



# The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the  
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

June 2022 - Volume 15 Issue 6

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## Feature Article

### Learning to Ride in the 60's

By Jim Park

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

The Sixties were a time of change for our country. We had Viet Nam, the Civil Rights movement and the Beatles. Honda created a very successful ad campaign during that period where you could meet the nicest people if you purchased one of their motorcycles. Motorcyclists were coming on the scene. Elvis, Ann Margret, Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper all made popular movies featuring Hondas or chopped Harleys. It was becoming cool to ride.

My memories go back to a short-lived NBC series, "Then Came Bronson", about a guy who dropped out of society and rode his Harley around the country. Not really a new concept as several years earlier the show Route 66 was based on a similar idea, but the mode of transportation was a Corvette. But what really stuck in my mind was the star, Michael Parks, riding along the Pacific Coast Highway at the beginning of each episode. I was going to do that some day!

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

Back in those days there were no rider training courses and very little safety gear available to riders. Motorcycle brakes often took a city block to stop the darn thing and tires... Well, let's just say that there was very little lean angle capability prior to losing traction. However, I later learned that this lack of traction was to be used in case of an emergency, so you could lay the bike down to avoid a crash.



Honda CB175

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

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



Michael Parks as  
Jim Bronson (1969)

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

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

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

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

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

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

We lived in the country in Southern Indiana. Our property was completely surrounded by fences as the adjacent properties were grazing land for milk cows. My dad realized that all he needed to do was to stretch a section of barbed wire fence across our driveway and he could have our horse mow our lawn free of charge! He put the fence up early that morning on his way to work and let the horse in the yard. Now, our driveway was gravel and several hundred feet long. The newly installed fence was out near the highway. I bet you can see where I'm going with this!

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



*On my Bridgestone 350 GTR*

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

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

I took the river road. There was very little traffic on that road, but it was bumpy from all of the railroad track crossings. I was becoming confident that my engine was receiving an adequate mixture of oil, and I began to pick up the pace. While my attention was on the happenings at the rear of the motorcycle, the railroad track running diagonal across the pavement in front of me was a piece of knowledge that would have proved to be beneficial in the moments to come.

Initially, my front tire wedged between the rail and the pavement. The result was my right-hand grip was ripped away from me, while the left-hand grip ended up hitting me in the stomach knocking the wind out of me. The rear of my bike followed the direction of the front and came to rest in the same pavement trap next to the rail. It's interesting how physics works on a mass in motion - the motion being an unexpected 45-degree turn at 45 mph. I was a bit like the coyote in a road runner cartoon. Here I was still in my riding position, in mid-air with my motorcycle several yards behind me.

As I said, riding gear was out of the question in those days. A short sleeve madras shirt (with belt to match) and a pair of Wrangler jeans offered little protection. I was a giant road-rash case. This resulted in a trip to the emergency room where they used a little brush to scrub out the gravel. Unfazed by my little episode and to my mother's dismay, I climbed back on my trusty steed the following weekend.

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

Those were good times!

– *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.*

### **The Aging Rider *By Doug Westly***



None of us like to admit it, but we're all getting older. Of course, that's better than the eventual alternative occurring too soon. They say the trick to aging is doing it gracefully. My thoughts in terms of motorcycling are to do it smartly.

Doesn't it seem bikes tend to get heavier as we get older? The truth is we tend to lose muscle mass and tone. Our physical well-being can become impacted by other medical factors as well, not to mention that if there is a situation, the healing time and effort on an aging body multiplies. On the mental side, staying focused can become more challenging as well.

So how do we take up these challenges of continuing in our chosen sport while confronting the irrepressible impact of time? First off, like anything else, we have to admit the inevitable.

Just this year, not coincidentally coinciding with my reaching 50 years of riding (since I started at age 15), I became eligible for Medicare. That alone told me I have several considerations now to examine, not the least of which are those mentioned earlier.

I had already decided last year to give up my track riding and coaching. In my case it wasn't any degradation of skills to that point, but rather the realization that if/when I did make a mistake on the track at 150+ mph, the potential for life-altering results, or at least significant injury and/or healing time would be the outcome.

The next realization was that I really don't have the stamina (or interest) for any more 1000-mile days in the saddle. Been there, done that, got the Iron Butt stickers for it.

The final factor was when it dawned on me that it has gradually gotten harder to put my 650+ lb ADV touring bike up on its center stand. I can still get it up there, but now it takes real effort.

All this doesn't mean I (or any motorcyclist) needs to give up riding. It's just that when we reach an age where sunset is closer than sunrise, we need to be smart about our expectations and how we ride.

First off, while I still enjoy my big ADV bike, I know there will come a time when downsizing becomes necessary. Maybe that's next year, maybe in two or three.

Fast speeds and 1000-mile days don't really interest me anymore, particularly since I don't have anything to prove. Again, been there, done that.

If anything, after 50 years of riding, I've learned to ride for myself. Don't let anyone tell you that you have to be the fastest or ride the biggest, newest bike out there. Motorcycling isn't necessarily about speed, others' challenges or unrealistic expectations.

Motorcycling is a personal experience. The ultimate goal is to continue safely pursuing it as long as you can, however you can. The real winner is the one who, as sunset approaches, is still in the saddle.

***Ride safe!*** – Doug Westly



## South Director's Report

### **This is the beginning of summer...**

Greenery has taken over, and the humidity has returned. Around here, we don't wait on celestial events to tell us what season we're in...

The Central Brunch Ride was a hit! Mary's always draws a crowd, and Carl's group added to the mix. Catch his report below.

We snuck in one last South Lunch Ride for the season. Lightsey's Fish Co. is a favorite destination, and they don't do brunch... Once again, we had a great turnout! Four Southies left the 7-11 under puffy clouds and sunshine. The afternoon was predicted to bring a change...

We had a pleasant jaunt over mostly familiar roads. A slight detour had Van taking a less than scenic route through Pahokee. *I don't need no stinking GPS...* We arrived to a gathering crowd under the shade of the trees along the edge of the parking lot. Despite the threat of rain, 16 more joined the party!! Some of the attendees did stack the deck in their favor regarding the weather, arriving on 4 wheels with a roof! We had riders/drivers from near and far. It's always a good sign when we draw participation from both coasts, and from Orange County to Broward!

Lightsey's provided their usual level of good service and tasty eats that earns them our repeat business. Dianne promoted our upcoming STAR event! Lots to look forward to in June. Our 50/50 raffle was super-funded! Our winner, Phil Baxter, took home \$55! Our Club total now stands at \$733.00. Always a BIG THANKS to all who participate in our raffle!!

As for the change in the afternoon weather, it stayed away. So much so, the crowd didn't split up until almost 2:00 pm! We did enjoy a lot more humidity and a few more Luv Bugs, but it is summertime!!



*Great turnout for the South Ride at Lightsey's in Okeechobee!*

## **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.

With the aforementioned STAR '22 looming in June, we pushed our BRUNCH rides up to the first two Saturdays. The **Central Brunch Ride** happens on **June 4th**. Head to **Grills Riverside Deck in Melbourne** for waterfront dining and great food! A week later, **June 11th**, we fly into the **Runway Cafe** alongside the racetrack in **Sebring** for the **South Brunch Ride**.

## 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:

Buddy Breheim      Doug Christensen      Roy Clark      Robert Fischer      Robert Miller  
Stephen Phillips

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

Kim Krzywicki      Michael Yandel

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](https://PlanetReg.com/MSTArenew) or [PlanetReg.com/MSTAjoin](https://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](https://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.





## Member Profile | Van VanSteelant – Boynton Beach, FL

- Hometown/State?  
*Born in Michigan. Six states later, I/we settled in Florida in 1993.*
- What was your first motorcycle?  
*A used 1973 two-stroke 250cc Yamaha*
- Current motorcycle?  
*'03 Hayabusa that's for sale. 2018 Ninja 100 (with the bags)*
- What is your all-time favorite motorcycle?  
*For two-up, our old Goldwing. Solo, the Busa.*
- How long have you been riding?  
*Earned my first license endorsement in 1976.*
- When did you join the MSTA?  
*November 1987*
- How did you hear about the MSTA?  
*The HSTA ran small ads in the moto mags of the day. Likely saw one in Motorcyclist (RIP). I owned a 1982 CB900F at the time.*
- Who or what was your biggest influence in motorcycling?  
*Over the decades of reading and riding, I've accumulated a "library of congress" level of "influence". Names familiar to most include Nick Ienatsch, Keith Code, Lee Parks, Doug Westly. Other sources include MSF courses and track days.*
- What are your favorite places to ride?  
*Anywhere I can combine friends and curves.*
- What was a memorable motorcycle adventure?  
*Where to start?? How about riding solo (1976) 1100 miles on a 250cc Yamaha from college in Wisconsin to home in New Jersey, 2 months after "training" myself to ride? Or riding the same route two years later (1978) on a naked, 1970 Triumph Trident, two up?? Or, two more years later (1980), riding a Goldwing cross country for 2.5 months, two up with the same love of my life?? Then there's the 112,000 miles I rode on the Busa.*
- What is the best motorcycle advice or tip learned over the years?  
*Cover your front brake lever. Ride your own ride. Look where you want to go. The Pace, including Nick's updates. Practice, Practice, Practice.*
- What turns you on about motorcycles or riding?  
*Returning to riding after 3 months off my bike for hip surgery protocols, I realized mid-ride that I'm a MOTORCYCLIST. A fundamental descriptor of my being.*
- What do you get out of your MSTA membership?  
*Sharing my being a MOTORCYCLIST with like-minded friends and riders. It helps being a State Director. I'm kinda hard to avoid!!*
- What are your hobbies and interests outside of motorcycling?  
*Huh?? Oh, like traveling, working with my hands, snow skiing and riding...*

Just as we see in other MSTA Newsletters and the STARreview, we would also like to publish profiles of our members, on a strictly voluntary basis, of course. If you would like to participate, please send an email to the editor of our *Florida Gator Tale* ([editor@flmsta.org](mailto:editor@flmsta.org)) and answer as many of the questions above as you feel appropriate. Please send an attachment with a suitable photo of you with your primary or favorite motorcycle. Thank you for your participation.

## Random Ramblings!!

I will not be attending STAR '22 next month. I preach "ride your own ride" and walk the talk. My unplanned hip replacement took me off the bike just when I usually ramp up my preparation for riding roads we don't have in Florida. I look for more seat time and as many curves as I can carve. With 3 months off the bike, and still working full time, I will not be ready for the hills and dales. One could argue that I could ramp down my riding to suit my reduced prep level...I'm unable to rewire myself that way. I would be disappointed with myself the whole STAR. I so look forward to riding at the way-fun STAR destinations that doing so half-assed, er...under-prepared, would ruin my trip. I'll be more than ready for STAR '23!!

With the latest surge of the scourge renewed, I do hope to see more riders roll up their sleeves for a shot to accelerate any positive momentum!! Most of us qualify for the booster shots, which I gladly took. I did so because I know I'm surrounded by unvaccinated persons on a daily basis, who are aiding and abetting the constant creation of COVID variants.

*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

### **May Central Ride – Mary's Kountry Kitchen, Tavares, FL**

Saturday morning was clear and pleasantly cool. Three of us met in Altamonte Springs for a relaxing ride on the backroads to Mary's Kountry Kitchen. We arrived at 08:50 to find one rider waiting for us. Enjoying the shade of the oak trees, we waited for others and soon eight other riders had

joined us in the shade.



*Enjoying the shade of the oak trees*

There was delay in getting our tables ready because Mary's was crowded. But, by 10:00 we were all seated. Conversation flowed and was great. As usual, the food at Mary's was delicious and the service outstanding. Mary's is a favorite biker spot for breakfast and lunch. STAR was a hot topic of conversation. Twelve riders were present.

Around 11:00 we all mounted up for the rides home or to other adventures. The ride home was definitely warmer, but not unpleasant.



*Mary's is a favorite biker spot for breakfast & lunch.*



## **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: **RESCHEDULED - Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Grills Riverside Seafood Deck & Tiki Bar**, 6075 N US Hwy 1, **Melbourne, FL**  
☎ (321) 242-8999 ([map](#))

Description: Back to the Indian River! Wonderful setting, outside tables with a view. Oh, and the food is good, too!!

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

### **MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride**

When: Saturday, **June 11<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Runway Cafe**, 130 Authority Ln, **Sebring, FL** ☎ (863) 763-4276 ([map](#))

Description: It's been a while since we dined here. Seems we're on a roll with airport destinations! Gives you wings...

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

### **MSTA STAR National Rally 2022**

When: **Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Location: **Drury Plaza Hotel/Cape Girardeau Conference Center**  
3351 Percy Dr, **Cape Girardeau, Missouri** ([map](#))

Description: The MSTA National Rally. STAR= Sport Touring Association Rendezvous  
Officially opening up on Sunday evening and closing on Wednesday evening with a banquet.  
However, many people come in early on the Friday or Saturday and stay until Thursday. On- and Off-Road routes will be available. Registration will include the Tuesday Lunch Ride, the Wednesday evening banquet, door prizes, and a goodie bag for all attendees. The hotel serves an evening happy hour every day that includes drinks and some food. This is part of your room rate.

Contact: [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com)

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## **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, **July 9<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:carltr6@hotmail.com), or ☎ (386) 793-0030

### **MSTA Florida South Brunch Ride**

When: Saturday, **July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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](mailto:busavanflmsta@gmail.com), or ☎ (561) 386-2594

## MSTA Big Lynn Lodge Event Just For Fun Rally – Little Switzerland, NC

When: **Thursday, July 14<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, July 17<sup>th</sup>**

Location: **Big Lynn Lodge**, 10860 NC-226A, **Little Switzerland, NC** ([map](#))

Description: Big Lynn Lodge Event Just For Fun Rally. This is an MSTA sanctioned event.

You must call the Lodge directly to reserve your room. 828-765-4257. Your room rate includes your breakfast and evening meals. Road routes will be available for downloading as GPX files to your computer of GPS.

Contact: Coordinator: Dave Brickner 828-448-5429

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](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!! 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/](https://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](mailto:editor@flmsta.org). Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!