



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

August 2024 - Volume 17 Issue 8

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Feature Article

Getting in the Zone at the MSTA Big Lynn Lodge Rally

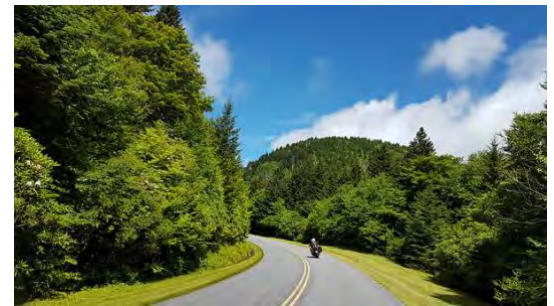
By Tom Blake

[Editor's Request: If you have ridden somewhere interesting at any time and would like to share your experiences and some photos from your journey with other riders, please contact editor@flmsta.org to publish an article. Thanks!]

Editor's note: Photos provided by Doug Pippin (NC), Rick Smith (OH), Tom Blake (FL) and the MSTA Photo Archive]

MSTA Big Lynn Lodge Rally July 11-14, 2024 Little Switzerland, NC

Every time I travel up from Florida, the moment mountains come into view on the



horizon, a feeling of excitement and anticipation washes over me. Maybe it's the good times I experienced as a kid growing up in the mountains of central Pennsylvania so many years ago that are at its root. Whatever, I like it. It makes me smile. And I cannot wait to get in amongst them again.

As a sport-touring motorcyclist I know there will be a lot of exhilaration and excitement ahead - blasting around the Blue Ridge and Southern Appalachian Mountains of the Carolinas, Tennessee and Virginia. Great roads in every direction. So many opportunities to test and sharpen one's riding skills.

As Norm Kern, the club president, so succinctly points out "...sport-touring riders view motorcycling as a skill-based sport. That doesn't mean they are particularly interested in racing or competition, but rather look forward to a challenge and enjoy practicing and developing their riding skill. It's not about simply riding a fun, challenging road, it's riding at a brisk pace, getting in the "zone" of total concentration on a capable motorcycle." I could not agree more.



Longtime member, local resident, one-time Michigan dirt bike racing champion and an all-around great guy, Doug Pippin, knows those roads like the back of his hand and has developed 24 road routes for the rally fanning out in every direction. Most are considered "twisty" and a couple "twisty and technical". They range from 32 miles to a local landmark and up to a 315-mile, 3-state loop. That equates to ride times from a little under an hour to a little over eight hours at a 38-mph average (you think that's slow... you don't know twisty!). Most are in the 160-to-270-mile range or roughly four and half to seven hours. You can access all the routes at the event website

ridemsta.com/nc-biglynn/. Preview or print out the maps, read the descriptions and download the GPX files for your GPS.

I had the pleasure of riding with my long-time friend, Ken Worland, now from North Carolina, Rick Smith from Ohio but whom I met at a FL MSTA lunch ride to Solomon's Castle back in March, and, finally, on one of the days - the aforementioned Doug Pippin. Ken still shags his Wing through the twists pretty good. Rick is a demon on his Wee-Strom. And I'm pretty sure Doug took it easy on his 900 Tracer because my RT was mostly able to stay with him.



BLL Office ☺ MSTA

The Lodge has been in existence for over 100 years. Today there are 38 rooms and 4 suites – some in motel-like structures, some in single or grouped cottages with mountain views, some with 1 bed and some with 2. All include porches with rocking chairs and adjacent parking. Accommodations are clean and comfortable though not fancy. Owner, Hoyt Johnson, is constantly updating and making improvements.



BLL Dining Room ☺ Pippin

Rose doesn't ride anymore. But she does enjoy getting away from Florida's summertime heat and humidity. And she likes the cool, fresh air, the serenity and the views looking out from the Lodge...(and me, of course).

Early registration with Big Lynn is recommended because they fill up quickly. Barring that, Skyline Inn, Alpine Inn and Switzerland Inn are the overflow facilities. Breakfasts and dinners can be purchased in advance at Big Lynn for those staying elsewhere but wanting to get in on the socializing. Details are on the event website. If you book and later are forced to cancel, please try to do it as early as possible, so folks on the waiting list can be contacted or the room opened to the general public. Also, be sure to understand the cancellation policy when making your reservation.

The *Big Lynn Lodge* is located along route 226A and is within a stone's throw of the Blue Ridge Parkway. It's near Little Switzerland (1 mile west), Spruce Pine (7 miles north) and about halfway between Asheville and Boone. Being up at 3,100 feet, temperatures are cooler. Looking southeasterly, you get a 40-mile view of the Catawba River Valley and the town lights of Marion, 16 miles away. And then there are the many mountain ranges spread out as far and as wide as the eye can see. Truly a spectacular sight!

The Lodge has been in



Cottage Porches at BLL ☺ Blake

What doesn't change, however, are the delicious breakfasts and dinners with desserts (*vittles*, they're called in *them thar parts*). The two meals are included in the room rate, and we all eat together. They even ring a bell when the food is ready. Attentive and friendly servers appreciate tips. We're on our own for lunches.

For times when you want to socialize or just relax but not outdoors or in your room, there's a large, carpeted sitting room adjacent the dining area with comfortable chairs and sofas, a table for cards or jigsaw puzzles and one wall covered with shelves full of books and magazines. There's even a piano. And, yes, it has the same grand views.



Valley View from Big Lynn Lodge ☺ MSTA

Chris Parker, also our STARreview editor, is in his second year as event coordinator. He sees to the countless behind-the-scenes details that make this the exceptional rally it is. His contact information as well as event registration, routes, etc. are on the event website. Note that club membership is not a requirement so you can even invite non-MSTA friends.

Local massage therapist Anne Marie LaFrance is usually present to give free massages to participants. She will accept tips. I've had occasion to receive her massages before. Believe me, she's good. She has more training and certifications than anyone I've ever come across. Unfortunately, a personal injury forced her to cancel this year. I'll look forward to seeing her next time. Friday evening a local band, *Almost Vintage*, sets up out on the porch and gets the crowd jamming with classic rock tunes mixed with a folk vibe.



Tunnel under the Blue Ridge Parkway



So...if this appeals to you, consider adding the Big Lynn Lodge to your rally calendar for next July. I don't know of anyone who has ever been disappointed. It's worth pointing out as well that weather forecasts for the area from three to ten days out this year were dismal and fret-worthy. But it turned out to be mostly sunny and beautiful each day. I'm glad I hung in there.

Now, let's go ride!

—Tom

Safety Talk

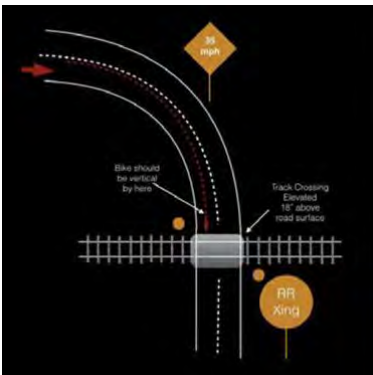
IMPORTANT NOTICES: *Ultimately, the safety of motorcycle riders and their passengers is their own responsibility. Nothing presented in the column supersedes, negates or relieves a motorcyclist and/or passenger from assumption of personal responsibility for their actions and safety. [Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the September 2015 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]*

Unique Road Situations By Doug Westley



Most of the time, we ride under conditions where we are focused on one particular type of road situation. Maybe it's raining and we're concerned about reduced traction. It could be the decreasing radius of an impending corner. It could be something as simple as the potential for wildlife in the roadway.

Then there are more unique circumstances, although not rare, where a combination of road conditions offers an even more challenging ride environment. Take for instance the following scene shown in the photo:



When approaching this railroad crossing from the far side of the photo, as you round the corner, you are faced with a set of motorcycle dynamics that need to be carefully considered. Without the railroad crossing, even though the speed advisory sign says 35 mph, you could safely navigate this corner (given your individual riding abilities, type of bike, current environmental conditions, traction conditions, etc.) at easily twice that speed. HOWEVER, in this case the railroad crossing is elevated approximately 18 inches above the road surface, and the crossing rises quickly due to the pavement buildup on either side of the tracks.

What you (hopefully) quickly realize is that if you cross this track with any real speed (above approximately 20 mph) the crossing will act like a ramp and literally launch the bike into the air. You also realize that if you are still leaned over when you cross the tracks, as you would if you were at a higher speed, the bike would be sideways in the air as well.

This means you need to negotiate the curve with a speed and path of travel that will allow you to right the bike before the crossing, and be able to negotiate the crossing without becoming airborne (unless of course, that is your intent).

This is a real-life situation on one of my favorite backroads. I will add another thought here, one also in the area of motorcycle dynamics. What you ride when you cross tracks and rises will also dictate your speed. On my BMW R1200GS, I can cross this particular set of tracks, after rounding the curve, at about 25 mph. At that speed, the suspension capabilities of the GS absorb most of the incline impact, and although I "get a little air," it is a very controllable, minimal amount, just a couple of inches.

However, last weekend I rounded this corner for the first time on my Ducati Hypermotard SP, with its very stiff, track-set suspension. Having a moment of less than perfect motorcycle dynamics mental processing, I hit the tracks at the same speed I always set over this obstacle on my GS, the aforementioned 25 mph. The SP suspension encountered the incline and immediately took on the characteristics of a pogo stick. My wife was on her S1000RR some distance behind me, and said on the far side of the tracks, the SP was at least 2 feet in the air! My own recollection was one of airline flight attendant briefings...something about keeping seat belts fastened, etc. Fortunately, I was able to control the jump and keep both wheels down and inline for the landing.

This is a case of a lesson learned the hard way. I knew the corner, knew the crossing and understood the path of travel and speed requirements, or at least speed as far as my GS is concerned. What I forgot to do was factor the difference in weight (almost 200 lbs), handling and suspension setup between the GS and my Hyper SP. It only goes to show that even seasoned riders can have moments of sub-optimal riding analysis; moments that have the potential to end badly.

We encounter unique riding situations every day. Sometimes we don't even recognize it when different road conditions all of a sudden combine to offer us a serious riding challenge. Here is one more reason that when we ride, we need to stay focused on the task, keep scanning ahead, and continuously analyze our path of travel.

Ride safe! – Doug Westly

Florida News



South Director's Report

Heat and humidity vs. the rest of the world...

Well, we're not on fire... roads and houses are not washed out or away... nor dodging tornadoes... Instead, we sweat and stick to our patio furniture!! And dread those red light waits on our rides home from our brunch/breakfast events!! I'll settle for Florida in August and the possibility of a tropical storm.

We had three successful rides again this July. Tom's breakfast rides have appealed to the Eastside early risers, and Doug continues to entice the Westsiders to join him for brunch. Look for their reports below!

And our South ride to Crossroads Restaurant, just north of Okeechobee, brought riders from Melbourne, Sun City Center, N. Miami and just around the corner! I was on four wheels this time, recovering from a right hip rebuild (typically needed after 15 years of active living on the original parts), so the A/C was welcomed (sorry...) And, Tom had the same thoughts, so understand, all brands AND all wheel configurations are welcome at our events!!

10 attendees enjoyed the brisk service, the good food, as well as their reasonable prices! Lots of great tales were shared. Eve sold another MST hat. And Mike took home \$23 from the 50/50 raffle!! Combining the East and West rides, we added \$49 to our June total, now \$693. Oh yeah, Doug sold 8 Apex Hunter stickers, which added another \$16. We enter August with \$709. As always, a BIG THANKS to all who participate!!

As we are just months away from STAR '24, now would be the time to gather info and make plans for your trip. The best place to start is the MST STAR Rally website: <https://ridemsta.com/star/> It includes the schedule of activities, riding opportunities, Lunch Ride details, shirts, raffle tickets and links galore!! The menu header also covers lodging/camping options, a link to the Kerrville website, and links to volunteer and find like-minded riding partners while at STAR. Do yourself a favor and make your plans early!! Meanwhile, we still have several regional events to keep you busy until October!! A SPECIAL NOTE: August is the last month for discounted raffle ticket sales! A snail mail and email prompt have been sent to you, as well as links on the National site will get you the deals on the bike and the tire changer. Understand that the raffles are a great income generator for the Club when the ticket sales exceed the cost of the raffle bike. The tire changer was a donation from Sue and Steve!! And all the other "stuff" that is handed out at the Banquet is the result of a year-round effort by the STAR Committee and the Promotion Director!!

We do have a passing to share with you. Rich Peabody of Venice, FL and during the summers in the Alleghenies of PA, has passed on. He was a regular ride attendant for as long as I can remember. A long involvement in the moto apparel business kept him on the forefront of ATGATT options. He was also a great resource for destinations in out-of-the way locations! RIP. His buddy, Jeff Molnar, will handle the sale of Rich's 2002 Honda ST1100. Look for a separate email with the details.



(l-r) Rich, Jeff and Dan | (r) Rich on his 2002 Honda ST1100

What's Next??

IT'S SUMMER... BREAKFAST RIDES AND BRUNCH RIDES!! Pay closer attention to the calendar and ride announcements this summer!

The **East Central Breakfast Ride** lands at a new-to-us location. On **August 10th**, be at **La Crepe de France** in downtown **Melbourne**! Tom is sweet on this place!! The **South Brunch Ride** lands at **Harry and the Natives**, way east in **Hobe Sound**, on **August 17th**. And be sure to get to **Roosters Cafe in Brooksville**, on **August 24th** for the **West Central Brunch Ride**.

We have inserted an email response "button" to our announcements to assist our coordinators with the reservation headcount. Click on the green "button", then hit the send email arrow. The pre-loaded email will be on its way!! Easy peasey!!

Membership News!!

If you are receiving the *Gator Tale*, but not my announcements, **PLEASE** email me ASAP to correct my files. I believe I'm up to date...

THANKS to Don Moe for his efforts EVERY month to bring our Florida membership up to date with all the news about our new and renewing members!!

Here's what we know today...

FLMSTA added a new member this month: **Robert Parsons of Fernandina Beach**. Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

Dell Haverland Lynn Trieschmann Tom Trieschmann

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Jim Faulkner Thomas Kusen Carl Mobley Bob Summers

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and continue supporting their MSTA. If you have a question about when your membership expires, please contact the membership committee at membership@ridemsta.com. Renewing or joining can be done quickly and securely online at PlanetReg.com/MSTArenew or PlanetReg.com/MSTAjoin respectively. If you use a pre-printed form from STARreview or an ITR, be sure to mail it to the new member of our new membership team, **Scott Snedden, 11484 Waterwood Dr., Tyler, TX 75703**, and not to the address of any prior membership director.

If you only want to update your phone, email, bikes, or other details, you can do so quickly via PlanetReg.com/MSTAupdate. **Please include enough unchanging information to assure the correct member is updated in the database.**

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please pass along one of our brand-new **Invitation-To-Ride Tri-folds**! For each new member you recruit and who provides your name and/or membership number on the application, you will receive a coupon for a **raffle ticket for the motorcycle touring package drawing at our next STAR event**. Any new or current member who joins or renews as a Sustaining Member will likewise receive a coupon for a raffle ticket for each year of the new membership term.



Random Ramblings!!

With 3 rides a month, you have plenty of chances to invite a friend along and introduce them to our group!! We will continue to support our local, small business restaurants. Please send your recommendations to any of the ride coordinators.

Hoping you're living the life you love, and loving the life you live...

When you can...

Join one of our monthly rides!!

And invite a friend to ride along!!

Ride well! Ride often!! Do it safely!!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Director



East-Central Ride – Sunshine Café, Palm Bay, FL – Tom Blake

Sunshine Café in Palm Bay was our July breakfast spot this month. I was surprised and delighted to have five Space Coast BMW Riders Club members show up. Ed Jergensen, their leader, put a really nice invitation on their [FB page](#) and said he plans to continue the practice. In addition to them, five FL MSTa members, including new member, Jim Polito, showed up. Several drove their cars – which was just fine with me. Ride, drive, pedal or walk - I don't care. Just show up and enjoy the camaraderie. We'll get back to some really fun rides when temperatures cool down.



Ride, drive, pedal or walk – Everyone came to the Sunshine Café and enjoyed themselves!

The Café didn't take reservations but, as promised, was able to seat us all together fairly promptly (we were 2nd in line). The food was good, we had a good server, the place was clean and orderly and there was ample parking. A lot of friendly chatter ensued up and down the line. I think we all had a pretty good time. With this many attending, I felt obliged to do a 50/50. Not all participated, but \$25 was collected and \$12 will go to the club.

Next up: Our **August 10th** breakfast will be at **La Crepe de France – Downtown, in Melbourne**. I ate there several months ago and thought their crepes were to die for. It's a small place with not an abundance of indoor seating. They open at 8:00 AM, so that's when we need to be there.

West Central Lunch Ride – Broadway Diner, Bartow, FL – Doug Westly

The west central FLMSTA brunch ride on Aug 27th went over with a bang! Everyone convened at the Broadway Diner in Bartow, one of our favorites for the good food, low prices and super friendly staff. We had a total of 8 riders from Tampa, Sun City and one brave soul even made the morning ride over from Melbourne. The weather cooperated as well. Slightly overcast skies kept the temperature in the bearable riding range, even at departure after the brunch! Almost everyone contributed to the 50/50 pot, with the winner coming away with \$15, which at least paid for gas money. We also sold 8 "Apex Predator" bike stickers, with all proceeds going back to the club. Overall, it was a great brunch ride.

Next month, on Saturday, **August 24th**, we'll be headed to another favorite, **Rooster's Cafe in Brooksville**. Make sure to mark it on your calendars! *Ride Safe, Everyone! Doug*

Florida Rides This Month

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 East Central Breakfast Ride

When: **Saturday, August 10th, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**

Location: **La Crepe de France - Downtown**, 707 E New Haven Ave, **Melbourne**, FL ☎ (321) 837-3760 ([map](#))

Description: New to us. Their crepes are delicious. Be there at 8:00 AM. That's when they open, and they fill up fast! On-street parking.

Contact: Tom, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎ (321) 794-6147

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 17th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Harry and the Natives**, 11910 SE Federal Hwy, **Hobe Sound**, FL ☎ (772) 546-3061 ([map](#))

Description: A very eastside favorite! Baby, it's hot out there... We're staying local!

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, or ☎ (561) 386-2594

MSTA Florida West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 24th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Location: **Roosters Cafe**, 715 W Jefferson St, **Brooksville**, FL ☎ (352) 540-4890 ([map](#))

Description: Another favorite with the West siders!! And the roads around Brooksville are worth the visit!!

Contact: Doug, flwingrdr@msn.com, or ☎ (813) 928-1663

Future Florida Rides

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 any updates.

MSTA Florida East Central Breakfast Ride

When: **Saturday, September 21st, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**

Location: **Hen House Eatery**, 1632 US-1, **Sebastian**, FL ☎ (772) 228-8907 ([map](#))

Description: Recently visited and worth a return trip!!

Contact: Tom, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎ (321) 794-6147

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, September 7th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **OK Corral Gun Club**, 9449 48th Street Northeast, **Okeechobee**, FL ☎ (863) 357-2226 ([map](#))

Description: Time to return to the Corral!! Brunch at the Hitching Post Cafe!!

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, or ☎ (561) 386-2594

MSTA Florida West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, September 28th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Location: **Eggs 27 Breakfast & Lunch**, 19301 US Hwy 27, **Lake Wales**, FL ☎ (863) 949-6941 ([map](#))

Description: Just west of our Holiday Lunch location. Easy-peasy to find and plenty of parking. And the menu looks terrific!!

Contact: Doug, flwingrdr@msn.com, or ☎ (813) 928-1663

MSTA Fall on Two Wheels Just For Fun

When: Friday-Sunday, **October 4-6, 2024**

Location: **Two Wheels of Suches**, 1915 GA-60, **Suches, GA** 📞 Hotel phone: 706-973-1671 ([map](#))

Description: Our 3rd informal gathering (IG)/(Just For Fun (JFF)) event organized by Georgia members of the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association (MSTA)

Contact: <https://ridemsta.com/ga-suches>

Coordinator: Chris Buck chris.buck@pm.me

MSTA STAR 2024

When: Saturday-Thursday, **October 19-24, 2024**

Location: **Y.O. Ranch Hotel**, 2033 Sidney Baker St, **Kerrville, TX** 📞 Resort phone: 830-257-4440 ([map](#))

Description: **STAR is the annual national rally for the MSTA**, and this year, we're riding in the Texas Hill Country. In addition to great riding opportunities, there will be a full schedule of fun activities, including: Welcome Ceremony, New Members/First Time Attendees Meeting, New Members Ride, Ladies of the MSTA Meet & Greet, Annual Members Meeting, Lunch Ride, Closing Banquet & Awards, Annual Bike Raffle- a Canyon Red 2024 Suzuki GSX-8s, Event T-Shirts, Vendors and Seminars

Contact: <https://ridemsta.com/star/>

Coordinator: Dennis Villarose ipnman2002@yahoo.com

For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page. The Florida MSTA chapter also has a presence on Facebook with upcoming events and past photos: [click here](#).

Florida MSTA Apparel



As a reminder, our Florida State Storefront is open online for your MSTA-branded apparel! Go to mstaflorida.qbstores.com. We have made arrangements with the supplier for our National Gearbox to allow our State membership to buy shirts, hats, etc. with our State logos directly from the source!!! No muss, no fuss!! Order yours today!! They offer both embroidery and digital print options. Click onto the Embroidered Apparel or Shop By Logo for each option.

Don't hesitate to contact Queensboro directly with any and all questions. They are very customer friendly. They also offer Polo shirts and T-shirts with pockets!! Shopping finds online... We found some fun motorcycle t-shirts you can order online. Click the image for this particular t-shirt. There are other fun motorcycle t-shirts online at <https://teespring.com/shop/motorcycle-tshirts>.

These MSTA websites have extensive event information:



National MSTA RideMSTA.com **SE Regional MSTA** MSTA-SE.com **Florida MSTA** FLMSTA.org

We're also on Facebook: facebook.com/FLMSTA/

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Classified Ads

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org. Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!