



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

July 2024 - Volume 17 Issue 7

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Feature Article

Riding Buddies Verses Touring Buddies

By Jim Park

[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!]

Eric and Charlie were the best of riding buddies. They would get together nearly every weekend, ride to breakfast, swap a few tales and visit their local motorcycle shop.

Every summer, Eric would take a long trip on his bike, while Charlie having obligations to family and work, could only hear about the details upon Eric's return.

Finally, the time came when Charlie could put three weeks together for that long road trip. No two ways about it, Eric and Charlie were going to see the country together on two wheels!



You need to ask yourself – How compatible are you and your riding companion?

Unfortunately, the pre-ride excitement was the best part of the trip. The guys experienced no mechanical problems, no accidents and no problems back home with family or work. So, what happened?

When planning an extended road trip there are many things to consider before setting out. The more obvious items are things like where you will be going, the routes you will be taking along the way, and doing your pre-ride preparations on your motorcycle by checking things like tires, brakes, cables and fluid changes. The most obvious problem with extended time on the road often overlooked is the person (or group) who is traveling with you. You need to ask yourself - How compatible are you and your riding companion?

Prior to any long trip you need to be honest with your assessment of several things and follow up with a candid conversation with your riding partner. Here are a few things to consider:

Do you and your riding buddy have similar riding skills?

Riding skills can mean a lot of things. For example, you reach a really twisty section of mountain highway, just what you have been waiting to enjoy on your trip. However, the other rider is a bit intimidated by those same roads and slows down....a lot! When you have completed a nice section of roadway, you find yourself not just a few minutes ahead of your friend but spend a half an hour waiting on the side of the road. Two bad things can happen here that you must avoid. First and most importantly, you can't ask your friend to

pick up the pace. This can take away the enjoyment of their ride not to mention the possibility of creating an accident. Secondly, the slower rider may ask you to slow down and ride down to their comfort level. Again, not good because you are now sacrificing what you may enjoy the most.

Riding skills also include the rider's stamina. One rider might consider a long day in the saddle to be 300 miles, while the other may want to put in 600 miles per day. If you're faced with cutting your riding days in half or doubling your riding day depending on your perspective, your trip plans will change significantly. You may miss seeing Mount Rushmore or ride by so fast you barely get to see George Washington's nose!

Do you have similar budgets?

Ah, the money issue! A worst-case scenario could be that one rider's idea of roughing it is having a room that doesn't offer an HD television, while the other guy's idea is a campground that doesn't have showers. This is an extreme example of course, but there are more subtle and realistic issues to consider. Do you want to share a room? If your riding buddy snores like a drunken sailor or watches TV until 2 AM, this could be a real problem.

Meals can become an issue, too. Do you eat three squares, two or even one? Most importantly perhaps, where do you eat? Again, tastes can vary from Mickey D's verses a 5-star restaurant, all items to consider before setting out.

Do you have similar touring experience?

Those that travel often may take for granted what they have learned over the years. An experienced touring rider will know what to pack on their motorcycle and how to pack it. You may find yourself each morning waiting for your traveling partner to pack his bike or routinely stopping along the way to pick up necessity items at *Wal-Mart*. Either way, this cuts into your travel time and can become a point of irritation or embarrassment.

Do you have similar motorcycles?

No, I don't mean are they both red! First off, consider the range of both (all) bikes. It doesn't help if one rider's bike has a 300-mile range if the partner's bike can barely reach 100 miles before needing gas. Yes, you can simply stop more often to fuel, but this limitation in certain parts of the country may dictate where you can ride.

Also, if you can't pack both bikes to carry essential gear, this will alter your plans. This is particularly important to those motorcyclists who are camping but will also dictate the number of laundry stops along the way.

Do you have compatible personalities?

In the case of Eric and Charlie, they probably had compatible personalities....well at least when they started out!

It may be as silly as your buddy never gets geared up to ride as quickly as you or you both strongly disagree who should have been elected dog catcher in the last election. Regardless, little things that may bug you on a day ride can become a really big deal over an extended period of time on the road. You need to ask yourself before starting out if you can handle your riding buddy's little idiosyncrasies on a daily basis and of course can he deal with yours?

Bottom line is to be candid with yourself and your riding companion before starting out on that big road trip. After all riding buddies can be the best of friends and touring buddies can become the worst of enemies.

Don't let that happen to you!

—Jim Park

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 June 2021 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]

Close Calls By Juan Dho



After recently describing a couple of my bike-related get-offs to a friend, the response was: “You must be a CAT! You know... nine lives.” And that got me to wondering - just how many really close calls have I actually had over the years? Let’s see....

#1. The first was in the early ‘70’s when I wheeled a dirt bike for the first time - straight into a pine tree! Talk about an idiotic, rookie mistake! It only took a few seconds. The bars came right up to my chest, and I was just **elated**. Even when I saw the tree, I didn’t want to back off. What I wanted to do is wheelie *around* it but didn’t know how. And then, how do you hit the brake pedal when the bike is standing up vertically? Fortunately, the little engine ran out of rpms in a low gear ending the wheelie just before impact. That gave me a more solid springboard from which to leap **hard** to the right. Even still, my left arm struck the tree sending me into a spread-eagle, horizontal spin. Boy, was that arm sore for a few days!

#2. The second incident, in early ‘74, was on the same Yamaha 125 Enduro, now with new forks. While in an unhurried sweeper in the woods, I was struck head-on by another, larger motorcycle approaching in *my* tire track. Blocking vegetation entirely masked our approach (never saw it), and our left-side engine cases collided! This one knocked me out and shattered my left humerus, which took three operations and a year to mend. I swore off motorcycling for 12 years. For a long time after, just the thought of riding made my knees shake. I vowed that if I ever got hit again, I would be on the larger bike.

#3. Riding south on a divided 4-lane street one afternoon in the late ‘90’s, I was doing the 45-mph speed limit in the left lane and had pulled even with a slower car. Another car pulled out of a side street from the right intending to cross the wide median and turn north. But instead of pulling into the median, she stopped *right in front of me* to wait on northbound traffic to clear. Lordy!

I laid **HARD** on my brakes and was repeatedly screaming at her to **GET OUT OF THE WAY**. My Kawasaki Vulcan Classic’s tires were all but smoking but not locked up. Just as I got it stopped about a foot shy of her rear quarter panel, she pulled into the median. I was exhaling a sigh of relief when tires squealed from behind. The impact knocked the bike and me well forward. Fortunately, I instinctively clung hard to the bars to keep from being flung back into the car.

#4. One September in the late ‘00’s, I joined a small group of riders at a SE STAR rally in Dillard, GA for a backroads romp. That afternoon in SC, I was riding #2 in the stagger. We had turned onto a recently retarred 2-lane with warning signs about loose stones. We progressed at a moderate pace through several curves – left and right - with no issues. Then on an easy right-hander, my front tire suddenly washed out and down I went! A car coming the other way avoided both me and the bike as we slid across the road towards it. I obviously didn’t detect the loose stones. When I got home, an eye exam was followed by cataract surgeries.

#5. During the fall of 2013, I rode my new Triumph Trophy SE on a cross-country trip out to the far northwest. After a hotel stop at Baker City in eastern Oregon, I headed east on OR 86 for Oxbow Dam where I was looking forward to a jet boat ride up the Snake River into Hells Canyon, which separates Oregon and Idaho.

About half an hour out, the road was following along the edge of the Powder River. The road was wide and in great shape with gravel berms maybe 12 feet wide. Tall, brown hills rose up on either side - no vegetation,

just brown soil (or rock?). Eerily strange. At one point, I was in a long left-hand sweeper doing a relaxed 55 mph and was just astonished that I could see the left-hander transition into a right-hander WAY out in the distance at about 10 o'clock. And then WAY, WAY out (maybe a mile) at about 2 o'clock, I could even see the exit of that gentle sweeper as the road bent back to the left! The visuals were stunning and truly epic in scale! I had never seen anything like that before. It was total sensual overload!

And then suddenly, I felt the front tire get onto a different surface. Refocusing, I was into the berm and angling toward the drop-off to the river way below! No time or traction to stop or make a normal turn. So, I gassed it with **English** to, hopefully, get the rear end to come around enough to power away from the drop-off.

Although I have no recollection of actually going over the edge, I believe both tires went over in unison. Otherwise, I would have flown well out over the drop-off. I felt a sharp **slap** on my left chest. And then I just sat on the edge of the seat (away from the steep bank), applied light control braking and rode that sucker about 40 feet down a thick layer of loose stones to the bottom next to the river. In retrospect, I think the tires kicked out as I momentarily went airborne slamming my left side into the bank. The force was enough to break the clavicle and crack a few ribs - explaining the "slap".

#6. One afternoon in 2014, I hopped on my Triumph Tiger 1050 and headed north into Volusia County. It was a hot and humid day and after an hour and a half, I was tired, and my mouth was dry. On US 1 in New Smyrna, I got distracted by railway activity west of the road and when I realized that traffic around me was slowing, I looked forward only to see a cargo van stopped at a red light right in front of me. **N-o-o!** I hit the brakes but was too close.

My front tire hit the van's bumper and I went into, what seemed like, an ultra-slow-motion roll. My butt very slowly rotated vertically so that my back hit flatly on the back of the van with a thud – butt up and head down. From there, I bounced away from the truck and somehow landed on my butt in the middle of the street. I've often wondered how it was possible for time to seemingly slow down like that, and how I managed to rotate to absolutely the best possible orientation to mitigate the impact - as if an external force was guiding me. It defies explanation.

#7. This final incident occurred during a spring rally in Helen, GA a few years ago. Some friends and I left the little hamlet of Suches and headed east on GA 180. It was a great ride, and the road got twistier the closer we got to US 129. I was leading on my BMW GS and humming along at a decent clip. We came around a blind right-hand curve leading quickly to an abrupt left turn onto a narrow bridge, which crossed a small stream.

I was startled to see a car right there on the bridge. And it was looking as if we would both get to that abrupt turn together. I kept expecting the car to slow, but it didn't and, unfortunately, neither did I. It forced a delayed turn-in and, therefore, a much sharper turn than originally intended. And that put me **scarily** close to the edge of the road where I was tracking through a buildup of loose dirt and debris right next to a very threatening railing. It was a **mortal fight** to maintain control and stay off that darn railing. When I finally got stabilized enough to steer away from it, the back end broke loose. I braked but came slowly around putting me and the bike's left side on the road. Hitting the railing (or car) would not have been good!

There have been other incidents but none even approaching the life-threatening potential of these. So, if it's true about cats having nine lives, well then, there just might be a couple more left in this old tomcat. Not that I believe in myths, mind you.

I hope the reader will profit from these accounts by considering what was done right, what could have been done better and what shouldn't have even been attempted... and then applying that knowledge to one's own riding. **Please... just be safe out there!**

(Note: The only insurance claim that I ever submitted for the above was for the OR wreck. Still, the intent of the pen name is to stay off insurance company radars.)



South Director's Report

Summer's here, and so we adapt...

Could be worse, could be 20' of snow instead of 20" of rain!! Nonetheless, we had to adapt... Out of concern for the unstable conditions and the safety of the group, we canceled the South Brunch ride to the Log Cabin. Fortunately, the East and West Central rides were held under better circumstances! Be sure to catch Tom's and Doug's reports below!

Jim Park's "Riding Buddies" is filled with timeless considerations when choosing to ride together, whether for a long weekend or out and back to STAR '24 in Texas. His tips will definitely improve the likelihood of a good ride for all concerned. And I hope you enjoyed revisiting Juan Dho's epic close calls!

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!!

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 **July 6th, be at The Somers Sunshine Cafe in Palm Bay!** The **South Brunch Ride** lands back at the **Crossroads Restaurant in Okeechobee on July 20th**. And be sure to get to the Main Street America An Eatery in Lake Placid on July 27th for the **West Central Brunch Ride**.

I'll be on 4 wheels for a month or two, pending doctor's orders, so I'll meet you all at the restaurants. Look for group riding hints in the South Brunch Ride announcements!

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 these new members this month: Jay Berlingo of Port St. Lucie and James Poito of South Daytona. Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

Ellen Kocher Kim Krzywicki

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

James Bosco L Dee Cramer Dell Haverland Robert Miller Tom Trieschmann
Lynn Trieschmann Jeffrey Withrow

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and continue supporting their MST. 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 OR 4 rides a month, you have plenty of chances to invite a friend along and introduce them to our group!! More ITRs are available now...You know what to do...

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 – Mulberry Lane Café, North Melbourne, FL – Tom Blake

Well, our inaugural summer *Breakfast Ride* is in the books. Three EC riders were out of town, but five others and a passenger did show up. In addition, give a big D-Day weekend salute to Mike who Spydered all the way over from Sun City (160 miles) and to Lance who rode up from Port St Lucie (75 miles). So total attendance grew to eight.

Mulberry Lane Café in North Melbourne stepped up and accommodated our ever-expanding gathering by pulling the necessary tables together piecemeal and promptly getting new orders taken. The cleanliness, food and service were first-rate. Adding to the D-Day theme, we were having a great time with a little friendly inter-service rivalry and could have continued the banter a good while longer. But, the place was filling up, and I decided it would be best to make room for the restaurant's regulars. Besides, the longer we sat, the hotter it was going to get outside.

Afterward, most headed home. But four of us took a leisurely ride up somewhat curvy back roads on Merritt Island to Kennedy Space Center. Then came back via the very fun Tico Airport Perimeter Road below Titusville and some other mainland roads along the Indian River Lagoon through Cocoa – in all about a two-hour scenic loop. Doug and Carol doubled back after Tico to check out the American Police Hall of Fame and Museum at the west end of NASA Causeway.

Next up: Our July 6th breakfast will be at *Somers Sunshine Café* at 1107 Malabar Rd, Palm Bay... about 0.4 miles west of I-95 on the north side. Please try to arrive a bit before 8:00 AM. Most online reviews

for this place are quite good, plus I've eaten there several times and have to agree. It started as an I-Hop and still has that vibe though it is privately owned.

West Central Lunch Ride – Sunrise Eatery, Zephyrhills, FL – Doug Westly

Last Saturday's West Central Brunch meetup was held at the Sunrise Eatery in Zephyrhills. Even though we're into the heat of summer, switching to the brunch schedule made a difference. Our thanks to Eve, Mike Tom, Rob and Bob for braving the morning heat and humidity, to meet Becky and me at the restaurant. Eve led the Sun City gang up to the Eatery, and Bob took his routine wandering route to meet everyone. The weather, along with the Saturday morning traffic... a combination of old-time Zephyrhills natives and the ever-increasing batch of local retiree transplants... always makes Z-town an interesting place to ride into and then escape from.

As usual, the Sunrise Eatery provided great food at a good price for the gang, and we had some fun conversation among everyone as well. In fact, we were having so much fun, we forgot to take pictures! Oops... It was a great get-together, so don't miss the next one.

On **Saturday, July 27th** at 10 AM we'll be at **Main Street America, in Lake Placid**. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate, and we'll get a cool, dry, morning ride for a summer's day!

As a final note, it is becoming ever more challenging to make sure we have the right number of seats reserved at the restaurants for the monthly meetups, so we're including an "RSVP" button link in the ride announcements. If you're coming on the ride, just click the button to send an email to me (or just hit the "going" button on the FB page announcement). That way, Van, Tom and I will get at least a rough headcount for the meetup at the restaurant. That will really help us out in making sure we have enough reserved seats, as all the restaurants are busy on a Saturday morning, particularly in the summer months. If you can't make it at the last minute, that's OK. We would rather have enough seats reserved than not. Thanks in advance for helping us out with the new RSVP button for the rides.

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, July 6th, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**

Location: **Somers Sunshine Cafe**, 1107 Malabar Rd, **Palm Bay**, FL ☎ (321) 676-6410 ([map](#))

Description: Started as an IHOP and still has many of the same menu items. Clean, popular eatery. Paved parking. No reservations so an early arrival will help. Trying a new approach to our BRUNCH rides. Details will be found in the Ride Announcement!!

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

MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride

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

Location: **Crossroads Restaurant**, 5050 NE 128th Ave, **Okeechobee**, FL ☎ (863) 763-8333 ([map](#))

Description: Time to return to an old favorite!! I'll be on 4 wheels for this one, so I'll meet you there. If you leave from the Shell on the Bee Line and use the Indiantown by-pass and roll along Martin Co. Hwy., plan on 50 minutes to cover the 45 miles.

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

MSTA Florida West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, July 27th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Location: **Main Street America An Eatery**, 22 S Main Ave, **Lake Placid, FL** ☎ (813) 782-0401 ([map](#))

Description: Always a favorite! And you'll likely see a few Southies in attendance!!

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

MSTA Big Lynn Lodge Rally

When: Thursday-Sunday, **July 11-14, 2024**

Location: **Big Lynn Lodge**, 10860 NC-226A, **Little Switzerland, NC** ☎ Hotel phone: 828-765-4257 ([map](#))

Description: The Big Lynn Lodge is located on a mountain ridge right next to the Blue Ridge Parkway, a few miles south of Spruce Pine, North Carolina. It is one of the most beautiful settings you will find for a place to stay. There are fantastic roads in every direction from the doorstep of the lodge.

Contact: <https://ridemsta.com/nc-biglynn>

Coordinator: Chris Parker chris@roadwolfdesign.com

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 any updates.

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

For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see the Florida MST A website's Events page. The Florida MST A 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!