



# The Florida Gator Tale

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Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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## In the June 2021 Issue:

- Page 1 – [Feature Article](#)
- Page 9 – [Safety Talk](#)
- Page 11 – [Florida News](#)
- Page 14 – [Florida Rides](#)
- Page 15 – [Future Florida Rides](#)
- Page 16 – [Florida MSTA Apparel](#)
- Page 16 – [Classified Ads](#)

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## Feature Article

### STAR 2021 Route Guide

MSTA



For the upcoming STAR 2021 at the Canaan Valley Resort in Davis, West Virginia (June 13-16, 2021), the MSTA offers an online STAR 2021 Route Guide at <http://star21.flybyweek.com/RouteGuide.html>. This year, in addition to the GPX navigation files, each route includes a link to an online map image and a pdf document of the map and Garmin route that you can download. Super easy!!

Here are summary descriptions of each of the 22 STAR routes in the guide:

#### **01 River RunsThru It**

RouteType: TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 196 miles.

Lunch Stop: Apple Annie's near Morgantown, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: NW, N, NE, CLOCKWISE

Comments: Something for big bikes, 2-up with some 1.5 lane twisty pavement to work up appetites. This route leans more towards civilization.

#### **02 Smoke Hole to the Knob**

RouteType: TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, DESTINATION- Spruce Knob, CURVY route.

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 179 miles.

Lunch Stop: Hollow Restaurant in Franklin, WV, and Ice Cream at Moe Fatz if desired.

Direction from Canaan Valley: S, SE CLOCKWISE

Comments: Suitable for any bikes but including 1.5 lane paved twisties. Includes Smoke Hole Road as well as Moyers Gap & Sugar Grove. After lunch back on US-33 where a stop could be made at Germany Valley

overlook then a quick up and back run to Spruce Knob on the paved road in/out before heading back to the resort. Much time can be taken at Spruce Knob just walking the short trails and absorbing the fantastic views East and West.

### **03 Five Rivers Tour**

RouteType: SHORT, TWISTY

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 94 miles

Lunch Stop: Melanie's Family restaurant (but it's only 50 miles into the short 94 mile route)

Direction from Canaan Valley: N, NW, CLOCKWISE

Comments: Five rivers- Blackwater, Dry Fork, Black Fork, Shavers Fork, and Cheat. Back Hollow Road to WV-72 (not suitable for large trucks!!!) A few miles north on WV-72 I have included a sharp left onto River Road to follow the banks of the Dry Fork of the Cheat. This is a tricky sharp turn and some may prefer to stay straight on WV-72 which is twisty itself but you don't have this sharp left hand turn which may be difficult on a large touring bike. River Road merges back onto WV-72 in about 5 miles so either way will keep you on the route. We'll go through the community of Hendricks where the Blackwater River joins the Dry Fork and creates the Black Fork ( about 3.5 miles in length I believe it's the shortest river in WV), the Black Fork merges with the Shavers Fork just north of Parsons to create the Cheat which ultimately meets its end at Point Marion Pennsylvania north of Morgantown, WV where it joins the Monongahela River.

At Parsons we'll stay on WV-72 and just a bit north of town we'll drop off onto Holly Meadows Road to the right. We'll follow this to Limestone Road which will head up the mountain and eventually join Stemple Ridge Road. This will meet US-50 at which we'll turn right/east. I added Melanie's Restaurant as a waypoint in case folks want a bite to eat or coffee and Cathedral State Park is just across the road where one could stop and walk the trails among the old growth hemlock trees.

· From there we double back west on US-50 and back to Stemple Ridge Road but at the intersection with Location Road we will turn left onto Location Road and take it down into the valley to St. George. You will not regret riding Limestone, Location, and Stemple Ridge Roads, they are just incredibly beautiful.

· Once we arrive at St. George we will return to Holly Meadows Road until it intersects with Horseshoe Run Road, we will stay on it until we come to Lead Mine Mountain Road, we will take it, to the right. This road is a blast going up the mountain to it's terminus at US-219, there we will take US-219 and WV-32 back to CVR.

### **04 Glady Fork Dry Fork**

RouteType: SHORT

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 41 miles

Lunch Stop: NONE

Direction from Canaan Valley: S, SW, CLOCKWISE

Comments: Beautiful relaxing, scenic views, rivers, takes WV-32 south to Harman and heads west on US-33 to Alpine Lodge at Alpena and heads back north towards CVR but not before crossing Glady Fork River and upper Dry Fork. Be careful on the road from Alpine Lodge to the Glady Campground area as there can be a lot of fishermen and/or campers traveling the road. This would be good for folks looking for a short ride or it could be combined with #03 above and still be less than 150 miles total with time for lunch in Davis or a stop at Blackwater Falls State Park.

### **05 US 50 Lonely Road**

RouteType: TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, DESTINATION

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 254 miles

Lunch Stop: Capon Bridge at either El Puente Mexican Restaurant or Greg's Restaurant (homemade and pie). Those wanting an earlier lunch can stop at Romney or for a later lunch stop at Moorefield.

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, NE, CLOCKWISE

Comments: "US-50 the loneliest road and assorted splendor" Includes US-48, WV42, US-50, WV29, Rt. 9, Magnolia Rd., Detour Rd., WV27 Smokey Hollow Rd., VA259, Christian Church Rd., Ford Hill Rd, North River Road. There are beautiful churches worthy of photos along both Christian Church Road and North River Road at Bean Settlement. North River Rd. to US-48, then to Patterson Creek Rd. Exit, through Greenland Gap and up WV-42 twisty to US-48 and back to CVR

### **06 Hacker Valley Challenge**

RouteType: TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, DESTINATION, EASY NAVIGATION FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 217 miles

Lunch Stop: Holly River State Park Restaurant, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: W, SW CLOCKWISE

Comments: Lots of friendly, fun roads on this route. Holly River State Park Restaurant is one of the favorite lunch stops for this edition of STAR. A side trip could be made to the Sago Mine Disaster Memorial if desired.

### **07 Potomac River Ramble**

RouteType: TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 239 miles

Lunch Stop: Main Street Grill in Romney, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, NE CLOCKWISE

Comments: Route includes four lanes, highways, back roads and a 50 cent toll bridge crossing of the Potomac River to Oldtown Maryland. Passes by the historic Paw Paw Tunnel. Runs down the mountain valley South via the beautiful Knobley Road to Petersburg and then a run back up the flowing Jordan Run Road to the uphill twist fest of WV-42 before heading back via four lane US-48 to CVR. Care should be taken in Paw Paw, WV, to keep at or under the posted speed limit.

### **08 Whistle Punk**

RouteType: DESTINATION, TWISTY route.

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 308 miles

Lunch Stop: Whistle Punk Grill & Taphouse, East Main Street, Richwood, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: W, SW, CLOCKWISE

Comments: An all day ride and good for the spirited rider as it's 308 miles total and 9-10 hours should be allowed to complete it. The county route section between Marlinton and the Highland Scenic Highway via Woodrow and Williams River roads is one of my all time favorite strips of blacktop in WV. US-219 between Elkins and Marlinton isn't bad either. Nor are the roads headed back north, WV-20, WV-15, US-19. Along US-19 North of Flatwoods is Falls Mill, a roadside stop with a beautiful waterfall on the Little Kanawha River. A back road route through the backwaters of Stonecoal and Stonewall Jackson Lakes will deposit us at Horner and US-48 for the mostly relaxed ride back to CVR.

## 09 Chris's Favorite

RouteType: DESTINATION, TWISTY

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 261 miles

Lunch Stop: High's Restaurant in Monterey, VA

Direction from Canaan Valley: SW, SE COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Called "Chris's Favorite" (Chris Shoop) as it includes the infamous "high crash area signs." Route includes Snowy Mountain Road as well as the Blue Grass, VA valley both of which will make you think you're in the Scottish Highlands. On the way to High's Restaurant in Monterey, VA it will pass the Green Bank Radio Observatory, which is definitely worth a stop. After Green Bank the twisty US-250 will rival US-33 which is on the way back. I recommend High's for lunch, they have awesome pie too.

Part 2 (below 133 miles) runs US-250 east to pick up VA-736 and 42, etc. to Ottobine, VA. Here if one did not wish to ride up to the US-33 (high crash area) they could head west from Ottobine to Briery Branch VA and on across the state line/pass to Sugar Grove and then pick up US-33 at Brandywine for the ride back to CVR. Along the way back on US-33 from Franklin folks will want to take in the view of Germany Valley. The overlook comes upon you quickly as you are enjoying the twisties approaching you from the east.

## 10 Lost River-Trough

RouteType: DESTINATION, TWISTY, EASY NAVIGATION FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 197 miles

Lunch Stop: Main Street Grill, Romney, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: "Lost River to the Trough via Grassy Lick" heads from CVR to Seneca Rocks then to Petersburg where a stop could be made at Tri-County Powersports (MSTA STAR sponsor). Then onto Moorefield and CR12 to Lost River State Park. From there we make our way up to a fun road called Grassy Lick, which will take to Romney. A very nice lunch can be had at the Main Street Grill but there are other fast food options, Sheetz and Dairy Queen. Points of interest in Romney include the School for the Deaf and Blind on the North side of US-50, also the Indian Mound Cemetery is interesting, it is on the west end of town also on the North side of US-50. From Romney we will head south though the Trough, I often see bald eagles on this road. This will pretty much go to Moorefield where I have us on the four lane US-48 back to Davis and CVR.

## 11 Crazy 8's

RouteType: DESTINATION, TWISTY, TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, EASY NAVIGATION FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 190 miles

Lunch Stop: High's Restaurant in Monterey, VA

Direction from Canaan Valley: S, SW CLOCKWISE & COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Go crazy on the Crazy 8's ride! This ride features some of the best curves in the state. It makes a figure 8 pattern because honestly I don't know which direction is best on Rt 250! This ride will take you past the Green Bank Observatory, the Jefferson Baths in Warm Springs Va and several other great locations along the way. It is a two lane paved ride with plenty of turns and some nice long straights through the valleys. You will travel through valleys, over mountains and follow along rivers through small towns and rural farms. There will be several excellent views as you switch back up some of the mountains.

## 12 Long and Easy

RouteType: DESTINATION, TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, EASY NAVIGATION ROUTES FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 191 miles

Lunch Stop: Greenbrier Grille or The Dirt Bean, Marlinton, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: S, SW COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Take a long and easy cruise through scenic West Virginia! This route showcases some of our less twisty, wide open roads. All paved two lane with scenic beauty around every bend. The route features Seneca Rocks, the Green Bank Observatory and other historic sites along the way.

## 13 Paved Adventure

RouteType: DESTINATION, ADVENTURE (EASY, PAVED)

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 199 miles

Lunch Stop: The Bluegrass Mercantile, Blue Grass, VA. Check their facebook for specials and menu

Direction from Canaan Valley: NE, SW CLOCKWISE

Comments: Ready for adventure, but not ready for gravel? No problem. The Paved Adventure route is for you! This route is paved and features some off-the-beaten-path lane and a half paved or chip and sealed roads that wander through the mountains of West Virginia. It features rolling farm county, scenic views, Seneca Rocks and Seneca Caverns!

## 14 Thrilla Over

RouteType: CURVY, DESTINATION, TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, EASY NAVIGATION FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 178 miles

Lunch Stop: Wood Grill Buffet, located at 1711 Reservoir Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. 540.432.9303

Direction from Canaan Valley: SE, OUT-AND-BACK

Comments: Since we don't have a specific Lunch Ride for STAR this year, Keith McCrea provided this simple route via US33 to The Wood Grill Buffet in Harrisonburg, VA. An MSTA area has been reserved, and members receive a buffet discount between the hours of 11:00 and 1:30.

## 15 Beginners ADV

RouteType: ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: REQUIRES A GPS THAT SUPPORTS TRACKS- NO ROUTE OR PDF AVAILABLE

Distance: 114 miles

Lunch Stop: Cheetah B's, Petersburg, WV

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, NE COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Take a scenic adventure consisting of graded gravel road, lane and a half lane chip and seal and paved lane and a half and two lane. This route passes over Dolly Sods and then follows the Potomac river into historic Petersburg. From there it meanders through some of the most beautiful farm country through valleys and over mountains. Route passes through a natural mountain pass and also by a unique waterfall that can be seen from the roadside (marked on the gpx file). This is an easy to intermediate adventure route, the only challenges are the maintained gravel roads.

## 16 iMAT ADV Loop 1

RouteType: ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: REQUIRES A GPS THAT SUPPORTS TRACKS- NO ROUTE OR PDF AVAILABLE

Distance: 184 miles

Lunch Stop: The Bluegrass Mercantile, Blue Grass, VA. Check their facebook for specials and menu

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, S, SW CLOCKWISE

Comments: Get an exclusive look at the iMAT route system that will be featured in the July/August issue of RoadRunner Magazine! Loop 1 is a mix of gravel, pavement and some dirt roads with a mild stream crossing or two. Enjoy some of the most epic, scenic beauty on the East Coast! Features of Loop 1 are views like Bear Rocks on Dolly Sods, the famous FR75, Smith Mountain Road (Also known as "the gate road"), Spruce Knob (the highest point in West Virginia), gorgeous rolling farm country of Bluegrass Virginia, the popular Middle Mountain Road and much more!

VERY IMPORTANT: Smith Mountain Road is a county road that runs through farms pastures, watch for cows, do not spook them. You will likely need to dismount your bike, ride through, and close at least one, if not more gates. Please leave gates open that are left open and ones that are closed left closed. Leave the gates as you find them.

Gas: Available with detour at the end of Smith Mtn Rd by going to Seneca rocks (~60mi) Gas stop for longer range bikes at Bartow (~125mi)

Note: If the seat time is daunting half the ride can be ridden and paved scenic roads will take you back to CVR with minimal planning.

### **17 iMAT ADV Loop 2**

RouteType: ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: REQUIRES A GPS THAT SUPPORTS TRACKS- NO ROUTE OR PDF AVAILABLE

Distance: 222 miles

Lunch Stop: Snowshoe Mountain- Some dining options may only be available certain days so view the web link and call the establishment you are interested in to ensure operating hours. <https://www.snowshoemtn.com/things-to-do/dining/the-village>

Direction from Canaan Valley: SW COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Get an exclusive look at the iMAT route system that will be featured in the July/August issue of RoadRunner Magazine! Loop 2 is a mix of gravel, pavement and some dirt roads . Enjoy some of the most epic, scenic beauty on the East Coast! Features of Loop 2 are Bickle Knob overlook tower, Cass Scenic Railroad, Snowshoe mountain top resort, Top of Allegheny battlefield and more!

Lunch: Snowshoe Mountain- Some dining options may only be available certain days so view the web link and call the establishment you are interested in to ensure operating hours. <https://www.snowshoemtn.com/things-to-do/dining/the-village>

Gas: Fuel range needs to be around 120 miles safely. Fuel stop at The base of Snowshoe mountain is around 112 miles from Canaan. Return trip fuel stop at Bartow is much closer, however it's around 111 miles back to Canaan so if you made it to Snowshoe you SHOULD be able to make it back.

### **18 iMAT ADV Loop 3**

RouteType: ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: REQUIRES A GPS THAT SUPPORTS TRACKS- NO ROUTE OR PDF AVAILABLE

Distance: 128-158 miles

Lunch Stop: Mama Mia Pie and Pasta <https://mamamiapieandpasta.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mamamiappizzeria>

Direction from Canaan Valley: E, NE COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Get an exclusive look at the iMAT route system that will be featured in the July/August issue of RoadRunner Magazine! Loop 3 was hands down the favorite route of Florian and Steve from RoadRunner. It is primarily gavel and paved mix. Scenic beauty and surprises await around every corner. Some of the highlights include The Sinks of Gandy, Government Road and Olsen Tower. The primary route bypasses two challenge sections that are not for the faint of heart. The Canyon Rim Road and Canaan Loop both feature gnarly rock bed roads with multiple stream crossings and mountain scenery like you will not experience anywhere else, if you decide to accept the challenge!

Gas: Available in Elkins, Parsons, Thomas and Davis along the route marked on the GPX file.

Time: Expect ride to take 5-7 hours depending on stops

Note: For those adventurous the Sinks of Gandy is a mountain stream that goes under ground the opening can be seen clearly from the hike outlined on the GPX file. This IS private property so be respectful. In the past I have encountered a ranch hand (or owner?) who told me as long as they owned it they have no intentions of keeping the Sinks from anyone as it is a natural wonder. It is private property and a cow pasture, enter at your own risk.

### **19 iMAR ADV Loop 1**

RouteType: ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: REQUIRES A GPS THAT SUPPORTS TRACKS- NO ROUTE OR PDF AVAILABLE

Distance: 215 miles

Lunch Stop: Snowshoe Mountain- Some dining options may only be available certain days so view the web link and call the establishment you are interested in to ensure operating hours. <https://www.snowshoemtn.com/things-to-do/dining/the-village>

Direction from Canaan Valley: W, SW COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: The iMAR Route system is a mix of easier gravel and pavement that takes you on a ride through nearly the same area as the iMAT route system but it is less challenging and utilizes some other great adventure roads. Loop 1 of the iMAT will take you on a ride through some of the state's most scenic areas. Roads vary from gravel roads, that were formerly railbed, following along the river to mountain top paved roads. This ride will take you to Snowshoe and through Cass Scenic Railroad as well as Top of Allegheny battlefield.

Gas: Fuel range needs to be around 120 miles safely. Fuel stop at The base of Snowshoe mountain is around 117 miles from Canaan. Return trip to Canaan is around 98 miles so if you made it to Snowshoe you SHOULD be able to make it back fine.

Time: Expect ride to take 9-11 hours depending on stops

### **20 Crazy 4-8's**

RouteType: DESTINATION, TWISTY, TOURING BIKE-FRIENDLY, EASY NAVIGATION FOR NON-GPS

Navigation difficulty: SIMPLE

Distance: 145 miles

Lunch Stop: High's Restaurant Monterey, Va <http://www.highsrestaurant.com/menu.html>

Direction from Canaan Valley: S, SW COUNTERCLOCKWISE

Comments: Go crazy on the Crazy 4/8's ride! This ride is the northern half of the longer Crazy 8's ride. It features some of the best curves in the state. It is a two lane paved ride with plenty of turns and some nice long straights through the valleys. You will travel through valleys, over mountains and follow along rivers through small towns and rural farms. There will be several excellent views as you switch back up some of the mountains.

### **21 Honestly**

RouteType: INTERMEDIATE ADVENTURE

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 125 miles

Lunch Stop: Lil' Moes, Phillipi, WV <https://www.facebook.com/little.moes/>

Direction from Canaan Valley: NW CLOCKWISE

Comments: As they say- honesty is the best policy. Well, this ride is honest. It is an intermediate adventure ride that will take you through gravel roads, paved lane and a half roads rolling through farm country and a few sections of dirt road with exposed rock bed as well as former railbed (as is evident by repurposed rail bridge). The scenery is quite diverse, it is rolling farm country, rocky river valley, mountain streams and honest exposure to impoverished rural Appalachian areas. The mixture of scenic beauty and poverty is a sobering socioeconomic journey that leaves one with introspection.

Gas: Phillipi Sheetz (60mi)

## **22 Road to Tom's**

RouteType: SHORT, DESTINATION, TOURING BIKE FRIENDLY

Navigation difficulty: AVERAGE

Distance: 129 miles

Lunch Stop: Oakland, MD, there are many good restaurants to choose from for those not into culinary adventures of selecting a restaurant Uno Pizzeria and Grill is always a good bet.

Direction from Canaan Valley: N, NW, CLOCKWISE

Comments: The Road to Tom's is just that! This is a route to Tom McKee's home, a motorcycle collector and friend of route maker Brian Holmes. Through this friendship the MSTA has procured exclusive access to Tom's personal collection of over 20 show condition vintage motorcycles including antique Harley-Davidsons and even some more unique motorcycles such as a rotary engine Suzuki and an antique Henderson. In addition to motorcycles Tom also has a nice collection of vintage memorabilia.

A visit to Tom's will assuredly keep you entertained as he has a vast knowledge of classic motorcycles, experiences with unique individuals in the sport and industry and a passion for motorcycles like few possess. Hours Tom is available will be made known at STAR. The route takes you to his home so please be respectful and abide by the hours he is available to show his collection. You will check in at his home and he will have provisions to lead you to his collection.

## *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.*

### **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 back roads 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.)*

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## Florida News



### South Director's Report

#### **So, what's the new normal all about...**

We had a small taste of it during our South Lunch ride to Lightsey's. Figuratively and literally! We had a significant gathering of 16 riders, which allowed us to just take over the far end of their covered porch. Our server just rolled with the ever expanding group, and handled the whole lunch event with calm and competence! And I'm not the only one who thought so...

Ellen Kocher's enthusiastic comments about the May South Lunch Ride to Lightsey's in Okeechobee mirror my own – it was great! She said: "The Okeechobee location turned out to be a magnet for MST riders. I was texting with Don Mroczenski last night and his response was that we should make that place an annual stop for our lunch ride. It's centrally located, good food and a big screened in porch. What's not to like?" And for me, after seeing the portions on the cobbler ala mode, I think next time I should start out with dessert first. Then I probably wouldn't need anything else."



*Great food and fun at Lightsey's in Okeechobee for the May South Lunch Ride.*

We gathered riders from Tamarac to Sun City to Melbourne to little ol' Boynton Beach. The small group who decided to ride the long way round the Lake O enjoyed the two lanes and uneventful conditions. And decided that we were good for another several years before the bug to ride the west side of the lake may bite again... Most rode a more direct route. Okeechobee may be approachable from several directions, but none will curl your corner-loving toes! Fortunately, the vibe and grub more than made up for the simple roads. Stories of how most of us passed the COVID times, from home and hunkered down to cross-country ventures looking for electrical charging stations, kept us all smiling and appreciative of the good fortune to still being able to get together and share a great meal!! For the ride home, a larger group enjoyed the "Canopy Road" and the "Indiantown By-Pass" on our way to points south and east.

We also revived the 50/50 raffle during our lunch. As usual for us, it was well received and generated a \$32 pot for the winner. Rich Peabody was so thrilled to have won, finally, that he offered his winnings back to the Club! So, another \$64 is added to our leftover funds. 2019 left us with \$533. Early 2020 added another \$97 before all hell broke loose. That brings us to \$694 as of today.

I'll send a separate email to the members detailing the recent GoDaddy renewals, which will deplete a portion of the sum above.

## What's Next??

Ok, I intend to support and encourage everybody's decision on whether to ride, eat or be merry. I am leaving the BRUNCH rides as scheduled WITH CONDITIONS!! Though nearly all restrictions have been lifted for restaurants and bars, I will continue to contact the restaurants to listen to how they are operating. I will send out the usual email announcements after my research.

Of course, we will continue exercising the option for a "regular sit down" BRUNCH by brown-bagging our own brunch refreshments and finding a welcoming place to "spread out" to eat and gab! Additionally, we have "regionalized" the email addresses of members in your area; say a 60-mile radius. This enables you up to reach out and set up "local rides" all over the state, any time you're motivated! Of course, the ultimate definition of "social distancing" is a solo ride!!

The **Central ride will be a BRUNCH ride, on Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>**, starting the summer season with a ride to **Grills Riverside Seafood Deck** in Melbourne. We will still offer a BYO destination for the time being, and the **Rotary Park at Suntree** fits the bill.

After we all return from STAR 2021, on **Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>**, the **South riders head to Beef 'O' Brady's** in LaBelle. For the BYO crowd, you will find **Barron Park** mere minutes away on the Caloosahatchee River.

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## Membership News!!

If you are receiving the *Gator Tale*, but not my announcements, **PLEASE** email me ASAP to correct my files. I believe I'm up to date...

My heartfelt THANKS to Don Moe for his efforts EVERY month to bring our Florida membership up to date with all the news about our new and renewing members!!

### Here's what we know today...

We welcome a new member – Michael Yandel from Niceville.

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Dee Cramer      Mike Engestrom      Pete Kauk





The food at Mary's is always well prepared and delicious, and today was no exception. The service was excellent. By 10:00 AM the restaurant was full and the patio half full. We were glad we had arrived at 09:30 AM. The fellowship was great and no one was in a hurry to depart.

Four of us decided, since it was close, to continue our ride to the Yalaha Bakery. The Yalaha Bakery is an authentic German bakery and deli. Not that we needed more food, but the bakery is a treat to visit, especially on weekends when they feature a live German band on the patio area outside. The bakery features German pastries, breads, and deli sandwiches.

Well, we couldn't get resist sampling some pastries and cookies – we rationalized that was lunch – and we took our goodies out to the patio to listen to the band. The band was really good playing German beer drinking music and folk songs.

It was a beautiful day, great riding weather and terrific friends.



*12 riders at Mary's, including Jackie, who rode the farthest – 241 miles from Ft. Lauderdale*



*Yalaha Bakery – an authentic German bakery and deli*

## **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, **June 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 – 11:30 AM**

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

Description: Back to the Indian River! Grills Riverside is a casual, laidback waterfront restaurant with outside tables and a view! Good food for breakfast and lunch while you watch the dolphins and boat traffic cruise the Indian River Lagoon. Sounds like a good time!

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

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

When: Saturday, **June 26<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 – 11:30 AM**

Location: **Beef O'Brady's**, 21 S. Lee St., **LaBelle, FL** ☎ (863) 612-9818 ([map](#))

Description: I know, but every once in a while, we enjoy a “chain” alternative. This venue looks inviting, and the menu options cover many different appetites! Just 4 minutes away, you'll find **Barron Park** right on the Caloosahatchee River. Nice!

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

## STAR 2021 / MSTA

When: **Sunday-Thursday, June 13-17, 2021**  
Where: **Canaan Valley Resort and Conference Center** 230 Main Lodge Rd, **Davis, WV** 26260 ([map](#))  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com) Click EVENTS/2021.  
Location: **Davis, West Virginia**

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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 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 – 11:30 AM**  
Location: **Four Seasons Restaurant**, 5298 US-27, Frostproof, FL ☎ (863) 635-2951 ([map](#))  
Description: We always have a good time riding in this part of Florida! Luckily, there's also a good place to stop and enjoy a brunch!! And you just might see few a Southies who got up real early to make this ride!  
We have decided to drop the park locations for the remainder of 2021. With the summer heat and the significant vaccination rates for our cohort, we think fewer of you will still consider a picnic table over restaurant service.  
Contact: Carl, [carltr6@hotmail.com](mailto:carltr6@hotmail.com), or ☎ (386) 793-0030

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

When: **Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 – 11: 30 AM**  
Location: **Main Street America, An Eatery**, 22 S Main Ave, Lake Placid, FL ☎ (863) 612-9818 ([map](#))  
Description: Some places always shine. This is one of them! Fun roads, central location and great service keeps us coming back year after year!  
We have decided to drop the park locations for the remainder of 2021. With the summer heat and the significant vaccination rates for our cohort, we think fewer of you will still consider a picnic table over restaurant service.  
Contact: Van, [busavanflmsta@gmail.com](mailto:busavanflmsta@gmail.com), or ☎ (561) 386-2594

### **Red River Gorge Rally / MSTA**

When: **Thursday-Sunday, July 8-11, 2021**  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com) Click EVENTS/2021.  
Location: **Mt. Sterling KY**

### **Big Lynn Lodge Rally / MSTA**

When: **Thursday-Sunday, July 15-18, 2021**  
Description: Visit [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com) Click EVENTS/2021.  
Location: **Little Switzerland, NC**

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>.

### **North Director Needed**

If you would consider taking the position of North Director, please contact Van, [busavanflmsta@gmail.com](mailto:busavanflmsta@gmail.com).

We welcome articles and comments from our members for publication. Contact the editor at: [editor@flmsta.org](mailto:editor@flmsta.org).

The MSTA National [website](#) has extensive event information.

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

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

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