



FLMSTA Newsletter | May 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

Enjoy Robert Frey's video summary of the April FLMSTA North Ride that he hosted to Swampy's in Dunellon. Join us on one of FLMSTA's rides in May and June (see below).



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.

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 2, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Location: **Wooden Spoon Diner Plant City**

712 S. Collins St., **Plant City, FL** (813) 652-8192 ([map](#))

Description: Enjoy a BRUNCH ride to a scrumptious destination!!
Come on out for some great food and camaraderie!!

Contact: Eve Blaszur, 6saturdaysretired@gmail.com

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 9, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Location: **Riverside Café**, 3341 Bridge Plaza Dr., **Vero Beach, FL**
(772) 234-5550 ([map](#))

Description: Good food selection. Riverside view from under the tall Sr 60 causeway bridge. Ample paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, May 16, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Lightsey's Seafood Restaurant & Fish Co.,**

1506 S. Parrott Ave., **Okeechobee, FL** (863) 763-4276 ([map](#))

Description: Yep, we're heading back to an old favorite in the middle of everything!! This will be the last South **Lunch** ride until October. Join us, won't you?!?

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

MSTA West Virginia Canaan Valley Rally

When: **Thursday-Sunday, May 7-10**

Location: **Canaan Valley Resort, Davis, WV**

Description: Head for the Mountains! The mountains of West 'almost heaven' Virginia! Experience some of the best twisty roads to be found anywhere and some of the best adventure riding to be found in the eastern US. Come to Canaan Valley and share those experiences with hundreds of other sport touring and adventure riding enthusiasts and enjoy the amenities that the Canaan Valley Resort has to offer.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://ridemsta.com/wv-canaan/>

MSTA TRISTAR

When: **Thursday-Sunday, May 21-24**

Location: **Alleghany Inn**, 341 North Main Street, **Sparta, NC**
888-372-2501

Description: The name of this Rally says it all! TRISTAR is named for its unique location in Sparta, NC. A quaint town located just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, Sparta is just a few miles from the borders of Virginia and Tennessee, so riders can enjoy the best roads of these three states all within the same day!

Contact: For information and registration: <https://ridemsta.com/nc-tristar/>

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.

North Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 6, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Florida Cracker Shamrock's - Irish Tavern**

8343 E. Orange Ave., **Floral City, FL** (352) 726-6414 ([map](#))

Description: Join Robert at this quaint little place!

Contact: Robert Frey, president@dixiedualsport.com

East Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 13, 8:00 - 10:00 AM**

Location: **Mulberry Lane Café**, 3440 N. Harbor City Blvd.,

Melbourne, FL (321) 426-7149 ([map](#))

Description: BRUNCHES are back!! A great place for breakfast. Not only a café, a bakery, too. Paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 20, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Drawbridge Restaurant at Torry Island**,

3300 W. Canal Street N., **Belle Glade, FL** (561) 722-0783 ([map](#))

Description: Some place new...Some place close...A "who knew" destination for us!!!

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

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, June 27, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **Hitchin Post Cafe** 10903 Lithia Pinecrest Road, **Lithia, FL**

(813) 737-4026 ([map](#))

Description: Omelettes, skilletts and large sandwiches for a hearty breakfast/brunch. Make your way here - highly recommended!!

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

MSTA Red River Gorge Rally

When: **Thursday-Sunday, June 25-28**

Location: **Comfort Inn, Mt. Sterling, KY**

Description: The 2026 Red River Gorge Rally will be held at the COMFORT INN, Mount Sterling Kentucky on the dates of JUNE 25-28, 2026. An MSTA sanctioned rally that is open to all motorcycle riders, regardless of club affiliation.

Custom suggested routes will be available for download to GPS devices. The location was chosen to take advantage of the abundance of twisty and scenic roads that are found in the eastern part of the state.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://ridemsta.com/ky-rrgorge/>

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.

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!]

There is no Feature article this month.

Safety Talk



My Best Safety Tips 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 2020 issue of The Gator Tale.]

This is a question I've received more than once. What are the best safety tips for a motorcyclist? I'm sure everyone has their own. Anyway, I thought I would throw out my own best *10 Rider Safety Tips* to start. So here they are, sort of in increasing order of importance:

- **10. Make checking your bike part of your pre-ride routine:** Don't just assume that because it was running fine when you last parked it, everything is still good now.
- **9. Keep up with the maintenance schedule:** Bike manufacturers have spent millions on development, to include how the bike should be cared for to ensure safety and longevity. Stick to the maintenance schedule.
- **8. If you're going to change a fundamental component of your bike, do the research first:** Once you start changing your bike, you are potentially altering its handling and performance characteristics. Make sure you figure out FIRST what it's going to do to the bike. Don't let it surprise you!
- **7. ATGATT:** Need I say more?
- **6. Riding partners:** Choose them wisely. Never be afraid to turn down a ride with someone whose riding style isn't compatible with yours.
- **5. Helmets:** More than just ATGATT. Put on your head what your brain and face are worth.
- **4. Tires, tires, tires:** Only because they are what make you go, make you stop and keep you upright. Check pressures religiously. Inspect tires either after every ride or before the next one. Never, EVER show up around me with the inner cord/belt exposed. I have a camera, and your tire WILL end up in the next safety article!
- **3. Passengers:** You are responsible for their safety. You don't want their injury or death on your mind for the rest of your life. Make sure they are ATGATT. When they are on

your bike, you should ride like their life is in your hands (because it is).

- **2. Other drivers:** They are nuts. They are preoccupied. They don't see us. Respect that and never forget it

...and my most important safety tip is...

- **1. Look in the mirror!:** No one is ultimately responsible for your safety on two wheels except you. Are you ready? Examine your riding style. Are you balancing risk and safety? Get some advanced training. If you've already had advanced training, get some more. When you're riding, if your ego or adrenalin starts to get the best of you, step up for yourself and rein in your riding. You've got family and a lot of friends who want to keep you around. Don't disappoint them!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly

Florida News



Florida News

The heat is on! Come fire and water...

Unfortunately, our (and the Nation's) fire season is off to a fast and awful start. Please be diligent and fire aware throughout this year, regardless of where your travels take you. I recently spent two weeks with my Sister in Sun Valley, Idaho, and their snowpack was just 38% of normal. The snowpack for the entire West, west of the Mississippi, is nearly gone by now.

Meanwhile, we enjoyed a busy month of April, with rides spanning the State! We opened with Robert Frey covering the first North Lunch Ride to Dunnellon (see the YouTube video above). Catch Tom's report below for the East Central ride to Astor. The West Central ride to Ellenton and the South ride to Fellsmere completed a great spread of destinations prior to our upcoming brunch season.

On the South ride, Joe and Mike met me at the Shell station for our casual ride up to Marsh Landing. We enjoyed our usual diversions up the middle of the State, with just a short stint on FL-60. It had been a few years since our last visit, and they hadn't lost their touch. We were able to take over a side room and carry on as we do without disturbing the other patrons!

We were joined by new member Rob West, via Long Island and Cocoa Beach. We'll look for him again in the Fall! And Joy and Larry barely warmed up the motor oil on their 8-mile hike from their home!!

We had a "quorum" for the 50/50 raffle, and Mike S. won, and promptly donated his share back to the Club. We'll look for him again in the Fall, after summering in Grand Rapids, along the shore of Lake Michigan. The East and South total for April was \$85, for a new total of \$1,301. Always a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!!

The next week, I hosted the West Central Lunch ride to Woody's River Roo! Our usual Westside hosts were "iffy" with prior personal commitments. Besides, it had been six years since I enjoyed the airy ambiance of Woody's!! And we weren't disappointed! Larry G. from Port St. Lucie met me at the first gas stop, north of Okeechobee. He was breaking in a new-to-him GS1300 he plans to take out west this summer. Good choice!

We survived the foggy soup that enveloped the area and enjoyed a sunny ride on 2-laners, with a short 3-mile run on I-75 to cross the Manatee River. Woody's has bike parking right up front, lots of outdoor/undercover tables, and an attentive server, all which made our visit most enjoyable! Though next time, we'll pick a table with chairs rather than wooden benches...

I was able to share the latest version of the ITRs with the group, along with the new MSTA Business Cards with a QR code for easy sharing with potential members. We'll keep sharing them at every RTE. Larry and I cruised back as we came, and parted ways back at Okeechobee. I'm sure his 430+-mile day provided some valuable travel tips.



West Lunch ride to Woody's Pub in Ellenton - great day for riding. Larry G's GS1300 is sweet (bottom right)

What's Next??

Registration is **OPEN** for **STAR 2026!!** Go to <https://ridemsta.com/star/> This is the comprehensive webpage for the entirety of STAR '26!! Peruse the website, and then click on **Register Today**. Everything you need to know can be found here!! Sign up today!!! I'll see you in Springdale, Arkansas, in October!!

We have three rides planned for May!! With Memorial Day arriving early this year, we squeezed them in, three in a row! Eve will host the West Central **BRUNCH** at the Wooden Spoon Diner in Plant City on May 2nd. Ask her about the MSTA hats she has for sale! Tom will host the East Central Lunch on May 9th at the Riverside Cafe in Vero Beach. I suspect a few Southies may join him. Van will host the South Lunch at Lightsey's Seafood in Okeechobee on May 16th.

Always check the Rides Calendar on our website for last minute changes!!

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! We have adapted to the new presentation of monthly data over these last few months. 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.

FLMSTA welcomed 2 new members in April - Robert West of Cocoa Beach and Mick Geary of Tampa. Welcome!

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Donna Villarose**
- **Brian Brannon**
- **Michael Ewanus**
- **Prior Powers**
- **Charles Quesenberry**
- **Bob Stanley**

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** at www.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!!

Hope you're out riding during this dry season... you know what's coming!!

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



April 2026
East Central News
Tom Blake

Drifters Riverfront Bar & Grill in Astor is a pretty good haul from the Melbourne/Vero area (130 – 167 miles) but six of us found some entertaining roads between here and there. We met up with eleven others from the northern half of the state – Grand Island, the Villages, Ocala, Gainesville, St Augustine,

Jacksonville and parts in between. They seated us at the south end of the lower dining room with great views out onto the St Johns River. I think the downstairs area is much nicer than upstairs where they put us last year. Anyways, the servers did their jobs, the cooks did theirs and we did ours. The food really hit the spot.

And when it came time for the 50/50, there was no shortage of big spenders. \$91 was raised and \$46 went to first-time ever winner, our very own - Roy Clark (not to be confused with the singer of the same name). Congrats, Roy. And thank you all for supporting Florida MSTA.



Good crowd of riders at Drifters (above); Villages riders (bottom left) and Roy Clark's new Honda 1100T (bottom right)

National just distributed revised **Invitations To Ride (ITR's)**. I thought they were exceptionally well conceived and handed out a couple to everyone in attendance so they can give them to prospective members. I have a good stock of them if anyone wants more.

Heading home, although temps got into the mid-80's, the lack of humidity made it very tolerable. A nice local shower made it even more spring-like.

Hats off to Eve for organizing WC lunch rides since the Westly's departure – and for getting us good deals on MSTA ball caps. Her efforts have been most appreciated. And I'm happy to say that a few of us EC types were able to attend several of her lunches and buy some caps.

Next up: Note that May is my month to go south. I try to alternate north then south to give riders from both halves of the state an opportunity to ride. It also keeps the roads a bit fresher for me and my local riders. Cobb's Landing in Fort Pierce was originally on the schedule for the 9th. But a recon on a recent Saturday revealed that although it would be a good spot to eat, they have a serious lack of parking on Saturdays because of heavy downtown activity and a popular flea market adjacent the shared parking lot.

Wanting to keep the lunch near the coast with its cooling breezes, this one will be at the **Riverside Café** in Vero Beach. It's on the barrier island, right alongside the Indian River and under the SR 60 bridge. **Start time is at 11:00 AM** when they open. This will get us out and home earlier (May starts to get a little on the warm side).

Safe Journeys, Tom

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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