary to popular belief, the terms cool and hip can be synonymous with [Appalachia](#). Yeah, sure, you have [Asheville, NC](#) in the [Blue Ridge](#) area and [Burlington, VT](#) in the [Green Mountains](#) area. But, what about other small Appalachian towns? I've been to [Blowing Rock, NC](#) a few times, and while it can be a little too touristy for me during the peak season, it's a cool little town up in the [Appalachian Mountains](#). I've also read and have heard a lot about [Greenville, SC](#). I have never been to Greenville before. So, that was a good enough reason to get on the bike and head south.

On my way, it went through [Mooresville, NC](#) which is home to most of the [NASCAR](#) teams' home garages.



Also, I stopped at [Lake Lure](#), famous for [Chimney Rock](#) and being the location of the movie, "[Dirty Dancing](#)."

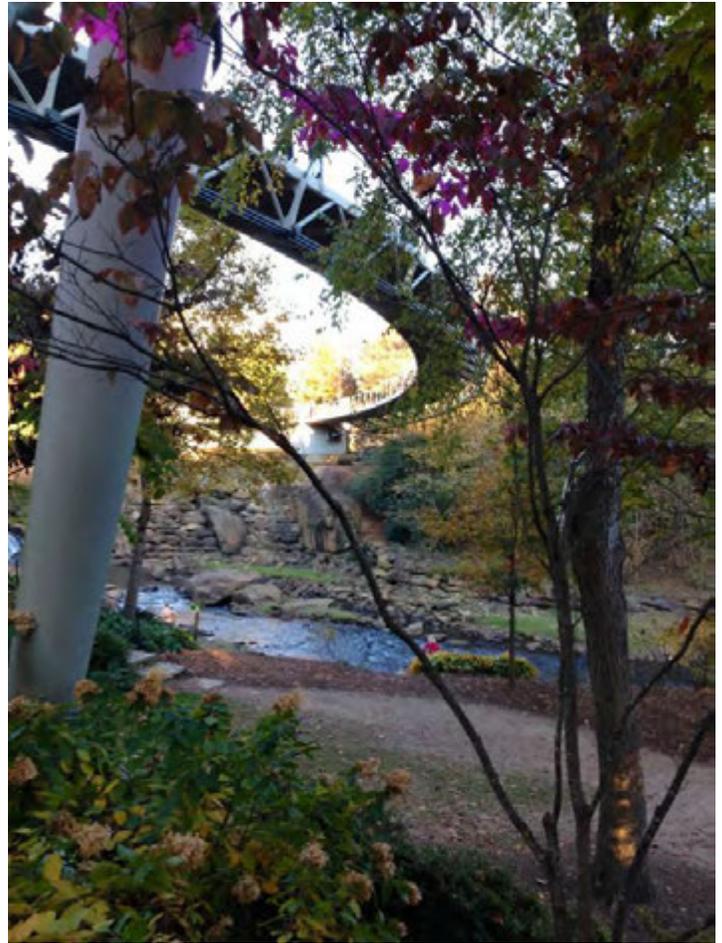
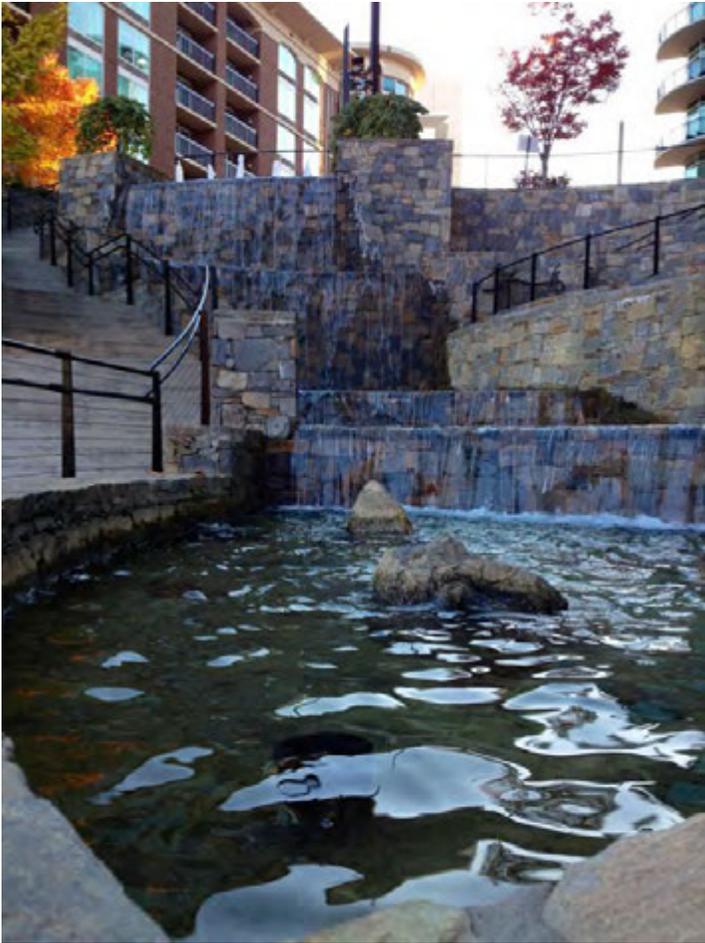
My view from my lunch location where I had the [She-Crab Soup](#) and a salad.

I eventually made it to Greenville where I rode all the way down Main St. towards my hotel, which is located on Greenville's famous river walk area and park.

While I didn't get any images of the northern section of Main St., it was a beautifully kept small downtown area with tree lined streets, a lot of local shops and restaurants, and busy with people walking, shopping, and dining al fresco.

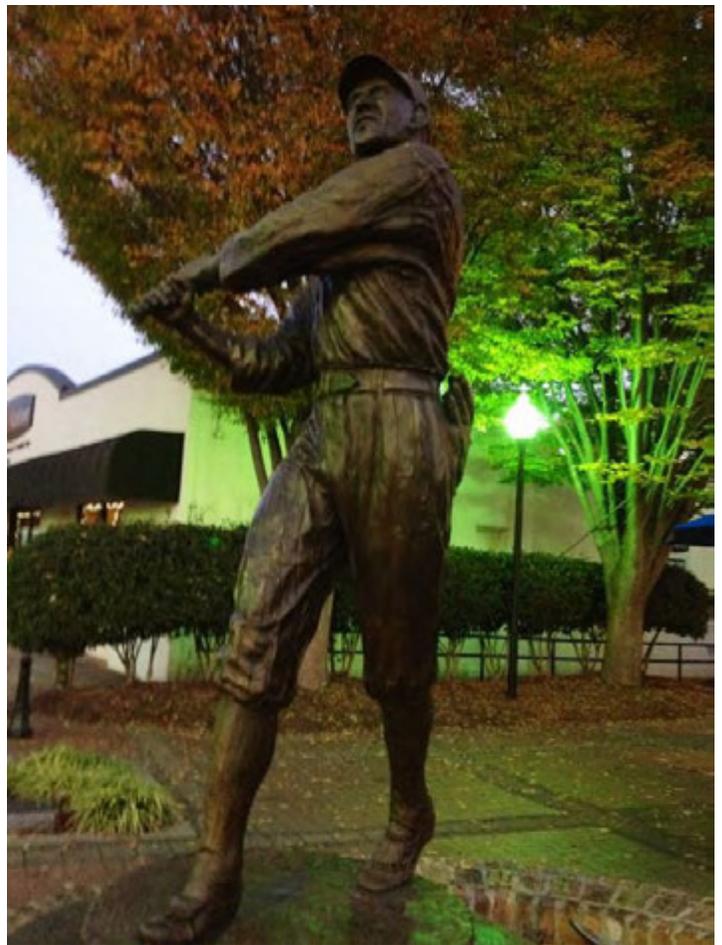
After getting settled in my room, I walked around the park and south on Main St. to get some dinner at

["Smoke on the Water."](#) I didn't take my main camera, so the following shots are from my iPhone.





It was getting dark, so I made my way to the restaurant, passing by “[Shoeless Joe Jackson](#).”



Dinner at “Smoke on the Water.” I started with a generous pour of [Baker’s Bourbon](#) and ended up eating what I believe is the best [brisket](#) I’ve had east of the Mississippi.



The next day, I took a twisty scenic way from Greenville, SC to Blowing Rock, NC. Here are some images from the ride.

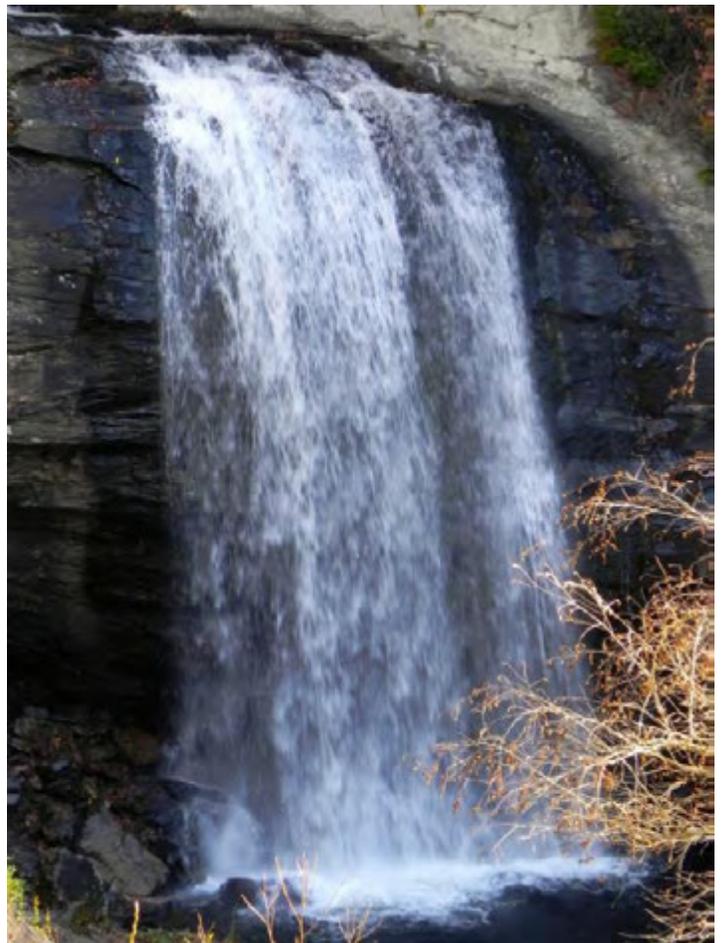
Southern Appalachian twisties in South Carolina.



From [Gorges State Park](#), NC.



[Looking Glass Falls.](#)



This will do.

Off the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#).



I walked to the forum-recommended [Blowing Rock Ale House](#). Here are some shots to the brew pub.



The local beer and food was very good. I had the [Scotch Ale](#) followed by their seasonal [ESB](#) during dinner.

Then, as a desert, I requested a pour of [Booker's](#) (125 proof). The bartender provided me with a VERY generous pour. My butt is kicked.

I got back to the room, turned on the fireplace, and brewed some coffee.



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.*

Did I Really Just See That?

Here is another way to approach safety. How many times has another motorcyclist passed you, and in your mind you asked, “Did I really just see that?” So here are some of the weirdest motorcycle sights with obvious safety implications that we’ve ever seen.

“The Stacker”

We once ran into a female rider who had packed so much for her trip that her bags on the back seat were taller than she was, sitting in front of them. The bike was so top heavy, she couldn’t balance it, and it kept falling over on her.

“Dead Men Tell No Tales”

A cruiser rider in front of us was displaying a patch on the back of his black t-shirt that said “Think Safety - Dead Men Tell No Tales”. He wasn’t wearing a helmet.

“Mr. Fresh Air”

The rider who buys a modular helmet, and then rides with it flipped up. Really? Why bother?

“Tourist Rider”

Shorts, Hawaiian shirt and flip-flops. Awesome.

“Best Buddies”

Motorcycle buddies who insist on riding side by side in the same lane. Yes, motorcops do it. The difference: The cops are TRAINED to do it. It all looks cool until someone has to swerve.



Photo source

“The Lane Splitter”

We see it almost every day. Unless you’re in CA and know how to do it, and it’s not illegal, don’t even think about it.

“Passenger Denial”

The rider is geared to the max. The passenger? Shorts, sneakers and a tank top. Maybe the rider is just not that interested in him/her?

And my favorite...

“Cord Hero”

You probably know this rider. He or she (usually the former... the latter are smarter than this...) proudly declares he has gotten 15,000 miles out of his tires, and says not to worry about the cord showing on the rear. He just knows he can get another few hundred miles out of it before replacement time. Oh, and he’s leaving on a bike trip tomorrow.

Sometimes we don’t realize our approach to motorcycling may entail some unintended risks. How we maintain our bike, how we dress for the ride, how we ride all impact safety. On the other hand...

Surely you’ve never been the rider that someone saw one day and said to themselves, “Did I Really Just See That?”

Don’t be that guy... ☺ Ride Safe in 2016!

Doug Westly – Safety Editor

Florida News

South Director's Report

IF YOU DOUBTED THE CALENDAR, JUNE'S WEATHER CERTAINLY CONFIRMED THE START OF THE RAINY SEASON!!

Ah, we are at the start of our "winter" behavior... From the A/C house to the A/C car to the A/C office/store to the A/C car (or bike, wink, wink, Don!), to the A/C house... and repeat!! Only motorcyclists and mad dogs and Englishmen are outside in this kind of humidity!! And ride we did!!



Van VanSteelant

The Central gang started off our BRUNCH ride season with a ride to the [Red Wing Restaurant](#) in Groveland. Teresa's report follows... The next week, the Southies met up at [Main Street America](#) in Lake Placid. This place continues to shine!! They set aside plenty of seats for us, never let our coffee cups empty, and served up a delicious mix of brunch items!! I think the weather reports may have scared off a few of you. We had three of the Boynton Boys and three of the Melbourne Men get together, and not one of us felt a drop of rain all day!! So, we had the roads all to ourselves!!



Dell, Tom, Bill, Steve & James. Photo by Van.

And, we have/had our annual rally in Vermont. I'll give you a full report, along with input from other members, next month. You ought to be there for yourself!! Assume that we are having the time of our lives!!

What's Next??

We continue with our Brunch rides in July! Teresa and the Central gang are heading to [Country Angels](#) in Polk City on July 9th. She has a private dining room set up for you!! The next Saturday, join the Southies for a ride to LaBelle for a new-to-us destination!! The granddaughter of the original Flora and Ella's has carried on the family tradition of fine home style cooking!! Check us out on the 16th, at [Two Peas Café](#)!! More details are always available on our website www.flmsta.org We have all of the dates picked for the remainder of the year. Many of the destinations are now included. Check in often!!

Membership News

Well, we may have some new news soon, or I simply missed the report. There was a change up in the reporting methods, and I might have deleted something that I actually needed...

Anyway, I'll catch up with any and all news at STAR. The Membership meeting should help catch us up with the big picture, and I'll make sure I'm tuned in for future reports.

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 should have been at STAR!! What a terrific part of the country!! Did you hear where we're going to next year?!? You'd know by now if you had attended the Membership meeting...

I'm looking forward to a great summer of riding, regardless of the heat or rain. Remember, most of our National membership only have 4-7 months of decent riding weather. Can you imagine only LOOKING at your bike for 5-8 months a year?!?! Yuk!!

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Upcoming Central Brunch Rides

Central Florida July Brunch Ride:

Saturday, **July 9th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM,

[Country Angels](#),

122 Commonwealth Ave. N,

Polk City, FL 33868

☎863-984-1047 ([map](#))

They offer hearty breakfast choices in their private dining room.

Central Florida August Brunch Ride:

Saturday, **August 13th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM,

[Village Inn](#),

2925 S. Washington Ave.,

Titusville, FL 32780

☎321-267-6611 ([map](#))

Teresa Vipond, DeLand

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

STAR 2016 Highlights

STAR 2017 Announced

At the MSTA members' meeting during STAR 2016, the location of STAR 2017 was revealed in a nice video presentation by Norm Kern as **Colorado Springs, Colorado** during the week of June 11-15, 2017, to be hosted at the [Hotel Elegante](#). Check the [MSTA website](#) or [forum](#) for further information, which should be posted there soon.

STAR Attendance by Florida Members

The following nineteen Florida MSTA members made the journey to [Stratton Mountain Ski Resort](#) in Vermont for STAR 2016. Our apologies if any Florida members were left out, and please let us know.

Steve Albert	Ken & Marcia Ford	Jim & Dianne Park
Dennis & Dorothy Anderson	Paul 'Paulie' Heydemann	Bob Shields
Eve Blazsur	Buck Jones	Paul 'Van' VanSteelant
Fred Christ	Ellen Kocher	Doug & Becky Westly
Robert Fischer	Don Moe	Don Williams

Florida Members Won Awards & Prizes

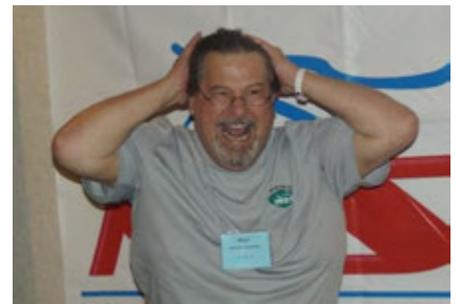
At the Members' Meeting and at the Banquet, several MSTA members from Florida were honored for their achievements and their participation in the MSTA.

- 🏍️ Eve Blazsur was surprised and honored to receive the [Jean Monacelli Award](#).
- 🏍️ Don Moe was once again honored to accept the award for the MSTA State Newsletter of the Year.
- 🏍️ Paul 'Van' VanSteelant and Kim Longacre received the award for the MSTA State Web Site of the Year for a second time.

Two Florida members won significant raffle prizes:

- 🏍️ Ellen Kocher won a set of [Krista LED lights](#) from Clearwater Lights.
- 🏍️ Bob Shields won the 2015 [Honda Grom](#) motorcycle.

The grand prize, the [BMW F800GT](#), was won by Richard Grabowski from Michigan. He was extraordinarily excited and shows it in this photo, taken by Jim Park.

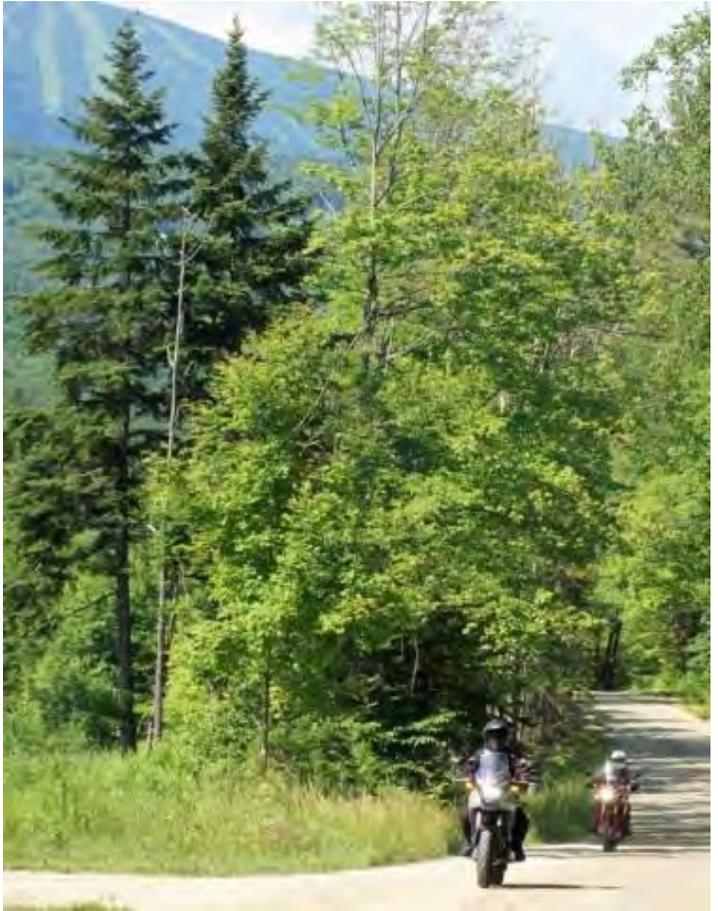


Richard Grabowski after winning!

In the August 2016 issue of the newsletter, we expect to publish a feature article about this year's STAR event. To show you a small sample of what you missed, on the next page are several photos taken during the event.

The photo to the right shows a group of riders on a practice ride during the Stayin' Safe class. In the background is a view of the Stratton Mountain ski slopes. [Photo by Jim Park]

The photo below shows Don Moe during a dual-sport ride with MotoVermont. [Photo by Eric Milano, MotoVermont]



The photo below on the left shows one of the demo models of Honda's newly introduced *Africa Twin*, beside their large transport trailer. Attendees took advantage to take well over 300 demo rides on this and other Honda models brought to STAR 2016.

Jim Park led a large group of riders on a tour from Stratton Mountain to [Fort Ticonderoga](#), which included a ferry trip across Lake Champlain, shown in this photo.

[Both photos 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 Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **July 9th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Where: [Country Angels](#), 122 Commonwealth Ave N, Polk City, FL 33868 ☎863-984-1047 ([map](#))
Description: They offer hearty breakfast choices in their private dining room.
Contact: Teresa Vipond termayn@gmail.com or ☎713-504-5763

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **July 16th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Where: [Two Peas Café](#), 870 W Hickpochee Ave #500, LaBelle, FL 33935 ☎863-675-2891 ([map](#))
Description: Join us for a return to our Labelle-feasting-roots!! In the tradition of the beloved Flora and Ella's, the Granddaughter of Ella and her lifelong friend have opened their own restaurant to carry on the good old home style cooking we know and love!!
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., **August 13th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Where: [Village Inn](#), 2925 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL 32780 ☎321-267-6611 ([map](#))
Description: Family-friendly chain serving home-style American classics such as chicken-fried steak & pot pie.
Contact: Teresa Vipond termayn@gmail.com or ☎713-504-5763

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **August 27th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Where: [The Palm Diner](#), 2710 Kenilworth Blvd, Sebring, FL 33870 ☎863-385-7323 ([map](#))
Description: A NEW place for us... We have hit the same place in Sebring for years... Time to check this diner out!! The enticing menu will have you playing “innie-minny-miny-moe” to place your order!!
Contact: Van busavan@flahsta.org or ☎561-386-2594

Upcoming Regional Events

BIG LYNN LODGE RIDE

When: Fri.–Sun., July 22th – 24th

Where: [Big Lynn Lodge](#), Highway 226A, Little Switzerland, NC 28749 ☎800-654-5232 ([map](#))

Description: The Big Lynn Lodge is located in/near Little Switzerland, NC and is literally hanging on the side of the mountain right on NC-226A. You will be AMAZED at the view and you will be ASTONISHED by the roads! The riding is what I go there for but the scenery and the location is what has me staying.

Contact: David Brickner, brick@ncwireless.net or ☎828-448-5429

More Info: msta-se.com/BLynn/

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 additional information 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