



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

February 2024 - Volume 17 Issue 2

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Feature Article

The *Why, Where and How* of our FLMSTA Website

By Van VanSteelant

[Editor's Request: If you have ridden somewhere interesting at any time and would like to share your experiences and some photos from your journey with other riders, please contact editor@flmsta.org to publish an article. Thanks!]

Every once in a while, it's good to share the *Why, Where and How* of our FLMSTA Website (www.flmsta.org) with members old and new.

Why?? Years ago now, we conjured up our website to better our communications with members here in Florida as well as nationwide. As a winter destination for many members, we felt obligated to make our Chapter more visible and accessible.

Our site is *Where* you'll find our history, our present, and our future.

And now the *How*...

As part of the National MSTa, we promote both local and regional events on our RIDES calendar.

(<https://flmsta.org/rides>) It is THE resource when it comes to events each month. Plenty of research and even recon rides are involved in choosing our destinations. And, suggestions are always welcomed!! Please check it often, as schedule changes are made as soon as they are needed and precede any follow-up announcements that you may receive.

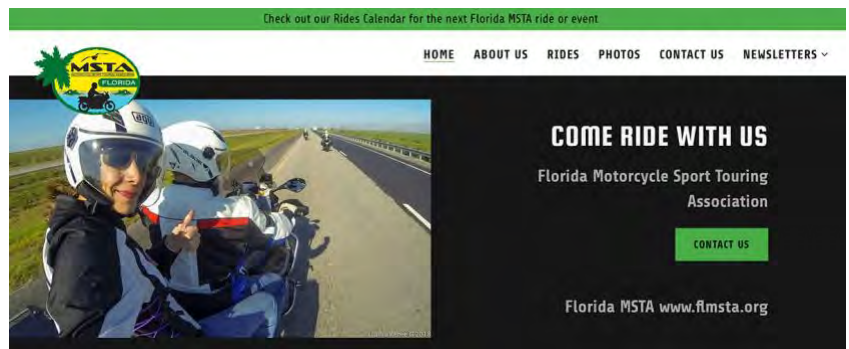
It's also *Where* you'll find lots of PHOTOS of local events and past STAR events.

(<https://flmsta.org/photos>) Admittedly, we are behind on recent postings...We will catch up sooner than later.

If someone you know, or just met, is looking for more information about the FL MSTa or How to join the National, refer them to our site and direct them to CONTACT US. (<https://flmsta.org/contact-us>) We receive inquiries every month!

As you are reading about our website in the latest *FLMSTA Gator Tale*, you should know that we have a link to our library of NEWSLETTERS in the pull-down menu at the top of each page on our website.

(<https://flmsta.org/2024-newsletters>) We currently archive back to 2014. If you are planning on traveling this year, a quick search through the feature articles may enlighten you about your destination! We are a well-traveled group! And know this, we were ahead of the *STARreview* with our own Safety Editor and Articles!! There is a treasure trove of knowledge in each *Gator Tale*!!



Those of you who attend our ride events and participate in our 50/50 raffle already know where the proceeds go. We thank the members who voluntarily support the costs of our website and related promotional vehicles, like our email announcements. And know that our FL membership rolls are updated monthly so that the regionalized email accounts are accurate. The list of addresses at the bottom of each announcement you receive are members "local" to each other. Usually within a 60-mile radius of one another! A BIG THANKS has gone out to Don Moe each month for years as our National Member Database Manager. Recently, Pat Mogavero has taken up the reins to spearhead the renovation of our database and monthly updates.

The five members, especially webmaster Kim Longacre, who years ago worked for months to establish our website and updates it every month, have been proud "parents" of our MSTA-award-winning website!

Please be sure to utilize this resource to its fullest!

Safety Talk

IMPORTANT NOTICES: *Ultimately, the safety of motorcycle riders and their passengers is their own responsibility. Nothing presented in the column supersedes, negates or relieves a motorcyclist and/or passenger from assumption of personal responsibility for their actions and safety. [Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the February 2018 and January 2023 editions of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]*

When to Say No

By Doug Westly

We were scheduled to head out on a ride yesterday morning, and at the last minute I decided to cancel it. I just wasn't in the right frame of mind to be on two wheels.

Motorcyclists often use their passion for two wheels as an escape from everyday life. Riding can help clear our minds, take our focus off of frustrating daily issues, and just generally make us feel better. Sometimes, however, it is those very issues that may (and should) preclude us from putting on our gear and getting on a bike.

Have you ever noticed that your riding reflects your current feelings or state of mind? If you're happy and content, you find yourself singing inside your helmet? (Yeah, I do that. It's not pretty...) On the other hand, if you're frustrated or angry, does your riding become more intense? Our physical riding skills and capability are dependent on a number of factors. Training, experience, frequency of riding, recent riding time, bike type, condition and riding environment all play a part in how we ride. However, our mental capabilities and specifically our state of mind also have a large impact on how we ride.

Even though we may use riding as an escape from our daily routines, if we're not in the right mental state to focus on our riding, AND our emotions may get the better of us while we're on the bike, then it may be a better idea to not strap on a helmet and go roaring off onto the public streets. The question becomes...how do we know when it's not the right time to get on the bike?

I'm not a psychologist, and I am certainly not qualified to issue hard and fast guidelines about when or when not to get on a motorcycle. On the other hand, here is my personal approach to the problem. If I find that I am not looking forward to riding just for the enjoyment of being on two wheels, then I start questioning my motivation. When I realize that I'm thinking of the ride as more of a task than a pleasure (other than for work), then I start to wonder if I'm doing the right thing by going for a ride. If I am upset about an issue, and the focus of my thoughts is the issue rather than the ride as I start getting ready to head out, then I know I'm distracted and shouldn't be on the bike.

The bigger challenge is not only recognizing that you're not focused on the ride, but actually making the decision not to ride. It's easy to say "I don't care. I'm going to ride." It's a lot harder to make the decision not to ride.

Safe motorcycling means being focused on your riding. You can't be distracted by other issues. You can't allow your emotions (other than being happy and carefree!) to rule how you ride. Being a safe and responsible motorcyclist means knowing when to make the decision not to ride, no matter how nice the weather is, or whether or not your riding group expects you to be there.

Know when to say no...to yourself.

Ride safe! – Doug Westly





South Director's Report

Winter riding in Florida...Four events attended by 63 riders!!

"Sunshine on my shoulder....."

And many of you were repeat attendees! Doug, Van and several others made two. Carl made at least three, but Tom overachieved and made all four!!! Be sure to catch their ride reports below. Good times were had by all! And our 50/50 raffle fund also had a good month. The New Year's ride netted \$63 after the winner donated \$20 back to the Club! The East and West lunch rides added another \$44 combined, for a total of \$107 in January! We start February with \$231. Always a BIG THANKS to all who participated.

The South ride to the Rusty Putter in Ava Maria started with five at the 7-11, and added one more at the Clewiston Marathon Gas. Re-emerging member Tulio and Spyder rider Ellen joined us for the group ride for the first time in a while. Our venture through the southern agra-glades was enhanced by the brisk and sunny weather. As mentioned above, Tom joined us, along with Carl and new member, Claude Hayes. The new-to-us location impressed us all! A wonderful setting facing a championship golf course, good food and fair prices. We gabbed and feasted for quite a while. A place to repeat for sure!



A brisk and sunny South ride through the agra-glades to the Rusty Putter in Ava Maria



(l-r): Jim Park, Tom Blake, Don Mroczenski, Ellen Kocher, Tulio Suarez, Michael Shooks, Carl Swafford, Claude Hayes

The next Saturday, a few Southies gathered to join the Westies at Johnny's Egg House. Michael, Tulio and Van enjoyed great weather and clean roads. We met up with Larry along with his good riding buddy and his daughter at our rendezvous point. All were impressed by Madison riding two up with Dad, on his BMW S 1000 RR. They are experienced riders together and clearly enjoy riding together!! Our ride home was more entertaining, as Van remembered to find all of the turns that kept us on the fun roads.... :)

What's Next??

We will have a full year of rides, to the east, west, south and even a chance of a few more northerly rides. The three of us are kicking around several ideas for the pending summer months in addition to the rest of the year. Stay tuned and check the calendar often!!

And, we will host a JUST FOR FUN weekend wrapped around this year's Riding Into History show! April 18-21. A separate email will be sent soon with the details and a RSVP request...

The **East Central Lunch Ride** to the **Deland Fish House** happened **February 3rd!!** Spectacular weather greeted Tom and the gang! The **South Lunch Ride** returns to **The Sebastian Saltwater Marina Restaurant** on **February 10th**. And be sure to get to the **Shamrock Inn in Floral City** on **February 24th** for the **West Central Lunch Ride**.

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...

We added 2 new members to the FLMSTA: Claude Hayes of Altamonte Springs and Jeff Reder of The Villages. Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

Thomas Batchelor	Frederick Blackall	Michael Brennan	Larry Fitch	Don Moe
Wade Osborne	Wayne Semenick	Bob Shields	Dennis Villarose	Donna Villarose

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Roy Clark	Robert Croot	Michael Demario	Larry Gonzalez	Laura Gonzalez
Raymond Harcourt	Robert Henry	Garth Jenkins	James Siler	Alan Spears

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!!

How can you not like the "winter" down here... Cooler temps and longer rides await!!

When you can...Join one of our monthly rides!!

With 3 rides a month, you have plenty of chances to invite a friend along and introduce them to our group!! More ITRs are available now...You know what to do...

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

Hoping you're living the life you love, and loving the life you live...

When you can...

Join one of our monthly rides!!

And invite a friend to ride along!!

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

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Director



East-Central Ride – Harborside, Winter Haven, FL – Tom Blake

New year, new rides....

January 1: Three of us East-siders met up with others from around the state at *Peck's Old Port Cove* on New Year's Day. The 42° start was exhilarating. A big thanks to Doug for holding this iconic event.

January 13: After a foul weather postponement, the EC ride to *Harborside* in Winter Haven finally took place. Even then, East-siders had a passing stormfront to contend with. But by afternoon, skies were just thinly clouded - like looking through an unfurled, very sheer white cloth. You could see the blue up there - just very light in hue.

Tulio and Larry S joined in at Yeehaw Junction. This was Tulio's first ride with the club since 2017! He's a good rider, and we were happy he decided to join us. Mike also rode over from Melbourne on his unfaired Beemer after a rain-aborted start. Kudos to him for his resolve to see the ride through. In addition, we were pleased to greet Carl, Alan and new member, Claude, from the state's center plus Eve, Bob, Kevin, Mike and Star from the west side. So, a total of twelve. The 50/50 raised \$34, \$17 to Carl.

Harborside, a new destination, was clean, comfortable, spacious and just a tad upscale. Service and food prep were excellent. I had a blackened chicken breast sandwich with cheese, bacon, lettuce and tomato and a side of really delicious slaw. The chicken was perfectly seasoned and so moist and tender, I thought I could be chewing fish. Asking around, everyone I talked to was pleased with their meal. A few had dessert and a few more after meal coffee – which was fresh and excellent. The cream was real and in classy little stainless dispensers with handles – a nice touch. And finally, as a group who seems to have a thing about waterside eateries, this restaurant fit right in with great views out across the docks and a very choppy lake.

Sadly, it never occurred to me to take a picture inside or out until we were halfway home. The outside one would have been nice with ten bikes and a Spyder lined up handlebar to handlebar right at the west edge of the nicely paved and striped parking lot with Lake Shipp as the backdrop. Inside, we were all seated together allowing a lot of friendly chatter.

January 20: Temps were warmer than the 45° our TV weather people were predicting. Those predictions, the distance (174 miles one way) and other commitments trimmed the EC headcount down to just me. And I... well, I thoroughly enjoyed the ride and the company at the *Rusty Putter* though it was a little tedious getting

through Immokalee. Thanks to Van for leading a different path east through Belle Glade where I turned north toward home.

January 27: Break out the mesh gear (really?) and make it a January sweep with a ride to Doug's lunch in Frostproof. From 42° on the 1st to high of 87° today is quite a spread. Three East-siders rode over. Good food, good friends, and there are good roads over in that part of the state to get one's juices flowing.

Looking ahead, my restaurant list for 2024 has been submitted. You may note that most are new-to-us destinations. You should also note that the lunch locations vary mostly between south-central and northeast-central in order to best serve riders from around the state.

Finally, since arguably all East-Central riders live in the Melbourne area or Vero Beach, I'm moving our hot weather, summer rides to 8 AM breakfasts around Melbourne and Sebastian. Alan, from Winter Park, said he should be able to take in a few of these. Great! We may take after-breakfast rides to area motorcycle dealers or do some not too long group rides before the daily baking process begins.

Let's all make it a happy 2024. Enjoy our Florida rides and work in a few fun regional rallies and/or the Sport Touring Association Rendezvous (STAR), this year in Texas Hill Country. We're all about making sport-touring activities enjoyable and open to suggestions that might make it even more so.

West Central Lunch Ride – Johnny's Egg House, Frostproof, FL – Doug Westly

The January 2024 West Central Luncheon turnout was spectacular! Approximately 20 riders and passengers from all over the central and southern part of Florida showed up at Johnny's Egg Works in Frostproof. One of our favorite lunch destinations, the restaurant gave us the entire back room of the restaurant, although probably just to keep us out of sight of their regular customers!



20 riders from all over came out on a beautiful winter's day for the West Central lunch ride to Johnny's Egg House in Frostproof.

Riders and passengers were fortunate to have a beautiful Florida winter day to ride to the luncheon, with clear skies and temperatures in the low 80's by the afternoon return time. If you walked outside, there were bikes everywhere in the parking lot. Honda, Triumph, Yamaha, BMW and Can-Am were just a few of the manufacturers represented that day. The restaurant folks made sure all the riders were well fed, and the stories around the tables flowed (surely all true and unvarnished...). The Southies even showed up with a few new riders in tow, including one brave lady back seating on a BMW S1000RR all the way from down their way! Serious respect goes out to that lady!

Next month the West Central Ride luncheon will be at the Shamrock Inn, Floral City. Its a great little tavern hiding in the middle of the village, with the best riding roads in the state leading to and from it! Make plans to join us there!

Florida Rides This Month

Always remember to check the Florida MSTA [Event Calendar](#) and/or your email for updates on scheduled rides. Changes in times, dates, and especially locations are often out of our control and with short notice.

MSTA Florida East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 3rd, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Deland Fish House**, 310 E International Speedway Blvd, **DeLand**, FL ☎ (386) 740-0069 ([map](#))

Description: Another new-to-us destination. Varied, reasonably priced menu with plenty of seafood options. Paved parking. Bike-friendly.

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 10th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Sebastian Saltwater Marina Restaurant**, 1732 Indian River Dr, **Sebastian**, FL ☎ (772) 918-4229 ([map](#))

Description: A waterfront destination for a change!! We were here last year around this time and said we'd return....

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

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 24th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Shamrock Inn**, 8343 E Orange Ave, **Floral City**, FL ☎ (863) 494-6077 ([map](#))

Description: One of our local rider's favorites.

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

Future Florida Rides

Note that the future ride events are included to facilitate longer term planning. The destinations and/or dates may be changed just before the ride dates. Please check the Florida MSTA [Event Calendar](#) for any updates.

MSTA Florida East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, March 2nd, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Olympic Restaurant**, 504 US Hwy 27, **Avon Park**, FL ☎ (863) 452-2700 ([map](#))

Description: New to us. As you might guess, the menu is slanted toward Greek food, pastries and desserts. Appears to be roomy, good for groups and has ample paved parking.

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

MSTA Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: **Thursday, March 7th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

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

Description: This is a repeat location for our Thursday Bike Week Lunch from last year. No one can complain about having a long ride from the Daytona attractions to get here. Very attractive and easy-to-get-to location next to the Tomoka River off US 1 in Ormond Beach. They open at 11:30, and we'd like to be first in line for their usual quick seating.

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

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, March 16th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **The Boathouse Tiki Bar & Grill – Fort Myers, 17101 SR 31, Fort Myers, FL**
☎ (239) 332-2628 ([map](#))

Description: Here we go again! The few who ventured here before had a GREAT time! Plan to be there "early-on-time" as it does get crowded, and they require all who want a seat to be present before they will seat you.

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

MSTA Florida West Central Lunch Ride

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

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

Description: A favorite for many years! Check it out for yourself!!

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

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

2018 Kawasaki Ninja 1000 ABS For Sale



- Corner carver AND a long-distance companion!
- One owner
- Stock bike
- 16,872 adult ridden miles
- 1043 cc 6 speed
- Side bags with trims/keyed to the bike
- 1 year-old battery
- 1500 miles on Dunlop RoadSmart IV tires
- 1500 miles on dealer oil change
- **Recent Price Reduction! Now asking \$8,960.00**

Van, FL State Director

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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!