



FLMSTA Newsletter | July 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.

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, July 11, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **Mulberry Cafe** 113 W. Badcock Blvd., **Mulberry, FL**
(863) 943-4181 ([map](#))

Description: The menu is to die for... Bring your appetite! **Look for details in our Ride Announcement!!**

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

East Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, July 18, 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

Location: **Country Ham 'n Egg Restaurant** 478 US-1, **Sebastian, FL**
(772) 589-4845 ([map](#))

NOTE: NEW 9:00AM start time for East Central Brunches.

Popular eatery with a nice selection of breakfast and lunch items.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, July 25, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **Lures Bar & Grill**, 3330 N. Indian River Dr., **Jensen Beach, FL**
(772) 208-5974 ([map](#))

Description: New-to-us destination! Simple place, great menu and wonderful reviews!! Be sure to double up the bikes in parking area!

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

MSTA Brick's Backyard Boogie Rally

When: **Thursday-Sunday, July 9-12**

Location: **Big Lynn Lodge, Little Switzerland, NC**

Description: The Big Lynn Lodge is located on a mountain ridge right next to the Blue Ridge Parkway, a few miles south of Spruce Pine, North Carolina. It is one of the most beautiful settings you will find for a place to stay. There are fantastic roads in every direction from the doorstep of the lodge. Every guest has breakfast and dinner included with their room and everyone dines together for both meals. Food is healthy and tasty with soft drinks and desserts, which include homemade pies. This area has some exceptional technical routes, both pavement and dirt, created by Doug Pippin. They are some of the best you will ride anywhere, ever. As if all of that is not enough, there will be entertainment on Friday night. Almost Vintage will play out on the back porch. Once again, the BLL Ride will have available Anne-Marie LaFrance, a professional massage therapist, so attendees can sign up for a free 20-minute massage on Friday and Saturday afternoon.

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

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.

East Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 8, 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

Location: **La Crepe de France - Downtown** 707 E. New Haven Ave.,
Melbourne, FL (321) 837-3760 ([map](#))

Description: **NOTE: NEW** 9:00 AM start time for East Central Brunches. Their crepes are delicious though a tad pricey. Be there at 9:00 - that's when they open, and they fill up fast and have limited seating. On street parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 15, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Original Mike's Grill** 1037 N. Broadway Ave., **Bartow, FL**
(863) 800-3130 ([map](#))

Description: Enjoy this brunch ride to an oldie but goodie!!

Look for details in our Ride Announcements!!

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

South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 29, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Red Rooster LaBelle**, 100 Main St., **LaBelle, FL**
(863) 342-8034 ([map](#))

Description: Another new-to-us destination, and easy to get to!! Extensive brunch menu!! Lots of parking!

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

MSTA FlyBy Week

When: **Monday-Sunday, August 17-23**

Location: **Comfort Suites, Marietta, OH**

Description: FlyBy Week is MSTA's largest regional rally - with 36+ Road and ADV routes to choose from. Come for the full week or any part. Evening dinner tours with transportation to downtown Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Outdoor lounge behind hotel for evening socializing. Bike wash with all equipment and supplies courtesy VEI. Free Therapeutic Massage Thursday - Saturday with Anne-Marie LaFrance.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://flybyweek.com>

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



The North Georgia
Classic - Even in the
Rain

By Tom Blake

[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!]

I've reported on this rally before. This report will be a little different.

My friend, Ken, and I met for lunch and then rode down to Dillard and checked into the Mountain Valley Inn Friday afternoon. Given the forecast for a wet weekend, there was a surprisingly good turnout. Wayne (Port Orange), Dale (Villages), Rick (Jupiter) and Tom (Bradenton) are some of the Florida folks I recognized. We walked to supper and had a good gab session with the other riders back at the Inn.



On Saturday, radar showed a storm front working in from the west. So Ken, Tulio (who was staying in Rabun Gap just below Dillard) and I rode east to the Pisgah Inn Restaurant up on the Blue Ridge Parkway for lunch. Unfortunately, the front overtook us as we were riding up the mountain toward the Parkway.

In the downpour, Ken missed the on ramp. Then he had to find a place to turn around going down the steep and twisty north side of the mountain. He finally found a place but had some

trouble getting his 900-pound Goldwing back out on the highway. There was a dip and then a sharp lip up onto the road. It flipped the bike over trapping his one foot under a saddlebag (ouch!). Meanwhile, unaware of Ken's misfortune, Tulio and I trudged into the upscale restaurant dripping wet. Ken came in a while later also dripping and with a limp. We got back to Dillard just a few minutes before 6 pm and it was still raining. What a day! At least the dry part was great fun.

The rain moved through Saturday night. Sunday and Monday turned out to be sunny and dry. As it's officially a Friday to Sunday event, the other riders headed home Sunday, but we hung around. Unfortunately, Ken's foot was still swollen so he stayed behind. Tulio and I hit half of the best mountain roads I knew of west of Dillard including up into NC and TN. We had a great time and were sorry Ken couldn't ride with us.

Sunday evening, Tulio and his lady friend picked Ken and me up in her car (to Ken's great delight) and drove us to Clayton where we met up with her friends – the couple who own the property in Rabun Gap where they were staying. We had a very pleasant time eating and chatting in a relaxed open-air section of the restaurant. All very nice folks. It was a good evening.

The swelling in Ken's foot moderated enough by Monday that he could get his boot on, so he rode home – about a four-hour trip. He texted us that he got home safely - which we were both glad to hear. Tulio and I were assaulting the other half of the best mountain roads west of Dillard.

Rain was forecast to move back in Tuesday morning. So Tulio and I made plans to meet at 7 am in Clayton, about 10 minutes

south of Dillard, and head to Florida. We had hoped to beat the rain but didn't. It rained all the way to Dublin, Georgia and then some - about 5 hours or so. The rest of the way was fine. Tulio was smart enough to put on rain gear. I relied on my "waterproof" textile jacket and pants which normally work fine. But long stints in heavy rain proved to be too much. I got a *tad* damp!

It took Tulio and me a long 12 hours to get to my place in south Brevard County. He had another couple to go but needed a night to recharge.

Epilogue: Every now and then, one of these wet ones comes along. The area had been in a severe drought so all the locals were praying for rain. I think our pleas got lost in the chorus. But, at least we got in a couple days of good riding weather and made the most of them. Well, maybe not Ken. But he's healing up, and I'm looking forward to seeing him again at Brick's Backyard Boogie (formerly the Big Lynn Lodge Rally) in July in Little Switzerland, NC.

– *Tom Blake*

Safety Talk



Solo Riding - Best Recommendations 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 January 2022 issue of The Gator Tale.]

As I prepare for a Saturday solo ride of about 400 miles, it occurs to me that MSTA riders are a strange bunch. While most motorcyclists are happy always being in a group, we occasionally (and for some, always) like to get out by ourselves. And I am not talking about a ride around the block, either. It may be across the state, or in my case down to the Everglades and back, just for lunch, or even across the country with nobody to keep us company except the bike.

There are entire books, online forums and seminars where you can find tips and hints on long-distance, solo riding. Long distance riders all have their own tips and techniques. Here are a few of mine:

- **A thorough bike check.** You are going out there, depending on your mount to get you to your destination. Before you go, do a thorough inspection of the bike. I don't mean a once-over. I am talking about putting your hands on every nut, bolt, fastener, cable, line, light, spoke, etc. Don't just check air pressure. Rotate the tires and inspect the tread. Do I even have to mention oil? Well, I did, anyway. Find it before it finds you, otherwise luck could mean you're stuck on a backroad in the middle of nowhere. And do this check at least a week in advance, so you have time to order, repair, replace or fix anything without having to rush at the last minute.
- **Make a riding plan.** That means route, gas stops, meals, nightly stops if it is overnight, etc. Take a look at the weather forecast and plan, plan, plan. Once you make the plan, stick to it. Oh, and tell someone the plan. That way they know where to go look if the worst were to happen.
- **When the roads first get wet, the water pushes all the oil to the top.** The roads get SLICK. Be super careful. If you can, turn up the traction control. Turn down the power delivery. Stay out of the lane centers where all the oil and grease accumulates.
- **Check-in.** With today's communications, there is no reason to ever be out of touch. Enable your location finding for your significant other. If you are going to be way out there, then get a SPOT or other type of satellite communications. It's easy, fairly inexpensive and means you can always reach out if you need. Don't let your loved ones worry.

- **Don't overextend yourself.** Make sure your riding plan is realistic. Take more frequent stops. Long-distance riders tend to want to just keep riding. There is a difference between a fun, long ride and an Iron Butt challenge.
- **If you haven't done a lot of long distance days, try this.** Instead of thinking about it as one long ride, imagine it as a number of short rides, from one planned stop to the next one. Mentally, that makes it a lot easier to absorb and manage.
- **Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.** Start before the ride. If you wait until the morning of the trip, you're too late. Your body needs time to absorb and process. Once you're on the road, stay hydrated. Use a hydration system. That way you can take sips during the ride, and not depend on stopping to get a drink.
- **Finally, go out there and enjoy the solitude.** I do some of my best thinking when I'm on a long, solo ride. Maybe an epiphany will strike you as well, while you're alone on the road.

Ride safe! – Doug Westly

Florida News



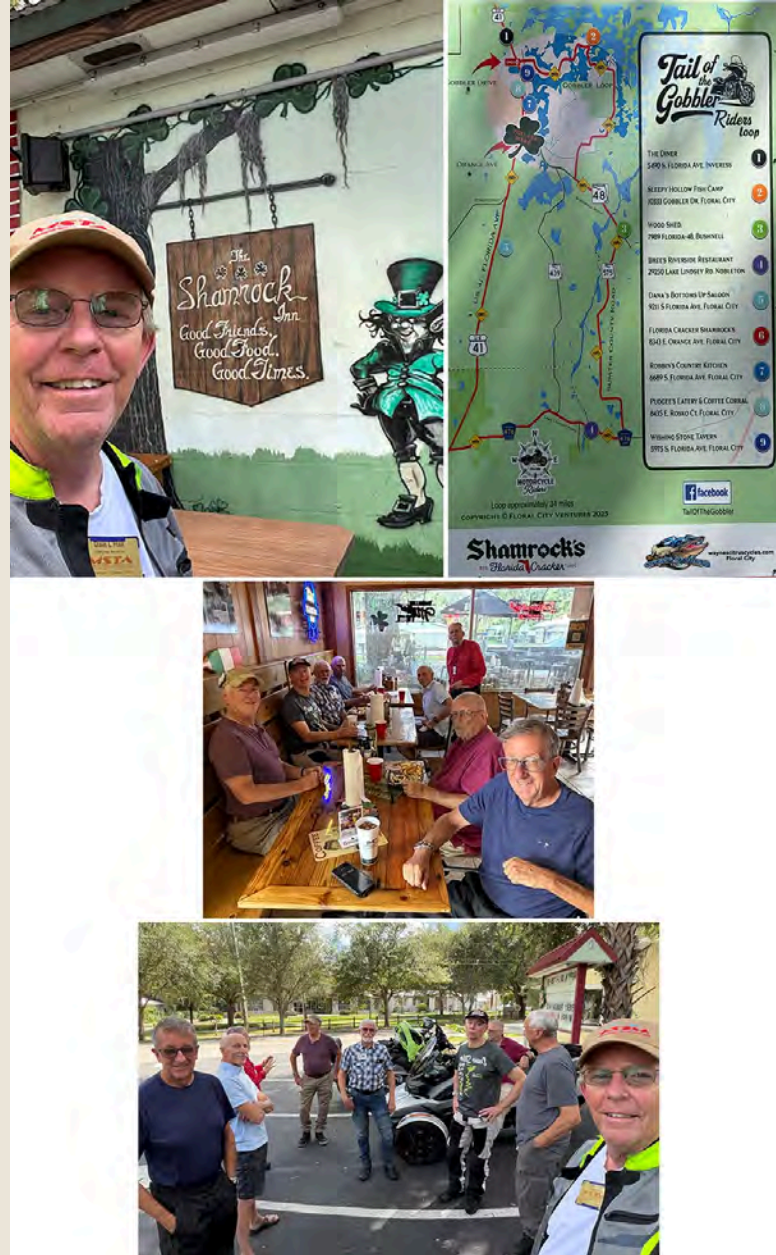
Florida News

Summer Solstice...Hot and Sticky!

Yep, we've hit the heat and humidity riding season! We start earlier, hydrate often, and understand the smaller groups! Tom's East

Breakfast report is below. And the self-hosted Western brunch rides are working out just fine!! Five Westies enjoyed the Hitchin Post on the 27th! Here are some words from Roy C. about the North Lunch ride, along with photos from Dale H:

Roy shared:"The North Lunch ride was good. I believe we had 10 people, and Dale took pictures of us at the tables. We all had the special prime rib hoagie with fries (\$12). Florida Crackers did a great job on the remodel of the old hole-in-the-wall Shamrock a couple months ago, but branding is still the Irish Pub. Besides the insides, they improved the grounds with outside seating and increased parking with designated motorcycle spots. It was worth the trip!"



North Ride to the newly renovated Florida Crackers Shamrock in Floral City - a great time! There's even a motorcycle loop posted for the area!

The South Brunch Ride turned into an adventure! In spite of multiple attempts to confirm their hours, we had to take the

chance that the Drawbridge Restaurant would be serving breakfast. Alas, their "current" hours were taped to the front door and not in our favor. We made the decision to continue our ride, heading north from Belle Glade to Okeechobee to the Ding-a-Ling Deli. Jim and I had recently tried them out on a "just-get-out-and-ride". The four of us who left the Wawa fortunately caught Greg F. on his way into the Drawbridge, so his venture up from N. Miami still resulted in a good brunch and an excuse to ride the west side of Lake O. on his way home!! We'll be back for a South ride next year. It's our kind of place!



The South Ride was diverted from Belle Glade to the Ding-A-Ling Deli in Okeechobee - good choice!

Member Promo!! Some of you may remember previous entries from Gator Tales' past. BUT, we know that some of you are just holding back... Don't keep secrets from the rest of us! If you have purchased anything motorcycle-related that has blown you away with its features or price or performance, send me and/or Kim an email with a short write-up and website. We'll

include a **Member(s) Promo** each month that you send something in...

What's Next??

You *are* making plans for STAR '26, right?!?! Registration is open, the hotel is taking reservations and Jerry has a substantial website up and running! Get with it!! I'll see you there in Springdale, Arkansas, in October!!!!

<https://ridemsta.com/star/>

We have three rides planned for July!! Enjoy a safe and happy 4th!

The West Central Brunch ride, July 11th, will be self-hosted at the Mulberry Cafe, in Mulberry! I'll ensure that the restaurant knows you are coming, and those who attend can enjoy each other's company and share some seriously good grub! This would be a great time to email some of the contacts at the bottom of our announcements to see who might be considering the ride-to-eat!!

Tom will host the East Central Brunch on July 18th at the Country Ham N Egg Restaurant in Sebastian. Note he has bumped the meet-up time to **9:00 AM**.

On July 25th, Van will host the South Brunch at a new-to-us location, Lures Bar & Grill, in Jensen Beach.

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.

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Dorothy Anderson**
- **Dennis Anderson**
- **Dell Haverland**
- **Bruce Genck**
- **Larry Gonzalez**

The following MSTA members have recently renewed their memberships:

- **Larry Solomon**

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 this 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!!!



June 2026
East Central News
Tom Blake

This month we visited *Mulberry Lane Café* in North Melbourne. Many believe they have the best breakfasts in Brevard County. They had tables waiting for us at the back of the dining area where we had a bit of separation from other customers. And, we had space to spread out. Good service, good chow and plenty to talk about - even though only five showed up. (See photo below) Alan chalked up a whopping 60 miles to get there. Rick did 49, I was at 20. Neither Larry nor Andy even got to 10.



Alan, temporarily sans riding gear as usual (red Ducati), and Rick (BMW) were chatting in the parking lot when I pulled in on my Honda. Then our friend Andy

rode in on a shiny white Honda NC750 DCT. He had been riding Triumphs for years. But after a mechanical issue which he said Triumph refused to address, he's now very happy with

his new Honda. And it has a *frunk*, he proclaimed – a front storage space where the gas tank normally resides. Larry came padding down the walkway in flip-flops while his recently detailed BMW remained pristinely in his garage.

Next up: *Country Ham & Egg* in Sebastian is on the schedule for July 18th. Many folks have recommended this place. So we're going.

And after a discussion and agreement among the five of us, **I'm adjusting the start time for the remaining EC summer meals to 9:00 AM** instead of 8:00 AM to allow more time for folks to get there. It has never been about limiting participation. It's just that, in my golden years, I've become reluctant to venture too far into the heat of our summer days. If you're not similarly afflicted, come on over, up or down. We look forward to your company.

STAR 2026: Terry and Jay spent time in northwest Arkansas this past April. Jay tells me the roads out there were far and away the best he's *ever* ridden on. Better even than the Blue Ridge and Southern Appalachians. Now that's quite a statement! So, adding STAR to my agenda for this October is now under serious consideration.

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

Florida MSTAs Apparel

Florida MSTAs 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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