FLMSTA Newsletter | Nov 2026

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Welcome to the **Florida Gator Tale Newsletter** from the Florida Chapter of the MSTA! We've updated the newsletter to make it easy to read on your phone or tablet. However, you can still download a .pdf of this newsletter and archived newsletters from the FLMSTA website here. The **Florida Gator Tale** includes all the news about rides, feature articles, Florida state reports and safety information to keep you current with the Florida MSTA.



Rides

Florida Rides This Month

IMPORTANT NOTE: Always remember to check the rides 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. Please check the rides calendar for possible updates.

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, November 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Lake Harris Hideaway** 11912 Lane Park Rd. **Tavares, FL** (352) 343-3585 (map)

Description: One of our favorite destinations. Attractive covered deck seating looking out on Lake Harris.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

North Central Brunch Ride - Brand New!

When: **Saturday, November 7, Meet-up 8:45 - 9:00 AM**

Meet-up: Meet first at the parking lot of the Huddle House at 3320 U.S. 441 in Lake City. (map)

Destination: **The Gathering Restaurant,** 1401 Ohio Avenue N., **Live Oak, FL (**386) 219-0177

Description: **BRAND NEW EVENT!! Note the meet-up/KSU time of 9:00 AM.**

Here's the first of two meet up/brunch rides that Ed Clay (see Ed's bio below) has set up for our Northern members!! These rides are meet up first and then ride as a group to the restaurant for Brunch. **Suggest you arrive by 8:45 AM. KSU at 9:00 AM**

Contact: Ed Clay, 1125r.rider@gmail.com

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, November 14, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Sora Eatery** 3900 Don Emerson Dr., Suite 201 2nd Fl, **Lakeland, FL (**863) 337-5587 (map)

Description: Eve has picked a wonderful place for lunch!! Located inside the Lakeland Linder International Airport!! Wonderful menu and great views from the 2nd floor!!

Contact: Eve, 6saturdaysretired@gmail.com

North Central Brunch Ride - Brand New!

When: **Wednesday, November 18, Meet-up 8:45 - 9:00 AM**

Meet-up: Meet first at the parking lot at NE Franklin St. and NE Lakeshore Terrace next to Lake DeSoto in Lake City. (map) Then ride as a group to the restaurant for Brunch.

Destination: **Blue Star Grill,** 23352 West U.S. Highway 27, **High Springs, FL** (386) 454-1055

Description: **BRAND NEW EVENT!! A WEDNESDAY RIDE!! Note the meet-up/KSU time of 9:00 AM.**

Here's an additional meet up/brunch ride that Ed Clay (see Ed's bio below) has set up for our Northern members!! These rides are meet up first and then ride as a group to the restaurant for Brunch. **Suggest you arrive by 8:45 AM. KSU at 9:00 AM**

Contact: Ed Clay, 1125r.rider@gmail.com

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, November 21, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Riverfront Grill,** 1682 Indian Hills Dr., **Moore Haven, FL** (863) 885-4644 (map)

Description: Another new-to-us destination, off the beaten path! ON the Caloosahatchee Canal, great vibe and lots of parking!!

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

MSTA Black Friday Ride

When: **Friday, November 27, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Cherry Pocket Steak n Seafood,** 3100 Canal Rd., **Lake Wales, FL (**863) 439-2031 (map)

Description: New owner has "fixed" this lakefront destination on the north shore of Lake Pierce. This will be our third return visit!! Good roads nearby and great vibe! Varied menu and reasonable prices. Paved motorcycle parking around back.

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 rides calendar for possible updates.

MSTA North Holiday Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, December 5, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Drifters Riverfront Bar & Grill,** 55716 Front St. **Astor, FL** (352) 759-2802 (map)

Description: Great spot, right on the St. John River! Big menu and lots of outdoor options!! Looking for lots of northern members and friends to join the festivities!!

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

MSTA South Holiday Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, December 12, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Dock 633,** 633 Lake June Rd., **Lake Placid** (863) 699-6330 (map)

Description: New owner has "fixed" this lakefront destination on the north shore of Lake Pierce. This will be our third return visit!! Good roads nearby and great vibe! Varied menu and reasonable prices. Paved motorcycle parking around back.

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

For additional Florida events and information, 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.

Bio - Ed Clay



Ed Clay Bio

Ed is currently 69 years old and has been riding on and off since the mid 1970's. He did 20 years in the US Air Force between (1979-1999). He then started working for Sun Microsystems until

2009 when Oracle acquired Sun Microsystems. He worked in computer security architecture for both companies until retiring from Oracle in September of 2025.

He has owned bikes of most types but gravitates towards sport bikes. While living in WV, he was the State Director of the WV MSTA group between 2017-2018 before moving down to Lake City Florida in 2018. He has enjoyed being part of MSTA and had many good rides over the years with the WV MSTA group.

He stopped riding motorcycles around 2022 worrying about getting too old with slowing reflexes and his knees starting to go and sold all of my motorcycles. Between pedaling bicycling 20-50-mile rides 2-3 times a week and some care, he has gotten around his knees, and his knees are good enough to ride again.

The motorcycle bug got him so he purchased a 2024 Suzuki GSX-S100GT+ earlier this year and has put some miles on it. He did a solo trip to VT via the Blue Ridge Mountains in Aug 2026, which was a blast. He also purchased a 2022 Buell Motorcycle Hammerhead 1190RX, much like his previous 2014 EBR 1190RX that he rode in WV.

He has taken the California Super Bike School training Level One at VIR. A couple years later he took their Level Two training at Summit Point race track. He has done track days at Summit Point Race track in WV, and Shenandoah race track in WV along with Pit Race in PA. He firmly believes if you want to really ride hard, get off the public roads and do a track day.

He still likes riding a bit spirited in corners on public roads but really focuses on riding within reasonable limits on public roads, he has no desire to get tickets. He feels like the North Central Florida area is not represented within MSTA and would like to get it rolling here for people to enjoy some of the nice country roads that are around this area. He looks forward to riding with you.

Feature Article

[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!]



What a story to read about life - Our life - Unknown Author

Each paragraph had meaningful memories and when reading them, stirred up memories each of us had back then.

To glance at us is to see silver hair, reading glasses, a slower walk across a parking lot. To truly know us is to understand that we are survivors of a vanished world. We were born into kitchens with rotary telephones bolted to the wall and radios humming in the background. We learned to dial by touch and to wait by habit. And somehow, without losing ourselves, we crossed into an age of satellites, smartphones, and artificial intelligence whispering answers from invisible clouds.

We did not just witness the change.
We survived the crossing.

Our story began in the forties, fifties, and sixties, when the world was still catching its breath after war. Cities were rebuilding. Families were mending. Hope felt cautious but determined. We grew up in neighborhoods where front doors were rarely locked and summer evenings stretched long beneath streetlights.

We were children of scraped knees and open fields. We played marbles in the dirt, jacks on the sidewalk, checkers on scarred wooden tables. We rode bicycles without helmets and drank water straight from the garden hose. We had no idea that one

day our grandchildren would swipe glowing screens, their games stored inside glass thinner than a notebook.

Saturday mornings meant cartoons on a single television channel. If you missed a show, you missed it. Music lived on vinyl records that crackled softly before the first note. Later, we carried cassette tapes in our pockets, rewinding them with pencils when the ribbon tangled.

We were teenagers when the world seemed to vibrate with change. The golden haze of the fifties gave way to the turbulence of the sixties and the neon rebellion of the seventies. We saw protests fill the streets. We heard speeches that shook governments. We gathered in muddy fields for outdoor festivals where hundreds of thousands believed music could bend history toward peace. Towering speakers sent sound rolling across open skies. Strangers locked arms and sang the same chorus as if harmony were possible.

We studied with ink-stained fingers. Our notes were handwritten, each word shaped deliberately. Research meant libraries and card catalogs. If you wanted knowledge, you searched for it. There was no cut or copy or paste. No instant search bar. Information was not disposable. It was earned.

We fell in love slowly. We waited by telephones for calls that might or might not come. We wrote letters folded carefully into envelopes. We danced in living rooms, socks sliding across polished floors, while records spun and time felt generous.

Then came careers, mortgages, children. The eighties and nineties were years of building. We learned to balance checkbooks, to fix broken appliances, to stretch paychecks. We raised families through recessions and recoveries. We watched the Berlin Wall fall. We saw old enemies become trading partners. We did not read about history in textbooks. We walked through its fire.

Read more...



The Howling...Wind
by Doug Westly

[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: We think Doug's safety tips merit repeating. This safety article is a repeat from the December 2021 issue of The Gator Tale.]

We had several conversations at STAR regarding the windy rides several members endured on their way to Springdale. Here are some tips from Doug for the rest of you!!

A few years ago, Becky and I took a cross-country motorcycle trip, destination California and the Laguna Sea MotoGP races. I've ridden across the country several times, and rode out west whenever I've lived in that part of the country, and the one thing you can count on out there is the wind. It's almost always blowing, and blowing hard.

On this particular trip we were west of Ely, NV on US-50 (known as "The Loneliest Road" and for good reason), when we encountered the fiercest winds I've ever ridden through. West of Ely, US-50 alternates between mountain ridges and valleys, all oriented north-south. The wind was coming from the north that day, and at times so intense we had to lean our bikes at about a 25° angle into the wind just to stay in the lane. We rode next to the north side of the road, as gusts would occasionally lob us into the other side of the lane. We had to be careful, as every time we encountered a wind buffer such as an

embankment on the north side of the road, the wind would be blocked and our lean would almost carry us off the road. At one point, we finally stopped in the lea of one embankment, just to rest and shelter.

So how do we deal with wind as riders? The problem for riders is understanding the wind. Headwinds just slow you down and make 30 mph seem like 60 mph. Tailwinds? Just enjoy them. It is the side winds that get us in trouble.

Rule One: Check the weather. Not just wind speed, but direction as well. Our winds in Florida come from all directions, unlike the west where winds are generally from the north.

Know when to say no. That day in NV the wind was probably blowing at 35-40 mph, and we were unfortunately caught out 100 miles from any civilization. We had no choice but to ride when it was safe enough, and shelter when we had to. But that was an extreme situation. For your daily riding, if the winds exceed your comfort level, either don't ride or take the car. It's that simple.

If you're already riding, watch for wind sign. Some of the best indicators are the trees and bushes along the roadside. If they are leaning and blowing in the wind, you will be, too. Birds are another good indicator. If they are flying into the wind and not going anywhere, that's a pretty quick sign that you should watch out.

Your bike makes a difference as well. Heavy bikes counter the wind more effectively than light bikes, to a degree. However, big bikes with fairings and bags offer more surface area for the wind to affect. It's a trade-off. Some of the worst motorcycle characteristics, in terms of wind resistance and affect, are those with solid wheels, as now the wind can actually push against the wheels, impacting the rider's control of the machine.

Bottom Line: Become weather smart. Not only for rain and other conditions, but also for the wind as well. When the wind warnings come out, pay attention and decide if and how you are going to handle it!

Ride Safe!

–Doug Westly

Florida News



Florida News

We had 13 members at STAR '26, the fourth largest contingent!!

I will give you my take on STAR '26 in the next newsletter. Ok, just a tease... PERFECT weather...(mornings were brisk for the Floridians!!) Hotels worked for the 201 attendees. Eventually, the parking worked out for us. Meetings, seminars and the banquet were all good! Routes and roads were entertaining!! And the Florida Chapter got an "atta boy(girl too)" for our donation to the Dan Clark Safety Fund.

Stephen E. offered up a terrific Feature Article for this November's *Gator Tale*. I sure hope you gave it a good read!!

Find Tom's East Lunch report below. Our nearly record wet weather played a role.Eve hosted the Western Lunch ride, and worked out just fine!! Four Westies and Alan S. from the Eastside enjoyed Giovanini's Kitchen on the 3rd! We may have added a new westside member as well!! And Ed Clay will begin hosting North Central events as his schedule allows!

The South Lunch Ride began as a test of wills. The first half of the ride to the *Nav-A-Gator* outside of Arcadia saw five of us encounter brief showers, sprinkles and lots of road spray! Fortunately, that was the worst of the weather for the day. Our early arrival let us park right outside of the front door. Another four Westside riders also made their way through the wet and cloudy morning!! We had avoided this destination for several years, but the current reviews and upgrades to the facilities justified a return visit. The menu, food and service was terrific, and we enjoyed the simple, rustic vibe. We appreciated their efficiency, as the weather continued to be of concern.

Fortunately, we enjoyed ever improving conditions and a leisurely ride home!





Southies and Westies braved the brief showers for a good lunch at Nav-A-Gator. Improved conditions for a leisurely ride home.

Member Promo!!

A few kind words about my new Shoei helmet (RF-1400) and Klim Induction Pro jacket. If you have a "Shoei head", and liked the RF-1200, you're in luck with the 1400. The minor changes and improvements work. Just one downside if you have a leftover shield from your 1200. The 1400 has its own version.

I've worn a Klim Induction Jacket for years, and it was time to replace it. The recently released Pro model is worth the premium over the "regular" model. More features and truly better impact protection.

If you've replaced or added new gear this year, and like it, please let us know. AND SEND IN YOUR RECEIPTS TO THE DAN CLARK SAFETY FUND BEFORE JANUARY 31, 2027.

What's Next??

You *are* making plans for **STAR '27**, right?!?! Get with it!! I'll see you in Huntington, WV, on **June 26th-30th**! We'll be riding in three different states!! I'd expect updates and registration news shortly. We're only eight months away!!

We have **TWO BRUNCH AND FOUR LUNCH** rides planned for November!! That includes the **TWO** North Central Brunch rides, hosted by Ed Clay!! AND, the traditional Black Friday Lunch Ride, hosted by Tom Blake!! Look at the **RIDES Calendar** on our website for all the dates and details!! *Always* check the Rides Calendar on our website for last minute changes!!

Looking ahead to December, our two Holiday Lunch Rides will each feature six giveaways, courtesy of our 50/50 Raffle Funds!!

We have inserted an email response "button" to our announcements to assist our coordinators with the reservation headcount. Click on the green "button", then hit the send arrow. The pre-loaded email will be on its way!! Easy peasey!!



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...

Pat Mogavero is our MSTA Membership Director! So far, Pat has introduced several improvements with a few more tweaks to come. **Big Thanks!!** patrickmogavero@gmail.com Contact him directly with any membership issues.

Please note that the Membership categories have been revamped, and you can only renew online through the National website. Do not use any older forms as they no longer conform with the latest updates.

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Vince Heilman**
- **Brian VanScoy**
- **Tom Blake**
- **Robert Parsons**
- **Michael Clark**
- **Hugh Palmer**

The following MSTA members have renewed their memberships:

- **Herman Greinstein**
- **Joy Melton**
- **Larry Melton**

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 **NEW MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM** at https://ridemsta.com/membership-account/membership-levels/ or simply visit the **MSTA Website** atwww.ridemsta.com and **LOG IN** and then click on **MEMBERSHIP**.

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please direct them to the **MSTA Website** at www.ridemsta.com. 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!!

Make the most of the upcoming "winter" riding season that more than a few northern Members head to Florida to enjoy!!

Smile every morning that you see yourself looking back in the mirror!!

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



October 2026
East Central News

Tom Blake

Hurricane Isaias threw a monkey wrench into our Wild Turkey Tavern plans. Although the threat of thunderstorms dissipated, widespread rain remained in the forecast. So it was decided to change the ride to an unofficial event – meaning go if you wanted to. But no official group rides were undertaken. Since rain was in my forecast, I didn't go. For those who did, I hope you had a good time and good riding.

Next up: EC has a ride to Lake Harris Hideaway up near Tavares on the 7th. This is a very popular destination for a lot of riders, not just MSTA, and they do not take reservations. So, we need to be there by **11:00 AM** when they open – **not 11:30** as stated in the last newsletter. Paved parking. Great, picturesque views out through the trees along the canal. Good food and service. We always have a good time there.

Also, our Black Friday ride goes back to Cherry Pockets a little NE of Lake Wales for the 3rd year.

Safe Journeys - *Tom Blake*, East-Central FL Area Rep

Florida MSTA Apparel

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!!

Classified Ads

To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to editor@flmsta.org. Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!

Contact Information

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/

More contact information:

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