



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

July 2022 - Volume 15 Issue 7

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Feature Article

Southern California Fun!

By Doug Westly

[Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the February 2014 edition of The Florida MSTAs Gator Tale]

If you've never ridden in Southern California, you don't know what you're missing. Becky and I ride out there a lot, both because of our work for Honda and because it is just an AWESOME place to ride. We try to take at least one



Looking out into the High Desert and Borrego Springs from Montezuma Pass

week a year and journey to SoCal for some road time.

In 2013 we headed to the state's southern areas during the first week of December. Fortunately, Honda doesn't mind loaning us a couple of bikes whenever we're in town, so upon arrival at LAX we jumped into a taxi and headed to Honda's secret off-site storage location in Los Angeles. No, we can't tell you where it is...keeping the secret is part of our contract! This year we opted for a pair of bikes in Honda's new "700" line. We always ride bigger bikes, so decided it was time to go light and maneuverable for this trip. Accordingly, Becky picked up a new CTX700N and I opted for an NC700X. Both bikes were equipped with Honda's new Dual Clutch Transmission (DCT) option, which allow for either automatic or manual shifting (with handlebar mounted paddle shifters). The DCTs would prove to be a wise choice later in the trip. After a quick meeting with our Honda bosses, we changed into our riding gear and set off, headed first to Huntington Beach, south of downtown Los Angeles.

Huntington Beach is surfer central, where surfers come from around the world to challenge each other and the waves in yearly surfing competitions. It is also the home of some great friends of ours. Keith is a senior manager at Honda and his wife Brittany is a freelance copy editor with a flourishing business. They decided this year to take a few days off and play tour guides as we all rode SoCal together. We spent our first night at their home, planning our trip and playing with their three cats...

Helpful tip No. 1 for any tour: Find someone who really knows the area and REALLY knows how to ride. Keith was a Marine in his former life, stationed at Camp Pendleton. He was also the head of the Marines combat motorcycle reconnaissance unit, serving on two wheels in the Iraqi desert during the First Gulf War. He knows bikes and knows SoCal. After an evening of maps, Google Earth, a bottle of wine and cats, we had a plan for our tour.

Helpful tip No. 2: Pack light. Fortunately, Keith and Brittany were two-up on their BMW R1200GS (A long story...actually my former GS, now residing in CA), so he was packing all the necessary tools and bike gear.

That means Becky and I showed up with just our personal riding and casual gear. One medium dry bag each, strapped across the back seat of each of our bikes did the trick.

Day 1 of our touring began with a run south on the Pacific Coast Highway from Huntington Beach down to Newport Beach, just to see how the other one-percent live. You know the area is affluent when you pass an auto consignment lot and it is full of Porsches and Ferraris. After Newport Beach, we cut inland and headed for the back roads of California. From there we wove our way down two-lane canyon roads and over passes until we reached the eastern, rural area of San Diego County. Keith cut his riding teeth here and knows roads, both paved and dirt, that you couldn't find with anyone else.

It was a beautiful day, with the sun shining, blue skies and 70° temperatures down in the canyons. A quick stop for lunch at one of their favorite Mexican restaurants (this became a theme for the next three days), and then we headed farther east.

Our next challenge, as Keith put it, was the steepest paved road he has ever ridden. It turned out to be just a short section, maybe a half mile long, of single-lane backroad that led down a pass in the hills on either side, but Holy S%&(! Not exaggerating, the road is well over a 20% downgrade, with tight switchbacks all the way down. It was so steep the bikes wouldn't hold constant speed even in first gear, and we had to work the brakes down the slope. I've ridden Lombard Street in San Francisco, and this beats that famous downgrade, hands down. Very cool...once you're at the bottom!

From there it was off to our next destination, Mount Palomar. We didn't go all the way to the observatory, but did circumnavigate the mountain at about 6,000 feet. The temperature dropped into the high 30s at the top, so we were happy when we started down the other side. From there it was through Montezuma Valley (including a couple of short dirt road sections) and down into the high desert for our first stop of the night, Borrego Springs, CA.



Our hotel room (2nd floor) in Borrego Springs!

Accommodations in Borrego Springs are few, but we found a cool little western-style resort, with a good restaurant and a bar to hang out in for the night. We spent the evening hanging with the local characters... and there are a lot of them in Borrego Springs!

Day two started off with a Mexican breakfast (see, I told you it was a theme), and then on the bikes and headed northeast. We set out across the desert for a refueling stop at the northwest corner of the Salton Sea. A little history is in order here. The Salton Sea was created by a huge flood from the Colorado River in 1905 and is the largest lake in California. Anyway, after a beautiful ride on a sunny day through the high desert, we made a refueling and provisioning stop in Mecca, CA. Both were necessary, as our lunchtime destination was further north, Joshua Tree National Monument. To get there, we rode a fabulous little paved trail called Box Canyon Road, which wound through desert washes and hills.



Casual off-roading stop in Joshua Tree National Monument



Becky with friends Brittany and Keith at Summit View in Joshua Tree National Monument

We came into Joshua Tree Park from the south, after crossing over I-10. We were feeling a little smug, seeing all those cages and trucks, plodding along the Interstate while we were adventuring through the California back country. We spent the next three hours riding from south to north, including finding a great picnic stop in the giant rocks of the park, where we snacked on (what else?) Mexican bread.

After touring Joshua Tree, we set our sights on the second night's destination, the cool little roadside stop of Pioneertown, in Yucca Valley. Pioneertown actually started as an old west motion picture set in the 1940s, and

many of the famous, early westerns were filmed here. Now with a permanent population of 350, it still retains all the old set buildings and a very famous bar/restaurant where the likes of Eric Clapton and others have been known to show up on a Friday night, to play an impromptu set or two!

Our lodging for the night was the Pioneertown Motel, the only establishment in town. Not exactly a Holiday Inn Express, but it fit perfectly with the theme for this trip. We had a great time at the restaurant, with dinner and a band jamming on stage.



*Headed west, down from Big Bear Lake.
Still above the snow line!*

Day 3 of our SoCal tour started out with temperatures in the 40s. We layered up and now aimed the bikes northwest. Our first destination of the morning, for brunch, was a little airport café at the airstrip serving Big Bear Lake resort. To get there we took a circular route through Lucerne Valley, then up the mountain to Big Bear Lake. Big Bear Lake is one of the premier recreation areas near Los Angeles, sitting above 6,700 feet in the mountains of San Bernardino County. Again it got a little cool on the ride up the mountain, but some hot beverages and brunch at the café made up for it. After brunch, we did a ride-by of the open ski resorts, then started back down the mountain, headed west back to Los Angeles. Like all other routes for the tour, this one consisted of narrow mountain roads with steep downgrades. What made this leg different was we were now above the snow line. Even with the sunny day and temperatures rising, there were still patches of ice in some of the shadows and corners, so careful riding was the order of the afternoon! This is where the DCTs really paid off, as we didn't have to worry about shifting and maintaining good clutch control/traction while navigating the icy patches. Honda's DCT system really does work as advertised.

The end of the day found us back at our hosts' home, with lots of new memories and stories! But...not the end of our SoCal riding adventure.

The next morning we thanked our wonderful friends and set out for ourselves. With great weather still beckoning, we turned our bikes north. Our objective this day was the Pacific Coast Highway, north of Los Angeles. That meant a quick ride up the infamous 405 freeway. Fortunately, we have ridden in California enough that we're familiar with that most welcome technique of all: Lane Splitting. While it is not something we would ever do at home, it is not illegal in California and after experiencing traffic on the 405, I can say with some certainty it is actually safer (if performed carefully) than just trying to maintain an adequate safety margin in rush hour traffic. BTW, the California Highway Patrol takes the same position and actually promotes lane splitting as a safe traffic management technique for motorcyclists.



A beautiful day along the Pacific Coast Highway! Honda was gracious in loaning us a NC700X and a CTX700N for our trip.



A great motorcycle hangout on the Pacific Coast Highway, Neptune's Net in Malibu on a busy Sunday morning.

After a dash up the 405 and west on I-10 (referred to locally as "the 10"), we found ourselves on the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu. Our destination this morning was one of the famous motorcycle hangouts in Malibu, Neptune's Net restaurant. As it was a beautiful Sunday morning, EVERYONE had the same idea. We arrived at the restaurant right at 11 AM, and there were literally hundreds of motorcycles and custom cars already parked. We got lucky with parking spots and a great table right on the front porch. We perched for a while, ate and watched the fun. Afterwards, we headed up the Pacific Coast Highway to the Santa Barbara pier for ice cream and then back to Ventura Beach for the night.



One of our favorite SoCal roads, Decker Canyon Road, above Malibu and the Pacific Ocean

Our final day on the bikes started with a quick ride down to Oxnard for one of our traditions. We never go to CA without stopping at In-n-Out Burger for at least one lunch. If you haven't eaten there, you're missing out. You can't order anything but old-fashioned hamburgers and fries. Awesome! Then it was headed back south to drop off the bikes after lunch. Of course we couldn't take the direct route, so it was through the Potrero Valley (horse farms), then up through the canyon roads, including famous Mulholland Drive, etc. We finished up by dropping back down into Malibu via one of our favorite trails, Decker Canyon Road. After that it was south through Malibu, the 10, the 405 (more lane splitting) and finally arriving back at Honda's off-site location.

Overall, the ride was about 900 miles in five days of riding. It doesn't sound like much, but included 90% back roads, the SoCal canyons, the high desert, mountain roads above the snow line, and pleasant miles along the Pacific Coast Highway. Like I said at the beginning, if you haven't ridden in Southern California yet, you are missing out!

Now if we can just win the lotto, we've already picked out the street in Ventura Beach where we're going to build the house with the six-car garage...

– *Doug Westly*

Do You Breathe Correctly? *By Dianne Park*

Breathing is one of the most basic functions of life but supposedly, most of us are not doing it correctly! We generally do not give it a single thought, but maybe we should, according to Dr. James Nestor.

Dr. Nestor says that, “How well our body takes in oxygen impacts our health on every level – from how we sleep to our stress response and even our metabolism is an incredible tool for optimizing health.” Dr. Nestor is an author and journalist who has written for *Scientific American*, *The New York Times* and other publications. His latest book, *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, came out in May 2021 and was an instant *New York Times* bestseller.



How well our body takes in oxygen impacts our health on every level.

Wikipedia says, “The book provides an historical, scientific, and personal examination of breathing, with a specific interest in contrasting the differences between mouth breathing and nasal breathing. Nestor explores research that argues that a shift took place, from nasal to mouth breathing, ‘due to the increased consumption of processed foods and has led to a rise in snoring, sleep apnea, asthma, autoimmune disease, and allergies.’” I personally think that these are some pretty strong claims! But, according to Wikipedia, “the book includes Nestor’s own first-person experiences with breathing, as well as working with scientists at Stanford University whose research suggests that returning to a state of nasal breathing will improve an individual’s health. He wrote the book after ten years of research on the subject.”

One podcast review states, “Breath explores how the human species has lost the ability to breath properly – and how to get it back. He explores why breath is the anchor for all the systems in the body and states that we get 25% more oxygen by breathing in through the nose than breathing in through the mouth. In his book, we learn why that is and how evolution has changed the structure of our jaws and airways, relating to the epidemic of crooked teeth we see in modern cultures.”

James shares how he enlisted in a Stanford University experiment to have his nasal cavities plugged, and was forced to breathe only through his mouth for 10 days in an effort to test how the pathways through which we breathe affect our health. He saw immediate changes to his blood pressure, sleep, and other functions, which reversed when he could begin predominant nasal breathing again. Whoah! That’s kinda scary!

Breathing is also one of our most powerful resources for reducing stress and regulating the parasympathetic nervous system. In his book, James shares one of the easiest variations of breath work we can all do throughout the day to slow down and feel better. Typically, breath work involves breathing for several seconds (maybe 4 or 5), holding it for maybe 7 seconds, and always exhaling for longer than the inhale or hold.

Lately, many people are concerned that they’re not getting enough oxygen through face masks. James breaks down what the science shows (we are getting enough!) and explains that CO² can even have some benefits in the body that we didn’t previously understand. While not everyone might agree with his premises, it is worth taking a look at his research.

But it is safe to say that the better we breathe, the longer (and safer) we ride! Breathe well!

– *Dianne Park*



South Director's Report

Ah, STAR month...

Normally, this month, I'd be sharing bits and pieces about the trip to MO and all the fun that was had during this year's STAR. My spring didn't go as planned, and my riding prep suffered. With new hip parts installed, I've been getting back into riding shape. So, we'll settle on the kindness of members who did enjoy the heat and the roads to share their good times!! Be looking for their tales in future newsletters.

Carl had a great few weeks out of Florida this month. He'll share his good fortune with you sooner than later. Meanwhile, he was back in town to enjoy the delayed Central Brunch ride to Grills. Catch his report below.

The South Brunch ride to the Runway Cafe in Sebring was a big hit for the small gathering of riders. Ellen and JR were already waiting for me at the Shell station. A pleasant morning made for easy riding to Crossroads and then onto the Cafe. Just the kind of ride to feel better on the bike!!

With several regulars preparing for or already on the road to STAR, just the seven of us filled the table they had waiting for us. Soon to be new member, Greg, missed us at the Shell station, and scooted straight to the restaurant and was waiting for the rest of us. The service was hilarious and efficient, and we all enjoyed a laid-back brunch!

Our ride home was warm and we managed to add a few more curves into the mix!! A big thanks to all the riders who made the brunch rides this month!!

Another BIG THANKS to Tom Blake for his hospitality on the Friday before the Central Brunch! I rode up to his place after work, so I could join him for the ride over to Grills. We enjoyed a nice morning for the ride. And the afternoon remained tolerable, so I took the long way home along the intercoastal down to Jupiter. A quick jaunt down I-95, and I ended a wonderful day on two wheels!!!



Laid-back brunch at the Runway Café in Sebring

What's Next??

Ok, I intend to support and encourage everybody's decision on whether to ride, eat and be merry. All restrictions have been lifted for all enterprises across Florida. No new warnings or mandates will be forthcoming. We will continue to contact the restaurants to be sure they can handle our groups. Recent experience indicates everybody is back to pre-COVID protocols.

The Central Brunch ride happens first in July. Head to **Johnny's Eggs in Frostproof** on **July 9th**. Two weeks later, the South Brunch ride lands at **Myshelly's Kitchen in Arcadia** on **July 23rd**. Look for the announcements soon. And some adventurous Southies will want to join me for the ride to Johnny's. It will be an early start, but some of our favorite roads lead us to Frostproof!!

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...

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Dell Haverland Joshua Ridder Tulio Suarez Thillet Lynn Trieschmann Tom Trieschmann

These Florida memberships have recently renewed their membership in the MSTA:

Doug Christensen Robert Fischer Robert Miller Stephen Phillips

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!!

Well, we've coped with COVID for 2.5 YEARS now, and likely you all have settled your score with the pandemic and your course of action. As the variants continue to circulate around the globe, please stay vigilant and continue to be healthy.

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 Co-Director





Central Director's Report

June Central Ride – Grills Riverside Seafood Deck & Tiki Bar, Melbourne, FL

In spite of the forecast heat, three of us left Altamonte Springs at 06:45 AM and enjoyed a cool refreshing early morning ride to Grills in Melbourne. The day was sunny and clear. Six riders gathered for a delicious brunch and enjoyed the beautiful setting on the Indian River. Conversation flowed freely. We talked about everything from STAR to private piloting. By the time we adjourned, the predicted heat was building. Ride home was a bit warmer than the early morning ride.



Grills Riverside in Melbourne

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 Central Brunch Ride

When: Saturday, **July 9th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Johnny's Egg Works**, 133 S Scenic Hwy, **Frostproof**, FL ☎ (863) 546-6150 ([map](#))

Description: We visited Johnny's last year. The staff was excellent, and the food was great. It's off the beaten track and offers some relaxed riding in the area. There may even be a few Southies in attendance.

Contact: Carl, carltr6@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Saturday, **July 23rd, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Myshelly's Kitchen**, 15 W. Oak St., **Arcadia**, FL ☎ (863) 993-5030 ([map](#))

Description: They treated us so nicely the last time we landed here. Great food and service in a homey atmosphere.

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com, 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 MSTA [Event Calendar](#) for any updates.

MSTA Florida Central Brunch Ride

When: Saturday, **August 6th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Cup Diner**, 1407 13th St, **St Cloud**, FL ☎ (407)891-1488 ([map](#))

Description: Another favorite deserving a return visit!!

Contact: Carl, carltr6@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

When: Saturday, **August 20th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Kountry Kitchen**, 301 New Market Rd E., **Immokalee**, FL ☎ (239) 657-6606 ([map](#))

Description: Back in February, we discovered how good this place was for lunch. Let's see what brunch is like...

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

MSTA Red River Gorge Just For Fun Rally – Slade, KY

When: **Thursday, August 11th – Sunday, August 14th**

Location: **Ramada Limited Mount Sterling**, 115 Stone Trace Dr, **Mt Sterling, KY** ([map](#))

Description: Red River Gorge Just For Fun Rally. This is an MSTA-sanctioned event. No rally fee.

However, we will be collecting donations for the Dan Clark Safety Fund at the Rally and ask you to give whatever you can (suggested donation is \$10). We will be using the Ramada Inn in Mt. Sterling as our rally HQ again. They have kindly given us the same rate as the past 2 years of \$84.95 plus tax per night. You must CALL the hotel to secure your room. Please ask for a room in the MSTA BLOCK. The phone number is 859-497-9400, ask for Heather. All rooms not reserved by August 1st will go back to the general public.

You can register for the event at <https://reg.planetreg.com/httpsreg.planetReg.comRRGR2022>
Registration will open on January 1, 2022.

No MSTA routes will be given out to anyone that does not pre-register or register at the event. Routes in GPX form will be available to all registered participants.

Contact: Coordinator: Patrick Mogavero 859-620-6352 / kzrex@aol.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/

More Contact Information		
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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!