



# The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of  
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 7 Issue 1

## Events in January

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## Feature Article

### **Cedar Key Weekend, December 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

by Dianne Park

There are not many people in this world like Kevin Healy. And I, along with about 60 other people who showed up to prove it, give him a world of credit. After the tragedy of last year, he resumed his (this year was the 8<sup>th</sup>) annual trip to [Cedar Key](#). I now know why so many people carve out time in early December and come from Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Georgia (hope I haven't missed anyone) and all over Florida for a super three days in Cedar Key.

Anyone who has not been to Cedar Key is missing a Florida jewel – especially if you love the keys. While it is quite a “hike” from West Palm Beach, it is still easier to get there from here than to get to Key Largo and the rest of the southern keys, and Cedar Key gives a very similar feel without the congestion. Approximately 100 miles north of Tampa, it is, at best, a six hour trip from WPB. But once you are

there, you really feel that you have left the cares of the world behind. There is plenty to do so you do not feel isolated, but with sketchy cell phone service, the beauty of being surrounded by water, the laid back feel of the entire key, you simply ... relax!

Jim and I arrived at the hotel around 3:00 on Friday and were

greeted by Rocky (owner/manager?), who could not have been friendlier. There were 3-4 people who were already there, and “Kevin’s



#### **Editor's Monthly Note:**

We wish everyone a Happy and Safe New Year with many fun rides!  
Don Moe, Editor

group” (I don’t know how many, but a bunch!) showed up around 5:00. The [Beachfront Motel](#) is situated on a point and is bordered by water on two sides. So from the window of your room, or two steps from the hotel were the most exquisite sunrise and sunsets! You can walk the entire key (might take you 20-30 minutes – but you will encounter island charm with every step).

It did not take long to find the “strip” (for lack of a better designation). It is maybe two blocks of neat shops, restaurants and bars. To say bar though, hardly creates the appropriate feel, especially for [Big Deck](#). It became our hang out for the weekend whenever there were free moments. I could describe it, but words would sooooo not do it justice. Suffice it to say, it was a really fun place with super nice staff, \$9.99 for 2 dozen (delicious) steamed clams, great draft beers at low, low prices and an atmosphere designed to unwind with friends.



Kevin had made arrangements for dinner Friday night at the near end of the strip, [Ken’s Cedar Keyside Diner](#), and there was a great turnout. I am guessing 30-35 people. I personally think the most special thing about Friday night was the excitement of seeing that Deborah was there for the weekend! :)

Next morning, breakfast was a fun, brisk 10-minute walk with perfect weather and fabulous temperatures, to [Annie’s Café](#), an obviously popular place with great food and service. It was good size but we pretty much filled the place!

Kevin also had a lunch planned on Saturday for those who wanted to ride about 90 miles away and while I did not go, everyone who did sounded like they had a wonderful time and memorable experience. Steve Phillips, Van, Rod, Jim and I took in the shops along the “strip” instead of riding – nice shops with some quality merchandise. We all had a bunch of laughs over the creative sayings on signs, hats and t-shirts. The more you read the many quips, the more you got in the mood to appreciate them, but I think one of my favorites was simply, “My reality check bounced.”

On the walk to breakfast, we discovered that Cedar Key has a [museum](#). We returned to the museum later in the morning and found that it is not only very authentic and quaint but well worth seeing. At the \$2.00 entrance fee, it really is not to be missed! Lots of history to the little key.

Then we went to lunch across from the museum and had some fabulous clam chowder. After all that eating, we probably needed a nap. I don’t recall what we did in the afternoon, but whatever it was, it was relaxing.

If I had to pick a highlight of the weekend, I guess it would be Saturday night. Again, Kevin had made arrangements at a restaurant and the group was now somewhere between 50-60. The restaurant felt elegant after our many trips to Big Deck :) The food and the service were exquisite. And omg, the desserts – fabulous bread pudding and unbelievable bananas foster. Man, can Kevin put together a weekend!!! And our great dinner was capped off back at Big Deck with some final socializing before most of us would leave the following morning.



Some stayed in Cedar Key and had breakfast together, which is what we should have done!!! Steve Phillips, Van, Rod, Jim and I left around 7:00, which was fine, until we hit really, really dense fog. It would have been so much better if it had simply poured down rain!!! No fun riding when you cannot see. But we did find a “new” definite keeper-of-a-restaurant-for-breakfast in Ocala called [Darrell’s Dog Gone Good Diner](#). By the time we finished breakfast, you could actually see across the street and the rest of the trip home was pretty quick and simple.

And I wanna go again next year!

*Dianne Park*

Our group photo, with Kevin in his yellow “Last Resort” T-shirt, and Dianne kneeling in her red sweater.



Sunrise and Sunset photos from Cedar Key.



Photos by Jim Park

## ***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.***

### ***The Track – Speed and Learning!***

In the January 2014 issue of Motorcycle Consumer News, noted motorcycle industry expert Ken Condon makes the case for rider learning on the racetrack. If you get MCN, please take the time to read through his writing on the subject.

We've mentioned this idea before, but it may be time to revisit the thought. The racetrack is one of the best places to work on advancing your riding skills. The advantages are obvious:

- It offers a safe environment for high speed and bike maneuvering, without interfering traffic, dangerous road conditions, etc.
- Everyone riding has (or should have) the same objective; to have fun and work on their skills.
- At the right track and under the right riding management, track riding offers more opportunity for safely exploring your (and your bike's) limits.



The author on the track at Jennings GP

It doesn't take a sport bike, the purchase of full race leathers and a lot of expensive preparation to experience a track day. Clubs will often promote track days for new groups or riders, and many schools offer track days to other than dedicated sport bike riders.

If you've thought about trying a track day, here is something else to ponder. Here in Florida we have one of the best tracks in the country for riders wanting to experience their first day in a controlled track environment.

[Jennings GP Raceway](#) in north Florida, located near I-75 at the FL/GA state line, is the state's (and maybe the country's) only motorcycle-only racetrack. It is specifically designed for motorcycles. That means no concrete walls or other barriers in the run-off areas, a course designed just for motorcycles, etc. It is the perfect course for first time track riders.

From what I've seen in riding as part of MSTTA over the past several years, our standing membership is made up (generally) of very proficient and experienced motorcyclists. Yet I've also noted that only a small percentage of them, at least through conversations, have made the effort to seek out advanced training or learning experiences. I suspect it is because they feel that they have reached the limit of readily available training, or perhaps they have gone through advanced training and don't feel the need to revisit the same courses.

If this is the case, why not take the next step? Go ahead and put that training and experience to the test. Take the time to experience a track day. I can guarantee you that no matter what your experience and training, a day on the track will change how you ride!

If anyone does have an interest in a track day, please feel free to drop me a note and I can give you more information on the topic!

**Ride Safe!**

***[Doug Westly](#) – Safety Editor***

***[flwingrdr@msn.com](mailto:flwingrdr@msn.com)***

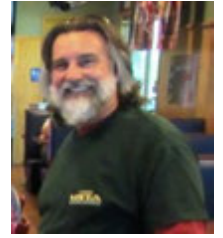


## Florida News

### South Director's Report

#### Welcome to the Start of Winter, Florida Style!!

We are still having to run the A/C on occasion! I know, I know, the snowbirds don't want to hear about our little trouble with 85 degrees and 60% humidity!! Dear friends of ours from Minneapolis came down for the Ft. Lauderdale Boat Show, and left here the Tuesday after the show at 78 degrees and landed in -2!! That'll teach 'em!!



Van VanSteelant

Meanwhile, we did some riding this month!!! The Central/Northern Lunch ride was to [The Perfect Spot](#)!! I'll rely on one of the attendees to fill us in on how that event went. From the photos I saw, it looked perfect!! That same weekend found a few of us attending the resurrection of the Kevin Healey's Cedar Key Weekend ride. I'll share my take-aways a little later.

And we had South Lunch ride to an old haunt! We made a trek to Everglades City, after more than a few years spent at Stan's Idle Hour in nearby Goodland. We were not disappointed!! Several groups made the ride to the [Everglades Seafood Depot](#), a wonderful setting, right on the river/lake that leads to the 1000 island region of southwest Florida!! We enjoyed a perfect day of weather, clear roads, and great company! We dined water side, outside where the breeze took the edge off the warmth of the mid-day sun! We had fine food, and the service was just slow enough to allow a LOT of tall tales to be shared up and down the table. And we had a new winner of the 50/50! Vickie Magill enjoyed her "free" lunch, while the Chapter's till now stands at \$280.50!! Big thanks to all who participated!! With 16 people on 14 bikes, we had a stellar turn out. Just a wonderful way to end the year of events -- believe me, your attendance at these events is a major source of joy for your Co-Directors!!



Photo by Don Moe

#### What's Next??

Of immediate importance is the upcoming showing of the movie, "[Why We Ride](#)"!! Please use only this link to purchase your tickets: [www.tugg.com/events/7062](http://www.tugg.com/events/7062). **You must act now, as Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> is the cut-off to ensure a screening on Thurs. Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>!** As Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, we still need another 18 pre-registrations! If you live within 90

minutes of West Palm Beach, you need to get you and a few friends here to see this show! Our own Bob Shields bought the DVD, (he's hours away!!) and gives it Two Thumbs Up!! Remember, this is a great opportunity to open the eyes of friends and acquaintances who are not convinced that we are in our right minds riding them thar "death cycles". This will make a great night out, on a "school day" no less!!

Of course, the New Year starts out with some real good reasons to get out and ride!! The Central Lunch Ride on Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> is to [Solomon's Castle](#) in Ona! The next week, the South Lunch ride returns to [Dock 633](#) in Lake Placid! As always, we have full details at [www.flahsta.org](http://www.flahsta.org). And for those in the West Palm area, Cycle Gear has their monthly Bike Night on Thurs. Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup>, roughly from 7-10 PM. These are laid back affairs, usually with pizza and drawings for gear or gift cards!! A great way to enjoy a free meal and support a local dealer!

Looking ahead, we have a HUGE local event coming up in February!! We have provided a link to this event, which we have signed on to be a sponsor and vendor as well!! This event is growing each week, and now will be a two-day event, with the Sunday festivities taking place at [Palm Beach International Raceway](#)!!!! Yes, there will be opportunities to participate in parade laps on the road course!! So, plan on checking out the show in downtown West Palm on Sat. from 2-9PM, and then spend some time out at PBIR for lots of action at and on the track!! As we will have a vendor tent and promo materials for the MSTA Florida chapter, we are in need of volunteers to spend 30 or more minutes meeting and greeting the crowd and sharing the joys of membership! Contact Van at my usual options.

## Membership News

As we receive updates about our current state membership after we "go to press", we don't always welcome our new members as soon as they sign up! We don't have any new sign-ups for this issue, but stay tuned!!

As a heads up to all, be sure to forward any new email addresses or changes to Choon Gan at [membership@ridemsta.com](mailto:membership@ridemsta.com). He then forwards the info to the various State Directors, VPs, and EC, as well as our newsletter editor. We have had an uptick in bounced emails lately, and most likely it's a simple fix to get back in the loop. Choon is also looking for your final updates for the Blue Book. Send in your fixes by January 1<sup>st</sup>!

If you know any the following, let them know that their membership has recently expired or will expire on January 31<sup>st</sup>:

- Jim Cavanagh
- Robert Ellis
- Richard Franklin
- Fanny Haine
- Mark Harris
- Whit Hyde
- Roger Magill
- Steve Marcum
- Dave Marley
- Alex Mattice
- James McClure
- Rick Nader
- Chuck Privateer
- David Sumner
- Van VanSteelant
- Doug and Becky Westly

AND, we are still looking for a volunteer to fill the Central Co-Director position! Bob Shields steps down as of Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. We do have several ride destinations already in place for the Central area, but those can change if the new blood so chooses!! Don't hesitate to contact Van or Bob, and we can fill you in on how to make a difference in our Club!!

## Random Ramblings!

Did you read about the *AMA 2013 Motorcyclist of the Year* in the January issue of the Magazine?!? (you are a member, right?) There is an excellent profile of Larry Little, who, among many positions in the motorcycle industry, founded the [AMIE](#) event that took place in Orlando in October!!!! Yes, the event I/we ranted and raved about!! It's great to see one of the really good guys get the attention he deserves! You'll be stunned by how many times we all have witnessed his effect on the sport we love.

As promised, here are few take-aways from my weekend in Cedar Key that Kevin Healey organized. For those who are new to us, or simply don't know Kevin and Debbie's recent story, a quick summary. A year ago, while leading a group ride to Cedar Key, they were t-boned/broadsided by a flaming a-hole, who passed a group of 16 bikes making a left turn despite the no-passing zone. Due to some extraordinary circumstances, they both survived the high speed impact. BUT, they did suffer extreme injury to their left legs, as well as severe injuries over the rest of their bodies. Debbie's leg was saved through multiple surgeries. Kevin lost his lower leg at the scene. After weeks of intensive care and months in the hospital, they both left as excellent examples of how amazing our medical care has become. But, that was just the beginning of their recovery. Kevin ended up losing more of his leg, which complicated his rehab, as now he had to compensate for losing his knee. Debbie also had a long road back to full use of her leg. Fast forward to the first weekend in December, and we find them leading the ride back to Cedar Key! Mind you, their ride this year had four wheels, but that made it easier for them to bring along their dog!! As you can imagine, it was a weekend of closure and renewal, not only for them, but also for 50 of their friends and family!! Kevin and Debbie have left the "what ifs" and regrets behind, and have seen how the present and future is in front of them. The attitude of gratitude is now their mission statement. We learned at the celebration dinner just how thin some threads can be that result in the difference of life and death. Those who attend this year's event were moved by little things all weekend long. Not the least of which was having Debbie front and center everywhere!!

For some awesome photos of the event, check out Jim Park's Flickr site...

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ridemyst/sets/72157638591839814/>

Ride well. Ride often. Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

## Central Director's Report

Well, this is no longer a director's report as I have officially taken that helmet off. I enjoyed the 14 months that I was able to work with Van, Don and the rest of the Florida crew. Although I have to back off of my responsibilities due to a family illness, I will still remain active and will contribute as much as I can to the Florida Membership.



Bob Shields

If you would like to get more involved in the MSTa, this is a great opportunity. I have already scheduled and posted the Central Florida rides thru the end of the lunch riding season (June). I can also assist anyone willing to take over to assure a smooth transition. If interested, please talk with Van or myself about the opportunity.



## December Ride Report to the Perfect Spot

Dang, I missed this one! Unfortunately I had a funeral to attend. I tried to convince my wife that our dear friend would have wanted me to enjoy the day on a ride, but that didn't wash.

From the photos, it looks like there was a very good showing and the [Perfect Spot](#) lived up to their name. Some people think we are pretty crazy riding a bike all over the state and country, but I think the skydivers that drop in at the Perfect Spot have a leg up on us in the crazy category.



Photos by Alan Singer

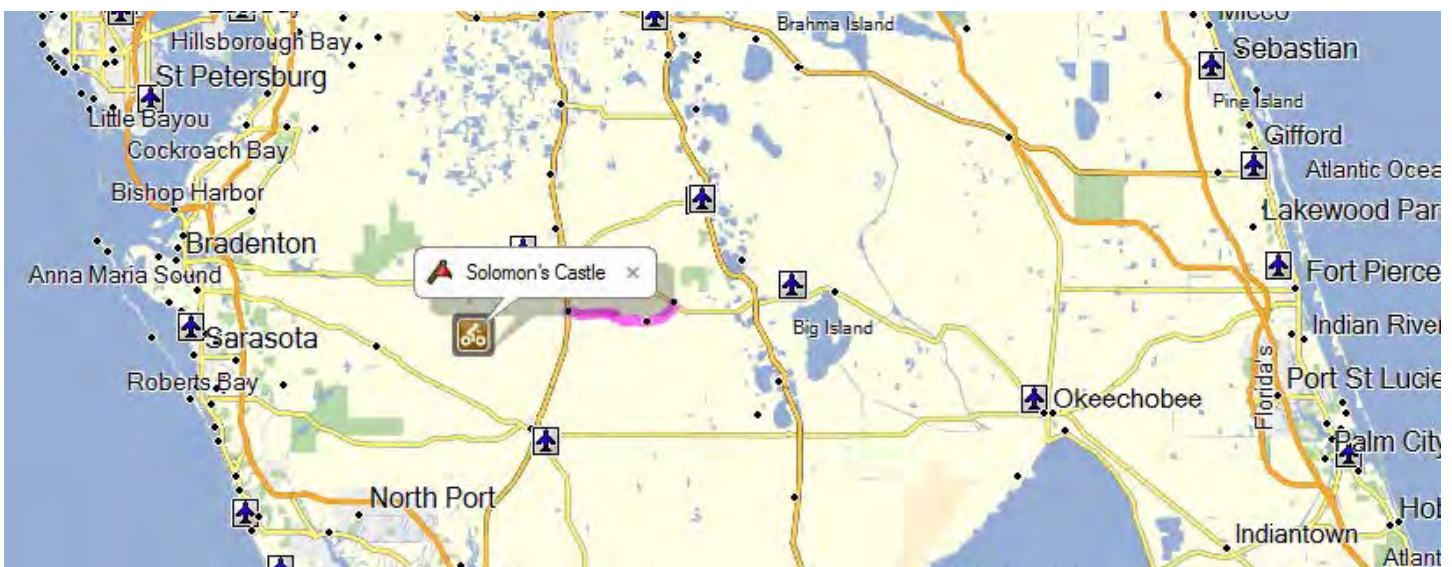
## Next Central Ride – January 18<sup>th</sup>

Our next ride is to Solomon's Castle in the thriving metropolis of Ona, Florida, [solomonscastle.org](http://solomonscastle.org). This is the home and art gallery for artist Howard Solomon.

We will dine in the Boat on the Moat at 12 noon.

This ride is doable for both the South and Central riders. Depending on your direction of travel, there are a few gems that you should bless with some rubber. One would be Crewsville Rd to Hwy 17 with its fast sweepers and nice scenery. You are often the only one of the road.

Hope to see you then!



Ride Smart, Ride Safe, Ride Home,

Bob Shields

MSTA Florida State Co-Director



## Northeast Director's Report

The Florida North Ride in January is still in limbo. Phil is still hoping to arrange someplace for a lunch ride late in the month. Contact Phil for an update or to make a suggestion for future rides.

Questions? Send an email to [rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net](mailto:rfoxrdr@bellsouth.net).

Phil Ridgdill  
MSTA Florida State Co-Director



Phil Ridgdill

## 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, **January 18<sup>th</sup>**, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm  
Where: [Solomon's Castle](#) – 4533 Solomon Rd, Ona, FL 33865 ☎863-494-6077 ([map](#))  
Description: This is another spot that is on the southern end of our Central Florida area, so we hope to see some of our South Florida riders attending. We will eat in an old ship wreck and some of us may choose to tour the art in the castle. This place is tucked away in the middle of nowhere... nothing but open roads. A popular motorcycle location.  
Contact: Bob Shields - [boju29@msn.com](mailto:boju29@msn.com) or ☎863-513-3626

### **MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride**

When: Sat, **January 25<sup>th</sup>**, 12 pm – 1:00 pm  
Where: [Dock 633](#) – 633 Lake June Rd., Lake Placid, FL ☎863-699-6330 ([map](#))  
Description: Back to a new favorite! Great roads surround this destination, and we were able to commandeer the whole back porch during our last visit!!  
Contact: Van - [busavan@flahsta.org](mailto:busavan@flahsta.org) or ☎561-386-2594

## Future Florida Events

Note that the February 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, **February 8<sup>th</sup>**, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm  
Where: [Chop Shop](#) – 126 S. Kentucky Ave, Lakeland, FL 33801 ☎863- 603-4040 ([map](#))  
Description: This is a neat burger joint with a hot rod theme in beautiful downtown Lakeland. Nice locally owned spot. Come into downtown from 33 from the north or 98 from the south to slip into downtown with little traffic. Take the time for a loop around scenic Lake Morton and Lake Hollingsworth just south of downtown.  
Contact: Bob Shields - [boju29@msn.com](mailto:boju29@msn.com) or ☎863-513-3626

## MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat, **February 22<sup>nd</sup>**, 12 pm – 1:00 pm

Where: [Beef 'o' Brady's](#) – 892 W. Sugarland Hwy., Clewiston, FL 33440 ☎863- 983-5002 ([map](#))

Description: We've received a few thumbs-up about this place, and it's located just about right to take in a trip all around Lake Okeechobee! We'll be looking for all of our South FL members to make this ride, right in their back yard!!

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



## Iron & Clematis Vintage Motorcycle Festival

The Downtown Development Authority and Vintage Iron Club have joined forces to bring one of the largest growing cultural movements to Palm Beach County. The vintage motorcycle revival has taken the nation by storm over the last few years and Clematis Street will be hosting what will become one of the largest annual vintage bike festivals in Florida. This Inaugural Iron & Clematis Vintage Motorcycle Festival will be hosted on the 500 block of Clematis St. in West Palm Beach. We will be closing down the entire city block for the event February 8<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 9 PM.

### Update

The Iron & Clematis Vintage Motorcycle Festival has become a two day event! The show is still the same on Saturday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, except it is starting an hour earlier at 2 PM to 9 PM. The added feature for the two-day event is **Iron-On-The-Track!** This will take place at Palm Beach International Speedway on Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>! We have rented the road course for the day's event from 10 AM to 5 PM. We are selling tickets to ride the road course

with your vintage iron/modern classic bikes. Tickets will be available Feb 8<sup>th</sup> at the PBIR tent at a discounted advance purchase price and at: [www.racepbir.com](http://www.racepbir.com)

The PBIR event is hosting drag races, stunt motorcycle shows, high-speed motorcycle, practice laps, vendor tents, and an Ace Café Pavilion! All Iron-On-The-Track tickets to ride the road course are a separate cost. If you have never ridden a road course even in a parade lap fashion, DO IT! It is pretty exciting! We do it every year at the Barber Speedway Vintage Festival and it is so much fun! The laps are not race laps. Let's face it; most of us are not skilled enough to run a course like this in a race-type fashion. But I assure you its plenty fast enough to have great time and get perspective when pros hit the course!

## Member Profile

Just as we see in other MSTA Newsletters, such as STARReview and the recent CO/WY Quarterly Newsletter, we would also 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 12](#).

### 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.

Our first Member Profile was submitted by Rich Peabody, [rpeabody@verizon.net](mailto:rpeabody@verizon.net). Thanks, Rich!

**Hometown/State?** Ohio until 1984... then a move to New Jersey until September 2013

**What was your first motorcycle?** Honda 50

**Current motorcycles?** 2001 Honda ST 1100

**What is your all-time favorite motorcycle?** My ST

**How long have you been riding?** 50 years, with a couple breaks

**When did you join the MSTA?** 2012 (?)

**How did you hear about the MSTA?** ST owner's forum

**Who or what was your biggest influence in motorcycling?** Competition

**What are your favorite places to ride?** Northeast US, Colorado, NC...everywhere!

**Describe a memorable motorcycle adventure?** Rode a 1971 H-I 6600 miles in 59 days

**What is the best motorcycle advice or tip learned over the years?** Wear a helmet

**What turns you on about motorcycles or riding?** The feeling of being part of my surroundings

**What do you get out of your MSTA membership?** Meeting good people

**What are your hobbies and interests outside of motorcycling?** Control Line model airplanes, trap and skeet, eating, cooking, boating watching racing





For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see Florida MSTA web site Events page.

MSTA website information on upcoming events: [click here](#).

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National MSTA [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com)

Florida MSTA [www.flahsta.org](http://www.flahsta.org)

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**ALL GRAPHICS WERE PROVIDED BY THE CREDITED AUTHOR, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.**

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## Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

This month's [Mystery Hyperlink](#) is in keeping with our safety article.

Also check out [this additional page](#) about the same subject!

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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