



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Contact Information:

South Florida Director:

Van VanSteelant – busavan@flmsta.org

Central Florida Director:

Tom Blake – tblake1@cfl.rr.com

Safety Editor:

Retired – Please volunteer!

Florida Gator Tale Editor:

Don Moe – editor@flmsta.org

Feature Article

Flickr: Motorcycle Touring A different way of meeting riders

By Jim Park

[Ed: This article previously appeared in the 2/2012 edition of this newsletter. Some facts about Flickr may no longer be correct.]

Those of you, who know me, know that I have a passion for two things, traveling via motorcycle and photography. Seems the two go pretty well together.

Several years back I discovered a photo site that was great for sharing your photography with others. There are many sites available to the avid photographer, but my personal favorite is *Flickr*.

Flickr's basic account is free and allows you to upload 2 videos and 300MB worth of photos each calendar month. The *Flickr Pro* account is basically unlimited posting of your photography at a reasonable rate of \$24.95 per year.

The *Flickr* site allows you to organize your photos into albums, collections and galleries. I have organized my site, for example, into four collections: Nature Photography, Family Photos, A Bit of This and That, and Two Wheel Trips. Each collection is then organized into individual albums, (i.e., 2001 West Trip, Local Rides, etc.). The site also allows you to geo-reference the location of your photograph. The map is displayed neatly along side of the photo depicting the regional location such as the country or city and then a much closer location showing the street level.

But what makes the site interesting is the ability to interact with other photographers. Not only can you view photos posted by others but you can comment or ask questions about the photograph.

While exploring the features of *Flickr*, I discovered the ability to set up a photo group. A group is where Flickr members can post their photos according to the group guidelines and create group discussions. I chose to set up a "Motorcycle Touring" group. At the time I expected very little interest in the group, but boy was I wrong!

Today the motorcycle touring group has nearly 1500 members from all over the world, with over 15,000 contributing photographs and 80 discussion groups. There are members as far away as China, Iceland,

Argentina, England and Viet Nam, just to name a few. The site has grown so large that I have a co-administrator (screen name Will Design Works), Koichi Takahashi.

Koichi lives in Yonezawa, Japan just 50 miles from the nuclear disaster. He was fortunate that he personally suffered minimal damage from the earthquake however some of his family members were forced to relocate to the Tokyo area for the safety of their children. I am trying to talk him into coming stateside one year to attend a STAR rally.

Last year I was able to meet with several *Flickr* members on my trip west. I met with a member in Washington for lunch and another member in Oregon, Chuck, who gave me a personal tour of the area on his 1974 BMW R90S but I had to pass on an invite to spend the evening with Priti, a molecular biophysicist and her husband in San Francisco due to a timing issue.

I have spent many enjoyable hours on *Flickr* both viewing photographs from around the world and reading comments from other avid two wheel travelers.

Take a moment and explore *Flickr*, better yet join the site. After all it free and you don't get any spin off spam. The best feature however is the really interesting people you'll meet!

My photo site: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ridemyst/collections/>

Motorcycle Touring Group: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/motorcycletrips/>

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.*

Due to his busy schedule with Honda, Doug Westly has decided to discontinue his safety columns in our Florida MSTA Newsletter as well as in STARreview. We sincerely thank Doug for his many years of excellent articles. Until another rider steps forward to volunteer to prepare new safety-related articles, we will republish Doug's previous articles, with his permission.

You Are Responsible

[Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the January 2012 edition of The Florida MSTA Grapevine.]

How many times have you seen it? It happens a lot at rallies and motorcycle bike nights across the country (and around the world). It seems like the challenge is to find the girl wearing the skimpiest attire and put her on the back of the bike for a ride.

OK, so it may not be this extreme. But you have seen it. The rider is dressed head to toe in protective gear, and the passenger is riding unprotected. Have you ever taken someone for a ride, even a quick one, around the block, without the passenger wearing even a helmet? Or perhaps you insisted on a helmet, but that was the extent of the protection? Is it the magic force field at work again? What is going to protect them if something happens?



The bottom line here (no pun intended...OK, maybe a little) is that YOU are responsible for the safety of your passenger. That means making sure that they are wearing protective gear to start. If they don't have the gear and you don't have it to offer to them, they don't belong on the back of your bike. Once you have them on the back of your ride, your next responsibility is to their safety. It's bad enough to involve yourself in a crash, but you don't want the added burden of knowing you may have caused, or contributed to serious injuries of a friend or loved one.

Don't get conned into taking someone for a ride, no matter how cute she (or he, ladies...) might be. Don't think you can get away with showing off. And DON'T be so over-confident as to think that "Gee, just this once, it won't hurt..." That's the kind of mentality that exceeds common sense and often gets us into trouble. Respect your passengers and our sport. Ride safe, and make sure your passengers do as well!

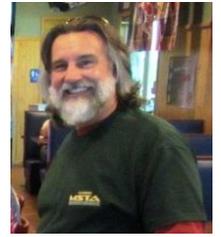
See our [Mystery Hyperlink](#) for further information on this topic.

Florida News

South Director's Report

FIRE, FLOODS, SNOW AND TORNADOS...

Seems fall has roared in like an angry mother... nature. Fortunately, we hang out in Florida. I know we had a bit of rain over the weekend we were supposed to be dining in Lake Wales. But the land sponged up the water, and the worst of the lingering storm moved north. And we simply adapted by riding to the South Lunch Ride the following Saturday! Tom's report about the Central Lunch Ride is below. What a difference a week can make....



Van VanSteelant

With most of the Eastsiders otherwise occupied, Buck and I held up the old school "Real Men" moniker for this ride. We covered 185 miles of country cruising on our way to lunch. Ah, we are back to having the time to enjoy some real riding for the next eight months! With two short stops along the way, we walked in just on time. We joined the feast at the [Crazy Fish Bar & Grill](#). This was a new-to-us destination, though highly recommended by local members. And we were impressed!! The whole atmosphere about the place is fun, busy, eclectic and delicious! Check out the photos!! We had a niche room all to ourselves, which allowed us



to carry on as usual without ruffling the other patrons! Terrific food, lots of conversation, and our 50/50 raffle winner was Diana Dickerson. Fitting that she and her husband Brian recommended the location and won enough to defray some of their combined lunch bill! Our new fund total is \$430.00. Again, a BIG THANK YOU to all who participate.

I expect to receive the donation receipts from the [Road Warrior Foundation](#) and the [Motorcycle Relief Project](#) in November. Both organizations ran their last riding events in October. I'm so proud of our collective efforts to help these volunteers working to heal our deserving Vets. Please take a moment to reflect on our fortunate ability to help others this year.

Usually, our ride home is lack luster, as we typically aim to minimize our time in the afternoon heat. This time, our path was dictated by the weather radar, rather than the shortest route! Navigating to avoid the worst of the downpours, we bobbed and weaved across the middle of Florida to reach our homes only damp from a few spritzes and showers rather than soaked by serious dumps!! My thanks again for Buck's clever choices. Good times!!

What's Next??

LUNCH RIDES ARE BACK!! LONGER RIDES IN THE FLORIDA SUNSHINE!! COME ON...

We have two destinations planned for back to back weekends. First up, on November 9th, the Central LUNCH Ride will be at [Gator Joe's](#), in Ocklawaha. A perennial favorite! If you haven't made a ride to this spot on Lake Weir, you owe it to yourself to get there... The next Saturday, November 16th, the South LUNCH Ride heads to another not-to-be-missed destination. The [OK Corral Gun Club](#) in Okeechobee is a one-of-a-kind lunch ride. A Cowboy Buffet and acres of shooting ranges! Rent a shotgun, buy some shells and damage as many clays as you can!! Or, bring your hand cannon and shred a few paper targets!! Look for the usual ride announcements!!

Come December, we have decided to run a combined statewide lunch ride for EVERYBODY on Saturday, Dec. 7th to [Jay Bees](#) in Lake Wales. With other holiday events always crying for our attention, we decided to pick a destination central to most of the membership and large enough for 30-40 hungry patrons!! Mark your calendars NOW!

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 one new Florida rider who joined the MSTA in October:

Mike Halburnt

We thank these Florida members for recently renewing their memberships:

Rick Sapir

Harry Hal Smith

These Florida memberships will expire soon:

Stephen Albert

Stephen Evans

Don Mroczenski

Phillip Ridgdill

Thomas Blake

Michael Ewanus

Hugh Palmer

Richard Danieri

Douglas Farnham

Stephen Phillips

Carlyson Delgado

Paul Heydemann

John Randolph

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and to 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 quickly and securely done 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**, **5380 Old Bullard Rd, Suite 600-315, Tyler, TX 75703**, who replaces the retiring Beth Hemstreet, 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 Invitation-To-Ride quad-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 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!

The fall/winter riding season ahead promises to be worth your time! Look for lunch rides to old favorites and several new destinations. We are working to expand our reach a little further north in Florida... a small start to be sure. The return to Peck's for our New Year's Kick Off is set to go. Our Just-For-Fun Weekend around Bike Week is in the final planning stages. The Bike Week Lunch is set. And we have a few new places to try out... Keep sending your recommendation to Tom or myself.

Thank you all for your continued support of our Chapter!! Please reach out to your riding friends and acquaintances and invite them to one of our upcoming rides. If you don't ask, they'll never know what they're missing...

Ride well! Ride often!! Do it safely!!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Director's Report - October 2019

Seventy-four degrees, low humidity, a gorgeous baby blue sky and nary a cloud in sight – what a fabulous way to relaunch our fall lunch rides. I aired up the Super Duke's tires the night before. Alas, a bit of wishful thinking because my achy knee issue persists. Not wanting to aggravate it further, I begrudgingly drove the car to DeBary instead. What a letdown!



Tom Blake

However, there were a few smile-producing highlights on the way over. Taylor Branch Rd between SR's 520 and 50 at Christmas is a nice, meandering 2-lane through trees and pastures. Fort Christmas Rd between Christmas and Chuluota is another lightly traveled bit of rural pleasure which passes by the Fort Christmas Historical Park. Just above the park, a banked, ninety-degree tight sweeper is always an adrenalin rush. There are a few additional attention-getting twists along this byway. Below Osteen, very rural Reed Ellis Rd branches northwest off CR 415 and ties into Enterprise Rd. Enterprise skirts the north side of Lake Bethel and Lake Monroe under a canopy of very old oaks before veering northwest to Highbanks. The [Swamp House Grille](#) sits at the west end of Highbanks in a beautiful setting right at the St John's River.

Out of curiosity, I Googled 'Fort Christmas' to see how it got its name. According to Wikipedia, a force of 2,000 US Army and Alabama Volunteers arrived in the area on December 25, 1838, to construct a fort. It was one of 200 built during the Second Seminole Indian War (1835 - 1842). A full-sized replica sits on the site today and is part of the historical park.

Six of us made it to the *Grille*. The northern burgs of Orlando, Fleming Island near Jacksonville, the north St Augustine area and Valkaria were our starting locations. It was nice to have recent MSTA president Dennis Villarose back in Florida and coming out for our rides. We ate a leisurely lunch and did a whole bunch of storytelling. It was 2 o'clock when we finally forced ourselves to get up and leave.

Have to say, after a super experience here on our initial visit, the kitchen was a little slow this time around but the food, once served, was excellent. It's a really nice property in a beautiful setting. But surrounded by Deland and Orange City to the north, Deltona to the east, Sanford to the south and the river to the west, it's not the most moto-friendly spot to get to, my road selection aside.



Peering over the downstairs lounge tables and marina to the river



CW: Alan, Dennis, Jim, Hal and Carl – all grinning ear to ear

OK, [Gator Joe's](#) in Ocklawaha is on tap for November 9th. Everybody loves this iconic place on the north shore of Lake Weir... and riding to it. "Gator Joe", the alligator for whom the restaurant was named, prowled the lake for many years and its notoriety was significant in the FBI's effort to locate the notorious Barker gang *hideout* just 1/8th mile west. Google "Ma Barker gang in Florida" for some interesting reads.

Here are a couple more bees for your bonnet:

November 29th is Black Friday. That means a lot of folks will be in stores and roads will be virtually empty. While they're shopping, we'll be riding... to [Goodrich's Seafood](#) situated along the water in Oak Hill. If Oak Hill is a stretch for you, I encourage you to call some riding pals and do your own fun Black Friday ride!

Looking further ahead to January 1st: NEW YEAR, NEW MILES!!! Start 2020 right off in a (Bill) Royal sort of way with a New Year's Day lunch ride to [Peck's Old Port Cove](#) near the Gulf Coast town of Crystal River.

Safe Journeys,

Tom Blake

MSTA Florida State Co-Director

Central Florida November Lunch Ride

Sat., November 9th, 11:30 PM – 1:30 PM

[Gator Joe's Beach Bar & Grill](#), ([map](#))

12431 SE 135 Ave,
Ocklawaha, FL 33870

Northeast Director Needed

If you would consider taking the position of Northeast Director, please contact Van, busavan@flmsta.org.

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!!

Florida Rides This Month

Important Note

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 Lunch Ride

When: Sat., November 9th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Where: [Gator Joe's Beach Bar & Grill](#), 12431 SE 135 Ave, Ocklawaha 33870 ☎352-288-3100 ([map](#))

Description: This has been one of our favorite destinations for years. Gator Joe's, for those who haven't been, is a unique and rustic place on the north shore of Lake Weir. There's covered seating out on the dock where you can really take in the great scenery. Some of Florida's best roads get you there. Good food and service, too.

Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sun., November 16th, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Where: [OK Corral Gun Club](#), 9449 48th St NE, Okeechobee, FL 34972 ☎863-357-2226 ([map](#))

Description: We can't stay away!! Brilliant service and assistance by the staff. Delicious buffet in a terrific setting. Bring your own weapon and fire a few (hundred!?) rounds! Or, rent a shotgun and clip a bunch of clays launched from 7 stations! Though we are planning on our usual noon arrival, the facility opens at 8:30AM. You are welcome to get a head start on the day. And you could make it a whole weekend adventure, utilizing their cabins and nightly bon fires!!

Contact: Van, busavan@flmsta.org, or ☎561-386-2594

Special Black Friday Lunch Ride

When: Fri., **November 29th**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Where: [Goodrich's Seafood](#), 253 River Road, Oak Hill, FL 32759 ☎386-345-3397 ([map](#))
Description: **Special Black Friday Lunch Ride** – everyone's shopping today so let's take advantage of the light traffic. We've enjoyed brunches here. **The lunches are even better.** Casual dining adjacent the Canaveral National Seashore and Mosquito Lagoon. In addition to delicious seafood, this restaurant has good service and great views. Parking is unpaved, so you might want to bring a kickstand support just in case. This place is really growing on me.
Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

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 possible updates.

MSTA Florida Statewide Lunch Ride

When: Sat., **December 7th**, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Where: [Jay Bees](#), 8625 FL-60, Lake Wales, FL 33898 ☎863-696-1901 ([map](#))
Description: WE ARE TRYING SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS MONTH!! With holiday plans and parties in abundance, we are consolidating our December rides into one destination. Our best hope is to revisit an old standby--Jay Bees!! We know it's a stretch for those in Lake City or Miami, but it is about as centered as we could find. And we know we'll be treated royally! Join us for our own collective Holiday Party!!
Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

Regional Events

MSTA Florida Statewide Lunch Ride

When: Wed., **January 1st**, 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Where: [Peck's Old Port Cove](#), 139 N Ozello Trail, Crystal River, FL 34429 ☎352-795-2806 ([map](#))
Description: Here we go again!!
NEW YEAR, NEW MILES!!! Start 2020 off in a (Bill) Royal sort of way with a lunch ride to one of Florida's best gulf coast seafood restaurants near the end of one of Florida's twistiest roads. Meal time is at noon.
Peck's Old Port Cove is old Florida charm at its very best. They are located out in the gulf's marshes between the towns of Crystal River and Homosassa Springs. Nine miles of twisty Ozello Trail gets you out there from US98.
Everybody raves about Peck's seafood. In addition, the waterside property is clean and comfortable and the whole staff at Peck's is extremely accommodating. We expect to reserve the 50-seat dining room – and fill it. There's plenty of parking.
Long distance riders may wish to get near by December 31st (or earlier). We're not reserving rooms and don't have any activities planned. However, the [Equus Inn](#) at 3434 SW College Rd, Ocala 34474 is suggested (previously a Quality Inn, they have a 4 star rating with Trip Advisor and others). We've used them in the past during Bike Week. They offer comfortable rooms at reasonable rates with complimentary breakfasts and in-room coffee, microwave & frig, etc. More importantly, very good restaurants and watering holes are just a short walk away. And in the morning, it's only about an hour's ride through mostly rural Florida to Peck's. You can phone the hotel directly at (352) 854-3200. Verify cancellation policy and book early.
Contact: Tom Blake, tblake1@cfl.rr.com, or ☎321-723-2857

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](#). We welcome articles and comments from our members for publication. Contact the editor at: editor@flmsta.org. The MSTA National [website](#) has extensive event information:

- 🛵 To join the MSTA or renew your membership: [click here](#).
- 🛵 For the Events in 2019: [click here](#).

National MSTA RideMSTA.com

Florida MSTA FLMSTA.org

More Contact Information			
Don Moe Newsletter Editor 300 N. Hwy A1A, Apt. J-206 Jupiter, FL 33477 ☎561-346-1009 editor@flmsta.org	Paul 'Van' VanSteelant South Director 217 S.E. 3 rd Street Boynton Beach, FL 33435 ☎561-386-2594 busavan@flmsta.org	Tom Blake Central Director 3835 Laurens Ave. Grant-Valkaria, FL 32950 ☎321-723-2857 tblake1@cfl.rr.com	We're also on Facebook: facebook.com/FLMSTA/

ALL GRAPHICS WERE PROVIDED BY THE CREDITED AUTHOR, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

This month's [Mystery Hyperlink](#) is related to the safety article.

CLASSIFIED ADS

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org

Editor's Request:

If you have ridden somewhere interesting at any time and would like to share with other riders your experiences and some photos from your journey, please contact me at editor@flmsta.org to discuss publishing an article. I can offer assistance in preparing your article. Thanks!