

The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Feature Article

Motorcycle Therapy at the MSTA North Georgia Classic By Tom Blake

It'd been three years since my last out-of-state ride. I wondered if I was mentally and physically up for the MSTA North Georgia Classic. The route would be 557 miles from my house to Helen, Georgia, or a little over 9 hours ride time. Yes, I'd done numerous 3-hour-each-way lunch rides with minor left hip/leg issues. So maybe a few extra hours would work out okay. Or... I could always break the trek into two days instead of one.

Then there was still Covid. I'd gotten all the shots as soon as they became available. And since it had been over four

months since the booster, I was eligible for the second Moderna booster available at Publix's. In fact, the afternoon before I left, I got the booster and had zero reaction to it, whatsoever.





Along Main Street and the Chattahoochee River in Helen, Georgia

The week before the rally, I contacted Ken, my old riding buddy in North Carolina, to see if he'd be interested. "Yes!" he said. Unfortunately, the Quality Inn was already booked for the rally weekend. But Red Roof Inn down the street was not and offered a rate only slightly higher than Quality's rally price. So a reservation was made for Thursday night through the following Tuesday night. Now the rally itself was for Friday to Sunday. But if I'm going to travel that far to my beloved Blue Ridge mountains, I want to ride those darn mountains(!) for more than two days.

Next was to figure out what to carry along. Temperatures were forecast to be from the upper 40's on up into the mid-70's. R-a-i-n chances were slight but present. My luggage capacity on the RT included both saddle bags, a small tank bag and the rear pack that I bought for my KTM Super Duke. This allowed taking a waterproof jacket with lots of vents as well as my mesh jacket with rain liner. Add in some layering, a few



changes of clothes, toiletries, civilian slacks and sneaks for walking the streets of Helen and I was set. No room for rain gear nor bike cover, however.

A few minutes after 7 a.m. on Wednesday the 20th, I was... "on the road again." By about 6 that evening, I was at Commerce, Georgia and decided to call it a day. Helen was doable. But I just figured I could get a better room in Commerce. Besides, my reservation didn't begin until Thursday. Now, I could get up when I wanted, take my time getting up there and start getting into the rhythm of the mountains.

And that is exactly what I did. Following some of my own "rhythm" advice, I rode US 441 up to Clayton and turned west on US 76. US 76 has its share of zigs and zags, ups and downs. After crossing over a finger of Lake Burton, I turned south onto GA 197 which dropped down to lake level through a series of tar snaked switchbacks and then brushed along the lake's shore and posh cabins for a ways until getting into pleasantly rolling hill country. GA 356 continued this to the west past <u>Unicoi State Park</u> to GA 17/75 leading into Helen. All good mountain roads to begin shaking off the Florida straights and getting into those optimum tracks and velocities through corners. Precision, not outright speed.

Red Roof would not let me register until 4 pm. So I headed north on 17/75 over the mountain and then took GA 180 west over some very hilly and curvy 2-lane toward US 19. I picked up GA 180 again at Vogel State Park and followed it to Suches – site of Two Wheels of Suches, a motorcycle-only campground. This section of GA 180 is called Wolf Pen Gap Road and starts with some of the knarlyest twists, switchbacks and elevation changes I know of. At Suches, I turned left on GA 60 which had more knarly twists down the mountain to the traffic circle onto US 19. US 19 heads north over Blood Mountain toward Blairsville. However, beyond Vogel, I turned east on GA 180 for a mile and then right onto GA 348, the Richard B. Russell Memorial Parkway, over another mountain toward Helen. GA 348 is, in my mind, especially swooping down the sweepers on the east side of the mountain, the perfect ending to a day of spirited mountain riding.

On Friday, Ken and I took 75 north, over the mountain, through Hiawassee and then further north to US 64. US 64 east took us over yet another mountain to the entrance to <u>Wayah Road</u>. Wayah is a fabulous 2-laner with too numerous to mention switchbacks, twists, turns and elevation changes.



Wayah Road near US 64 before it starts up the mountain



One of the many switchbacks along Wayah Road

Past Nantahala Lake to US 74, which follows the Nantahala River's rapids east to the River's End Restaurant at the <u>Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC)</u>, we met more good friends whom we hadn't seen in years and got caught up over some really terrific food and views of the kayakers and rafters plying the white waters below us.



Nantahala Lake



Nantahala Outdoor Center



Saturday and Sunday was more of the same. We covered the <u>Cherohala Skyway</u> between Robbinsville, NC and Tellico Plains, TN, the hyper-twisty Joe Brown Highway past the Dam Restaurant and across the Lake Hiawassee Dam into Murphy, NC. GA 60 from Morganton where it sweeps down onto rolling farmland and then twists up the mountain through Suches and down again to US 19. US 19 south goes into <u>Dahlonega</u>, where we enjoyed two scoops each of delicious ice cream in the downtown square while observing an art & crafts festival and too many to mention, ad hoc, banjo/fiddle/guitar type bands.





On the Cherohala Skyway

On Monday we headed east through Clayton, GA and across War Woman Road to NC 28, which hyper twists up into Highlands, NC. US 64 took us further east through Cashiers to NC 215, which twists and turns and twists some more as it climbs steeply north to the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP) above Rosman. The BRP is one very special mountain 2-laner, which we took west (south) toward Cherokee. We eventually made it back to the NOC for chili before returning to Helen.

Tuesday was a day of clouds, rain and, for me, rest before starting home on Wednesday.

I left a little before 8 o'clock in 45° sunshine, stopped a few times for coffee, lunch or potty breaks before refueling in Waycross, GA. The rest of the way home was non-stop, arriving around 7 pm. 2112 miles for the trip. My left hip and leg even felt better. Now, that's motorcycle therapy!

Safe journeys,

- Tom Blake



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. [Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the August 2016 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale.]

Buddy Riding - Not a Group Ride By Doug Westly

Riding with a buddy is not a group ride. Different riding techniques apply. Maybe you've ridden with your buddy for thousands of miles. Maybe you have a new friend with a bike who wants to go for a ride. Regardless, here are some common sense rules for Riding with a Buddy:



- *The staggered formation, one-second rule applies.* Generally the Lead Rider rides to the left.
- The Lead Rider tends to be the more experienced, or at least the one with more familiarity with the local area or roads/route. This may mean he or she is comfortable with the route and/or ride. In these cases, the Lead Rider has to take this into account, and not lead the 2nd rider into situations or riding activities that may exceed their abilities or comfort zone.
- The Lead Rider has to remember he/she is part of a two-bike formation. That means more time to stop, start, and change lanes. That also means just because you can beat the yellow light, it doesn't mean your Follow Rider can do the same without danger.
- As the Lead Rider, at stop signs and lights don't forget to make room for the 2nd Rider to come alongside you. If you are a good Leader, you'll be able to anticipate where to stop so that both are comfortable and have room to maneuver.
- When the light goes green, don't play MotoGP race start time. It just frustrates the rider behind you, who now has to play catch up.

OK, Follow Rider...your turn:

- Remember to ride where the Lead Rider expects you. This is usually about one second behind, in the opposite wheel track. If you're a good Follow Rider, you'll ride so that the Lead Rider can always see you in their mirror. That way they don't have to wonder where you are, or turn around to find you.
- Riding in this position also means you've given the Lead Rider maneuvering room in case an avoidance action is needed.
- At stops, remember to pull up two abreast, but leave room for your fellow rider.
- *Don't fixate!* Particularly in corners, traffic, etc., don't just blindly follow the rear end of the bike in front of you. If your Lead Rider makes a mistake, you may follow them right off the edge of the road.
- A good rule of thumb to prevent target fixation, particularly in corners, is to fall back a little, so that you can see the road and the riding line between you and the bike in front. Make this part of your regular riding routine with your Lead Rider, so they know what is going on as well.
- Watch the traffic, so you can anticipate the Lead Rider's actions.

There is a lot more to being good buddy riders. These are just some of the basic guide-lines. Talk to your buddy. Develop your own buddy riding style. Just remember to be safe and work together! It makes riding more fun for both!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



Florida News



South Director's Report

Oh, the drought...Oh, the flooding...Must be April around here!!

Our spring has sprung! And depending on the weekend, we had iffy conditions to contend with. The Central Lunch Ride had strong winds and determined riders. See Carl's brief report below.

Oh, and following April showers, Lovebugs will likely emerge in May...



The South Lunch Ride to a new destination had a cloudy future, highlighted by yellow and red storm cells... So, who made the ride?? Oh, the Eastside "Real Men" of course! Jim Park led the ride, as Van is still 4wheeling. Buck and Steve P. joined Jim at the 7-11. They picked up Don M. at the Love's stop, who braved the conditions from southern Broward County!!

As is typical of Florida stormy weather, overcast and cloudy can turn nasty, or partly cloudy with welcomed sunshine. We enjoyed the latter!! The Boathouse Tiki Bar & Grill in Ft. Myers is a keeper!! Lots of room, pleasant view, great service and tasty menu!! Though reservations aren't an option, they will accommodate a waiting-list request. The system worked well for us, and we sat down at 11:30, menus waiting. This place is huge, and our early arrival beat the crowd that piled in over the next 45 minutes. It's nice to now have destinations around La Belle, Ft. Meyers, Punta Gorda and Arcadia for the southwestern/westside members that the Eastsiders can enjoy as well.







The Boathouse Tiki Bar & Grill in Ft. Myers is a keeper – lots of room, pleasant view, great service and tasty menu!

And the rider's ride home included one brief shower in the Glades, which was a welcomed relief from the afternoon temperatures! A good day for a lunch ride afterall!!

Our 50/50 raffles took a month off due to the rough weather and small attendance. We carry over our previous total of \$678. Always a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate in our raffle!!

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.

Join the Central riders at Mary's Kountry Kitchen in Tavares on May 14th. This will be the start of BRUNCH rides for the Central locations. That means a 9:30 AM sit down! The South ride remains a LUNCH ride, as Lightsey Fish Co in Okeechobee doesn't offer breakfast/brunch. Be there on May 21st for a good time! In addition, our calendar has both in-state and out-of-state events for May that will keep your wheels a-rolling!!



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...

The Florida MSTA welcomes a new member – Mike Smith of Oviedo. Glad to have you!

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Budd Breheim Roy Clark Robert Fischer Kim Krzywicki Robert Miller Glenn Monroe Stephen Phillips Michael Yandel

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

Dianne Park Jim Park Larry Solomon Rebecca DeShazo-Westly Doug Westly

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/MSTAjoin respectively. If you use a pre-printed form from STAReview 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 <u>PlanetReg.com/MSTAupdate</u>. 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.





<u>Member Profile | Dale Hall - The</u> <u>Villages, FL</u>

- Hometown/State?
 Originally from Northeast Ohio. Now residing in The Villages, FL
- What was your first motorcycle? 1973 Honda CB350

- Current motorcycle? 2008 Honda ST1300A
- What is your all-time favorite motorcycle?
 My current ST1300A
- How long have you been riding?

 Legally since 1973. But I borrowed friends' bikes before that when my parents were out of town!
- When did you join the MSTA? 1985
- How did you hear about the MSTA?

 From an ad that our founder Dana Sawyer put in a motorcycle magazine looking for Honda VF750S

 Sabre owners
- Who or what was your biggest influence in motorcycling? I've been a gear head all my life. It started with minibikes. But when I got the chance to ride my uncle's CB450, that was the spark that lit the flame that burns to this day.
- What are your favorite places to ride?

 Any place the roads are curvy. SE Ohio, Smoky Mts, Rocky Mts, etc. We even have curvy roads in FL!
- What was a memorable motorcycle adventure? Probably my first multi-state trip from Ohio to Daytona Beach via Virginia Beach with three friends in 1975. I learned a lot about long-distance riding on that trip!
- What is the best motorcycle advice or tip learned over the years? *Ride "THE PACE"! Plus counter-steering*
- What turns you on about motorcycles or riding?

 I like to make whatever motorcycle I own into what I think is the best version of it. And riding...Oh boy, does that ever make me happy! The ability to carve a curve, the power available whenever you need it, getting in "The Zone" on a good road and all the wonderful friends I've made along the way.
- What do you get out of your MSTA membership?
 Being with other people that feel the same way as I do about motorcycling. That's why I'm a Lifetime Member. The places I've gone that I may have never experienced except for traveling to, participating in or coming back from HSTA/MSTA rallies.
- What are your hobbies and interests outside of motorcycling? *I play golf, bowl, card games, cruises, travel and visit grandkids*

Just as we see in other MSTA Newsletters and the STAReview, 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) 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!!

With the latest surge of the scourge having waned, 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.

If you have a destination or event or hidden gem that the rest of us should see or know about, PLEASE send the info to me to include in future planning!! I keep looking for new ideas to add to the legacy of events that we have enjoyed for years. And don't think your idea has to appeal to everybody... if you like it, that's enough. We'll put it out there and see what happens!! You'll never know if you never try!!

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

April Central Ride – 3 Bananas, Crescent City, FL

I was not able to make this ride due to a death in the family. My thanks to Alan Speares for filling in for me.

Saturday was a clear but very windy day. Ten riders braved the winds for a good meal and great comraderie. One of the hot topics discussed was Star 2022. I thank all who turned out.



3 Bananas in Crescent City



Lovebugs descend on us by the millions each spring.

Lovebugs – A Few Facts, Myths and Tips

Flip down your visors, riders, as our Lovebug Season is upon us!

Florida riding always has its share of bugs, but hands down the Lovebug takes first prize for all of the flying critters we typically encounter on a ride.

Each year between April and May these adorable little creatures descend upon us by the millions. Their squashed remains are difficult to remove; they stink and for the motorcyclist they taste....well let's not talk about their taste.

Amazingly enough, the Lovebug's life cycles is linked with celestial seasonal cycles of Earth. Adult Lovebugs die after their late summer breeding season, but their young live on. New small larvae will emerge as adults after the spring equinox. If we are fortune enough to have a few cold fronts pass through the Sunshine State or a low amount of rainfall, it may reduce the birth rate of the bugs, so we may experience a bit fewer on our roadways. Unfortunately, they're not limited to appearing in large numbers not only in spring, but also in late August and September during their mating season, but in smaller numbers, usually.



Lovebugs are here to stay.

Get used to them!!



Perhaps you've heard that Lovebugs originated from the laboratories of either the University of Florida or Florida State University. Not true! The Lovebug, which is actually a fly whose scientific name is Plecia nearctica, migrated naturally from Central America along the Gulf of Mexico. It was first identified in southeastern Texas in 1940 and has since spread through the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, as well as Georgia and South Carolina.



Lovebugs splatter all over and cause cars and motorcycles to overheat while reducing rider visibility and damaging our paint.

If Lovebugs seem to be primarily on the roadways where we all ride, you're not wrong. Researchers have found that automobile exhaust fumes, heat from the engines and the vibrations of the vehicles themselves all attract Lovebugs that splatter against the fronts of bikes, riding gear and our helmets. The results can be nasty, causing both cars and motorcycles to overheat, while reducing rider visibility and damaging our paint. Experts recommend cleaning Lovebug remains from your vehicle within 24 hours to avoid permanent paint damage. Soapy water and dryer sheets are recommended by many, although I've never personally tried the dryer sheets. What I have found that works is a spray bottle of hydrogen peroxide and a soft cloth to remove their initial remains followed by soap, water and

elbow grease (a word of warning, try a test area before applying the hydrogen peroxide).

Will the Lovebug ever go away? you ask. Well, it doesn't look like anytime soon. Pesticides seem to be ineffective for the most part, and natural predators in Florida like frogs and bats hunt at night when Lovebugs are not flying! So, just take a not-so-deep breath to be sure you don't inhale a Lovebug, and get used to them as they are here to stay!

- Jim Park

Florida Rides This Month

Always remember to check the Florida MSTA <u>Event Calendar</u> 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, May 14th, 9:30 am – 11:30 AM

Location: Mary's Kountry Kitchen, 15945 County Rd 448, Tavares, FL (352) 343-6823 (map) Description: This is a little country gem south of Tavares that we've been to before. Unremarkable on the

outside, they serve up generous portions of home-cooked meals inside, and the service cannot be

friendlier. You don't want to miss it! Good roads to get you there, too!

Contact: Carl, carltr6@hotmail.com, or \$\alpha\$ (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, May 21st, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Lightsey Fish Co & Seafood**, 1506 S Parrott Ave, **Okeechobee**, FL **(863)** 763-4276 (map) Description: OK. OK... Yes. this is a LUNCH ride. This location doesn't do brunch.... So, ioin the Southies for

an extra LUNCH ride this year. We had a terrific time here last year!! Looking to repeat the same good times!! You can use the circumference of Lake O for however long you wish to cruise...

Contact: Van, <u>busavanflmsta@gmail.com</u>, or **2** (561) 386-2594



Tallahassee Bike Fest

When: Friday-Sunday, May 13th - 15th

Location: Railroad Square Art District, 661-2 Railroad Sq. Tallahassee, FL

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

Website: https://www.tallybikefest.com

Canaan Valley Resort Just For Fun Rally

When: Thursday, May 19th – Sunday, May 22nd

Location: Canaan Valley Resort & Conference Center, Main Lodge Rd, Davis, WV (map)

Description: Canaan Valley Rally - A Just for Fun Rally with NO RALLY FEE.

We will be collecting money for the Ride for Kids Foundation that raises money for pediatric brain

tumor treatment and research. (Suggested donation is \$10)

No meals provided. Main lodge has 2 restaurants. Other restaurants are within a mile of park

entrance. Cabins have fully equipped kitchens and outdoor grills.

Road and Dual Sport Routes via GPX file to be available online and in person

Special rates on Cabins and lodge rooms: 4-Bedroom cabins for \$303.00 plus tax per night

Lodge rooms for \$99.00 plus tax per night

Contact: Call the resort directly at 304-866-4121 and ask for a cabin or room in the MSTA BLOCK.

Coordinator: Chris Shoop - phone: 304-488-9128 email: shoopce@gmail.com To register for the event please go to: https://reg.planetreg.com/CanaanValleyJFF

Registration will open January 1, 2022

MSTA TriSTAR 2022 Just For Fun Rally - Sparta, NC

When: Friday, May 27th – Sunday, May 29th

Location: Alleghany Inn, N. Main Street, Sparta, NC (map)

Description: TriSTAR 2022 A Just for Fun rally with no rally fee. Road routes will be available online and in

person for downloading to your GPS.

Contact: Coordinator: Geoffrey Greene 865-659-4755 hawkgtrider@aol.com

Website: http://msta-se.com/tristar

Call the hotel directly to reserve you r room at 888-372-2501 Ask for a room in the MSTA block

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, **June 4th**, **9:30 am – 11:30 AM**

Location: Grills Riverside Seafood Deck & Tiki Bar, 6075 N US Hwy 1, Melbourne, FL

(321) 242-8999 (<u>map</u>)

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

Contact: Carl, <u>carltr6@hotmail.com</u>, or **2** (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **June 11th**, **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 are on a roll with airport destinations! Gives you

wings...

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



MSTA STAR National Rally 2022

Sunday, June 19th - Wednesday, June 22nd When:

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

For additional Florida events and information, <u>click here</u> 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-SE.com Florida MSTA FLMSTA.org

We're also on Facebook: facebook.com/FLMSTA/

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. Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!

