



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of
the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 7 Issue 6

Events in June

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Feature Article

Learning to Ride in the 60's

by Jim Park

The Sixties were a time of change for our country. We had Viet Nam, the Civil Rights movement and the Beatles. Honda created a very successful ad campaign during that period where you could meet the nicest people if you purchased one of their motorcycles.

Motorcyclists were coming on the scene. Elvis, Ann Margret, Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper all made popular movies featuring Hondas or chopped Harleys. It was becoming cool to ride.

My memories go back to a short lived NBC series, [Then Came Bronson](#), about a guy who dropped out of society and rode his Harley around the country. Not really a new concept as several years earlier the show [Route 66](#) was based on a similar idea but the mode of transportation was a Corvette.

But what really stuck in my mind was the star, [Michael Parks](#), riding along the [Pacific Coast Highway](#) at the beginning of each episode. I was going to do that some day!

Convincing my parents to allow me to purchase a bike was tough going but ultimately a success. Learning to ride properly however, was perhaps my unachieved challenge.

Back in those days there were no rider training courses and very little safety gear available to riders. Motorcycle brakes often took a city block to stop the darn thing and tires... well let's just say that there was very little lean angle capability prior to



Michael Parks as Jim Bronson (1969)

Editor's Monthly Note:

Again I ask everyone to submit articles, stories, sale items and other information of interest to *The FL MSTA Gator Tale*. We rely on you to make this newsletter interesting and informative.

To be added to or removed from the newsletter mailing list, please contact [Choon Gan](#) at MSTA National.

We wish you all safe and fun rides!

Don Moe, Editor

losing traction. However, I later learned that this lack of traction was to be used in case of an emergency so you could lay the bike down to avoid a crash.

My first lesson came from my Boy Scout leader, Tim Irwin. Tim owned a [Honda 175 Scrambler](#) and he rode it everywhere. I started my training in his driveway going over the features on the bike, sort of a *Reader's Digest* version of today's [Motorcycle Safety Foundation](#) course, minus 8 to 10 of their training exercises.



Honda CB175

I was shown how to use the clutch while operating the throttle and shift lever and the front and rear brake locations. The braking lesson came with a stern warning about never using the front brake as you would nearly be guaranteed to crash! You were to wear gloves only when it was cold as gloves might get caught in the cables, again resulting in a crash. Leather gear was acceptable as it was primarily a fashion statement. Of course the only leather I wore was my Penny Loafers (pennies inserted in the slots) as I spent all of my money on my bike. A leather jacket was out the question.

After my 15-minute training session was complete, I was ready for the highway. Tim thought it best that we stick to the back roads. This was seemingly a good idea; however, Indiana back roads in the 60's were primarily gravel... deep gravel.

So I developed my riding skills under pretty difficult conditions even for today's more experienced riders. I must say that the front brake advice did prove to be helpful for those gravel roads.

Having finely honed my riding skills over an afternoon I was ready for the real world. My "real world" was cruising [Frisch's Big Boy](#) on a Saturday night.

There was no doubt in my mind. I was cool.

That was about the time that reality came to visit my real world.

It was a Saturday morning and not unlike my present lifestyle, I was planning on riding for the entire day. But I first had to give a promised ride to my sister which I wanted to get over with as quickly as possible.

We lived in the country in Southern Indiana. Our property was completely surrounded by fences as the adjacent properties were grazing land for milk cows. My dad realized that all he needed to do was to stretch a section of barbed wire fence across our driveway and he could have our horse mow our lawn free of charge! He put the fence up early that morning on his way to work and let the horse in the yard.

Now our driveway was gravel and several hundred feet long. The newly installed fence was out near the highway. I bet you can see where I'm going with this!

I was doing about 30 MPH with Sis in tow when I heard my front fender make contact with the fence. That was definitely an "oh shoot" (I choose not to use a more descriptive word) moment! Of course, as advised, I wasn't wearing gloves so I still have the scars on my fingers for a memory. While my sister didn't get a scratch, she was a bit rattled. Funny thing when you're a teenager, I wasn't concerned about getting hurt. I was upset because I scratched my fender and cut the rubber housing over my shock!

I rode a two cycle [350 Bridgestone](#). They were sold out of the Sears catalog; I kid you not. My Bridgestone was an oil injection model which eliminated the need to pre-mix your gas and oil. A minor flaw of the design was that occasionally the oil ports would clog causing the engine to receive straight unmixed gasoline resulting in a fried piston or two.

I had trouble with the bike running properly all weekend so I left it at a buddy's house overnight. My sister, who lost her interest riding as a passenger, came and picked me up in her car. The next day with an extra 2-cycle oil bottle in hand, I picked up my bike to ride home. I chose a back street route knowing that if I broke down my friends would not see me pushing the bike. My theory was if I had blue smoke coming from the exhaust that the oil injectors were working. All the way home I closely watched my exhaust pipes instead of the road in front of me. Again, I bet you have an idea what happens next!



On my Bridgestone 350 GTR

I took the river road. There was very little traffic on that road but it was bumpy from all of the railroad track crossings.

I was becoming confident that my engine was receiving an adequate mixture of oil and I began to pick up the pace. While my attention was on the happenings at the rear of the motorcycle, the railroad track running diagonal across the pavement in front of me was a piece of knowledge that would have proved to be beneficial in the moments to come.

Initially my front tire wedged between the rail and the pavement. The result was my right hand grip was ripped away from me while the left hand grip ended up hitting me in the stomach knocking the wind out of me. The rear of my bike followed the direction of the front and came to rest in the same pavement trap next to the rail. It's interesting how physics works on a mass in motion; the motion being an unexpected 45 degree turn at 45 MPH. [Ed: [See this relevant article.](#)]

I was a bit like the coyote in a road runner cartoon. Here I was still in my riding position, in mid-air with my motorcycle several yards behind me.

As I said, riding gear was out of the question in those days. A short sleeve madras shirt (with belt to match) and a pair of Wrangler jeans offered little protection. I was a giant road rash case.

This resulted in a trip to the emergency room where they used a little brush to scrub out the gravel.

Unfazed by my little episode and to my mother's dismay, I climbed back on my trusty steed the following weekend.

I'm certain that we have all looked back and wondered how we survived our youth. But then again, we survived not having child restraint seats or even seat belts. We survived the lead paint on our baby cribs, the atom bomb and red M&M's.

Those were good times!

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.

Mentoring Others

Hi to All Florida MSTA'ers!

As I write this, I'm at [Road America Raceway](#) in Elkhart Lake, WI. I've spent the last couple of days here, working at an event and watching the riders doing their track days. I've also been observing a [Motorcycle Safety Foundation](#) (MSF) Basic Rider Course being conducted, on a different part of the facility. What's interesting has been to watch the difference between those struggling to master basic motorcycle techniques and the riders on the track; those who are comfortable with 170+ mph on the Road America front straight. As experienced motorcyclists we often take our skills for granted. Regardless of whether we are on the track, street or in the dirt, we've spent a lot of years building those skills and the experience that (hopefully) keeps us safe while we enjoy our sport. However, there was once a time for all of us when we too were struggling with basic motorcycle skills. We also sometimes see others who, despite successfully completing their Basic Rider Course, and sometimes even advanced riding courses, still struggle with basic skills.

Part of being a good motorcyclist is helping others. We all need to be ambassadors of our sport, as well as remaining concerned for our safety and the safety of others. In MSF advanced riding classes we talk about mentoring others; that is to pass along our knowledge and experience to other riders, to help keep everyone safe as well as for enjoyment of the sport. The challenge is to mentor in such a way that it is a positive approach. Motorcyclists can be fiercely independent individuals (that's one reason we enjoy the sport...), so trying to suggest new techniques to a rider, to help them stay safe and enhance their riding, can be a daunting task. Nevertheless, it is up to all of us to keep one another safe.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to pass along your knowledge, skills and experience to others. Be a mentor for our sport. When you see a rider struggling with basic skills, or even with just little issues, step in and with a friendly, positive approach, offer up some sage advice. It is up to all of us to keep ourselves and our motorcycling companions safe out there!

Ride Safe!

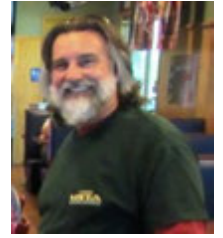
Doug Westly – Safety Editor

Florida News

South Director's Report

May can be a fickle weather partner!!

It seems that the lunch ride to Solomon's Castle was a wash out for everybody, but, the ride to Capt. Hiram's Inn was nearly perfect! We had 17 riders make their way to one of our favorite places! Once again, we were treated well, the view was as nice as we remembered, and the weather for the ride up and back was just right! We had brand new members as well as the usual salty dogs!!



Van VanSteelant

And our 50/50 netted us \$30 more dollars, well more than covering first-time winner Jenks' lunch cost!! That puts our tally at \$332.00. We have a deduction for ~\$57.00 coming soon to renew our current website for another year. Be looking for our NEW website to be up and running by the end of June. We'll set up a link from our old/current site to our new site, so for the next year, everybody can get from one to the other.

What's Next??

We have two events on the schedule for June. Both are set up so that those returning from STAR can make the rides and share your stories about the event!! On June 21st, be in beautiful downtown Webster to lunch at the Hayseed Cafe!

The following week, June 28th, make your way to downtown Lake Placid to join us for BRUNCH at Main Street America! Yes, summer BRUNCH rides are back!! As always, further details are at www.flahsta.org. New events have been added recently, so take a look and mark your calendars!!

STAR 2014

By now, many of you have hit the road to South Dakota!! Sadly, recent replacement purchases for vital household items have gutted my opportunity to join you all in Rapid City. Something had to give, and this year's ride was the victim. I look forward to hearing from you about your adventures!! I was last in that area in the summer of 1980 on a cross-country bike trip, and I was looking forward to revisiting some favorite haunts!! Maybe my pain will be abated by winning that raffle bike....



Mount Rushmore

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 can welcome the following new members:

- Robert Chaikin, Aventura
- Robert Fischer, Tampa
- Carlton Tedrick, The Villages
- Scott Courtney, Lakeland
- Pete Kauk, Englewood

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

- Roy Clark
- Glenn Monroe
- Paul & Julie Rohan
- Ron Stechert
- Bill McDaniel
- Kelly Tichner

As a heads up to all, be sure to forward any new email addresses or changes to Choon Gan at 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.

Random Ramblings!

You've seen the latest T-Shirt email, and the confirmations and checks have started coming in!! The call will be made shortly to the vendor, and shirts should be here soon. I'll send another email out when I have a confirmed date. Thanks to all who have placed your orders!! We are looking at over 30 shirts to be on display at our upcoming events!

AIMExpo we will have a MSTA booth at the event!! We still need several more volunteers to help out and make the event all that much better!! We have made arrangements for a block of rooms near the Convention Center! Be looking for an email update so you can book your room and make arrangements THIS MONTH. Here's why not only is the Expo in town, and bigger than last year, but the AMA will run their annual membership convention and Hall of Fame Induction ceremonies during the event!! And, there's the annual fun and games in Orlando for Halloween! ALL of the parks make a BIG deal out of Halloween, and we've heard that the room rate we negotiated is doubled in October!!

Ride well! Ride often! Do it safely!!

ATGATT Van
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report

We are still in need of a member to take of the position of Central Director. Please contact Van if you are possibly interested.

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, **June 21st**, 11:30 pm – 12:30 pm
Where: [Hayseed Café](#) – 599 N. Market Blvd., Webster, FL 33597 ☎ 352-568-8008 ([map](#))
Description: Bring your appetite. This is one of the best buffet lunch spots in the south with fried chicken just like mama made. Last lunch run before the heat of the summer sets in and we move to breakfast/brunch spots.

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat, **June 28th**, 9:30 am – 10:30 am
Where: **Main Street America** - 15 S. Main St., Lake Placid, FL 33852 ☎863-465-7733 ([map](#))
Description: BRUNCH rides are back!! It must be getting hot out there!! This is a no-brainer destination!! Great local roads, great breakfast options, and within two hours of most of our members!! Get up early and join us!
Contact: Van - busavan@flahsta.org or ☎561-386-2594

Future Florida Events

Note that the July 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, **July 12th**, 9:30 am – 10:30 am
Where: [Pappy's Grill](#) – 2073 Highway 92 West, Winter Haven, FL 33881 ☎863-268-8240 ([map](#))
Description: Pappy's is a great breakfast spot in the Auburndale/Winter Haven area. It is located at the Winter Haven Airport and its right near some fantastic roads located around the Fantasy of Flight. Check out Old Lake Alfred Road and Cass Street. Also: Huge pancakes!

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Sat, **July 19th**, 9:30 am – 10:30 am
Where: [Marsh Landing](#) - 44 N. Broadway, Fellsmere, FL 32948 ☎772- 571-8622 ([map](#))
Description: We are going back, because we like it here!! Great food, 80+ year-old building, surrounded by some of Florida's oldest farms and ranches. And if you are interested, you can skydive just down the road at the Sebastian Airport!
Contact: Van - busavan@flahsta.org or ☎561-386-2594

Future Regional Events

During the Summer riding season, you may wish to attend popular regional MSTa events being held in areas with fantastic riding on nice, twisting roads through some beautiful scenery, including the Blue Ridge Parkway.

MSTA Big Lynn Lodge

When: **Friday, July 25th – Sunday, 27th, 2014**
Where: [Big Lynn Lodge](#) – Box 459 Hwy 226-A, Little Switzerland, North Carolina 28749
Description: The Big Lynn Lodge is located in/near Little Switzerland, NC and is literally hanging on the side of the mountain right on NC-226A. You will be AMAZED at the view and you will be ASTONISHED by the roads! The Big Lynn Lodge has a unique “formula” in that their nightly room rate INCLUDES an excellent home styled cooked meal and a full Breakfast for each person! Special motel rates and additional information are available at msta-se.com/BLynn.
Contact: “Brick” Dave Brickner – brick@ncwireless.net or ☎828-448-5429

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 Florida MSTA web site Events page.

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

National MSTA www.ridemsta.com

Florida MSTA www.flahsta.org

More Contact Information

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

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

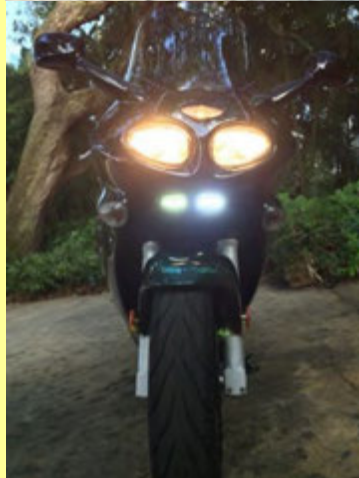
This month's [Mystery Hyperlink](#) is in keeping with our safety article.

CLASSIFIED ADS

For Sale:

2004 Triumph Sprint ST

Like new 2004 Triumph Sprint ST 955cc, 3-cylinder 120-hp sport-touring motorcycle for sale; unique and highly desirable factory Aston Green color with matching Triumph hard (locking) top and side bags (all removable). 6-speed, fuel injected, liquid cooled, twin spar aluminum frame and single sided swing arm, 43-mm forks (adjustable for spring preload and rebound damping), 4-piston caliper front brakes, 456 lbs. dry weight. Excellent (near showroom) condition, 12,000 miles, new Pirelli tires and new battery, all dealer maintenance records. Economical @ approximately 40 miles per gallon. Add-on options include custom Sargent custom rider/passenger saddle highlighted with matching green piping, LED safety lights front and rear (rear lights flash when braking); ThrottleMeister cruise control system, extended deflecting windshield system, hard wired for radar detector and MP3 music player and plug-in adapter for battery charger. Bike is now equipped with A&R CB radio which I will remove (or sell for extra \$500). Cycle has been adult-owned and meticulously maintained in covered garage. Never dropped. No dings or dents. Beautiful paint in very good condition. Excellent and versatile sport tourer with perfectly functioning digital clock, blinkers, flashers. Great looks, great performance and great value @ **\$4,500**. Also included are extra stock Triumph saddle and windshield.



Contact: Rick Sapir ☎561-346-4526

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