



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Feature Article

MSTA's Fly-By Week 2022

Marietta, Ohio

By Tom Blake

The Fly-By Rally takes place Monday-Sunday during the 3rd week of August. It is now the largest regional event in the MSTA. And as Norm Kern, the event coordinator, puts it, *we want to ride **all day, every day*** (now that's an MSTA kind of mindset). He says some riders can only come for the weekend, but whole-week participation is growing.

It's centered at Marietta, Ohio, alongside the Ohio River, which separates that



*The Ohio River separates OH & WV
Marietta on the river in SE OH (red dot)*

state from West Virginia and Kentucky. The route list has grown to a total of 31+ variations (24 road and 7 adventure), totaling over 4,000 miles of fun roads in southern West Virginia's mountains and southeastern Ohio's hill country. Now, don't poopoo those hills. They may not quite have the elevation changes of mountains, but these can be every bit as fun and challenging to ride - even for experienced riders.

You can find everything worth knowing on the event website: <https://flybyweek.com/index.html>. There are details on Registration, Routes, Hotel/Camping, the Event Guide, Photos, a GPS Users Guide and more. Everything is downloadable and printable anytime except for route files in PDF and GPX formats, which can only be accessed around event week. But routes in HTML format are accessible anytime – just click on MAP for any route.

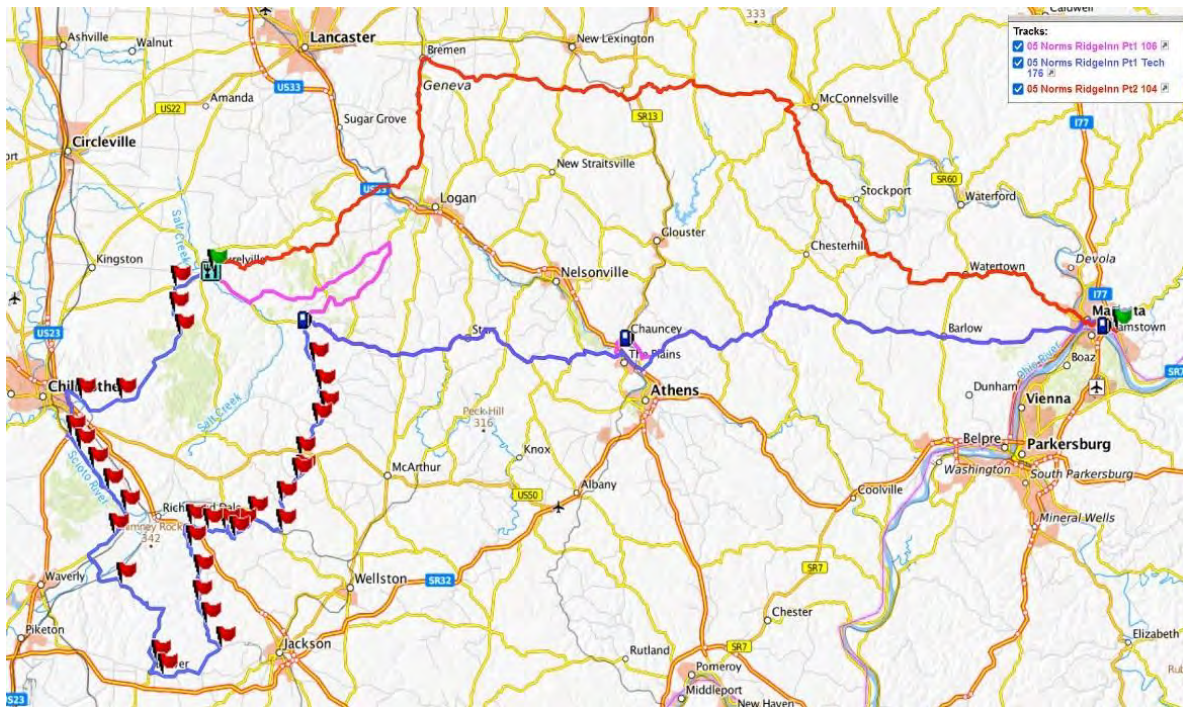
Non-riding activities include bike washing, dinner tours, professional massage therapy, help with downloading files to your GPS, finding someone to ride with, a seminar, camaraderie and local sight-seeing (the Ohio River and Marietta have rich histories).

Norm really has gone all out. This is an exceptionally well-organized event.

The HTML route maps, in addition to the route itself, show gas station locations (gas pump icons), and if applicable – the lunch stop location (knife & fork), destination location (camera) and areas of broken or poor pavement (red flags). Some had alternate routings (color-coded) that offered the option of including or excluding sections of bad pavement or perhaps a longer or shorter variation. Except for the short loops, GPS routes included a Part 1 (outgoing), and a Part 2 (returning) with the starting point (green flag) identified for each.

To illustrate, the "05 - Norm's Ridge Inn 210 – 276" map is shown below. It's #5 on the route list. 210 and 276 refer to the distances for the shorter and longer options. There are three GPS files for this route. Part 1 is the blue line excluding the section of red flags but including the magenta line which shoots way northeast

briefly. The longer all blue Part 1 Technical includes the red flag section. Part 2 follows the red line back to the hotel in Marietta. Marietta is at center, right. The lunch stop is center, left. Two gas stations are located along Part 1, pre-tech.



Coming from central Florida, I'd never attended before because of August's heat and humidity. But one of my riding buds, Ken, from North Carolina was planning to go again this year and said we could split a room. So, to beat the heat, I decided to trailer the BMW RT. Turns out, I would be the only Florida rider there.

The host hotel was the Comfort Suites of Marietta about a mile east of I-77. When Ken inquired, they didn't have any rooms left with two beds. Right next door, literally steps away, was a Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriot which did. We booked there. Tent camping options were also available for those so inclined.

It took me Saturday and Sunday to drive up. The Fairfield Inn was fairly new, clean and quiet. My bed was very comfortable. Their COVID protocols were thorough including sanitizer dispensers everywhere. Breakfasts were well above average. We were quite pleased with the hotel... not to mention its close proximity to rally activities next door.

Weather forecasts leading up to rally week did not look great at first but steadily improved. By Sunday, only a low chance of r-a-i-n was predicted for Monday, and the rest of the week would be sunny with temperatures from the upper 60's to low 80's. Just about perfect. And that held true.

Monday morning, a little precipitation to the east was showing on my phone's weather app. So, of the 24 road routes, we picked "05 - Norms Ridge Inn 210" for our first ride ([map](#)). See the route map above or open the link. It was a substantial and fun ride to the Ridge Inn Restaurant in Laurelville and back. We encountered a short stretch of gravel, probably in the magenta section running partly through Hocking Hills SP. It slowed us down but we made it through okay. What little moisture we encountered was minor. Ken, not yet reacclimated to the scarcity of gas stations in this part of the country, passed by the two available along Part 1. And with only about a 200-mile range on his Goldwing, was running on fumes as we got back to a station on the west edge of Marietta. He made sure not to let that happen again.

Tuesday, we did the “02 - Bridge Ride 315” ([map](#)). This tour bike friendly route squiggled southeast through the mountains then way south to lunch at *Pies & Pints* in Fayetteville, WV, which is near Beckley. Then we rode across the New River Gorge Bridge just east of town. The view was spectacular. A narrow, 7.5-mile road zig-zagged down below the bridge and along the water where rafters were enjoying their float downriver. And down there, we were absolutely awestruck with the massiveness and height of the bridge as well as the depth and width of the gorge. Just how on earth did they ever construct that bridge? At 315 miles, it was the longest ride offered, and we may have shaved a little off by letting our GPS’s find the fastest way back to the hotel.



*New River Gorge Bridge
Fayetteville, WV*



Rafters on the New River

Wednesday, we did route “11 – Tour 2 190” ([map](#)). Described as a twisty route, it initially meandered gently south from Marietta, west of the Ohio River. After the long, twisty, mountainous bridge ride the day before, this low energy stretch of highway was relaxing and welcome. Our GPS’s then vectored us onto a more scenic road heading toward the river, but a local advised us of a collapsed bridge further down. So, we returned to the highway and picked up the scenic route a little further south.

Near Pomeroy things changed. Our path took a north-northwesterly track up into the hills, twisting and turning, rising and falling. Beyond Athens, the heading was more to the north-northeast, but the twistiness and hills continued. The restaurant at Trimble was unexpectedly closed so we pressed on. At Ringgold, the route turned southeast onto Ohio’s famed *triple nickel* – OH 555. We followed the triple nickel for nineteen glorious miles down to Bartlett. After some convenience store grub and a needed breather, we turned east to Marietta. That section of 555 had to be **the** knarliest piece of road I’d ever been on. Good pavement, just twisty, hilly and highly engaging.

Now, I crave spirited cornering. The strategy is to enter blind turns somewhat conservatively then roll it on as the situation presents itself. But here sight distance was limited by the hilly terrain and I was caught off-guard on a couple occasions by a curve’s abrupt appearance and sharpness. This put my RT’s anti-lock braking system to the test when the backend got **really** light under hard braking. Even the front tire was skittering on occasion. MAN!

“04 - Ferry-Covered Bridge 217” was Thursday ([map](#)). We had dinner Monday evening down along the river with a couple from Connecticut and were pleased to have them join us for this ride. The tour-friendly route went south on I-77 for a few miles then southeast, east then north through the mountains to Harrisville, West Virginia where we had lunch at the *Pizza House Family Restaurant*. Everyone but Ken had GPS routing issues around Harrisville. Only he correctly rode the 19-mile loop through North Bend SP coming into town while we waited for him at the restaurant. And we all took off in different directions after eating. I finally hooked back up with Ken, but Don and his wife had disappeared. We were relieved when the Sistersville, WV ferryboat skipper said they’d already crossed the Ohio River there. Anyway, we did note two covered bridges on the final leg between the river and Marietta. In retrospect, I think the routing issue probably had to do with

“route settings” differences or limitations among our GPS units and perhaps oversimplification of the .GPX data in the Harrisville area. Norm was informed, so it will be resolved by next year.

On Friday, looking for a shorter ride, Ken and I did the “**22 - OH Windy 9 Taste of the Nickel 108**” ([map](#)). This tour bike friendly route headed due west out of Marietta, dropped south and then west again into Athens. Then, it vectored northeast to Chesterhill where it turned southeast for a 3.4-mile “taste” of OH 555 before turning east back to Marietta. At only 108 miles, there was no lunch stop. Perfect. Good afternoon for a bike wash and massage.

Hotdogs were calling us Saturday. This was the “**06 - HB Hotdogs EZ 200 - 228**” tour bike friendly route ([map](#)). Like our Wednesday ride, it again followed the Ohio River south, this time hopping it for a stretch into Lesage, WV and the *Hillbilly Hotdogs Restaurant*. My God, it looked like a junkyard! But I finally decided - on purpose. They fixed hotdogs every which way it was possible to fix ‘em. I ordered two chili dogs and fries. At the other end of the spectrum, you could get “The Original Homewrecker” - a 15-inch 1-lb. weenie with 2 lbs. of toppings for \$22.50. Or “The Original WidowMaker” - a 30-inch 2-lb. weenie with 3 lbs. of toppings for \$35.50. Good lord! Instead of I-77, we took the longer, twistier Ohio backroads option north and northeast on our return to Marietta.



Hillbilly Hotdogs in Lesage, WV – Ummmm good!

Closing ceremonies were Saturday night in the tent-canopied lounge area set up behind the hotel. After recognizing attending MSTA officers, area directors and event volunteers, door prizes were handed out. Almost everyone got something. Norm mentioned that 168 had registered. I have to think that number will climb as word gets out about just how great the riding is up there and how good this event really is.

Finally, on Sunday, while everyone else was heading home, Ken and I did the new for this year tour/twisty “**29 - Morgan’s Raid Road 223**” ([map](#)). The route went west to near Athens then zigzagged northeast to McConnelsville, OH where we had lunch at the *Chatterbox Tavern*. Then, we proceeded north and east-northeast to Senecaville, OH where the loop turned south to Marietta. A failed 1863 Confederate army raid into Ohio followed roughly the path we traveled from just above Athens all the way to Senecaville. Then we encountered a long stretch of gravel road south of that town which slowed us way down but we got through OK. Norm has already eliminated the gravel from next year’s route.

As you can tell, we got in a lot of riding - ranging from relaxing to challenging, short to long, flatland near the river to hills to mountains - all of it supremely satisfying. Whatever we felt like doing on a given day, this rally had an answer. To fill in the blanks when we weren’t riding, there was bike washing, massages, dinner tours, a seminar on medical evacuations, camaraderie and local sight-seeing. And, we were blessed with great weather, to boot. What more could you ask for?

Next year the event will be held August 21- 27 at the same Comfort Suites hotel. What I saw of it was nice. I might go back and choose from the 17 road routes we didn't ride this year or maybe mix in some of the seven we already did. Perhaps, there'll be even more to choose from by then, but I'll leave the 7 ADV routes for others.



5 pairs of barges on the Ohio River in Marietta



Rally HQ in mid-afternoon showing just a smattering of motorcycles

BTW, almost every barn in the area had a large *Mail Pouch Tobacco* ad painted on it. I recall the event used to be called the Mail Pouch Fly-By and was a weekend event. But as Norm explained - when he took over, not wanting to be associated with a brand, he shortened the name (and lengthened the event) to Fly-By Week - just in case you were wondering, too.

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 May 2015 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale.]*

The 10 Golden Rules (More or Less)

By Doug Westly

1. Thou shalt honor ATGATT, lest ye be struck by the pestilence of rash and fracture during the moment of unwanted communion with Mother Earth.
2. To thy own bike be true. Thy steed shall carry its rider (and passenger) valiantly, and asks only of thy care and maintenance.
3. Honor thy tires, as they are the hooves of thy steed. Pressure bears thy ride, and rubber the ethereal connection to glorious pavement (or dirt...). Do not forsake them.
4. Caress thy mount, but do not force. Thy ride is like the butterfly. It responds to controlled, yet relaxed grasp. Punish thy steed with over controlling force and it may turn against thee.
5. Thy brakes are the most fragile of all. Squeezed firmly when need be and they shall obey, but grabbed without care and they may bite. (“All Hail ABS”).
6. Respect the Goddess of Traction. She is gracious but fickle. She may be shared through speed and cornering, but never exceeded. Anger her at thine own peril. For those so in need, ye may seek the protection found in the wizardry of Traction Control.
7. Commune only with those who share thine own vision of the Perfect Ride. Forsake those who stray from your path (Literally, at times...).
8. Thine eyes are the Path of the Ride. Remember this, lest ye wander from the Path (Again, literally).
9. Observe the sanctity of T-Clock. Fail not to adhere to its tenants, lest ye violate Golden Rule #2.
10. Respect and honor thy sport. Offer it well to all who observe.



The preceding was brought to you by your friendly, neighborhood safety guy. Sure, there are probably about another dozen or so Golden Rules we could put down without a lot of effort. The challenge we face is actually remembering them all as we prepare to venture out, or when actually on the ride.

The reality is that as experienced motorcyclists, we can become complacent about things as simple as ride preparation, or even basic aspects of motorcycle control. Basic techniques can become stale, again through complacency and a lack of attention. Practice, practice, practice.

As for honoring thy sport, this is perhaps where we fall short most often. We need to remember that we are all ambassadors of motorcycling. When we ride, we need to see ourselves from the perspective of the other motorists on the road as well. A positive impression will perhaps result in a little more consideration from them, either towards you or perhaps other motorcyclists in their future.

I wish you safe and happy riding!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



South Director's Report

Well, we made it through another summer, and fall has sprung...

By the time you all read this, we're hoping our members have weathered Ian and are well on their way back to normal. We are doubly concerned for our members... I'm told that the Red Cross is one of the favored sites to donate to. They have the infrastructure and volunteers, and are on the move. Here's a link to the Red Cross Donations for Hurricane Ian - <https://www.redcross.org/donate/hurricane-ian-donations.html/>

I can't argue with the calendar, but this is Florida after all. As my sister enjoys 30° mornings and 70° afternoons in Sun Valley, Idaho, I break a sweat feeding our outdoor cats at 6:15 am...

Carl's report on the Central Lunch ride to the Gator Joe's is below. We also have good news report on a fellow member. Catch it all below.

The final South Brunch ride was another winner! Sun and clouds and a minor threat of rain from a non-tropical storm related front didn't keep 14 of us from enjoying ourselves! Six Southies met up at the 7-11 and moseyed up the eastside of Lake O. Even more Southies had arrived prior to us and succeeded in arranging our group table. And Tom and Eckart repped the Central membership. Okeechobee locations seem to be a great draw for us.

Though I heard that the Landing Strip was slower than usual, you wouldn't know it if you were waiting for a table!! I guess we lucked out as they were able to set us up with a table for 10 and still had room for the other 4 of us!! MSTA Karma to the rescue!!

It became obvious that the staff have their act together, as plates seemed to hit the tables as the server walked back to the kitchen! Those of us who gathered for brunch last month couldn't help but be grateful!! The perfect combo of good food and great gab!

For some of us, the ride home did include a brief shower, as usual just along the Bee Line! Others may have avoided the rain by heading along the west side of Lake O, likely stopping for some Brunch desert!!

We had another successful 50/50 raffle as well. Don M. took home \$25, and our new total is \$856. Always a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate in our raffle!!



Final South Brunch ride at the Landing Strip in Okeechobee was a winner!

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.

The **Central Lunch ride** happens first. Head to **Don Jose Mexican Restaurant in Sebring on October 8th**. Likely a few Southies will join the fun! Three weeks later, the **South Lunch ride** lands at the **Log Cabin BBQ in LaBelle on Oct. 29th**. Look for the announcements soon!

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 – Jamie Rohrbaugh from Jacksonville. Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Stephen Albert Mary Catherine David Mike Halburnt Robert Holder Steve Hudson
Joseph Walsh

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

Brian Van Scoy

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've had some really fine riding this summer, despite the late afternoon temps at nearly 90.

I get ribbed about how early the starts are for the Brunch rides, but rolling along in the mid 70's with the sun rising in the East is a wonderful way to begin a day!!

We swing back to LUNCH rides for the next seven months. For the end of this year, we pack them into the first two weeks to avoid conflicts of interest with the holidays!

Well, we've coped with COVID for 2.5 YEARS now, and likely you all have settled your score with the pandemic and your course of action. FYI, the latest Covalent boosters are available. As the variants continue to circulate around the globe, please stay vigilant and continue to be healthy.

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

September Central Ride – Gator Joe's, St. Ocklawaha, FL

Carl reports that despite the high temps, 13 riders made their way to Gator Joe's! He made the lunch on 4 wheels, so the afternoon heat wasn't a factor for him! As always, Gator Joe's offered up their good eats, and you all know how nice the view is from nearly every table. He'll be looking for you at Don Jose's in Sebring depending on how they weathered Ian...

On a serious note, **Jacky Ilse Zeigler**, an FLMSTA member from Ft. Lauderdale, is on the mend. Though she has a way to go to before she's back on 2 wheels, she is getting around much better and is able to drive now.

Florida Rides This Month

Always remember to check the Florida MSTAs [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: Saturday, **October 8th, 12 PM – 2 PM**

Location: **Don Jose Mexican Restaurant**, 4731 Lakeview Dr, **Sebring**, FL ☎ (863) 385-9316 ([map](#))

Description: We are officially back to LUNCH RIDES!! This place keeps bringing us back!! Waterside patio, central location (beware of a Southie invasion), and a few good roads to enjoy!! FYI - They open the doors at NOON, with the waiting line forming 15-20 minutes earlier!!

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

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

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

Description: We've enjoyed their brunch...EVERYBODY wanted to try their lunch menu. See ya there!!

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

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 Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, November 5th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Goodrich Seafood & Oyster House**, 253 River Rd, **Oak Hill**, FL ☎ (386) 345-3397 ([map](#))

Description: We're going back to a waterside location!! An old favorite that always delivers!

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, November 12th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Solomon's Castle**, 4533 Solomon Rd., **Ona**, FL ☎ (863) 494-6077 ([map](#))

Description: The roads are fixed, and the latest photo gallery shows it's still a wonderful destination!

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

MSTA Black Friday Lunch Ride

When: Friday, November 25th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Marsh Landing Restaurant**, 44 N Broadway St, **Fellsmere**, FL ([map](#))

Description: We will once again offer you an escape from the melee of frantic shoppers...And we'll head inland to an old favorite of ours! We had a great turnout last year, so we'll hit the repeat button!! Bring your appetite and good cheer for a wonderful afternoon of good grub and great gab!!

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

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

Motorcycle For Sale:



BMW R1250RT

Contact Phil Baxter – teal1500@yahoo.com

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!