



# The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of  
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 8 Issue 4

## Events in April

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## Feature Article

### Eighteen Years In The Making

By “BluRidgeRider”

[Ed: BluRidgeRider lives near Monroe, NC and refers to himself as “Numa Sr.” and his son as “Numa Jr.” He posted this ride report on the [AdvRider.com Forum](#). It has been edited for publication. All photos by BluRidgeRider unless stated otherwise.]

This ride report covers a three-day ride in 2014 from Charlotte, NC to Robbinsville, NC to ride [Deal’s Gap](#) and the [Cherohala Skyway](#) with my son on his first overnight motorcycle trip.

#### Prologue

In the summer of 1994, I bought my first BMW motorcycle. I had owned a wide variety of motorcycles before then, but had been bitten by the sport touring bug and had to have a BMW. Shortly after I took delivery of my new 1994 [BMW K75S](#) in Mystic Red livery, I found out my wife was pregnant with our third child. My son, Numa Jr., was born on June 4, 1995 and the photo below was taken when he was still a just a baby. My wife was standing just out of the picture ready to catch him if he fell, but he showed wonderful balance on the motorcycle even as an infant.



Since that date I have been looking forward to the day when I might get a chance to take a multi-day trip with my son. In his younger years he didn’t express a whole lot of interest in looking at various motorcycles, but he did enjoy hearing about my adventures and looking at the pictures I took while touring around the country by myself and with my brother. We didn’t have any good places for off-

road riding near where we lived so we never seriously explored making a dirt bike purchase.

When he turned 16, he told me that he wanted to get his motorcycle license as quickly as possible after getting his regular driver’s license. I encouraged him to get some driving experience in a cage before taking the next step. When he was doing well with the cage, he approached me again about getting his motorcycle license. My brother was kind enough to loan us his [Yamaha XT225](#) and the lessons began. Numa started out in a small grass/dirt field and worked on clutch release, balance and shifting. When sufficient progress was made, we

headed for the Charles County Fairgrounds where he had more space to practice shifting and riding at higher speeds. The fairgrounds was a great location because it offered pavement, dirt, gravel, sand and grassy areas.

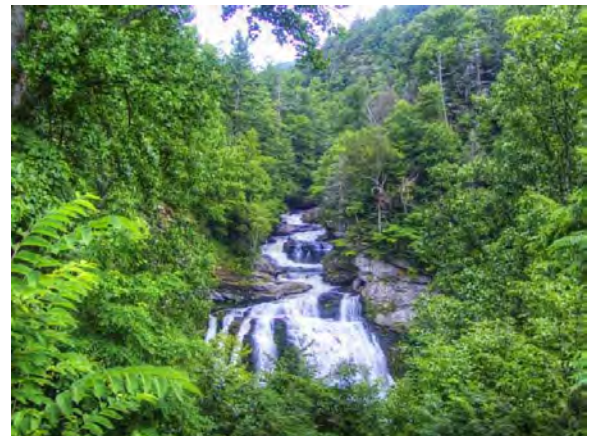
The Motorcycle Safety Foundation Beginner's Course came next and then many rides on the back roads around Southern Maryland. With his skills still progressing nicely, we headed for the large paved parking lot of a minor league baseball stadium where he rode my [Suzuki V-Strom 650](#) for the first time. Next we returned to the back roads, but this time he was on the V-Strom with me on the XT225. After his first taste on the V-Strom, he was reluctant to trade back with me. He loves the V-Strom and it is now his preferred mount.



A move to the Charlotte area for work last October has limited our opportunities lately to ride together and even to hang out. He's still living back in Maryland working for the summer and getting ready to start college at the University of Maryland in a few weeks. We decided the time was right to take our first tour, so I made arrangements with Dean at [Carolina Adventure Cycles](#) to rent a [Kawasaki Versys 650](#), made a reservation at [Phillips Motel](#) in Robbinsville and blocked my calendar for three days of motorcycle riding. Numa Jr. – now 18 years old – drove down from Maryland in his cage on Thursday and we stopped by Carolina Adventure Cycles that evening to pick up the Versys. The plan was for me to ride the rented Versys and for Numa Jr. to pilot my V-Strom 650.

## Day One

Friday morning we loaded up the saddlebags on both bikes and headed west. We took secondary roads including SC 11, Rt 276 to Brevard, Rt 64 from Brevard down through Highlands and into Franklin and then Rt 28 from Franklin up to Rt 74 before heading southwest into Robbinsville. The weather on Friday started out nice, but we experienced some heavy rain in the middle of the day – along with some fog thrown in for good measure – while up in the mountains on Rt 276 headed up to Brevard. It stayed overcast the rest of the way into Robbinsville, but we didn't get any more rain after we left Franklin. The tarmac was dry and the traffic light on Rt. 28 after we left Franklin and Numa Jr. got to experience the joys of riding in the twisties.



[Cullasaja Falls](#), just off of Rt 64 west of Brevard.

## Day Two

On Saturday, it was raining hard in Robbinsville in the early morning, but cleared up by mid-morning and we were able to ride Deal's Gap over into Tennessee and back on dry tarmac. While at a scenic overlook in Tennessee, Numa Jr. struck up a conversation with a very attractive young lady who was also on her first mountain ride. Erica had come down from Richmond, VA with her father and they were riding Deal's Gap and other roads in the area with friends who joined them from Florida.



Numa Jr. taking a break at roadside near Cullasaja Falls.





Like father, like son.



Great form!



Getting diagonal on Rt. 129 at Deal's Gap.



Numa Sr. and Jr. at a scenic overlook in Tennessee just after Numa Jr's first pass of Deal's Gap on only his second day of mountain riding. (Photo taken by Erica.)

A requisite stop by the [Deal's Gap Motorcycle Resort](#) gave us a chance to stretch our legs, check out the bikes and purchase a T-shirt. Erica and her riding party also made a stop by the Resort and the conversation with Numa Jr. continued. Her party was also staying at Phillips Motel and they made arrangements to hang out later that evening.

The weather was still sunny and bright so we made the decision to ride along the Cherohala Skyway. As we headed west on Route 143 towards the beginning of the Skyway, we got into a right-hand, decreasing radius turn and Numa Jr. ran a little wide on the exit and crossed the centerline. I pulled over at the next opportunity so that we could talk it over. He was following me too closely (for the twisty road conditions) and it made it difficult for him to see far enough in front to accurately judge the appropriate entry speed. A gentle reminder for him to allow a larger gap between us, focus on the road and to "ride his own ride" got him back on track.



We continued on and shortly after we got on the Skyway – while between areas suitable for pulling over – the skies opened up and we got soaked. There was no sign of it slowing down anytime soon and our clothes were thoroughly soaked, so we headed back down into Robbinsville to get dry. Reba, the owner of Phillips Motel, was kind enough to let us use the hotel's clothes dryer so we wouldn't have to pack wet clothes when it was time to head home. Her employee monitored the dryer, folded our clothes for us and even brought them back to our room. Great service from a family run, motorcycle friendly motel!

When Numa Jr. left to hang out with Erica, I spent some time talking with other riders who were staying at Phillips. Erica and her party invited us to join them for dinner and the conversation-filled evening was very enjoyable.

### Day Three

I had to be back at work on Monday and Numa Jr. had work on Tuesday, so we checked out early Sunday morning and took a more direct route back to Charlotte. Routes 143 and 28 out of Robbinsville got us back to Rt 74 where we headed east up to Asheville. We jumped on Interstate 40/Rt 74 east and then headed southeast on Interstate 26/Route 74 down to Columbus where Route 74 breaks off and heads east back to Charlotte.

We got lucky with the weather on the final day of our ride and only experienced a little fog in the mountains shortly after we left Robbinsville. The skies cleared progressively as we rode east back to Charlotte and our rain suits remained in their respective stuff sacks for the duration. Numa Jr. wanted to ride through the city so I took him through Uptown Charlotte for the final miles of the ride.

### Epilogue

Monday morning we returned the Kawasaki Versys to Carolina Adventure Cycles and then Numa Jr. started the long drive back to Maryland in his cage. Even though our motorcycle trip was only three days, the ride was fantastic and I'm hoping it's just the first of many motorcycle trips we'll take together. As for Numa Jr., on this trip he experienced many firsts – his first overnight motorcycle trip, first riding in the mountains, first riding in the rain and fog, first time riding in the city and first miles riding on an Interstate. He handled it all with aplomb and I'm very proud of how he has worked to develop his skills. He's still got plenty to learn and experience on two wheels, but he's off to a great start!

And I experienced a first on this trip as well. Although I've been riding for close to forty-eight years, this was my first overnight motorcycle trip with my son. I'm so proud of how he handled himself in such a wide variety of riding conditions. It was eighteen years in the making, but worth every second of the wait.

A special thanks to my brother for loaning us his XT225 so that Numa Jr. could learn the basics and begin getting in some dirt and street miles before

graduating to something bigger. I would also like to extend thanks to Dean and Jeff at Carolina Adventure Cycles for providing us with the Kawasaki Versys and some route tips. The Versys performed flawlessly and was a close match for my V-Strom in the areas of power and handling.

As I sit here finishing this missive, I'm already starting to think about where we should head on our next ride. *[Ed. He has added further tales of rides with his son and local riding buddies starting with [this posting](#) in the same thread on the AdvRider forum.]*





## ***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.*

### **Personal Choices**

I actually didn't come up with this topic. It was suggested to me at the March lunch gathering. BTW, it was a beautiful day to ride and we had over 30 MSTA'ers from all over central and south Florida in attendance. If you haven't gone to a lunch ride lately, better hurry up before we hit the summer months! Now, back to our regularly scheduled program...

Personal Choices. It's what motorcycling is all about. The freedom of riding is unlike any other experience. Just by riding we are taking the (hopefully calculated) risk of the sport. It's how we approach our riding, and the choices that we make in the sport, that determines our level of safety.

Everyone now has to go through a basic rider training course to receive their motorcycle endorsement. Unfortunately for a lot of riders, that is where their formal training ends. Realistically (with the exception of Oregon, Idaho and now California), the standards for basic motorcycle training are minimal, at best. Really all the MSF basic rider course does is teach a new operator basic controls and riding concepts. It does not give the rider any exposure to real world riding conditions. Doesn't it make sense to follow up your basic rider training with some advanced rider courses? But hey, it's your choice!

Safety gear. I'm not going to beat a dead horse, other than to just say I let out a sigh every time I see someone in regular jeans on a motorcycle. Why haven't most riders at least figured this one out yet?

Alcohol. Really? It still happens, even among MSTA'ers. As a group we pride ourselves on our capabilities and dedication to the sport, yet some (fortunately in our group mercifully few) still can't avoid the lure of a draft at the afternoon lunch stop. Yes, everyone notices.

How we ride and who we ride with are more choices. I will be the first one to admit that I love a spirited ride, but I am careful to choose where and how I have fun on my bike. If you ride with folks who disregard neighborhood speed limits, bicyclists, other highway users, etc., it says a lot about the choices you make in your riding.

One more thought, and this is perhaps the most important of all. Very few of us live in a relationship and/or family vacuum. We have people who care about us (Well, at least Becky tolerates me...but she is kind to other strays, too.). Riding is a choice, and an exercise in risk assessment. When we make the wrong choices, we significantly increase the chances that something bad is going to happen. That not only affects us, but our loved ones as well. Make the choices that won't put your loved ones through unnecessary heartache and anguish.

Motorcycling is about the freedom of the ride. It's about enjoying the experiences of the road. But it's also about riding smart and making the right choices. Just something to think about...

**Ride Safe!**

***Doug Westly – Safety Editor***



Photo: [JAFRUM Motorcycle Blog](#)

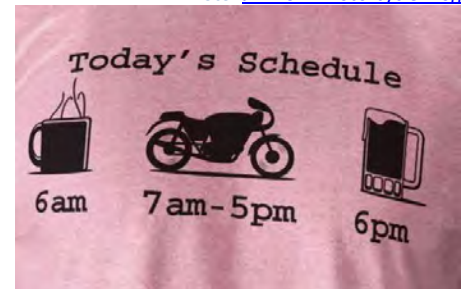


Photo: [Motorcycles of Manchester NH](#)

## Florida News

### South Director's Report

#### Spring has Sprung, and the Pollen Count is Climbing!!

Did you know that New Jersey got 3 inches of snow at the end of last week and endured even more flight cancelations... Meanwhile, we hit 91 degrees on Friday at the PBI!! I hear moving trucks being loaded all over the northeast!!



Van VanSteelant

We had our usual good fun this month, with three!! rides to enjoy. Teresa and the Central group had a great time in Deland at Brian's BBQ for the first event!! *[Photos by Don Moe]*



The next lunch event was the special Daytona edition, organized once again by Phil Ridgill!! We had 21 local and distant members and friends join the fun at the South Beach Grill during Bike Week!! Long distance winner was OK State Director, Denise Dickerson, adding 1300 miles to her well-worn FZ1!!! *[Photos by Don Moe]*



And then, we had the South ride to Dock 633 in Lake Placid. What a day!! The temps dropped from 91 on Friday to 71 on Saturday, which obviously contributed to the turnout – 36 riders enjoyed a perfect day on the



back deck!! Though we slightly overwhelmed the staff, they did a terrific job taking care of us. Nobody seemed to mind, as the conversations carried on well after lunch and into the parking lot, which looked like a rally was in progress!! I even ran out of tickets for the 50/50 raffle, which netted our winner, Don Williams, \$42!! That brings our total to \$529.00!! Thanks again to all who participate!! [Photos by Don Moe]



## What's Next??

We have two new venues on deck for our April lunch rides!! Teresa and the Central area will head to the [Country Angels Restaurant](#) in Polk City on April 11<sup>th</sup>. The next weekend, we have something special planned. We will hold our South lunch ride in conjunction with the Barrett-Jackson car auction taking place over the weekend of April 17-19 in West Palm Beach! I will send a more detailed email about the event by next weekend, as well as posting pertinent info on our website [www.flmsta.org](http://www.flmsta.org). In a nutshell, the doors open at 8AM; your general admission ticket gets you everywhere but on the bidding floor; there are "thrill rides" available from several manufactures; and you can get close enough to millions of dollars' worth of cars to leave a nose print...well almost that close!! Check out [www.barrett-jackson.com](http://www.barrett-jackson.com) for more info and ticket options. They offer discounts to seniors, 55 and up....

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 advice 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 April. 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

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!!

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](mailto: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!

With spring in the air, thoughts of cleaning out the closets come to mind...like those dusty corners in our motorcycle training memories... I know, that's a leap, but, think about the last time you participated in any formal training program. If it's been more than 2 years, you need a tune up (guilty as charged!) I know we started this conversation last year, and we hit a few logistic bumps that shelved any progress for 2014. I think we are close to resolving some of the issues, and I hope to have some concrete offerings very soon. Here's a motivation for all of us – let's set the bar for the state membership with the most participants in recognized training in 2015!! Remember, members can apply for partial reimbursement for the class costs through the Dan Clark Safety Fund!

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?!? TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR THE SPECIAL OFFER ON RAFFLE TICKETS!! 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!!

We just received an update from Ann Redner, MSTA VP, promoting the last few days for purchasing your discounted raffle tickets!! Only members can participate, so your chances of becoming a new owner of a FJR are much better winning the lottery and buying one on your own!! Read on and don't delay!! Do it NOW!!

Ann says...

“As you know, we're handling this year's raffle bike—a red, 2014 Yamaha FJR 1300 — differently than in the past. For one, we've cut our costs of printing and mailing raffle tickets to you and have applied these savings toward the higher purchase price of the popular FJR 1300. Second, we're offering a 20% discount on the price of raffle tickets until March 31st. Through March 31st, raffle tickets are \$8 each. Beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>, tickets are \$10 each. ONLY 3 DAYS LEFT for discounted tickets!!

Next, there are 3 ways to buy tickets:

Online at <http://www.planetReg.com/MSTAraffle2015>

–OR–

Revisit page 37 of STARReview Vol. 34 No.1 and follow instructions

–OR–

Fill out individual tickets on the attachment and mail in (follow instructions on attachment)

Lastly, you can't win if you don't buy tickets! Besides, buying tickets supports all of the good things we bring you in the MSTA.

GOOD LUCK and thank you for your support.”



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**

12 members met on March 7<sup>th</sup> for our lunch ride to Deland. Two were here from out-of-state for bike week...Dennis Ergo from Michigan & Dennis Villarose, our MSTA president from S. Carolina.

The next lunch ride is scheduled for Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> (11:45) in Polk City at the [Country Angels Restaurant](#), 122 N Commonwealth Ave, Polk City, FL 33868. The menu is described as southern style down-home food.

Here is a link for a suggested ride to or from Polk City:

<http://www.motorcycleroads.com/75/1899/Florida/Twisties-Through-Central-Florida-Countryside.html>.

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 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., **April 11<sup>th</sup>**, 11:45 am – 2:00 pm

Where: [Country Angels Restaurant](#), 122 N. Commonwealth Ave, Polk City, FL 33868 ☎863-984-1047  
([map](#))

Description: The menu is described as southern style down-home food. Click [this link](#) for a suggested ride to or from Polk City.

Contact: Teresa Vipond - [termayn@gmail.com](mailto:termayn@gmail.com) or ☎713-504-5763

### **MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride "Special Edition"**

When: Sat., **April 18<sup>th</sup>**, 8:00 am – 11:00 pm

Where: **South Florida Fairgrounds**, 9067 Southern Blvd., West Palm Beach, FL 33411 ☎ ([map](#))

Description: Join us for a day of gawking and fun at the Barrett-Jackson Car Auction in West Palm Beach. Doors open at 8 AM, with PLENTY to see and do all day. We'll settle on a lunch arrangement real soon and post the info ASAP.

For ticket info and everything else, go to [www.barrett-jackson.com](http://www.barrett-jackson.com). The website is very well done, informative, and easy to navigate. The offer discounts to seniors, 55 and up!

Contact: Van - [busavan@flahsta.org](mailto:busavan@flahsta.org) or ☎561-386-2594

## Just For Fun Event

When: Fri., **April 24<sup>th</sup>**, to Sun., **April 26<sup>th</sup>**

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](http://leesburgbikefest.com) for LOTS more info!!!

Contact: Van - [busavan@flahsta.org](mailto: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., **May 9<sup>th</sup>**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

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

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

Contact: Teresa Vipond - [termayn@gmail.com](mailto:termayn@gmail.com) or ☎713-504-5763

### MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **May 16<sup>th</sup>**, 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

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

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

Contact: Van - [busavan@flahsta.org](mailto:busavan@flahsta.org) or ☎561-386-2594

## Upcoming Regional Events

### Just For Fun Event

When: Thurs., **April 2<sup>nd</sup>**, to Sun., **April 5<sup>th</sup>**

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. More information on the MSTA SE Region website, [msta-se.com/fun](http://msta-se.com/fun). 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](mailto:gediehl4@comcast.net) or ☎276-340-1173

### Just For Fun Event

When: Fri., **April 24<sup>th</sup>**, to Sun., **April 26<sup>th</sup>**

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](http://msta-se.com/helen). For those unfamiliar with Helen, this website has further information, [helengeorgia.com](http://helengeorgia.com).

Contact: Matt Thornton - [thorn2wheels@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://www.ridemsta.com)

Florida MSTA [www.flmsta.org](http://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.

[This link](#) has information about early-spring riding hazards.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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