



# The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the  
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

Volume 13 Issue 7

## Events July 2020

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Please volunteer!

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## Feature Article

### **My Camera was Smoking in the Great Pacific Northwest**

*By Tom Blake*

*[Ed: This continues Tom's multi-part article that began with "Here's How I Got Started in Motorcycling" in the May 2020 issue. Hyperlinks added.]*

*Pend Oreille* (pronounced *pon-da-ray* and translates to *pendant*) is a long pendant-shaped lake in northern Idaho. The town of [Sandpoint](#), at its northwest corner, was my stopping point after a very tiring, chilly and mostly wet day coming from Glacier NP in Montana on US 2.



*Looking out over Lake Pend Oreille from the hotel*

After a long, hot shower, I headed for the hotel's restaurant. It had a beautiful lakeside view, and I ordered

what turned out to be the best meal of the trip - a hardy bowl of *cioppino*, Italian seafood stew. Never had it before and never had any better since. It included big hunks of delicious halibut, about half a dozen small clams on the shell plus mussels and prawns in a very flavorful and warm tomato base. Boy, did that and a Jameson on the rocks really hit the spot!

About 45 minutes down the road the next morning, I was in [Coeur d'Alene](#) at a trendy, little, downtown coffee shop. The town was very clean and nice and with a large lake on the south side. It's a college town and looked like a great place to live, maybe during the summer. The coffee was excellent.

After much deliberation, I decided to cross Washington state to Seattle on I-90. [U.S. 2](#) would have been vastly more scenic, would have put me close enough to the [Grand Coulee Dam](#) to pay a visit and later would have crossed the more challenging northern [Cascade Mountains](#). On the other hand, I-90 routed me through Ritzville, a small town about 90 miles southwest of Spokane where I was temporarily stationed on a USAF radar train in the late 1960's.

The Ritzville I remembered was a tidy little farm town with well-maintained houses and green, manicured yards. The place I found on this trip looked like it had been through hard times. I barely recognized it. A deputy sheriff, whom I spoke with over lunch, remembered touring the train as a young girl, and we had a nice chat. Among other things, she said they took a lot of ash from the Mount Saint Helens eruption in 1980. She said that the ash turned day into night as it blew over the state. You could still see it along the sides of roads. Mount Saint Helens is located about 180 miles, as the crow flies, to the southwest.

About 85 miles west of Ritzville, I-90 crosses the very impressive [Columbia River](#). An overlook approaching the bridge provided a great view of the river and surrounding area. The river originates in British Columbia and is the largest in the U.S. northwest.



*Mount Rainier near Seattle*

Nearing [Seattle](#), one cannot help but marvel at the sight of ice-capped [Mount Rainier](#) situated some 60 miles southeast of the city. At 14,410 ft, it dominates the skyline

and is the tallest and most glaciated peak in the Cascades. I was fortunate for the view as the top, I was told, is often obscured

by clouds. It's also an active and potentially very dangerous stratovolcano.



*I-90 crosses the Columbia River near Vantage, WA*

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by clouds. It's also an active and potentially very dangerous stratovolcano.



*Crescent Lake along US 101 on the Olympic Peninsula*

I spent a couple days in Seattle resting, sightseeing and getting an oil & filter change on the ST. Then it was on to the Olympic Peninsula, which is separated from the mainland by Puget Sound and from Vancouver, British Columbia by the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The [Olympic Mountains and National Park](#) which includes the Hoh Rain Forest are at the center of the peninsula. Hoh is one of the few temperate rain forests in the U.S. and the largest. Although rainfall there averages 150 inches or

so per year, I managed to run the perimeter of the very scenic peninsula with nary a drop. Crescent Lake, formed by a glacier, is in the northwest section of the peninsula and the ride alongside it was fabulously beautiful.

Two bridges with a causeway in between got me across the wide Columbia River where it passes the small town of [Astoria, Oregon](#) and spills into the Pacific Ocean. I spent the night at Astoria in a hotel next to the river and managed to leave my credit card at one of the nearby watering holes. Fortunately, it was still there the next morning with no extra charges. Whew! There was also a marina within walking distance filled with commercial fishing boats. And, the place had a considerable population of large, ugly and noisy seals swimming around and relaxing on barges and docks.



*The beautiful Oregon Coast*



*Heceta Head lighthouse near Florence on the Oregon coast*

The next morning, I continued down the coast on [U.S. 101](#) for about 5 hours to Florence. This was one of the most beautiful sections of the whole trip. It was slow going owing to the hilly and scenic nature of the country, the many little towns and on this day, numerous cops with radars a-buzzing. Mountains and craggy hills butt right up to or drop down into the Pacific Ocean along there.

The next day I cut southeast from the coast at Reedsburg toward [Crater Lake NP](#) in south, central Oregon. The lake resides inside a very large volcanic crater created by a super-violent eruption of Mount Mazama some 7,700 years ago.

Wizard Island, a cinder cone near the western edge, was formed by subsequent, smaller eruptions. The lake is surrounded by a steep, 7,000 to 8,000 ft ridge - what remains of the original mountain. A well-maintained park road follows the



*Wizard Island inside Crater Lake*

ridge. The crater's blue water is somewhere around 2,000 ft deep, and on the day that I visited, had a misty, surreal appearance. *Sensual overload, my camera was smoking!*

Next month, I'll finish the trip in Northern California and Nevada. Stay tuned.

*Tom Blake*

## *Recent Florida Rides*

### **Ride to Titusville for an Awesome Historic Launch**

**By Carl Swofford**



*Carl Swofford*

On Thursday, May 27, SpaceX and NASA had scheduled an historic launch of two astronauts - the first launch of astronauts in nine years since the space shuttle program was cancelled. As you know by now, the launch was scrubbed because of lightning in the area.

Knowing that it was a 40/60 chance of the launch on Thursday, three of us made the ride to Titusville to watch the launch anyway. Hal and I left my house at 1:30 pm for the 48-mile ride to Titusville. We met Alan in Geneva, and the three of us encountered sprinkles as we rode into Brevard County. By the time we reached Titusville at 2:30 pm, we found the place was packed. We were glad we were on two wheels because we could not have parked a 4-wheeler!



Unfortunately, at T minus 13 minutes, the launch was scrubbed. We had no choice but to hit the road for home. Traffic was horrible. It took us 1:20 to go 11 miles to Mims. After that it was easy riding. In Mims, a Seminole County motorcycle deputy sheriff joined with us and rode as far as Geneva. First time I have ever rode with an on-duty LEO in a group ride!

Well finally, we saw a successful launch on Saturday. Four of us rode over to Titusville to witness, firsthand, this historic launch. Alan Spears, Hal Smith, Claude Hayes and I made the 92-mile round trip.

We left home at 1100 hours. We learned that to get there two hours early was not going cut it. We arrived in Titusville at around noon, parked our bikes and walked to a restaurant about a block away - recently reopened from the Coronavirus lockdown. Great food! I have never been there before, but they have earned a repeat



customer. We still had time to kill. We kept an eye on the weather and the countdown clock.

The launch was awesome - history was made!

Success! And the Dragon successfully docked with the ISS. This earned NASA's certification as the first private corporation to launch astronauts. Congrats to SpaceX and NASA! I am so glad I got to watch this awesome launch!



*Ignition*



*Liftoff*



*Successful Launch*

## *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.

Here's one of Doug Westly's previous articles, that we are republishing with his permission.

### **Safety Strategies – Environmental Analysis**

*By Doug Westly*

I was rounding a corner of one of my favorite back roads the other day and had an epiphany. Actually, I hit an unexpected patch of sand in the corner, so the epiphany almost filled my riding briefs. Big kudos to the Ducati Safety Pack system on my Hypermotard SP! The traction control activated and between that and some instinctive rider input I managed to survive the corner. However, the event really threw me, so I stopped, turned around and went back to analyze how I got caught up in that situation. What I found was that inside the pavement, in the middle of that turn was a small patch of sandy soil that had been turned up by vehicles taking the corner too sharp, dropping wheels off the pavement and subsequently kicking the sand up onto the inside line.

As road riders (we'll save off-road for another day) we spend a lot of time analyzing the road itself. Surface conditions, pavement construct, etc. all get continuously assessed (or should) as we ride. The problem with this is that we can only analyze what we can see, and the road surface itself is a fairly confined area. It should still remain the focus of our traction requirements, but how taking that analysis effort and expanding it outside the road envelope itself? Let's call it "Environmental Analysis".



*A narrow rural road with sand or dirt spilling over the pavement edges almost guarantees a dirty corner ahead.*

I define Environmental Analysis as examining the environment around the road for those factors which could impact safe road conditions. For example, in my previous dilemma could I have foreseen possible sand in the middle of the corner by recognizing that sandy patch of soil just to the inside of the pavement? If you ride in rural areas, particularly farm, mining or other locations where heavy equipment moves on the roads, can you expect dirty corners?



*This should not be a surprise after environmental analysis and the first view of this upcoming corner.*

How about the foliage? Beautiful, narrow canopied road are a joy to ride, but what can all those overhanging trees mean for your traction conditions and riding safety? If you have an area that is constantly shaded, it could mean a wet road surface well into morning hours. In the fall in areas where trees drop their leaves, this could also mean a road coated with wet, slick leaves.



*Overhanging trees means possible debris on the road.*

Heavily foliated areas also are havens for wildlife. Watch out!

Pictured left is one of my favorite local roads, but I am never in a hurry here. Overhanging trees means possible debris on the road. The soil encroaching on the pavement edges guarantees a poor traction environment. There are critters everywhere, including the inevitable suicidal squirrels!

How about other areas? Should we still practice environmental analysis? Why not? When I'm riding in the canyon roads of southern California, I'm going to be more focused now on not just the loose dirt/gravel in the corners, but the sides of the hills as well. Loose hillsides ahead probably mean a dirty road surface. Riding in other parts of the country and world will offer up their own terrain analysis challenges.

Can we apply this analysis technique in an urban setting? Why not? We already know that intersections accumulate oil, engine coolant, grease, etc. How about analyzing the environment around the urban streets? Exits from car washes are always wet. Industrial areas usually mean chewed up streets with lots of potholes, from the heavy truck traffic.

Let's extend the urban environmental analysis to its interaction with other drivers. If you see a Starbucks ahead, I will guarantee you that at least one car in front of you is going to turn into it, and there is probably another waiting to pull out! Shopping areas means families in the vehicles, in turn this causes distracted driving, particularly during holiday events.

So how far can we take the idea of environmental analysis? I suggest it is up to the rider to assess how far out he or she needs to look in order to assess the environment and its potential impact on riding safety.

We should recognize another factor here, and that is the condition of the nut that connects the handlebars to the seat. That's right...the rider. It is up to all of us to stay focused on our riding, constantly scanning our path of travel for possible negative riding situations. The MSF strategy of "SEE", standing for Search, Evaluate and Execute, remains one of the most valuable tools we have as riders to keep ourselves safe. What I'm suggesting here is we take the SEE concept and extend it well out beyond the road and path of travel itself.

The next time you are out riding, try a little environmental analysis. Try looking beyond the road surface and around at the environment. See if there are other factors outside the road area itself that may impact your riding safety or may give you clues as to possible road conditions.

***Ride Safe! - Doug Westly***

## ***Florida News***



*"Van" VanSteelant*

### **State Director's Report**

#### **A reality check for all of us.....**

Cases and hospital admissions for COVID 19 are up across the state and nation. As I mentioned last month, we would have to see how the general public behaved and deal with the resulting consequences. The data and video evidence is out there. For now, our monthly plans will continue as they have for May and June, unless new or revived restrictions are announced over the next few weeks.

On our home front, we continue to be healthy and utilize as many guidelines as possible. The life we save may be yours. We sincerely hope that all of you have marked off another month of good health for yourselves and those near and dear to you.

We had both a Central and South Brunch ride this month!! I almost made both... I had to take my own "prescription" on the morning of the Central ride. After pushing hard for three weeks prior to the ride, I came up "empty" that morning. Like hitting the wall when over exercising, the mind and body were not connecting... I met up with two South riders at the start point, wished them well and rode back home. Gotta know when to fold 'em.

Buck and Jacky did enjoy the ride to Four Seasons. Jacky is a new member, and this was her first time to this destination. As many others have found during previous rides, she too really enjoyed the food and company. A couple of West coast riders made the trip and likely shared a few tall tales over brunch!!



A week later, after some serious rest, I led a group of 10 bikes to the Crossroads Restaurant. Two more Southies came in on their own, and we had four other riders make their way from places near and far! Eight riders decided to dine in and took up the usual "long table" and enjoyed a morning of grub and gab!!

Another nine riders opted for a convoluted ride through a few neighborhoods to end up at the Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park. We took up the three picnic tables under the thatched roof, in the shade, and were grateful for the steady breeze. As suggested, everybody enjoyed their



*Park visit with BYO refreshments*

BYO refreshments and carried on conversations for 90 minutes! Check out the photos and read up on the significance of this site. Everybody agreed that an option similar to our park visits should continue to be offered along with our usual restaurants and destinations. Look for details in the upcoming ride announcements.



*Okeechobee Battlefield Historic State Park*

## What's Next??

Ok, **just like last month**, hang with me. I intend to support and encourage everybody's decision on whether to ride, eat or be merry. I am leaving the two brunch rides as scheduled **WITH CONDITIONS!!** I will contact the restaurants to listen to how they will operate if they are cooking and serving. I will send out the usual email announcements after conversing with the restaurants. It will only be then that we'll know if we have a ride to enjoy. I'll share what I'm told to help you make your own decisions. I am truly hoping we can get together, safely, and support the local economies.

Of course, **just like last month**, there are a few other options available to us if a "regular sit down" brunch is out of the question. We could bring along our own "brown bag" brunch/lunch/refreshments and find a welcoming place to spread out and eat and gab! Additionally, we have "regionalized" the email addresses of members in your area; say a 60-mile radius. This enables you up to reach out and set up "local rides" all over the state. Of course, the ultimate definition of "distancing" is a solo ride!!

When we set up the calendar back in January, STAR was scheduled for the first half of June. **You now know that STAR has been canceled for 2020.** A brilliant email was sent to all members explaining in great detail the reasons for the cancelation. We have left the various regional MSTA rides, and the Just For Fun rides, on our calendar. Check out the RIDES calendar for all the details and events through December [www.flmsta.org](http://www.flmsta.org)

First up, on **Saturday, July 11th, we have the Central Brunch Ride to Red Wing Restaurant, at 12500 FL-33, in Groveland!!** Look for a confirmation email a week before the ride with the latest info.

Two weeks later, on **Saturday, July 25th, we have the South Brunch Ride to Main Street America An Eatery, at 22 S Main Ave, in Lake Placid!!** Look for a confirmation email a week before the ride with the latest info. As this is written, both places are open and have 50% or more occupancy for indoor dining. Their dilemma is whether 10-15 riders might take over their available tables if we want to distance ourselves.

## 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...

My heartfelt 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...

No new Florida riders have joined the MSTA recently.

We thank these Florida members for recently renewing their memberships:

Budd Breheim                      Dee Cramer                      Michael Engstrom

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Dennis Anderson                      Dorothy Anderson                      Steve Balistreri                      Bill McDaniel  
Ed Palmer                      Ron Stechert                      Tulio Suarez Thillet

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](mailto:membership@ridemsta.com). Renewing or joining can be done quickly and securely online at [PlanetReg.com/MSTArenew](http://PlanetReg.com/MSTArenew) or [PlanetReg.com/MSTAjoin](http://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](http://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 **Invitation-To-Ride quad-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 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!!

The response to the monthly rides has been very encouraging. The positive vibe during our gatherings is certainly welcomed!!

For the next month, PLEASE heed the directions of our local and state leadership and the health departments. I do recognize the need to sift through the mixed messages and contradictions. Bottom line, more people in the USA have died from COVID-19 than anywhere else.

This too shall pass. Be a patient contributor to the efforts to hasten the decline in the deaths from and the spread of COVID-19.

When you can... Ride well! Ride often!! Do it safely!!!

ATGATT Van  
MSTA Florida State Co-Director

## Northeast and Central Directors Needed

If you would consider taking the position of Northeast or Central Director, please contact Van, [busavan@flmsta.org](mailto:busavan@flmsta.org).

## Florida MST A Apparel

As a reminder, our Florida State Storefront is open online for your MST A-branded apparel! Go to [mstaflorida.qbstores.com](http://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!!



## Florida Rides This Month

EVENTS MAY BE CANCELED OR POSTPONED DUE TO COVID-19.  
CHECK WITH EVENT COORDINATORS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

### Important Note

Always remember to check the Florida MST A [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.

### [MST A Florida South Brunch Ride](#)

When: Saturday, **July 25th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM  
Where: **Main Street America An Eatery**, 22 S Main Ave, in Lake Placid, FL 33852 ☎ (863) 465-7733 ([map](#))  
Description: The roads... The location... The service... The food!!! See ya at one of our best destinations!  
Contact: Van, [busavan@flmsta.org](mailto:busavan@flmsta.org), or ☎ 561-386-2594

### [MST A Florida Central Brunch Ride](#)

When: Saturday, **July 11th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM  
Where: **Red Wing Restaurant**, 12500 FL-33, Groveland, FL 34736 ☎ (352) 429-2997 ([map](#))  
Description: It's been a while since we've been here. It's on the small side so don't be late. Food has been good and prices reasonable. They are centrally located.  
Contact: Van, [busavan@flmsta.org](mailto:busavan@flmsta.org), or ☎ 561-386-2594

## 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 MST A [Event Calendar](#) for possible updates.

### [MST A Florida Central Brunch Ride](#)

When: Saturday, **August 8th**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM  
Where: **Grills Riverside Seafood Deck & Tiki Bar**, 6075 N US Hwy 1, Melbourne, FL 32940 ☎ (321) 242-8999 ([map](#))  
Description: This is a very attractive property alongside the Indian River Lagoon. Brunch fare is especially tasty and affordable. Plenty of seating and paved parking.  
Contact: Van, [busavan@flmsta.org](mailto:busavan@flmsta.org), or ☎ 561-386-2594

### [MST A Florida South Brunch Ride](#)

When: Saturday, **August 22nd**, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM  
Where: **Alva Country Diner**, 21220 Palm Beach Blvd #3841, Alva, FL 33920 ☎ (239) 728-3366 ([map](#))  
Description: How many years has it been since we dined here and then learned about Honda's DCT from Doug and Becky...Let's reacquaint ourselves with the good country cooking and friendly surroundings!  
Contact: Van, [busavan@flmsta.org](mailto:busavan@flmsta.org), or ☎ 561-386-2594

## Regional Events

### Red River Gorge Rally / MSTA

When: Fri.-Sun., July 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>  
Where: **The Ramada Inn**, 15 Stone Trace Dr., Mt. Sterling, KY 40353 ☎ (828) 765-4257 ([map](#))  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). Click EVENTS/2020. More details will be available as the event date approaches.  
Location: Mt. Sterling, KY  
Contact: Patrick Mogavero, coordinator ☎  
Information: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). Click EVENTS/2020

### Big Lynn Lodge / MSTA

When: Fri.-Mon., July 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> (Tentative)  
Where: **Big Lynn Lodge**, 10860 NC-226A, Little Switzerland, NC 28749 ☎ (828) 765-4257 ([map](#))  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). Click EVENTS/2020. More details will be available as the event date approaches.  
Location: Little Switzerland, NC  
Contact: Dave Brickner coordinator ☎  
Information: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). Click EVENTS/2020

### Star 2020 / MSTA

When: **CANCELLED**  
Where: **Drury Plaza Hotel Cape Girardeau Conference Center**  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). Click EVENTS/2020.  
Location: Cape Girardeau, Missouri

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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](#).  
We welcome articles and comments from our members for publication. Contact the editor at: [editor@flmsta.org](mailto:editor@flmsta.org).  
The MSTA National [website](#) has extensive event information:  
🏍️ To join the MSTA or renew your membership: [click here](#).  
🏍️ For the Events in 2020: [click here](#).

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National MSTA [RideMSTA.com](http://RideMSTA.com)

Florida MSTA [FLMSTA.org](http://FLMSTA.org)

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

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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](mailto:editor@flmsta.org)

Ellen Kocher is retired but with COVID-19 sheltering in place, she's been clearing out closet and bookcase items, shredding and organizing her place. Here are some items she dug up for sale. Maybe you'll find some motorcycle items, too, while your self-isolating at home during the lockdown. Sell'em right here in the Classified Ads!



First Gear, Men's "M" mid-weight jacket with zip in liner  
\$40 o/b/o  
Call Ellen Kocher at 561-308-4756 & leave message



Magnetic tank bags, 9" x 14"; identical except red one says VARIO and black one says Motoline  
one large compartment and decent sized map area (if you don't rely on GPS)  
\$15 each o/b/o (+ shipping, if that's necessary)  
Call Ellen Kocher at 561-308-4756 & leave message



Haynes BMW (Twins) paperback manuals  
Green one covers 1970 to 1985  
Blue one covers 1970 to 1988  
\$15 each o/b/o

Call Ellen Kocher at 561-308-4756 & leave message



Clymer BMW paperback manual for R series (1970-1989)  
\$20 o/b/o.  
BMW Twins (1955-1985) Restoration paperback  
\$20 o/b/o

Call Ellen Kocher at 561-308-4756 & leave message