



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 8 Issue 8

Events in August

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Contact Information:

South Florida Director:

Van VanSteelant – busavan@flahsta.org

Central Florida Director:

Terese Vipond – termayn@gmail.com

Safety Editor:

Doug Westly – flwingrdr@msn.com

Florida Gator Tale Editor:

Don Moe – editor@flmsta.org

Feature Article

Adventure Motorcycle Training at RawHyde's Colorado Camp

By Don Moe

In January this year I bought a 2015 BMW R1200GS Adventure and, in order to feel more confident riding the beast on unpaved roads, I decided to sign up for the two-day, Level-1 [Intro to Adventure](#) rider training course at [RawHyde-Offroad.com](#) taking place in mid-July near Hartsel, Colorado. The itinerary for our Intro course is listed on that webpage.

Additionally I signed up for their “Pre-Training” session and the subsequent two-day “[High Rockies Adventure](#).” The pre-training session on Friday afternoon allowed the instructors to give us more

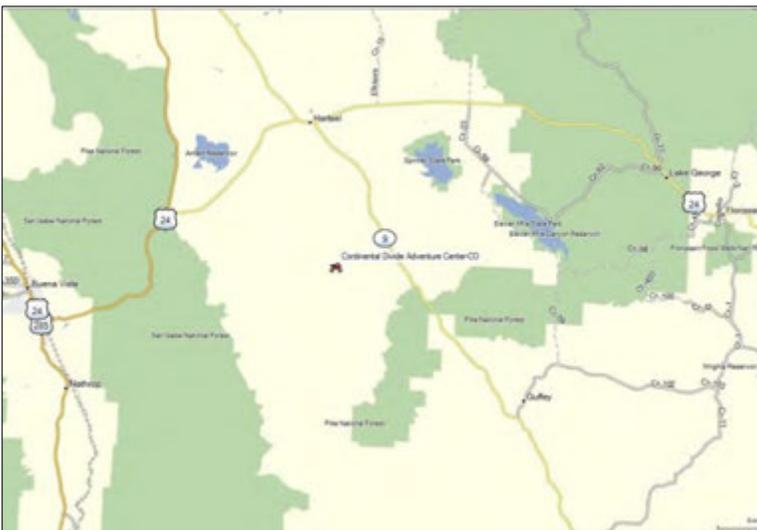
personalized attention in a smaller group and we could reinforce the techniques during the additional practice in the full-day sessions.

Prior to attending the course, I had purchased the [BMW GS Off-Road Riding Skills Instructional DVD](#) and found it quite helpful in preparing me for the training experience at RawHyde's camp. Additionally, I found

several useful videos on YouTube, including [RawHyde's own playlist](#).

This article reviews my experiences during the Intro training course. *[Maps and photos by Don Moe unless otherwise noted. Click on any photo or map for a larger version from my website.]*

The RawHyde training camp is located at around 9,500-ft elevation near CR-53, just 13 miles south of the US-24/CO-9 intersection at Hartsel. The adjacent map provides a general overview of the camp's location in central Colorado.



The area around the camp had once been plotted as a development project with numerous unpaved, public roads throughout the area, and scarcely any buildings. Although the project didn't succeed, it left behind a nearly perfect off-road training ground for beginners. Much of the area is also open-range for livestock.

From the hilltop at the camp, we enjoyed this gorgeous view of the mountain range to the west.



The camp facilities were somewhat minimal, although adequate for short-term stays, consisting of a single large shed along several smaller bunkhouse buildings, campers, and tents. Staff members provided very good meals and looked after our needs. Up to four instructors were present to help us master our riding lessons.

Day #1 — Pre-Training

This next panoramic photo shows a view of the camp area shortly after I arrived for their Pre-Training session around 10 AM MDT on Friday, July 10th. Several more trainees arrived later that day.



Since I had opted for the upgrade to a “deluxe tent,” I was assigned one of the yellow and white “Eureka” tents that are visible to the left of the building. The next photo shows a closer view of these tents. Each tent is mounted on a wooden platform and contains a mattress on a cot, a chair, a small table, and a battery-powered

lamp. Each bed has quality sheets and a heavy blanket, called by some there a “Russian Army” blanket. Since the temperature inside the tent typically dropped into the low 40s at night, the heavy blanket was nice.



Other participants at the camp were assigned a “tent” in a specially designed trailer parked behind the building. The tents are attached to elevated platforms along the sides of the trailer and accessed by short ladders.

Although I didn’t take a look inside the bunkhouse, other attendees indicated that the accommodations were quite sufficient.

The camp also provided for some degree of “comfort” facilities. Behind the building on an elevated platform are three [portable toilets](#) (left) and three showers of similar appearance (right). The sink in the middle supplies running cold water when the diesel generator is running to provide electricity for the camp and the water pump.

Upon my arrival, I signed in with Lea, one of four very friendly female employees, and was given my name tag, etc. Trev, one of the trainers, introduced himself and showed me around the camp, explaining the “ropes” and assisted me in transferring my luggage from my motorcycle to my designated Eureka tent, the one on the far left in the earlier photo.

The four instructors for our “Intro” group for the weekend were Trev, Dusty, Russell, and Matt.

In order to minimize potential damage during a crash, we then proceeded to prepare our motorcycles for the training sessions by removing vulnerable accessories, such as both mirrors, the windscreen, along with the top



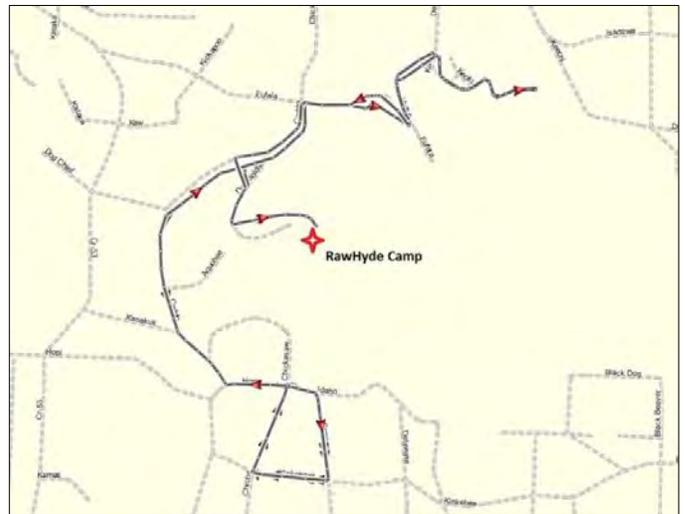
case and panniers. The turn signal stalks were also zip-tied in a vertical position, facing forward. The handlebar was repositioned upward for best posture when riding while standing on the foot pegs.

In this next photo, instructor Trev is describing aspects of off-road bike protection and preparation to several of the attendees.



As soon as everyone attending the Preliminary Session and their motorcycles were ready to begin our initial training, we donned our riding gear and at 2 PM headed out to the training area, located a short distance south of the camp. For this exercise, our instructors were Trev and Russell.

The adjacent map shows the track log from my GPS. From the camp we headed back out the entrance “driveway” and turned left. Our trainers had us perform several exercises around the loop.



This next photo shows Trev and Russell on the far left explaining our first series of exercises to perform: standing on only one foot peg and then the other. The goal is to keep our bikes properly balanced while shifting our weight side-to-side. In a later exercise, we alternately swung our legs fully across the seat. In the subsequent photos, Russell demonstrates the first exercise for us.





As we rode around the training loop, we had an audience of donkeys and cattle, seemingly giving us either curious or annoyed looks.

Around 4 PM we rode back north, past the camp to a scenic overlook, where we paused for nearly 20 minutes. This panoramic photo shows the view from that overlook.



While at this overlook, Trev and Russell posed for this next photo.



Trev then took our group photo using my camera.



We returned to camp by 4:30 PM and relaxed until dinner was served around 6 PM. The camp had a well-stocked, open bar and included a nice selection of Colorado-brewed beers. After dinner we gathered around the campfire and talked about our experiences during the day.

By 9 PM, it was getting dark and we gradually retired to our lodgings. By 9:30 PM the generator was shut down, bringing welcome stillness to the camp. During the night, I had occasion to venture to the portable toilets and paused afterwards to admire the glorious, cloudless view of the very dark night sky and the Milky Way.

Day #2 — Intro to Adventure, Part 1

Just before 5 AM, the generator started up! What an early wake-up that was! After putting in my foam earplugs, I soon fell back asleep.

Breakfast was excellent and plentiful! I didn't hear anyone complain about the food or preparation at the camp. Somewhere hidden out of sight was obviously a good kitchen, probably in the large truck parked adjacent to the building.

For the newcomers taking just the Intro training course, Trev again demonstrated the proper techniques for safely lifting a fallen motorcycle, as shown in these two photos. Dusty stood behind him to demonstrate properly assisting another rider to raise his bike.



At 9:40 AM we lined up at the staging point along the driveway, as shown in this next photo. Another beautiful day to ride motorcycles in central Colorado!

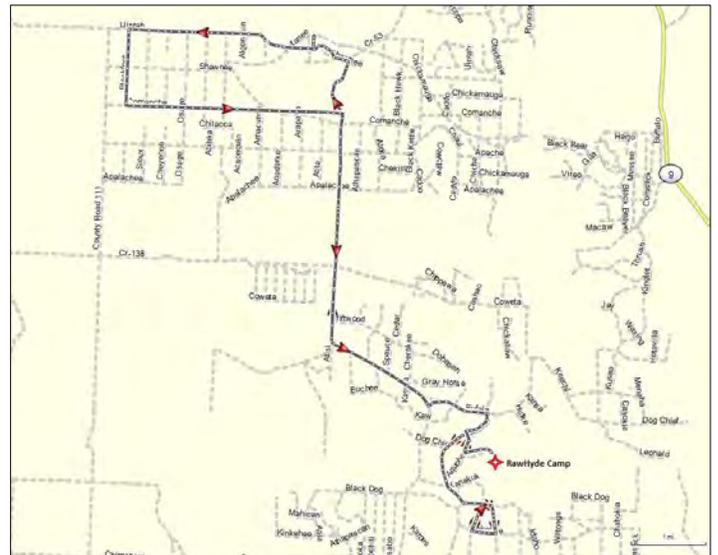


Saturday's training session was more intense than the preliminary session was on Friday. We initially headed south to the same training area as Friday and repeated the balance and other exercises for nearly three hours. At 12:30 we returned to camp for lunch. During the ride, I took this next photo as we were leaving the first training area. The wind was blowing our dust trails towards the south.



The adjacent map shows our track for this day's training sessions.

After lunch we rode north to the second training area consisting of a short section where the instructors set up traffic cones for us to practice tight circles and figure-eight loops.



Upon arriving at there at 2 PM, we gathered around as Dusty, wearing the orange sweater, gave us instructions for this training session.



In this next photo, Trev and Russell then demonstrated the maneuvers through the cones.

After each trainee successfully practiced the exercises several times over nearly 90 minutes, we departed this training area and took a long, scenic route back to RawHyde's camp, arriving there just after 4 PM. Along the way, I took this next photo as we paused to let our group get back together.



Once again we relaxed for a while around camp, enjoying beers and other adult beverages until another delicious dinner was served. The evening proceeded much the same as the day before, along with a beautiful night with a clear view of the stars.

Day #3 — Intro to Adventure, Part 2

The final day's training in RawHyde's Intro program began just before 9 AM, starting with another visit to the first training area to the south of the camp for about an hour of warm-up and refresher exercises, including cone weaves.

The adjacent map shows our track log for today's exercises, including our lengthy ride out to CO-9 after our training session ended.

Following the warm-up session, we returned to camp since our next lesson involved riding a tight serpentine course, which is located directly east of the camp on RawHyde's property and is fenced in to prevent livestock from "messaging up" the course. Additionally, several small dirt piles were placed in a line to allow us to practice riding up hills and stopping briefly before continuing down the other side.



In this next panoramic photo, a portion of the lengthy serpentine course can be seen behind the other riders.



The exercises on this course were definitely more challenging due to the slope of the hill and the tight turns in each loop of the serpentine trail that required careful throttle and clutch control as well as weight shifting to perform the turns. Thankfully the trail was just dry dirt and not muddy!

After practicing several variations of the exercises on that course and the small hills for nearly 90 minutes, we returned to camp for a welcome lunch break.

Shortly after 1 PM we mounted up again for the afternoon session. This time we headed north to a section where several large hills allowed us to practice our hill climbing and descending techniques at speed on much more challenging terrain covered with more gravel.



Being the first to traverse the hills, I decided to take photos of the other trainees as they came down the same steep hills, although they don't appear to be that steep in my photos.

After satisfactorily completing that exercise, we returned to the particularly steep and rocky hill to learn how to perform a proper turn-around after stalling or stopping when heading up a steep slope, although we were not asked to perform this exercise. In this next photo, Dusty has stopped halfway to the top of the upslope to explain the procedure.



The next item on the day's training plan was to ride through a modest section of sand followed by a small gully alongside the road. Instructors Trev and Russell demonstrated riding through it for us and we each took one or more turns to traverse the gully too. It doesn't look like much in this photo of Trev doing the run, but it was a challenge for some of the trainees. Instructor Matt recorded videos along with humorous commentaries of each of our attempts and showed them to us later on the wide-screen TV at camp.



After our 45-minute gully exercise, we returned to camp for a 20-minute break. The instructors asked us whether we might be up for another lengthy ride, to which we all said, "Of course, we are!" We mounted up and headed south and

east through a section of the Pike National Forest to reach CO-9. We continued north about 7.5 miles and turned off onto Buffalo Drive, which appeared to be part of another failed development project.



Along this ride, I rode back in the pack and took several photos as we rode along. At one point we passed by another group of cows looking at us warily. We always slowed down when approaching livestock as we didn't want to spook them and cause a collision.

A few minutes later Trev and a trainee showed off by riding hands-free while standing for a short distance.



As a final photo from this excursion, this next one shows the view north along CO-9. The structures visible near the highway are close to the entrance to Buffalo Drive. We couldn't have asked for better weather all weekend!



We arrived back at camp by 5:30 PM in time for another delicious dinner and conversation. After dinner, I hooked up my laptop computer to the wide-screen TV and showed photos from our three days of training. This article contains only a small selection of my nearly 200 photos.

High Rockies Adventure Ride

As mentioned, I had also signed up for the two-day “[High Rockies Adventure](#)” tour. On the first day, Michael guided us over unpaved Boreas Pass, paved Hoosier Pass, and unpaved Weston Pass. These passes are located north of Hartsel. On the second day, the ride traversed unpaved passes Marshall and Old Monarch, located to the southwest of Hartsel. Some of these passes are former railway routes that no longer have any tracks.

Although the weather was cloudy both days, we all enjoyed our rides over these passes in remarkably dry road conditions. However, on the second day, the clouds did more than just threaten rain back at RawHyde’s camp. A rain cell had been stationary over the area south of Hartsel and had rained intensively for quite a while, only letting up as we returned to camp. We found muddy road conditions along CR-53 and especially slick conditions on one side road leading to the camp’s location.

When the rider in front of me suddenly slowed down, I was unable to maintain momentum and became the only rider to fall over into the mud on that final stretch. Thankfully I had plenty of help from both trainers and other trainees in picking up my motorcycle again. It was undamaged and the mud was easily cleaned off when I reached a car wash facility in Buena Vista the next day. Thanks to fellow trainee Jason Alderson for capturing the moment.



Summary

My personal experience at the RawHyde Adventure Camp was quite good and I am looking forward to attending their Level-2 class, called “[The Next Step](#)” in the future, either again in Colorado, or at their facility in California, or elsewhere. The courses are not inexpensive, but the intense training and counseling along with the supporting staff and facilities make the investment in both time and money worthwhile. Everyone who participated in the training likewise seemed quite satisfied with their experience. After spending over \$20K for the new motorcycle, another 10% to learn to ride it confidently in off-road conditions was just part of the package for me.

Several riders, who haven’t yet taken the RawHyde course in Colorado or California, have asked me why I didn’t take the similar course at the [BMW Performance Center](#) in Spartanburg, South Carolina, especially since it’s much closer to my home in Florida. My answer to them is that I like the coolness and the scenery of the high Rockies in the summer, particularly compared to the heat and humidity of the southeastern US then. Additionally, the High Rockies Adventure ride over passes nearly 12,000 ft. in elevation cannot be easily duplicated elsewhere. Otherwise I would agree that taking the training in Spartanburg would be a good option. Jim Hyde, the founder of RawHyde Adventures, has collaborated with BMW on developing the off-road training courses and both include essentially the same curriculum.

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.

Are You Prepared?

I just received a report of a rider who was out West, on a long-distance group ride. He was on a series of secondary roads and came across what initially appeared to be tar snakes in the road. It turns out this was a free-range road (meaning ranchers can drive their cattle over it), and the “tar snakes” were actually cattle droppings. Even after they look dry, the droppings are still wet in-side. He ran over several of them and his back tire started sliding, eventually causing him to leave the road, into a steep drop.

Fortunately he was riding with friends, who saw the crash and after initially thinking he was dead, called for help and began life-saving actions. Eventually he was life-flighted out. The word is he will fully recover. The bike, as you might imagine, is a total loss.

There are so many lessons here, for all of us. First are road conditions. The riders didn't even realize at first what confronted them. Then, when they realized the obstacle was cattle droppings, they thought the droppings were old and dry. The friends didn't at first believe he was still alive, and there was actually some moments before they went and checked on him. They called for emergency services (but what if they had been out of cell phone coverage?). One final note: Our rider swears up and down that ATGATT saved his life.

The reality is that a crash can happen with little or no warning. Innocent situations can hide danger. Being prepared is better than being lucky.

What could have been done differently? Well, more situational awareness might have provided better analysis of the riding environment. Quicker reactions to check the downed rider may have helped. Did anyone have an on-board first aid kit? What if they had been out of cell phone range? Whenever I'm traveling, I carry a SPOT emergency beacon with me. (By the way, carry it on you, not on the bike. If you and the bike unintentionally separate, you don't want to be on the ground with a broken leg and your SPOT out of reach!)



We don't want to second-guess the rider. This could have happened to any of us. We're grateful he has shared his story. But what we do have to remember that in an instant, what was a beautiful morning's ride in the country can become a serious and potentially life-threatening situation.

Our sport is an exercise in risk management. Part of that management is being prepared. Whether you are sneaking out for a quick ride when the sun comes up, or you are doing your Iron Butt Association 50CC run (Coast-to-coast in under 50 hours), try to keep this mantra in mind: "Expect the best out of your ride. Prepare for the worst."

Oh, and the ending to this story? The rider's insurance company paid him the full purchase price of his totaled bike, allowing him to buy a new 2015 for only \$500.00. I want the name and number of his insurance agent!

RIDE SAFE!

Doug Westly – Safety Editor

Florida News

South Director's Report

IT'S GETT'N HOT IN HERE!!

Crank up the A/C, open a cold one, and plan your next ride!! Just plan on an early start and a little chance of rain before you get home!! That's how we do it in FLA...



Van VanSteelant

And that's exactly what we had for our South FL. Brunch Ride back on July 18th!! Seven of us departed from our usual start location and easily made our way west to Clewiston for a wonderful brunch at Beef O Brady's! We were joined by two others and made the most of their "long" table. Several of the faces were new — old friends who found their way back; and brand new members as well!! Of course, yours truly forgot to take any pictures... Our usual "artists" are away riding all over the country!! A good time was had by all!! We all took different ways home, with many of us getting a little damp before making it back into the garage!

What's Next??

We have the usual two brunch rides scheduled for August! The details are always found at our AWARD WINNING website www.flmsta.org On **August 8th**, join Teresa for her Central FL Brunch Ride to the **Broadway Diner** in **Bartow**. Two weeks later, on **August 22nd**, join me for the South FL Brunch Ride to **JR's Runway Café** at the **Sebring Airport**!! It's been quite some time since we ventured here, and I'm looking forward to our return. This may be a first time for the MSTA...

On the national scene, we have two big events for you!! Starting this weekend, the River City Ride takes place in Corydon, Indiana this year! And at the close of the month, the Mail Pouch Fly-By takes place in Marietta, Ohio. We have info and links on our website, or go to www.ridemsta.org

We are always looking for unique lunch/brunch 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....

I'd like to thank the members who have recently sent along some suggestions! We will be venturing to new venues once we return to our lunch ride schedule. Stay tuned!!

We are in the final stages of scheduling all of the 2015 lunch/brunch rides. The dates and places are posted through October. The rest of the dates-only are posted through December, 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

Well, we are back to normal for our national updates to our membership rolls. We have new members to recognize this month!! Alison Klay and Matthew Terry from Panasoffkee!! Welcome!!

If you know any of the following members, let them know that their membership has, or is about to expire:

Wilma Boyle	Steve Gollihugh	Carl Mobley	Barry Simon
Terry Brown	Martin Johnson	Lee Muschott	Alan and Terri Singer
Anita and Paul Buxe	Ellen Kocher	Richard Peabody	Ron Wipp
Scott Courtney	George Kunkle	Bobby Shields	

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!

Let's get out there and enjoy what we have in our own backyard... You know that several people step up every month to make sure that there's lots to do here in Florida and nationwide with the MSTA. You owe it to yourself to see what we have put out there for your enjoyment!! We do what we do because we like to... And sharing that fun with others is its own reward. If you haven't made it to a recent event, local or otherwise, make your plans right now to join us...

Participation will open your eyes to what you've been missing!! As some card issuer maintains, "membership has its rewards..." Put yours to good use!!

YOU ARE PLANNING ON ATTENDING STAR 2016....

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

Central FL Brunch Ride

Sat. **August 8th**, 9:30 - 11:30.

Broadway Diner
1380 N. Broadway Ave.,
Bartow FL 33830
863-537-7647

Teresa Vipond
DeLand, FL
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

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., **August 8th**, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Where: [Broadway Diner](#), 1380 N. Broadway Ave., Bartow FL 33830 ☎863-537-7647 ([map](#))

Description: We have their private (air-conditioned!!) dining room reserved for 9:30am. They don't have a website, but it is described as a locally owned non-chain restaurant with great food. It's in a shopping center so there is plenty of parking in the front & on the left side.

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

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **August 22nd**, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Where: [JR's Runway Cafe](#), 130 Authority Lane, Sebring, FL 33870 ☎863-655-0732 ([map](#))

Description: We've been going to the Sebring area for years, but haven't hit this place before. Nice setting, cool planes, and some nice roads to enjoy coming and going!!

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., **Sept. 12th**, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Where: TBD

Description: Place holder for the September brunch ride!! Stay tuned!!

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

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat., **Sept. 19th**, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Where: [Big V Restaurant](#), 32 Hall St N, LaBelle, FL 33935 ☎863-675-2917 ([map](#))

Description: We are trying a new place this time around. The reviews are amazing – aged decor, but spectacular food!! Let's hope we have finally found a new RTE in LaBelle!

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

Member Profile

We would like to publish profiles of our members, on a strictly voluntary basis of course. If you would like to participate, please send an email (or a letter) to the [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 [on page 20](#).

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

More Contact Information			
Don Moe Newsletter Editor 300 N. Hwy A1A, Apt. J-206 Jupiter, FL 33477 ☎561-346-1009 editor@flmsta.org	Paul 'Van' VanSteelant South Director 217 S.E. 3rd Street Boynton Beach, FL 33435 ☎561-386-2594 busavan@flahsta.org	Teresa Vipond Central Director Deland, FL ☎713-504-5763 termayn@gmail.com	Vacant Northeast Director ☎

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 e-mail to editor@flmsta.org