



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Contact Information:

Florida State Director:

Van VanSteelant – busavanflmsta@gmail.com

East Central Florida Area Rep:

Tom Blake – tblake1@cfl.rr.com

West Central Florida Area Rep:

Doug Westly – flwingrdr@msn.com

Florida Gator Tale Editor:

Kim Longacre – editor@flmsta.org

Feature Article

A Motorcycle Story

By Stephen Evans

[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!]

Attached is a motorcycle story that I came across about 10 years ago. I have no idea how I came across it or who wrote the story, but I kept it because I liked it. I found it in a notebook of mine and thought to share it. So, here's a kind of "feel good" story that I'm sure many of our members may be able to relate to it from some experience they have had during their travels on two

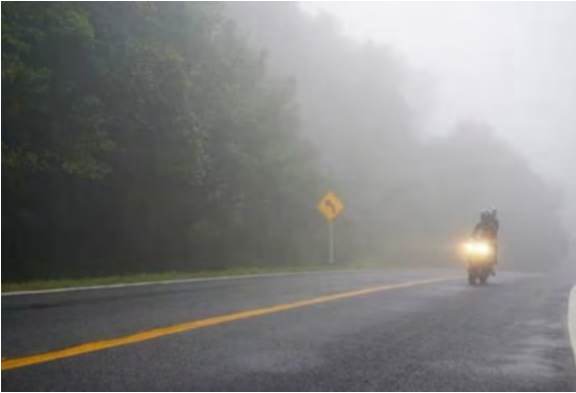


wheels. I know I can. I hope you enjoy it, and perhaps you'll recall an experience that you had out on the road.

The Story

Let me tell you a story about a young man who was on his first day of a ride from Pueblo, Colorado to Cincinnati, Ohio. As he's passing through Colorado Springs, the weather starts to turn bad, but he knew this was possible, so he was dressed for it. However, the weather got worse, and it became very foggy and even icy. He was feeling OK because he was on back roads, not the interstate, and he felt safer there under the circumstances. He was traveling without a map and just picked a road and headed east, thinking the fog would start to lift as soon as the sun started to warm up the air - but it was not to be. It didn't matter that he had no map, and it didn't matter if he were to get side-tracked because he was out riding and that was all that mattered.

We motorcyclists are (I believe) never really lost because we are always where we want to be - on a bike riding. I believe I get side-tracked or turned around at least once on every trip I've ever taken, and I've grown to love it. It seems that when I do get side-tracked, I come across something special in one way or another, such as a scenic byway I didn't know about. I've always been lucky enough to have plenty of gas and thus my motto is - I may be lost, but I'm makin' good time. :-) Anyway, let's get back to the story here.



It got colder, and the fog became thicker, so he slowed down and crept along the side of the road at 10 mph. At this point, his face shield had become frosted over, making it almost impossible for him to see. He was thinking he needed to pull over, and just then a small cafe came

into view, so he pulled off into the parking lot. Quickly, he got off the bike and went into the cafe trying to thaw out with a hot cup of coffee and a hot breakfast. He figured he had to wait for the weather to clear some before he got going again (as I'm sure we all have done at one time or another).



But the weather didn't clear. In fact, the fog got thicker, and it started to snow. But, the company in the small cafe was good. The other customers, all locals, engaged him in conversation and offered him the church next door to spend the night, which was where he stayed.

In the morning, he was back in the café, and the storm had moved on, but roads were covered in snow. However, the locals said, "It's no problem as the snow will melt by this afternoon." He saw no problem either because it was St. Patrick's Day, and the cafe had corned beef and cabbage - all you can eat. He was a happy camper, and he wasn't even Irish! America, what a great country! The local farmers said there was another storm coming later that day, but as the weather and roads cleared, he turned around and headed home. He felt no need to travel on as he had already had an experience that would last him a lifetime.



Sometimes, it's not the road but a special place with special people that you'll always remember how kind and friendly they all were to you. It's an experience you will always remember.

I love taking trips and riding solo, and stories like this (the people) have happened to me as it seems everyone wants to talk to a solo rider. We are easy to approach. I'm sure a story like this in some way has happened to all of you, also. Stories like this are just one of the many reasons why I ride. It's a "feel good" story, and riding makes us ALL feel good!

Now, get out there and chase the horizon!

—Stephen Evans

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 April 2019 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]

Surviving the Roundabout By Doug Westly



Some people call it a traffic circle, although technically the two have slightly different characteristics. Whatever you want to call it, they are becoming more prevalent in U.S. road planning every year. There is a good reason for this increase. Statistically, roundabouts are more efficient than either 2-way or 4-way stop intersections. They move traffic faster and are safer. They actually reduce types of crashes involving serious injury or death by 78-82% (Source: AASHTO Highway Safety Manual). Common sense tells us why. If there is a crash in a roundabout, it usually happens at slower

speeds and with lesser angular impacts. Pretty simple physics.

Regardless of size, shape (there are oval, teardrop, peanut-shaped roundabouts, as well as some other oddities out there), roundabouts all have three characteristics, at least here in the U.S.:

1. *Counterclockwise flow* around a center island or marker.
2. *Entry Yield Control:* Vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to traffic already circulating.
3. *Low Speed:* Roundabout curvature results in lower vehicle speeds, usually 10-25 mph.

Roundabouts do offer different types of safety challenges to motorcyclists, among them:

- Drivers not seeing the motorcyclist trying to enter or already in the roundabout. Not a big surprise...
- Drivers changing lanes in a roundabout, in preparation to exit the circulation.
- Drivers simply not knowing what to do in a roundabout, including entry protocol, lane positioning, exiting, etc.

So how do you survive the roundabout on two (or three) wheels? Here are 3 simple rules to follow:

- Always assume traffic in circulation, or about to enter the roundabout does not see you.
- Always assume traffic in the roundabout is going to unexpectedly change lanes.
- Always assume drivers don't have a clue as to how to navigate a roundabout.

This last one is really important. We don't have a lot of roundabouts in Florida. Combine that with our aging driver demographic, foreign drivers, tourists, etc., and you get a potentially dangerous riding situation.

In short, whenever you come upon a roundabout in your riding adventures, take the time to slow down and look at all the traffic in and around the roundabout before entering the counterclockwise circle of vehicular chaos. Look for confused drivers, vehicles getting ready to change lanes, and even drivers in the circulation who will stop for other cars to enter, though that is the exact opposite of the traffic rules!

Roundabouts can be fun, but they need to be carefully analyzed as you ride them!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



South Director's Report

Oh, we're on the edge of a stormy season...

Early heat waves, little rain, big downpours, lots of sunshine. Ah, May! Seems to have affected our East and West lunch rides. Tom and Doug certainly made the most of their events, evidenced below. And be sure to adjust your schedules for the summer rides!

The South lunch to Lightsey's Seafood got the luck of the draw. No rain, only in the 80's, and a favorite destination, brought out 20 riders and drivers. We had representation from both coasts and parts south! A special mention here--Brian made a day of it, leaving Sebring to meet the Southies at the Shell station in Jupiter to join us for the ride back north to Okeechobee! Good times!

Our departure from Shell was a bit haphazard, as one rider attempting to fuel up could not get his BMW gas cap to behave. Despite lots of assistance and tools, he bailed with enough gas to get to the nearest dealer for a program reset. Whatever was wrong with using a key to unlock a gas cap?? And who remembers simply twisting a cap to refuel?

So we left with 7 riders, with 3 more planning to meet at Lightsey's. A line of bikes in the shady part of the parking lot greeted us upon arrival. And as usual, the Staff jumped right in to set us up for a great gathering in the outdoor enclosure. The service and food were the usual goodness. Plenty of time for lots of gab covering summer travel plans and prior visitations!! Dianne gave us a STAR '24 update, covering vendors, raffles, registration, and answering a few questions as well. Eve was also able to sell an MST hat to an eager new owner! She has plenty more, so look her up!



The South Lunch ride to Lightsey's Seafood had 20 riders from both coasts and parts south!

This ride was a summer swan song for James and Laura as well. Their work allows for doing so remotely, so they will be spending the next few months "working" and riding in the hills of NC. We'll let them settle in before we come "crashing" their new digs... (with their permission, of course!) As a fitting send off, James won the 50/50, but then donated \$20 back from his winnings, netting us \$55, bringing our total to \$644. As always, a BIG THANKS to all who participate! We will soon be covering another yearly GoDaddy renewal, so our funding level is much appreciated.

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 **June 8th**, be at **The Mulberry Lane Café in Melbourne!** The **South Brunch Ride** lands back at the **Log Cabin in LaBelle on June 15th.** And, be sure to get to the **Sunrise Eatery in Zephyrhills on June 29th** for the **West Central 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 renewed:

Robert Croot	Robert Fischer	Nate Laney
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These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

James Bosco	L Dee Cramer	Elaine Kendall	Thomas Longo
Robert Miller	Jeffrey Withrow	Kim Krzywicki	

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

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

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

Random Ramblings!!

With 3 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 – The Port Steak and Seafood Restaurant, Poinciana, FL – Tom Blake

Our May 11th lunch ride was to **The Port Steak and Seafood Restaurant** on the west shore of Lake Hatchineha (hatch-n-hah') and about 10 miles east of Dundee. We rode lots of interesting little zig-zaggy roads going up there from east of Lake Wales that I'd never been on.

Thanks in part to the early morning thunderstorms, which were working east-southeast and stretching across the peninsula, and partly on the mid-90° temps, only 7 intrepid riders showed up – 3 from Sun City and 4 from my neck of the swamp. The thunder in my area was of earth and window-shaking magnitude, extremely LOUD and persistent – woke me up about 3 a.m., and I never really got back to a sound sleep after that. The rain was barely over when the EC riders left for the meet-up. We knocked out a few lovebugs coming across 60 – mostly around the Kissimmee River area going over, but they apparently had had enough by the time we rode home.

I was disappointed with the restaurant's appearance – inside and out. The online pictures didn't match the reality we saw. And although the food was pretty good and we had a lot of amusing stories going on around the table, the place just wasn't up to our standards. My apologies.

Next up: I've decided to experiment this summer and NOT set up any 9:30 brunches. Instead, we'll do **8 a.m. breakfasts** each month at new and interesting destinations in Brevard and Indian River Counties. We'll meet up **at the restaurant**, enjoy some friendly chatter over what I hope will be above-average food, service and ambience and then, weather permitting, go for a group ride afterward. So, sort of a reversal of our normal modus operandi. The restaurant list is under development – I'm sampling each one in advance and making changes. I hope they all turn out to meet everyone's high expectations.

Leading off in June, we'll meet for breakfast at **The Mulberry Lane Café**, in **North Melbourne**. It's at the south end of the Rivercrest Plaza, which is on the west side of U.S.1 between Parkway Dr and Post Rd. The review summary on Google Maps is 4.7, and they got 5 stars from almost all Yelp reviewers. I've eaten breakfast there and was impressed. They also make their own bakery products and have adequate room for all of us plus plenty of paved parking. And yes, Terry, oatmeal is on the menu!



Despite the heat and thunderstorms, 7 intrepid FLMSTA riders made it to the East-Central Ride in Poinciana.

West Central Lunch Ride – Gloria's Restaurant, Bowling Green, FL – Doug Westly

Well folks, Saturday's lunch spot at **Gloria's Restaurant in Bowling Green** was not FL MSTA's largest showing. Sorry to be so direct, but we had exactly four riders show for lunch on Saturday, and that is counting Becky and I. Many thanks to Mike Clark and Bob Shields, joining us for a casual lunch and fun chat! At least now we're shifting to the brunch schedule. Next month, on **June 29th**, the **West Central Brunch ride** will meet at 10 AM at the **Sunrise Eatery in Zephyrhills**. Hopefully, with the shift back to earlier time, we can get more folks out to ride and join in! Hope to see you there!

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, June 8th, 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM**

Location: **Mulberry Lane Cafe**, 3440 N Harbor City Blvd, **Melbourne, FL** ☎ (321) 426-7149 ([map](#))

Description: New to us but has excellent re views. A great place for breakfasts. Not only a café, a bakery, too. Paved parking. **NOTE: New times!** 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, June 15th, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Log Cabin BBQ**, 480 W Hickpochee Ave, **LaBelle, FL** ☎ (863) 675-3418 ([map](#))

Description: Simple and tasty!! We had a great time here a while back!!

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

MSTA Florida West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 29th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Location: **Sunrise Eatery**, 5883 Gall Blvd, **Zephyrhills, FL** ☎ (813) 782-0401 ([map](#))

Description: This place looks fantastic!! You won't leave still hungry...

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

MSTA-BMWRA Canaan Valley Rally

When: **Saturday-Wednesday, June 22-26, 2024**

Location: **Canaan Valley Resort State Park**, 230 Main Lodge Rd, **Davis, WV**

☎ Hotel phone: 304-866-4121 ([map](#))

Description: Head for the Mountains! The mountains of West 'almost heaven' Virginia! Experience some of the best twisty roads to be found anywhere and some of the best adventure riding to be found in the eastern US. Come to Canaan Valley and share those experiences with hundreds of other sport touring and adventure riding enthusiasts and enjoy the amenities that the Canaan Valley Resort has to offer. Stay in the Lodge, rent a cabin, or camp all within the park confines. See old friends and make new ones as you enjoy socializing around the fire pits or taking in a nice swim after a day of riding. Enjoy great food at the on-site lodge or at one of the local restaurants. Lots of activities for the family too! You'll find everything you need to make this an unforgettable rally experience.

Contact: ridemsta.com/wv-canaan

Coordinator: Patrick Mogavero 859-620-6352 patrickmogavero@gmail.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 MSTA [Event Calendar](#) for any updates.

MSTA Florida East Central Brunch 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

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

Kim Longacre Newsletter Editor editor@flmsta.org	P. 'Van' VanSteelant FL State Director ☎ (561) 386-2594 busavanflmsta@gmail.com	Tom Blake East Central Area Rep ☎ (321) 794-6147 tblake1@cfl.rr.com	Doug Westly West Central Area Rep ☎ (813) 928-1663 flwingrdr@msn.com
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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!