

The Florida MSTA Grapevine

You heard it through the Grapevine...

Volume 4 Issue 3

Events in March

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Feature

Key West - A Rider's Destination by the Editor

So you haven't ridden to Key West yet? What are you waiting for?

One of the advantages of living in Florida is that you've got a premier motorcycle adventure destination at your southern doorstep. Approximately 164 miles from Miami and only 90 miles from Havana, Cuba, Key West welcomes motorcyclists with open arms.

Over 40 bridges link Key West to mainland Florida, and riding them is one of the highlights of a ride to the Southernmost point in the continental United States. From the west central part of the Sunshine State it is about an 8 hour ride.

Your journey really begins in Florida City, the last town on the Florida peninsula, en route to the land of Margaritas and green flashes at sunset. In Florida City you actually have two route choices taking you to Key Largo, the most northern of the Florida Keys. You can follow the turista lemmings, wandering down single file on Hwy 1, or you can take Card Sound Road to the left. OK, so you have to pay a buck to cross one toll bridge, but there's MUCH less traffic, the scenery through the little fishing villages is cool, and you immediately feel like you're out of the mainland insanity. Oh, and this is the home of Florida crocodiles (the real ones that can actually run more than 20 miles an hour on dry land), so watch for them in

the brackish waters next to the road.

Good timing will put you on Card Sound Road sometime around lunch, so you can stop at Alabama Jacks Restaurant and Bar. Don't worry, you can't miss it. Order the conch fritters (that's pronounced "conk", by the

Editor's Monthly Note:

Our one feature article submission for the month is in group review, as it involves a technical riding discussion, so instead you can think about a ride to the islands... – ed.

way) and blackened Mahi! After lunch, with your belly stuffed, you'll continue onto Key Largo and eventually rejoin Hwy 1. You'll suffer with the Key Largo and Islamorada traffic for a few miles, then eventually make your way to Marathon and the Middle Keys. Here the traffic thins out, the sea air cools your ride and you can relax all the way to Key West. Don't forget to stop at the little parking area just on the north side of Seven Mile Bridge, on the right side of the road, to get the obligatory bridge picture!

Okay, you've made it to Key West. Hmm, where do you stay? Good planning means reservations were made at any number of hotels, B&Bs or campgrounds on Key West or in the lower Keys. This is particularly important if you plan on going during any one of the festivals that occur all year long. Expect higher (much higher!) hotel prices if you go during any of the large events. If you are into the night life, the place to be in Key West is Duval Street, so pick a B&B or hotel within walking distance. Confused? Just search "Duval Crawl" on the web, and you'll soon understand.

There's much more to Key West than just hanging out at Captain Tony's or Sloppy Joe's (although it was good enough for Ernest Hemingway). There are museums, tours, fishing charters, scuba diving, snorkeling trips, sunset cruises, and the list goes on. Or, you can just go lay on the beach. If you get bored in Key West, it is your own fault! I highly recommend taking either the Fast Cat or the seaplane charter out to Ft. Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas. It is an amazing place and a fascinating piece of American history. The seaplane ride is particularly fun!

A couple of warnings are in order here. First off, Key West is a "lifestyle friendly" town. You will probably see evidence of it both during the day and evening hours. Everyone keeps to themselves and it is not intrusive, but it is there. Second, be aware that Key West is also a cruise ship destination, so Duval Street can get crowded when a ship is in port. Actually, when you take situation number two and intersect it with situation number one on Duval Street, it gets pretty comical.

This brings us to another point. One of the great experiences of Key West is the people watching. You will see literally everything on Duval Street, particularly if there is a festival underway and it coincides with a cruise ship visit. Be non-judgmental, find a good people watching spot (one of the many outdoor cafes work well), sit back with a Land Shark in your hand and watch the sights. It really is the best show in town. For the really adventurous souls, go during Fantasy Fest, in late October. By city decree, body paint qualifies as clothing during Fantasy Fest, as long as there is a (very minimal) personal covering as well. You will truly see the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly! If you decide to go to Fantasy Fest, make sure you get your reservations at least 6 months in advance. Otherwise there is not a room to be had on the island.

Here's the final secret: Getting out of Key West. Remember that Hwy 1 is a two-lane road, all the way back north as well. Everyone comes down to party on a Friday afternoon/evening and leaves on a Sunday afternoon. Never try to leave Key West the afternoon following a major festival, or any Sunday afternoon. Plan your retreat in advance.

That's about it. If you've never been to Key West, you don't know what you're missing. If you're not sure about going, give us a call. Becky and I ride down to the Southernmost Point at least a couple of times a year, just to escape the mainland madness for some relaxation. We may not know everything about the island, but we guarantee you we've got some friends there that do, and that can arrange just about anything for visitors. Oh, and if you don't know about the rooftop bar and the sunset green flash, you truly haven't spent enough time in Key West!

SAFETY TALK

IMPORTANT NOTICE: 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 own actions and safety.

Group Riding – Accident Management

(This month's topic is a follow-on from the February Safety Talk article. Given that we are moving into the prime riding season, we think it is particularly pertinent right now. As always, comments are welcome!)

Well, it's happened. You were riding with your group and all of a sudden someone goes down. Maybe the rider was too fast going into a corner (a common cause of single vehicle, motorcycle accidents), or it was something as simple as a tire going flat. No matter the cause, now you have to deal with an accident scene. In this discussion we'll look at what the group does to deal with a crash. If you are by yourself when you go down, that's another subject for another time...

When a group rider unexpectedly meets Mother Earth, there are several instant considerations. First off, the riders behind him or her have to make sure they stay safe. The instinct is to watch the crash unfold, and that can have tragic consequences for following riders. The old saying "you go where you look" applies here. If you are staring at the accident, fallen rider or bike in front of you, you will most likely end up in the exact same spot. Make sure you focus on your own line of travel, and begin safe options for responding to the incident. In a good group ride, each rider should be responsible for maintaining a line of sight with the motorcycle behind them. If a rider goes down, it should become quickly apparent up the line that something is wrong. Riders nearest the crash will naturally want to stop and assist their fallen comrade. There is nothing wrong with this, **as long as** there is a safe place to pull off and park, as well as a safe way to reach the fallen rider. Don't become another part of the crash! Take the time to come to a safe stop, ensure your bike is secure, watch for your own safety and then attend to the incident.

It is a well-documented fact that a majority of single vehicle, motorcycle crashes occur in curves or corners. The location becomes an issue very quickly at the time of the crash. The group has to ensure that vehicles approaching the curve and accident site don't become a danger to the fallen rider or themselves. In managing the accident scene, warning the oncoming traffic becomes an immediate priority. Particularly if the accident has occurred in a blind corner, it is important to warn oncoming vehicles early, so they have time to slow down and drive cautiously through the accident scene. The group may want to safely station riders away from the curve in each direction, to warn oncoming vehicles of the accident.

Now comes the tough part, both for the fallen rider and the group. IGNORE the fallen bike, until an initial assessment has been made of the downed rider. Do not allow the bike to distract from any immediate, medical priority. If the crashed rider is conscious and not feeling any pain (as is often the case, with adrenalin flowing after the crash), their initial reaction will be concern for their bike. They will want to immediately get up and check on the motorcycle. Try to calm the rider down and have him or her remain motionless until and only if they and/or the group can thoroughly assess the potential medical issues. There are some well-accepted medical response practices which should be followed in these situations. First off, the ABCs (Airway, Breathing and Circulation) should be assessed and steps taken to ensure the rider's

immediate emergency needs. A helmet (or other safety gear) should not be removed by other than the rider or a qualified EMT or doctor. One other thought applies here... If the rider is conscious and asks you to remove their helmet because they are unable, you might want to decline. If they can't do it, then that may signal a medical condition that would be further impacted if you try to remove the helmet for them. If the rider is unconscious, they should not be moved by other than a qualified, first responding EMT, to prevent possible further (and potentially permanent injury) to the individual. The only exception to this might be if leaving the rider in their location would prove more dangerous than moving them, or moving is required for immediate first aid application, such as doing CPR. In any event, only once the rider's condition has been established and appropriate steps have been taken to ensure their life and health should the fallen bike be addressed. Oh and by the way, who has got the first aid kit? Is anyone CPR-certified?

Now, how do you deal with that lump of metal and plastic lying on the road, shoulder or off in the dirt? Well, it kind of depends. In 2009 there was one unlucky sport bike rider in North Carolina who actually left the road so violently that his bike ended up in the adjacent river...in 4 feet of water! Amazingly, he only suffered minor injuries, but it took snorkeling gear, the better part of a day and a long tow truck cable to drag his drowned and helpless steed out of the river. Unusual situations like this aside, there are a couple of thoughts. If anyone has a camera and there is time, grab a few shots of the bike, any road marks and/or other physical factors that might have a bearing on the crash, before you move the bike. The rider might need them for the insurance debacle that is sure to follow. It might also help with any discussion involving the responding authorities, if that occurs. If the bike is still lying in the middle of the road (and authorities and/or local laws allow), you will probably want to upright the motorcycle and get it out of the roadway. If the bike has been leaking fluids, there could be a HAZMAT situation which needs attention (did anyone bring 40 pounds of kitty litter with them?) Or, maybe you'll get lucky. Hopefully the bike will be rideable, the rider relatively unhurt and he or she can continue on their way.

Wait a minute...That rider has just gone through a fairly traumatic experience. Do you really want them immediately back on their bike, adrenalin still running and hands shaking, letting them at the controls of their (supposedly) undamaged machine? Now is a good time for the group to take a break, find some shade and relax for a few minutes. Talk openly about what happened. Don't disparage the rider and/or their skill. It could have happened to anyone. Be supportive and give the rider time to calm down. Don't let them assess the condition of their bike on their own. Their reaction to damage might be "Oh, its not so bad. I can get it home." Worst yet, their ego and pride have just taken a beating and they might want to be back on the bike just to prove a point, regardless of the bike's condition. A little group intervention might be needed here. Get someone else in the group who is technically competent to assess the motorcycle's condition. Tell the rider to relax and take a few breaths while you offer to check out their machine for them. If there is no obvious damage, maybe you want your group's best rider to take the bike for a short, slow test ride, just to make sure its ok. If there might be a problem, don't take any chances with a damaged bike and/or injured rider. Call for the group's nearest pickup truck and loading ramp, or use roadside assistance if it's available.

There are lots of issues to think about when a group rider goes down. These are just a few of the most pressing and immediate. Always remember that every rider is responsible for their own safety. That being said, when you do go to help that fallen rider, do it smartly and think about what you and the group are doing to SAFELY respond to the crash.

The Florida MSTA Group Leadership

Featured Motorcycle



Here's a shot of my Yamaha R5. I bought it as a \$400 rolling basket case during Bike Week 2009, driven by my memory of one having been my first "big" bike. I actually completed it last summer, but had some carburetor issues so turned it over to Yamaha expert Buddy Vitt to sort them out. Unfortunately, on the same day he finished the job I crashed my R1200GS up in NC and spent the next four months in recovery and therapy. I'm up and about now and looking forward to finally getting it out for a ride.

Alan Singer

(This one brings back memories for a lot of us. If you have a bike you'd like featured, please send us a pic or two, along with a short write-up! - Ed.)

Florida News

South Director's Report

A few words from your Co-Director. Damn those "winter" fronts!! Our end of the state suffered a major storm front on the South Lunch ride morning. Supposedly, it was to have passed our way by midnight. Yeah, right!! We saw the sun around noon!! Soooo, the decision to call off the organized ride was made. And from a couple of reports from riders who braved the elements from around here, it was a good one. They emailed from a restaurant less than half way there, reporting of 40 degree rain, 20-30 mph winds, and the need for more hot chocolate before heading back home!!! I do have to give props to George Tice and Stephen Phillips, who rode in to the first rendezvous point, where I let them know that the ride was off, despite their preparedness. Fortunately, everybody lived for another day. You can read about the lunch from the crowd who started out in sunshine and had a great time in Bill's report. Looking forward to the rides in March!!

Speaking of which, be sure to tune into our local ride schedule ASAP. We have our usual lunch rides. And we have a mid week special date for those who are going to Daytona. Phil Ridgdill has once again stepped upped and organized a great lunch event for March 10th, noon to 1PM. We are heading to the Blackwater Inn. See our website for details and directions. And if you know for sure that you will attend, do Phil a favor and email him with your plans. This will help with any future planning and last minute details. As this event traditionally attracts members from all over the country, you just might meet some members who haven't been able to ride since October!! Feel their pain, and don't laugh out loud!! In fact, we know some friends with a Florida house or two for sale...

And we will be finalizing the plans for April real soon. Look for lunch rides on April 2nd (South) and April 16th (Central). On April 9th, many members are making the trek to the Moonshine Burger Ride. This will be a celebration event for the founder of this one-of-a-kind event, who passed away recently (and unexpectedly). Bill will most likely be promoting this event as the time grows closer.

And then...we have the MSTA N. Georgia Classic on April 22-24. See all the info about this great spring-time event on our National site and in the upcoming STARreview. And we might still be able to squeeze in a Florida Spring Fling. Right now we are looking to schedule it the last weekend of April. We might move the timing of this event to tie into the Ride Into History event in May. This is a WORLD CLASS event, and continues to amaze year after year. Stay tuned!!

One last note. Just in the past seven days, the "local" gang here in and around Palm Beach County, have enjoyed two remarkable breakfast rides. And you know what it took to make these rides happen? Somebody simply sent out an email to a bunch of members and friends, with a place, time and a crude route layout. You know what happened?? For the first event, TWELVE bikes showed up at the rendezvous point, and two other riders met us at the restaurant!!! And one of the riders was from Ohio!! Now, he lives locally during the winter (SMART MOVE PHIL!!), and looked me up via email to see if he could tag along. As it turns out, he knew several other riders at the breakfast from other MSTA National events! He's now "in the gang"! The second ride was on a Friday due to scheduling issues, and still six riders made the trip. Great weather, great rides, great camaraderie!! You never know what will happen if you don't ask the question first. We "eastiders" try to ride at least once a weekend. There have been months when we squeezed in 8-12 rides

together. And we are talking about 100+ mile round-trip breakfast rides, and 200+ mile round-trip lunch rides. Don't let the mileage scare you. I've also enjoyed some 10 mile rides with these characters as well!!

Till next month...Get out and ride!! ATGATT Van

North Director's Report

Well, February shaped up to be a pretty good month for riding here in Florida.

We had a great turnout of ~ 15 for the South ride to Toucan Restaurant in Matalacha (or Matlacha or Cape Coral or Punta Gorda depending on what map you looked at) despite a couple of glitches. The first glitch was there was some confusion for some folks over where the place was. While it was a bit confusing to find in Mapsource, if anyone that needed to went to the link on the Google Calendar entry in the MSTA Florida Website events listing, it was easily found/resolved. The second glitch was a weather front that swept southeast across the state the day before, but stalled out a bit such that it lingered into Saturday morning impacting the folks in the West Palm/Miami area. Despite their assumed moniker of "Real Men" for a similar reversed situation a few years back - they elected (probably wisely) not to attend. Guess we'll need to change that nickname from "Real Men" to "Smart Men" ;-). The venue was pretty good - food was good and prices reasonable. Parking was a bit sparse and getting out onto the road after lunch was an exercise in daring, but doable. Oh and one more item, MSTA Man showed up and made the leap from John Watts over to travel now with Bill Royal. Guess that means Bill now HAS to attend the next MSTA regional event ;-).

The following weekend there were absolutely no excuses not to be out riding. And it showed when in addition to the 20 or so MSTA attendees, we had a large group of Can-AM Spyders that "piggy-backed" on our event. I did enjoy seeing such a large turnout of riders though it did max out the venue which slowed service some. Despite that the staff at Catfish Johnny's did a pretty good job of handling the full house. I did feel bad that one attendee who rolled in later than most couldn't find a seat with the rest of the group so he just left. We had a pretty large group (10 bikes) that showed for the group ride up from Tampa area and everyone seemed to really enjoy the pretty twisty route up to the venue. A few had other engagements so opted out for the return ride home, but there were still 9 bikes on the return trip. We made a wide sweeping loop out towards Clermont and despite a brief encounter with a LEO completed a 250 mile day with no performance awards and nothing but smiles on the faces of the riders.

Bill Royal

MSTA Florida State Co-Director & Webmaster

<http://www.flahsta.org/>

'07 ST1300 - "Silver STreak"

Florida Rides This Month

DAYTONA BIKE WEEK LUNCHEON (make plans for this one!)

When: Thursday, March 10, 2011, 12pm – 1pm

Where: Blackwater Inn - Astor, FL 34429

Description: Phil Ridgill has once again put together his annual lunch for those attending Daytona Bike Week. The luncheon is located just a short ride from the festivities in Astor Park, at the Blackwater Inn. From Daytona take SR 40 west to Astor Park, 30-40 minute ride. Going west, when you cross the bridge in Astor Park, Blackwater Inn is on your left. You can't miss it. Coming east from Ocala on SR 40, Blackwater Inn is on your right just before you cross the bridge. GPS: N29 10.001 W81 31.453 ([map](#))

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Sat, March 19, 2011, 12pm – 1pm

Where: Capt Hiram's Inn, 1580 US Hwy 1, Sebastian, FL 32958 ([map](#))

Description: Another new place for us! But I know the guys that recommended this RTE, so we will have a winner!! The view is spectacular, plenty of room for all of us, and the menu looks great! As a side trip, we can stop in at the Sebastian Airport to watch the Skydiving adventurers do their thing!! I have six or more tandem jumps with them, and the view from 13,500 feet is amazing!!

Contact: Van at 561-386-2594 or busavan@flahsta.org

For additional Florida events and information, [click here](#) to see Florida MSTa web site Events page.

MSTA web site information on "Just For Fun Events": [click here](#).

National MSTa www.sporttouring.us

Florida MSTa www.flahsta.org

Mystery Hyperlink of the Month

Yes, its that time of year again! Click on the link above and make your plans!

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

ADVERTISEMENTS

Riders Needed

WEAVERVILLE, CA – June 10-12, 2011

I'm looking for one or two fellow riders who would like to journey from Florida to Weaverville, CA to join the "Western Ducati Madness" event. You don't have to own or ride a Ducati. Northern CA is great riding territory if you've not been there before, or if you simply want to go again. I am planning a two week trip, including the three days with the group in California. Bob Barnesky, 352-270-8723 or email rbarnesky@tampabay.rr.com

Motorcycles For Sale

2003 Honda ST1300, 19,780 miles, silver, Honda Box, Heated Grips, Total Pref. Risers, like new condition, one owner, purchased new in Indiana. Bike is now located in Ft. Myers. Tom Sizemore, 317-431-4114 or sizemore.agency@att.net

2007 Triumph Tiger 1050, 11,137 miles, Caspian blue, original owner, adult miles, pristine condition. Bike runs perfectly, has never been back to the dealer. Tires: Dunlop SportMAX with at least half tread life left. Extras: engine crash bars, center stand, luggage rack, hard locking tail trunk. Last oil/filter change at 10,795 miles w/Mobil MX4T exclusively. Price: \$6,490. Pictures available upon request. Bob Barnesky, 352-270-8723 or rbarnesky@tampabay.rr.com

(Ed. Note: I've seen this bike and while I haven't inspected it closely, it is from casual assessment a very clean and well-kept ride.)

Gear For Sale

LOWERED PRICE: Nolan N-103 Helmet, w/J&M single rider stereo bluetooth system. White/Blue, Size Large, w/internal, retracting sun visor. Purchased Sept 2010, used for one trip. No scrapes, scratches, dings, never dropped. Electronics work perfectly. Only flaw is one of the two chin vent covers must be opened manually, instead of using the central opening button. It just doesn't fit me comfortably for long trips. New Cost: \$750, asking \$200 plus shipping. Pics available upon request. Located in Tampa. Call Doug at 813-684-8737 or email at flwingrdr@msn.com

ZUMO 350 GPS, Factory Exchange unit, complete in box. Selling for 50% off retail price. Call Buck Jones at 561-736-0675 or 561-389-2840, or email at buckjones4019@gmail.com