



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Feature Article

Why Do We Ride?...A Pictorial Musing

By Doug Westly

[Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the March 2018 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale]



A couple of years ago, I finally got to take my wonderful wife on her first cross-country trip. She had been wanting to make the trip for a while, and we finally got the opportunity. We spent 18 days traveling from Florida to California and back. Some

days were better than others. One day was 8 hours of solid rain. Another was 725 miles of nothing but interstate (yuk). On the

other hand, we rode the Colorado passes in the Rocky Mountains, traveled down the Pacific Coast Highway, and saw the endless ribbon of the “Loneliest Road”, U.S. Hwy 50 through Nevada. I’ve been across the U.S. by motorcycle several times, but always solo before. This was my first trip with a riding partner, and doing it with my best friend and love of my life made it extra special. I also watched her experience that first cross-country trip and it reminded me of when I was making my first, similar journey many years before. Recalling that memorable trip, it raised the question: “Why do we really ride?”

Is it the traveling itself? Many riders say “It’s not the destination, it’s the journey.” It could be. How many of us have been “In The Zone” when we’re riding, that magical feeling when all perception of time, troubles and the outside disappears? It is feeling and thinking of nothing but you, the bike and the road... The Zone is a unique experience...Maybe it is the chance to get away with your best friend, loved one, or just friends who enjoy the same passion.

I don’t think Becky and I are ever closer than when we are on a trip together. The sharing of mutual experiences when you travel by motorcycle is unique. It is one of the reasons motorcyclists bond together so strongly. OK, sometimes it is undoubtedly the challenge. Whether it is crossing the country, climbing the mountain passes, or just taking a Sunday morning off-road ride, motorcycling challenges all of us in one way or another. This next pic has my vote for coolest riding gear look...ever...





...And until you've experienced it, you can't imagine the thrill of pushing your skills and machine to the limits around a racetrack. Doing a track school and/or a track day is a great way of improving your skills, meeting new folks in our sport, and finding your limits, and the limits of your machine. I highly recommend everyone experience a track day, at least once!

better way to experience our land than to feel it, see it, and even smell it (unless you're going by the cattle processing plants out West...) than on two wheels!



Of course, sometimes it may be the destination. Whether it is across the country, to the mountains, or just a ride to your favorite ocean-view picnic spot, there is no



For us MSTA'ers, it may just be the time we spend with each other, riding our favorite back roads, on the way to lunch and time spent talking motorcycles. For each one of us, motorcycling is a very personal experience. So the next time you're on your bike, whether alone or with the group, ask yourself: "Really, why do I ride?"

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 March 2018 FLMSTA Gator Tale.]*

The Eyes are the Key

By Doug Westly

Sometimes we tend to forget the basics. It is easy to get complacent and not practice good riding techniques. Using our eyes is probably one of the most basic and most critical elements of our riding.

When you started riding, your instructor (hopefully) stressed how important it was to “Look where you want to go.” It really is true. There is a bioscience term for it. It is actually called body indexing. Your body tends to orient towards your line of sight. It is a natural occurrence that just happens to lend itself to riding, provided that you use it properly.



That means that you not only have to look where you want to go, but you have to look ahead. And.... while your focus needs to be on where you want to go, at the same time you have to remain aware of what's around you. So how do you do all that at the same time?

The key is visual awareness. Understanding not only that you need to look where you want to go, but that your vision also has to tell you what's going on immediately around you. That's a lot to ask your eyes to do. So here are some simple steps to follow:

First, always remember to keep your eyes moving. Scan ahead. Move your eyes from one point to the next.

Next, don't get visually fixated. If you focus on one thing too long, guess where you are going to end up going? Yep, right at where you are looking.

Try cataloguing: As you note particular visual cues (cars, interchanges, other riders, the dog that looks like he's going to run out into the road, etc.), mentally voice those to yourself. That will help you maintain visual and mental awareness of them, peripherally, while you continue to scan ahead.

Be aware of your eye usage. If your focus tends to become too long or delayed on any particular visual target, it could be a sign that you are getting tired (or at least your eyes are getting tired).

Finally, using your eyes also means finding your path of travel. If your eyes can trace your intended path of travel, then there is a good chance the bike will follow that path as your eyes continue to move ahead. This becomes more and more critical as the path becomes narrower, faster, more congested, etc. You often hear riders talking about “looking through the corner.” What they should be referring to is using their eyes to trace their intended path through the corner (whether it is an outside-inside-outside line, or another path), and then continue their eye movement beyond the corner as they can see through or beyond it. Once your eyes trace that path, you and the bike should follow right along behind.

As you can see, our eyes are not just another tool when we ride. Used properly, they add safety, control, smooth movement and early warning for our riding. Not using them properly is one of a rider's biggest sins. Don't get caught just going out for a ride and visually taking in the scenery. Certainly there is a time and place for that, but let the casual view come peripherally. Focus your eyes on where you want to go, catalogue those visual cues and trace your lines. You'll find it to be a particularly necessary skill, if you haven't already.

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



South Director's Report

Oh, winter riding in Florida...

If you've caught any weather reports this winter, we seem to be hanging out of all harm's way this winter. Keep this wonderful news amongst ourselves...

Soooo, we continue to enjoy our monthly RTEs! The East Central Ride returned to a prior Daytona Lunch location, and Tom reports all went well, as detailed below. Doug's report on the West Central Ride to a renewed BBQ location follows as well.

The South Ride ventured a bit northerly to a wonderful waterside place in Sebastian. The Sebastian Saltwater Marina welcomed us with a quiet room and a terrific server! 14 of us dined with a water view and delicious food. Despite a gloomy forecast, we drew from Lakeland to Okeechobee to Melbourne to Boynton Beach. New members, Mike DeMario and Jim McMullen, joined a crowd of regulars and fit right in! We even had EC member Dianne Park find her way, carpooling up with Ellen Kocher, who's "between rides" at the moment.

Our group of 5 riders started with an unexpected delay due to a charity run/walk event that, only after we committed to the road over the intracoastal, essentially closed off our planned route. After a lengthy delay, we were able to safely U-turn and utilize other roads, bypassing preferred routes to make up for the time penalty. Arriving just on time, we were welcomed with the usual "where the hell have you been"!! It's nice to know when you are missed!!

The 50/50 raffle was well funded, with winner Buck Jones taking home \$45, adding \$45 to the \$30 from the East Central Ride and \$25 from the West Central ride, we now stand at \$1,164.

Always a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate in our raffle!!

What's Next??

We have four! rides in March. We carry on the tradition started by the late Phil Ridgdill with the Daytona Bike Week Lunch ride on Thursday, March 9th. We head to a new location, so make plans to be at the RiverGrille on the Tomoka, in Ormond Beach. A lovely setting! A big thanks to Dennis Villarose for stepping in for Tom this year. On March 18th, join us for either the South Lunch Ride, when we head to a new-to-us location, JR's BBQ in Indiantown, or the West Central Ride to Woody's River Roo in Ellenton! And on March 25th, the East Central Lunch ride returns to Eaton's Beach Sandbar and Grill in Weirsdale! So many opportunities...

Looking way ahead, registration is now open for STAR '23!! Members received a detailed email with all the info needed to make your plans... NOW!! Committing early makes it so much easier to ensure your attendance! You know it's in Knoxville, right!?!?



South Ride at Sebastian Saltwater Marina – dining with a water view and delicious food

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 welcomes a new member – Michael Demario of Melbourne. Great to have you ride with us!

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Eckart Schneider

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

Frederick Blackall Roy Clark Raymond Harcourt Prior Powers Ilse Zeigler

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!!

We have lots of LUNCH rides for the next several months. With 3 rides a month, you have plenty of chances to invite a friend along and introduce them to our group!!

We will continue to support our local, small business restaurants. Please send your recommendations to any of the ride coordinators.

We've had a terrific year sharing good grub and lots of great gab!! Our new personnel ought to make 2023 even more better... 😊

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 Co-Director



East-Central Ride – St. John’s River Grille, Deland, FL – Tom Blake

Despite the nice day, turnout at the St. John’s River Grille west of Deland on the 4th was a tad light. By region, we had 5 from north Florida and 5 from the east-central area, including 2 out-of-staters. I think everyone found enjoyable back roads to use coming and going. And, of course, there was no shortage of good-natured chatter. Larry Solomon won the \$40 raffle and donated half back to the club. So, \$30 is headed to Van to add to our coffers.

I’m pleased that we were able to offer a riding opportunity for our north state riders. It happens again in March with both the Bike Week Lunch in Ormond Beach on the 9th and then the East-Central Lunch in Weirsdale (which intrudes a bit into the northern reaches of the west-central zone) on the 25th.

Those planning to attend the Bike Week Lunch will be happy to note the new location – The RiverGrille on the Tomoka in Ormond Beach. It sits right on the south edge of the Tomoka River and on the west side of US-1. It’s not that far from the speedway, most area motorcycle shops, Main Street and only blocks from the Ormond Scenic Loop & Trail. I had lunch there in January to scope it out. Very attractive property and setting. Good food. And, if weather permits outside seating, even better. The manager says they don’t get that busy until around 2 pm, so our group should get in promptly. I’ll be out of state, so Dennis Villarose will get everyone seated. Enjoy!

I’ll be back in time for our second trip to Eaton’s Beach Sandbar & Grill in Weirsdale on the 25th. Hope to see many of you there!



Nice day for the East-Central Ride to St. John’s River Grille in Deland

West-Central Ride – Florida Cracker Cook Shack, Brooksville, FL – Doug Westly



A beautiful day to ride the Brooksville backroads to the Florida Cracker Cook Shack

Saturday, February 25th was a GREAT day to ride in Central FL. Several MSTA members met up at the Florida Cracker Cook Shack in Brooksville for BBQ under the awning. A small turnout for this weekend, but at least one rider did a 300+ mile trip for lunch. For those that don’t know, the Cook Shack is the old Ma’s Kitchen and now features indoor and outdoor seating for great barbecue! A beautiful day to ride the Brooksville backroads! Sitting outside for lunch evolved into great motorcycle story telling as well. We’re looking forward to seeing everyone at the Bike Week 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.

Daytona Bike Week

When: Friday-Sunday, **March 3 – 12, 2023**

Location: **Daytona Beach, FL** 📞 (352) 795-2806 ([map](#))

Description: 82nd Anniversary of Bike Week in Daytona. Possible races:
Flat track / Supercross / Daytona 200 Road Race
<https://www.motoamerica.com/daytona-200/>

Contact: www.officialbikeweek.com

MSTA Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: Thursday, **March 9th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **RiverGrille on the Tomoka**, 950 US-1, **Ormond Beach, FL** 📞 (386) 615-2004 ([map](#))

Description: This is a new location for our Thursday Bike Week Lunch. No one can complain about having a long ride from Daytona attractions to get here. There is a really nice spot alongside the Tomoka River just north of mainland Ormond. **They open at 11:30 and we'd like to be first in line.**

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **March 18th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **JR's BBQ & Saloon**, 15492 SW Warfield Blvd., **Indiantown, FL** 📞 (772) 597-0876 ([map](#))

Description: First time visit to a really local eastside location! Not much to look at on the outside, but the menu looks terrific!!

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

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **March 18th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Woody's River Roo**, 5717 18th Street E., **Ellenton, FL** 📞 (941) 722-2391 ([map](#))

Description: Can't go wrong with this one!! Get there early to grab the bike parking spots!

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

MSTA Florida East Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **March 25th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Eaton's Beach Sandbar & Grill**, 15790 SE 134th Ave., **Weirsdale, FL** 📞 (352) 259-2444 ([map](#))

Description: Eaton's Beach Sandbar & Grill – We tried this place a few years ago on a member's recommendation and thought it was a good choice and a nice alternative to Gator Joe's. It's a good-sized place with great views out over Lake Weir, which is a water sports playground. They have separate, paved motorcycle parking. Good central location with some really enjoyable roads.

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

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 Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, April 8th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Lake Harris Hideaway**, 11912 Lane Park Rd, **Tavares**, FL ☎ (352) 343-3585 ([map](#))

Description: Lake Harris Hideaway – This is an old favorite and for good reason. It's in a picturesque setting along the lake, plus they have an extensive menu and reasonable prices. The weather should be just about perfect for outdoor seating on the covered deck.

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

Tallahassee Bike Fest

When: Friday-Sunday, April 14-16, 2023

Location: Railroad Square Art District, 661 Railroad Sq, **Tallahassee**, FL ([map](#))

Description: A 3-day fest covering a multitude of interests and rider types!! Free to the public!!

Contact: <https://www.tallybikefest.com>

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, April 22nd, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Sandhill Grill at Pinecrest Golf Course**, 2250 Little Lake Bonnet Rd, **Avon Park**, FL ☎ (863) 453-7555 ([map](#))

Description: Join us at another new-to-us establishment that comes highly recommended! And an easy to get to destination for many of us.

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

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, April 29th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Tiki Docks River Bar & Grill**, 10708 Palmetto St, **Riverview**, FL ☎ (813) 683-8454 ([map](#))

Description: New location for MSTA, but we've eaten there often, and it's one of our favorites. A more urban setting, but a large restaurant with lots of seating outside on the deck overlooking the river.

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

North Georgia Classic

When: Friday-Sunday, April 21-23, 2023

Location: Mountain Valley Inn Dillard, 13 Royalty Ln, **Dillard**, GA

Description: The North Georgia Classic 2023 - A Just for Fun Rally with no rally fees. No meals provided

Contact: ridemsta-GA.com – [N GA Classic 2023](#)

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/

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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!