



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 8 Issue 3

Events in March

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Feature Article

Grand Canyon Backcountry Adventure Ride

By Dave Schwartz (a.k.a. dave6253), Phoenix, Arizona

[Ed: Dave posted a multipart ride report on the [AdvRider.com Forum](#) about his eleven-day trip in September 2013 on his KTM motorcycle. For publication it has been abbreviated to just the first day. Many of our readers may find his complete ride report of interest, if they now ride adventure motorcycles, or are just getting into such off-road riding, as I am. The photos are from the author's photo library on [SmugMug](#), which includes other stunning photos. Click on these photos to display them in your web browser.]

I've been dreaming of this trip for a few years. The route is planned, GPS loaded... and the bike is ready.



September 20th

I leave town around 11 AM. I can't wait to leave the triple digit heat behind. I'm already regretting wearing the winter jacket and pants.

I have eleven days to get all the way around the Grand Canyon to as many backcountry viewpoints as possible.



But first, the super-slab.

At Tusayan I turn off the pavement and leave the regular tourists behind.



There are MILLIONS of visitors to the Grand Canyon each year. You may think getting away from everyone would be more difficult, but I've heard of a place even here on the South Rim where you can be alone.

It will cost you though...

I cross the tracks for the Grand Canyon Railroad...



and get reacquainted with my bike in the gravel. I haven't been able to ride much over the summer.



I enter the Havasupai Reservation.



I reach a gate and am contacted by a Tribal Ranger. Actually, he was a teenager wearing jeans, t-shirt, and an unbuttoned, official-looking, ranger uniform shirt.

He was polite and asked where I was going. "Havasupai Point," I answer. He asked for \$25 and I handed it over. I knew this ahead of time and was prepared (financially and emotionally). He tells me they have an elk hunt going on and warns that all of the other roads are off limits and he opened the gate for me.

My \$25 allows me access to about four miles of this "road".



At this intersection I turn right onto the South Bass Road.



The "road" went up a wash with heavy erosion damage. The trench and washouts crisscross the road requiring repeated crossings. At times the entire track was washed out with loose sand and rocks making it interesting.



I leave the Tribal Lands and enter the National Forest...





and then into the National Park. No one asked to see my annual park pass.

The trail doesn't improve in the park.

I reach the Grand Canyon at the [South Bass Trailhead](#).



There were two SUVs in the parking lot, but the owners were off hiking.

South Bass Trailhead View:



I head back a short ways and find the left turn towards Havasupai Point.

The trail gets narrower and it is obvious not as many people venture out this way.



This log wasn't too big so I decided to ride over my first-ever log even though I could have gone around it. I was surprised at how easy the bike rolled over it. This may have contributed to an over-confidence issue later in the trip...😬



I reach Havasupai Point on a different route than planned. Since the intended route is now closed, you must ride almost all the way to the South Bass Trailhead before taking the trail over to Havasupai Point.



I like it here. I think I'll be like a cactus and hang out at the edge here awhile.

The Colorado River flows thousands of feet below me.



I set up camp and make dinner plans...

while I watch the sunset.



After dinner I crawl into the tent and read a book before going to sleep. It feels nice to be alone at the Grand Canyon again. This place isn't even that far from home.



The track for Day 1:



If you would like to continue reading, Day 2 of Dave's ride report continues at [this link](#).

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.

Mindset?

Ok, I'm going on a rant here. Actually, it is more of a quest for an explanation, and it comes from a scene I witnessed just this last week.

I was headed out in our truck, running errands one morning, when I saw a rider coming out of an adjacent neighborhood, pulling onto the main thoroughfare in our area. The rider was on a newer Gold Wing, but that was not really what caught my attention. It was his riding gear that stunned me. He was wearing (top to bottom) a good full-face helmet, a high quality, armored mesh, hi-visibility jacket, full-finger gloves and shorts and sandals. WHAT?

What kind of mindset does it take to recognize that you need to protect your upper body but somehow believe everything below the waist is going to be magically immune to danger?

Everyone knows I'm a big proponent of ATGATT. I campaign against t-shirts, jeans (my biggest pet peeve), sneakers and any other kind of non-safety outerwear. I even had a long, drawn-out discussion with noted motorcycle journalist Ken Condon on what constitutes acceptable risk and managed a begrudging affirmation of my position from him. I count that as one of my life's memorable achievements, by the way. However, I also recognize that riders have different personal safety considerations. This one, on the other hand, has me completely stumped. The Gold Wing rider turned onto the highway in front of me and I actually hoped he was going to turn into the upcoming gas station where I had already planned to stop. I have never approached a rider to question their safety gear choices, but this time I was ready. It is not that I was going to reproach him for his choices, but I really did want to know his rationale for them. Unfortunately the rider did not stop, so I'll never know.

Here is the cold fact. Statistically as a motorcycle rider, you are more likely to suffer a lower extremity injury (about 70-80% of the time) than any other kind in a crash. Doesn't it make sense to protect the lower half as you would the top part?

This is only the latest example of other strange safety statements we've seen lately. A couple of weeks earlier it was a guy on a cruiser in front of us that was wearing nothing up top but a t-shirt that said "Dead Men Tell No Tales - Think Safety!" Really?

Certainly everyone should be free to make choices. I am not going to berate anyone for putting on their gym clothes for an Iron Butt ride. Sometimes though I just don't understand their thought processes when it comes to safety.

Whenever you are out riding, take a moment as you encounter other riders. Examine their choices in safety gear. If nothing else, it will get you thinking about your own approach to safety. It may also provide you with some entertainment, or at least the opportunity to go... "WHAT?"

Ride Safe!

[Doug Westly](#) – Safety Editor



Photo: [Motorcycle Enthusiast Ducati](#)

Florida News

South Director's Report

Oh, The Weather Outside Is Frightful...

How many northeasterners will be moving down to Florida over the next 12 months?!? Two infamous winters in a row and it's a chinch for us to become the third most populous state in the country!! Be looking for strangely smiling people next winter, wondering why nobody else is at the beach and in the ocean on a 60 degree day of sunshine!!



Van VanSteelant

As for us, we had two great reasons to ride, and a vintage show in downtown West Palm Beach. You'll read about the fun and frolic the Central riders had at the [Umatilla Inn & Restaurant](#) elsewhere in this edition. I'm hoping to have a brief report on the [Vintage Iron and Clematis](#) event from one of our local members.

My work commitment over the last six weeks has made Saturdays "just another day at the office..." So, you can imagine my disappointment on Feb. 28th when I only made it two blocks from my house and found my Busa would not run.... The problem is still being diagnosed.... I made a quick call to Jim Park who graciously accepted the "pack leader" role, who then conscripted Buck Jones to lead the ride to Jay Bee's due to on-bike communication compatibility!! Despite the rocky start to the day, the ride went very well, the weather was a minor issue on the way there, and 13 riders enjoyed a typically wonderful lunch! I suspect that our central area members were not as lucky with the storm front, as the worst of the rain appeared to west and just north of Route 60. Due to afternoon weather predictions, the group welcomed the fast and friendly service Jay Bee's always delivers. For some of the members, the ride home was uneventful. For some, the last 5 miles were the worst of the day!! I heard of fording streets with water over the pegs!! So much for Florida's famous "dry season"!! (Oh, it could be worse, it could be snowing....)

What's Next??

We have THREE lunch rides planned for March!! The usual Central and South destinations will be joined by a very special lunch event during Bike Week in Daytona!! Once again, Phil Ridgdill will host a THURSDAY LUNCH, March 12th, at the [South Beach Grill](#), a bit north of Daytona. Last year's lunch was very well attended, and we expect similar results this year too! (Oh, the weather outside is frightful!!!) All the details are on our website, flmsta.org, in the "Rides" section.

On March 7th, the Saturday before Phil's lunch, we offer you the Central Lunch ride to [Brian's BBQ](#) in west Deland. This is also the weekend for the [Deland Bike Fest](#), so plan on sticking around for a while after lunch!! On March 28th, we return to a favorite destination and riding area – [Dock 633](#) in Lake Placid. Besides some tasty morsels, the roads all around this area are some of the best in south Florida!

We are always looking for unique lunch spots for the next few months. As long as they can handle 10-20 riders at once, we want to hear from you!! AND know this, we are looking for members to share anything that interests them with the rest of the gang!! Favorite roads traveled recently; travel photos; why your ride is the best; what your first ride was; recent training you've completed and your "a-ha" moment; best advise you've ever heard about motorcycling; new gear purchases; new parts, farkles, accessories that everybody else should know about; promote your motorcycle biz or product that we all should know about... You get the idea, so, send your idea to me and we'll see what/where/when we can enjoy your presentation!! The more the merrier!! Don't worry about how long you need to entertain us! Two minutes or twenty, it won't matter! If we could do this at every ride....

We are in the final stages of scheduling all of the 2015 lunch/brunch rides. The dates and places are posted through March. The rest of the dates-only are posted through May, so you'll be able to mark your calendars and be sure to line up those pesky "honey dos" around the reality of what's really important....

Membership News

As we often receive updates about our current state membership after we "go to press", we don't always welcome our new Florida members as soon as they sign up!

This month we have no new members to welcome. I'll have our MSTA Invitation-To-Ride quad folds at our next events. We are in the midst of the transition of Membership Directors for a month or two, so we will be slightly behind in our reporting of new members and renewal prompts. We welcome **Michael Tissandier** aboard and offer many thanks to **Choon Gan** for his years of volunteer service updating and streamlining our membership rolls!! Well done to you both!!

If you know any of the following riders, please let them know that their MSTA memberships have recently expired, or will expire very soon:

- Charles Anoff
- Ken Ford
- Mark Lewis
- Jon Selby
- David & Diana Cassell
- Charles & Frances Headrick
- Alex Mattice
- Judy Erickson
- John Kyle
- Rick Sapir

As a heads up to all, be sure to forward any new email addresses or changes to our BRAND NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, 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!

Did you find yourself shaking your head in total agreement with the smart information that Doug Westly shared with us in our last issue?? Then get out and practice what he recommends to break your wobbling habits!! His points have been covered in EVERY advanced training I've taken. Look up; look where you want to go...

Thanks to Don for sharing the article about the [Talimena National Scenic Byway](#)!! It is a TERRIFIC road, and just an hour or so from our STAR location!! Bob Shields and I ran this road east to west on our way to Avon, CO back in 2012. It was the highlight of our trip, save for the roads in Colorado!!

You know that you earn \$5 STARBUcs for each new member you recruit to the MSTA, right?!? You can use them for MSTA products, event registrations, membership renewals, etc. BE SURE TO GET YOUR SUPPLY OF OUR NEW ITRs (Invitation to Ride) quad folds at our next RTE, or email me and I'll send some along to you!!!

You have registered for STAR and the raffle bike, right?!? This will be a terrific STAR and is being held in an area that everybody needs to check out. The regional rally that runs in and around this area routinely hosts 60-80 riders, for just a weekend's event!! Check out the National site for more info!!

Be sure to check our [National site](#) for the latest schedule of sanctioned events for 2015. I count ten, including STAR. That doesn't include the "[Just For Fun](#)" events that will pop up during the year!! We have sooo many opportunities to ride with our club!!

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Mother Nature provided another great day for riding on Sat., Feb. 7th. From the Central FL area, 16 riders & two local guests met in Umatilla for lunch including....new member (as of January) - Bill Rorke, Vero Beach; 1st time joining us - J.P. Dumas, Orlando; longest distance ridden - Steve Evans, Lake City; door prize (Amsoil Octane Boost) winner - Terry Brown, Melbourne.



The next central FL lunch ride is scheduled for Sat., March 7th to W. Deland at [Brian's BBQ](#), 795 N. Spring Garden Ave. (Hwy15A).

For those who have time to linger, the [DeLand Bike Fest](#) is going on downtown until 5 pm.

Teresa Vipond
DeLand, FL
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Northeast Director's Report

If you would consider taking the position of Northeast Director, please contact Van.

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., **March 7th**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

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

Description: This is in west Deland, on Hwy. 15A, and/or N. Spring Garden Ave. For those who have time to linger, the DeLand Bike Fest is going on downtown until 5pm.

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

Deland Bike Rally

When: Sat., **March 7th**, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Where: Wells Fargo Parking Lot, 131 E. New York Ave., Deland 32720 ([map](#))

Description: More info at delandrally.com.

Contact: Troy Rentz ☎386-801-1810

Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: Thurs., **March 12th**, 10:30 am – 1:30 pm

Where: [The South Beach Grill](#), 45 Cubbedge Rd, St. Augustine, FL 32080 ☎904-471-8700 ([map](#))

Description: Cross Streets: Near the intersection of Cubbedge Rd and A Ave; One block south of SR-206.

Phil Ridgdill will once again host a lunch ride in the Daytona area for both local and out-of-state members and friends!! This is the same great location as last year!!

NOTE: this happens on THURSDAY during bike week!

SPECIAL NOTE!!: They have a very busy business, and an early arrival will help secure the upstairs dining room. Look to park your bike by 10:30AM, meet with Phil and fellow members and friends, and be ready to “storm” the second floor as they open the doors at 11AM!! Phil will be there to wrangle the crowd, and can be reached at 904-699-2447 with pertinent questions!

Thanks, Phil!!

Contact: Phil Ridgdil ☎904-699-2447

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **March 28th**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Where: [Dock 633](#), 633 Lake June Rd, Lake Placid, FL 33852 ☎863-699-6330 ([map](#))

Description: Cross Streets: Near the intersection of Lake June Rd and Mockingbird Rd We are going back to an old favorite!! With nice weather and a spacious outside dining area, we are sure to have a great time!! Be sure to hit the curvy roads that lead in and out of this area.

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 Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **April 11th**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Where: **T.B.A.**

Description: Place holder for our April lunch ride for our Central area members and friends!! Stay tuned!!

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **April 18th**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Where: **T.B.A.**

Description: Place holder for our April lunch ride for our South area members and friends!! Stay tuned!!

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

Just For Fun Event

When: Fri., **April 24th**, to Sun., **April 26th**

Where: [Leesburg Bikefest](#), West Main Street, Leesburg, FL ([map](#))

Description: When Leesburg Bikefest started, the goal was to provide a great experience, support area businesses, and treat attendees better than any other biker events in the state. This goal has become a reality, and remains the main objective in planning the event. Bikefest promoters pride themselves on being able to say to Leesburg, Lake County, and Central Florida residents, “It’s your town, your party... no bike required!” Check out leesburgbikefest.com for LOTS more info!!!

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

Upcoming Regional Events

Just For Fun Event

When: Thurs., **April 2nd**, to Sun., **April 5th**

Where: [Fools Run – Ride Dual Sport](#), Dillard, Georgia ([map](#))

Description: We return to the mountains of GA and NC for early dual-sport riding. Part of the reason for traveling so far south is to minimize the likelihood of snow! Most riders probably will ride Friday and Saturday routes.

If you’re not into Dual Sport riding there will also be a few Big Bike Adventure Routes available.

Contact: Galen Diehl - gediehl4@comcast.net or ☎276-340-1173

Just For Fun Event

When: Fri., **April 24th**, to Sun., **April 26th**

Where: [North Georgia Classic](#), Helen, Georgia ([map](#))

Description: Meet with fellow MSTA members and ride some of the best roads in the Southeast. Find more information on the MSTA SE Region website, msta-se.com/helen. For those unfamiliar with Helen, this website has further information, helengeorgia.com.

Contact: Matt Thornton - thorn2wheels@yahoo.com or ☎864-979-3626

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 [editor](#) 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 [below](#).

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, [click here](#) to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page.

MSTA website information on upcoming sanctioned events: [click here](#). For Just-For-Fun events: [click here](#).

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.

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

This month's [Mystery Hyperlink](#) amplifies on this month's safety article.
Another rider's personal perspective can be read at [this link](#).

CLASSIFIED ADS

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

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