



FLMSTA Newsletter | Feb 2026

February 2026 | Volume 20 | Issue 2

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, February 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Varied and reasonably priced menu, with plenty of seafood options! Paved parking and biker friendly.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Dune Dog Cafe**, 421 SW Federal Hwy., **Stuart, FL** (772) 266-4360 ([map](#))

Description: I know... Valentines Day! This is close by for most of the Southies/Easties, so you'll be home in plenty of time to make your dinner plans...

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

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 28, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Always a favorite!! Funky vibe, good eats!! CASH ONLY!!

Contact: Eve Blazsur, 6saturdaysretired@gmail.com

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 Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: **Thursday, March 5, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **RiverGrille on the Tomoka**, 950 U.S. Route 1, **Ormond Beach, FL** (386) 615-2004 ([map](#))

Description: Very attractive and easy-to-get-to location, next to the Tomoka River, off US 1 in Ormond Beach. No reservations, but quick seating if we're all there by 11:30 AM when they open!!

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Gator Shack Restaurant at Babcock Ranch Eco Tours**, 8502 FL-31, **Punta Gorda, FL** (800) 500-5583 ([map](#))

Description: Out of the way...Always amazing!! Join us and see why!

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

West Central Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Sunrise Eatery**, 5883 Gall Blvd., **Zephyrhills, FL** (813) 782-0401 ([map](#))

Description: Eve will host this lunch ride back to a fan favorite!! Meet her there!!

Contact: Eve Blazsur, 6saturdaysretired@gmail.com

East Central Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Cowpoke's Watering Hole**, 6813 U.S. Highway 27 S., **Sebring, FL** (863) 314-9459 ([map](#))

Description: Huge destination! Appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches, pasta, steaks, seafood AND more!! Paved parking

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

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



Mindset?
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 October 2023 issue, which was a repeat of a 2015 issue. 11 years on, and it's still applicable!]

Ok, I'm going on a rant here. Actually, it is more of a quest for an explanation, and it comes from a scene I witnessed recently.

I was headed out in our truck, running errands one morning, when I saw a rider coming out of an adjacent neighborhood, pulling onto the main thoroughfare in our area. The rider was on a newer Gold Wing, but that was not really what caught my attention. It was his riding gear that stunned me. He was wearing (top to bottom) a good full-face helmet, a high quality, armored mesh, hi-visibility jacket, full-finger gloves and shorts and sandals. WHAT?

What kind of mindset does it take to recognize that you need to protect your upper body but somehow believe everything below the waist is going to be magically immune to danger?

Everyone knows I'm a big proponent of ATGATT. I campaign against t-shirts, jeans (my biggest pet peeve), sneakers and any other kind of non-safety outerwear. I even had a long, drawn-out discussion with noted motorcycle journalist Ken Condon on what constitutes acceptable risk and managed a begrudging affirmation of my position from him. I count that as one of my life's memorable achievements, by the way.

However, I also recognize that riders have different personal safety considerations. This one, on the other hand, has me completely stumped. The Gold Wing rider turned onto the highway in front of me, and I actually hoped he was going to turn into the upcoming gas station where I had already planned to stop. I have never approached a rider to question their

safety gear choices, but this time I was ready. It is not that I was going to reproach him for his choices, but I really did want to know his rationale for them. Unfortunately, the rider did not stop, so I'll never know.

Here is the cold fact. Statistically as a motorcycle rider, you are more likely to suffer a lower extremity injury (about 70-80% of the time) than any other kind in a crash. Doesn't it make sense to protect the lower half as you would the top part?

This is only the latest example of other strange safety statements we've seen lately. A couple of weeks earlier it was a guy on a cruiser in front of us that was wearing nothing up top but a t-shirt that said "Dead Men Tell No Tales - Think Safety!" Really?

Certainly everyone should be free to make choices. I am not going to berate anyone for putting on their gym clothes for an Iron Butt ride. Sometimes though I just don't understand their thought processes when it comes to safety.

Whenever you are out riding, take a moment as you encounter other riders. Examine their choices in safety gear. If nothing else, it will get you thinking about your own approach to safety. It may also provide you with some entertainment, or at least the opportunity to go... "WHAT?"

Ride safe! – Doug Westly

Florida News

Florida News

Ah, winter riding in Florida!!

True, it was in the 30's the morning of Jan. 1 for the lunch ride to Peck's. But it improved significantly for the rides home!



Meanwhile, the rest of our lunch rides were held on 60-80 degree days!! Oh my!!

Tom hosted the January 1st New Year's lunch at Peck's Old Port Cove where quite the crowd braved the elements! He also entertained many at the Airport Tiki for the East Central lunch on January 17. See his report below.

On January 10th, 15 riders from East and West joined Eve at the Eagle Lake Dinner, continuing our big turnouts!! Good company and fine dining make for a great time!! She truly appreciates the camaraderie at her events. BTW, she has MST hats for sale too!

The Southies ventured back to Scotty's Tiki Hut after many years. Things have fortunately improved, and the weather couldn't have been more enticing for a ride! Seven riders joined me at the Wawa, and rode the short trip to Clewiston. Two of those riders extended their morning's adventure. Gregg rode up from North Miami, and Brian rode down from Sebring! Several Westies were already there to greet us for some tire kicking. 13 of us occupied the waiting table and were joined later by the Easties who loitered in almost on time...We had six riders at over 150 miles, we had four under 100 miles, and nine more in between!!

Ah, dining alfresco in January, breeze in our hair, scrumptious grub and delightful gab carried the day!! If you know, then you know...I am always grateful for the warm response to our planned gatherings!!

Buck J. won the 50/50, pocketing \$35!! Adding \$130 from the January 1 ride, our new total is \$1,175.00. A **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!!



Dining alfresco in January on the South ride to Clewiston

Last, but not least, thanks to all of you who take the time to send your comments and suggestions to me/us!! They are most welcome!! Remember, this is YOUR club, and to make it better often lies with the membership rather than the leadership. I thank you all for your support!!

What's Next??

We have three rides planned for February!! Tom will host the East Central Lunch on February 7th to the Deland Fish House. Van will host the South Lunch at the Dune Dog Cafe in

Stuart on February 14th. Eve will host the West Central lunch to Solomon's Castle in Ona on February 28th. Look for a few Southies to join in! We currently have rides planned through March, into April, including a NORTHERN lunch ride!! Stay tuned!!

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.

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Michael Demario**
- **Mike Halburnt**
- **Claude Hayes**
- **Todd Mason**
- **Don Mroczenski**

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 when the endless supply of playoff games are over...

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



January 2026 East Central News

Tom Blake



Wow! We kicked off 2026 with the annual **New Year's Day** ride to *Peck's Old Port Cove*. Larry F and I logged about 180 miles on mostly

deserted country roads and the curvy Ozello Trail to get there. Good times. But the first 90 or so were in the mid-30's (34°-38° on my gauge). Brrr. I think we saw some low 40's near the end. But no one was spared. Which made it such a pleasant surprise to see so many motorcycles and smiling faces in the parking lot when we pulled in. We knew there would be good food. And now we knew we would enjoy it with a big group of friends.



A total of 28 showed up, nearly filling the large dining room. Perhaps that and the new year set the tone for our 50/50. One fellow bought \$30 worth of tickets! Two or three others bought \$20 worth and

several more were good for \$10. The gross was \$150! Our Larry M had the winning ticket but donated \$55 back. Thank you, sir. So, a whopping \$130 goes to the club to start the new year. How about that!

Our **EC ride** was to (new to us) *Airport Tiki* at the Treasure Coast (Fort Pierce) International Airport. Despite a cool start, 16

showed up. So it was a nice gathering of Central and South riders. Unfortunately, we were not favorably impressed with the restaurant. Though clean with a good view out onto the tarmac (for half of us at the table, at least), it was pretty basic, and most of the food, though flavorful, was way overcooked. Someone said the coffee was really good, though. No matter, the storytelling didn't stop. By the time we got around to heading home, the weather had turned gorgeous. It could not have been nicer and prompted many to go on extended rides. The perfect ending!



The weather couldn't have been nicer for the EC ride!

Up Next: On February 7th, we head back to the *Deland Fish House* for some really good chow. There's gobs of paved parking including in the adjacent lot to the east. This will be our 3rd visit – they're that good and they appreciate our business.

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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