



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

February 2021 - Volume 14 Issue 2

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Feature Article

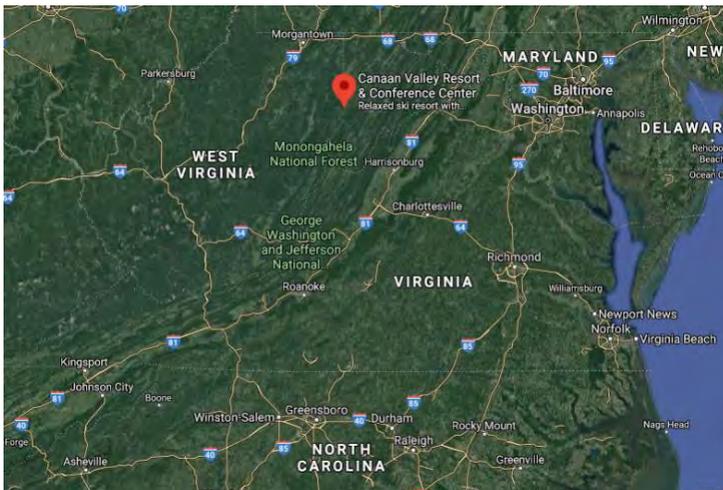
STAR 2021 Preview...Registration is Open!

By Patrick Mogavero

[Ed. Note: Here are excerpts reprinted from "STAR 2021 Preview" published in the October/November/December 2020 of the [STAR Review](#), the official MSTA magazine. Hyperlinks have been added.]

STAR stands for Sport Touring Association Rendezvous. I wasn't around when they first started up, so I can't tell you what was going through Dana's and others minds back then (1983?). But I imagine it was something along the lines that they thought it would be fun to get as many members as they could all together in one place, to spend a few days riding the roads in that area together, and to hang out in the evenings getting to know each other in person and not just through a keyboard or an email. As far as I can see, that hasn't changed. That's still pretty much what it's all about. Riding and Socializing. Enjoying riding together and getting to know each

other better. Our Regional Rallies do a great job of doing these two things on a smaller scale, but a STAR is like a regional rally on steroids. Instead of just being over a long weekend, it's over a 4-5-day period. Instead of having 50-100 people, it has had over 500 some years. Instead of being in the same place every year, it moves to a new location every year. Instead of having people come in from a couple of hundred miles as the norm, some people travel over 1000 miles to get there. But the things that make a regional so much fun, riding, socializing, kicking tires, telling stories, exploring new roads (or off-roads), good food, good company, good times, are all there and even more prevalent.



STAR 2021 will be at the Canaan Valley Resort in northeastern WV surrounded by mountains, twisty roads and scenic areas.

So how does it work? What goes on and how is it organized? (Or is it?) It starts off with picking a place and a date. The location will be chosen based on a few criteria. It has to have great roads within easy reach. It has to have the space to accommodate everything that goes on at a STAR. It has to be affordable for the members. This is all a delicate balancing act, as often the places that have the accommodations we need are either not located where there are good roads, or are not affordable (we aren't cheap, we are just thrifty!). So it takes some scouting and time to find the "right" location. We think that this year's location, the [Canaan Valley Resort and Conference Center](#) meets all of the criteria and then some. It is located in the **northeast part of West**

[Virginia](#), the Mountain State, and is surrounded by mountains, twisty roads, and scenic areas. It is truly a **motorcycling paradise**.

The resort has plenty of room for all of our attendees at a reasonable price. (Double rooms start at \$99 per night with our group rate) It gives attendees the choice of rooms in the lodge, cabins close to the lodge, camping on the premises, or chalets, cabins, and small hotels all within a few miles of the location. Onsite there are also restaurants members can choose from, and there are a few small towns located less than a dozen miles away.

But what happens at a STAR? What is there to do? The answer is, what isn't there to do?

Since this is a Sport Touring Club meet, located in the Mountain State, and held in the middle of hundreds of miles to twisting, turning roads, the obvious answer is that first and foremost there is **LOTS of riding** to do! When you get there and get registered you will be able to download into your GPS several suggested self-guided routes that will highlight many of the great roads in [West Virginia and western Virginia](#). The **routes will vary in length and difficulty** as we try to provide routes for everyone's taste and desire. We will even have some dual sport routes (this is a great area for that!) provided for those bringing bikes suitable for that activity. For those new to the MSTTA know this, we do not do big, large-group rides. You won't see a hundred bikes all heading out at once in a parade. I know that is common at many "biker" rallies, but it's not our style. Instead, you will see **several small groups of 2-5 bikes** head out individually **to ride one of the several provided routes, or to ride their own route!**



Lots of riding on twisting, turning roads in the Mountain State



Canaan Valley Resort offers lots to do beyond riding.

Beyond the riding, many people treat this as their yearly vacation, and we've got you covered there too. Since this is a resort, there is lots to do there and in the surrounding area. Swimming, hiking, golf, mountain biking, horseback riding, skeet shooting, fishing, rafting, or just relaxing are all available either onsite or close by. There are also several other parks and scenic locations worth seeing in the area ([Seneca Rocks](#) and [Blackwater Falls](#) are just two). Many people spend a day or two riding to a STAR and then take a day off when they get there, especially ones coming from hundreds of miles away.

We haven't forgotten about the evenings either! **Sunday evening is the real kickoff of STAR**, and we hold a **Welcome Ceremony and Reception**. There is a **special reception** held after the regular one, just **for new members and first-time STAR attendees**. Here we introduce the MSTTA leaders and the STAR staff and try to answer all your questions about the rally. **Monday evening**, we are holding a **cookout at the ski lodge** on the resort (Bear Paw Lodge) for all the members, followed by our annual Members Meeting at the same location. **Tuesday evening** there will be **seminars** put on by various people. Choose the time and subject that works for you or choose none, it's up to you. **Wednesday evening** we hold the **annual closing Banquet**. The cookout and banquet are included at no additional charge with your STAR registration. Breakfast, lunch, other nights dinners, drinks, snacks, etc. are all on your own. The resort has a main dining room, a snack bar by the pool, and a convenience store/carryout all on premise. Davis, WV is located 12 miles north of the resort and offers restaurants, shopping and a brewery.

Oops! Almost forgot! There are always lots of **door prizes**, and we will have some **vendors** setting up and selling motorcycle stuff. We also will be doing the drawing for the **annual MSTTA New Motorcycle Raffle** at the conclusion of the Wednesday evening Banquet!

You can now register for STAR 2021 at: [STAR Registration](#)

Some Florida MSTA members are planning to take the **AMTRAK Auto Train** to STAR 2021 in June. Some of us have taken the Auto Train to STAR before, and it worked out well. The overnight AMTRAK Auto Train runs from Virginia (outside of don't have the time You park your leave Sanford in Lorton, it's a 3 to the Canaan Valley some fun roads Florida. Contact Van VanSteelant at busavanfilmsta@gmail.com if you're interested, and you can find tickets and information about the AMTRAK Auto Train [here](#).



Star 2021 / MSTA

When: **Sunday-Thursday, June 13-17, 2021**

Where: **Canaan Valley Resort and Conference Center** 230 Main Lodge Rd, Davis, WV 26260 ([map](#))

Description: Visit www.ridemsta.com Click EVENTS/2021.

Location: Davis, West Virginia

Travel Planning By Jim Park

Now that 2020 is in our rearview mirror, and we seem to have a healthier future ahead, it's time to start planning for that big trip. I for one can't wait to hit the road this summer!

Pre-planning is key to a great road trip. Granted, some of the best rides have been when you were lost but spending a couple of weeks "lost" will get old real fast, and you may miss the good stuff. Knowing in advance where the great roads and sights along the way are located will greatly enhance any road trip, especially if you have limited time.

I always carry State Highway maps with me while on the road. However, I use my GPS and related software to plan my rides and to navigate my route. My personal choice for a GPS unit is Garmin and their related *BaseCamp* software but note that this is an expanding market and there are several choices available to the consumer.

Motorcycle GPS Units:

- Garmin: buy.garmin.com/en-US/US/cOnTheRoad-cMotorcycles-p1.html
- Tomtom: [Motorcycle GPS | TomTom](#)

I usually begin my planning by going to the Internet for nearly all of my information. I start with State Department of Tourism sites. Most states provide a wealth of information at no charge in either a digital format, or better yet, maps and brochures can be mailed directly to you. Note that it may take up to six weeks to receive this information in the mail from some states, so order early!

State Department of Tourism sites:

- [State Travel and Tourism Information | USAGov](#)
- [NPS.gov Homepage \(U.S. National Park Service\)](http://NPS.gov)

The next step in the planning stage is the nitty-gritty stuff - the twisty roads, the state and national parks or even the unusual or weird stuff along the way. I have accumulated several websites that work well as a planning tool to aid and enhance your trip.

Let's start with roads. Most of us know about the Blue Ridge Parkway, Natchez Trace or the Skyline Drive, but there are a lot more, less-traveled highways out there. A good source for those off the beaten path roads are

rider's forums. Sites like our own ridemsta.com/mstaforums will have members that have a wealth of information on local back roads. More often than not, they will email you their favorite routes in a GPS file format so you can simply incorporate the route into your trip. Also, if you subscribe to *RoadRunner Motorcycle Touring & Travel* magazine (roadrunner.travel) you can download the GPS & printed routes of their monthly articles. Here are but a few sites to consider when you are doing your route research:

- Blue Ridge Parkway: <http://blueridgeparkway.org/> (there are lots more sites)
- Natchez Trace: nps.gov/natr/index.htm
Cherochalla Skyway: [Cherochalla Skyway – Mile High Legend – Robbinsville North Carolin to Tellico Plains Tennessee](#)
- Skyline Drive: [Driving Skyline Drive - Shenandoah National Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)
- Lincoln Highway: lincolnhighwayassoc.org
- DOT Scenic Byways: [America's Scenic Byways](#)
- Motorcycle Roads US: [Motorcycle Roads](#)
- Mohawk Trail: mohawktrail.com/driving-tours.html
- Cabot Trail: [Explore the Cabot Trail | Trip Ideas | Tourism Nova Scotia](#)
- Alaska Highway*: [Home - The MILEPOST](#)

* Get a copy of “The Milepost” at your local bookstore for this trip!

Although our national and state parks are getting loved to death and often overcrowded, it's still worth the time to make them a part of your trip. These are a few of the sites that I reference for maps, food and accommodations within the parks:

- America's State Parks: [America's State Parks | National Association of State Park Directors](#)
- State/National Park Directory: [America's Parks: State Parks, National Parks, along with all of the other parks - AmericasParks.com](#)
- National Park Service: nps.gov/findapark/index.htm

Finding sights along the way or even making that side trip will add to any road trip. I often refer to these sites for a diversion to my travels:

- Waterfalls: allstays.com/Special/waterfalls-map.htm
- Lighthouses: lighthousefriends.com/maps.html
- Ferry Crossings: howderfamily.com/travel/united_states_ferry_map.html
- Points of Interest (*note there is a small fee for bulk downloads*): poirectory.com/poifiles/united_states

Then there's the part of your trip where you see the unusual or even weird stuff. Usually, you just stumble upon things like the “world's largest ball of twine”, but there are actually books and websites that will give you the details on these sights. So, if you are into the weird, here you go:

- Roadside America: roadsideamerica.com
- Back on Tack: gethep.net/road

I sometimes pick up a travel book that tweaks my interest. I tend to stay away from those books that tackle the “best roads” for the entire country as they tend to leave out details and side trips that the regional travel books include. Here is a recommended list of just a few:

- *The Milepost - an Alaska Travel Planner* – Published annually
- *Motorcycle Journeys Through New England* *– by Martin C. Berke
- *Motorcycle Journeys Through Atlantic Canada** – by Rannie Gillis & Ken Aiken

- *Motorcycle Journeys Through Appalachian** – by Dale Coyner
* There are a series of these *Motorcycle Journeys Through....* books. I have found them to be well written and informative.
- *The Ride Guide, America's Best Motorcycle Guide (Appalachian edition)* – by I. Michael & Barbara Ring
- *Road Food* – by Jane & Michael Stern's

There is virtually an infinite amount of information available today for planning that perfect road trip. There are books and Internet sites that not only list such things as lighthouses, caves or wineries but also provide detailed directions and/or GPS coordinates. Bottom line is to do your homework before you travel and make the most out of your trip!

Ride safe! –JEP–

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. [Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the May 2016 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale.]*

Road Trip! By Doug Westly



Spring and summer mean road trips for a lot of folks. With road trips comes preparation. Here are some thoughts for preparing you and your bike for that upcoming long distance journey:

- *Maintenance:* Is the bike ready? No, it won't make it those last thousand miles before you think the cords will start to show. If needed, replace the tires, both of them.
- *Brakes:* Check them. If the pads are getting close, change them! Why worry during the trip? If you don't know how to inspect pads, find someone who does. Or look it up. Easy to do and a critical safety item on the list.
- *Fluids?* Is this starting to sound like a T-CLOCK check? That's because basically it is the same thing. Are you due, or close to an oil change interval? Same applies to that chain condition, or your final drive service. Just Do It!
- *General Bike Condition:* Cables, hoses, fasteners, wheels, all that stuff.
- *Equipment:* Now we're talking safety equipment. That means tools (and knowing what to take, not those stupid "all-in-one", prepackaged kits. Take what you need and what fits your bike. Don't forget the tire patch kit (I prepare the old-fashioned strings and glue, just because they still seem to work the best and are the most versatile, but there are other solutions out there). Along with that comes a miniature air compressor and tire gauge.
- *First Aid Kit:* Please don't set off on a journey without one. How big and complete is up to you, but something as simple as a splinter can ruin your riding day.
- *Rain Suit:* One-piece or two-piece. It is up to you. A rain suit is not a convenience on a long trip. It is a necessity. I prefer two-piece, just because of the more flexible combinations.
- Finally, a *SPOT:* If you don't know what a SPOT is by now, you aren't a real rider! Get it and learn to use at least the basic features. It's a great way for the family to keep track of you as well. A note on SPOTs: Do not attach them to the bike. Keep it on your person. If the unthinkable happens and you are lying in the ditch, you may not be able to crawl back up and reach your bike-mounted SPOT to hit the emergency beacon.

- Finally, the *Rider*: Are YOU ready? Physically, are you in shape? Mentally, are you prepared for the journey?

One Final Thought: We're all going to put a lot of miles on our bikes this year. Let's look out for ourselves and one another. Ride your own ride and know your limits. And as always: ATGATT!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly

Just For Fun Ride from Palm Bay to Stuart – Tom Blake

Larry Solomon contacted me early in the week wanting to do a ride but not all the way to Everglades City. Eckert Schneider was also keen to go. I had considered the Everglades ride, but it would have been a really long way. Our friend Chuck Berry from Space Coast BMW Riders (no, he's not the rocker) was also interested in riding. So, we decided to meet at the Malabar Road RaceTrac in Palm Bay at 9 and head out from there.

As we all collected for the ride, things were not looking good to the north – our intended direction of travel. It was mostly cloudy up that way and off and on showers were expected all day. Chuck, who lives up toward Patrick AFB, confirmed the lousy weather so we decided to head south instead. Good choice. We enjoyed sunny skies and mid-70's temps the whole way – well, after getting into Indian River County, anyways (and most of the way home).

Our route took us down through Fellsmere, east through Wabasso, over the Indian River to A1A on Orchid Island and then south through Vero Beach. A little past the [National Navy UDT-Seal Museum](#) at the lower end of Orchid Island we turned west across the north causeway to Fort Pierce. The south causeway got us back over to A1A now on Hutchinson Island (the Inlet forces the detour) and we followed it past the [St. Lucie Nuke Plant](#) (gives me the heebie-jeebies) all the way south where it rounds to the west and crosses a bridge to [Sewall's Point](#) near Stuart.

On the outside (southeast arc) of the curve, stands the [Elliot Museum](#) in a large, modern, multistory building. I've noticed it many times when passing there at dusk because rows of circa 1920's automobiles can be seen in the lit-up interior. Upon researching the place for this article, I find it contains a large collection of not only antique cars, but old motorcycles, flying craft and other historic exhibits as well. And it's open to the public for the price of a ticket (about \$14). Maybe when the COVID thing dies down, I'll take a tour. Same for the Navy Seal Museum as they seem to have ever more exhibits on display there.

We turned north on Sewall's Point Road (which becomes Indian River Drive further up). Before getting to Jensen Beach, we pulled in at [Indian Riverside Park](#). It's a 63-acre plot adjacent to the river with rolling grassy terrain, plenty of oak trees, ponds and a big flock of ibises and some ducks. The entrance, parking area and a walking trail are paved. It looks and feels inviting and tranquil. I couldn't locate picnic tables but did find two nearby unoccupied, extra-long cast iron benches sitting on a colorful mosaic of bricks under the shade of old oaks. That's where we had lunch. I've ridden past this park many times and always wanted to stop. After reading up on the place, there is much more that we couldn't see from the entrance and parking area. So, I'm looking forward to a more exploratory stop sometime in the future.



*Lunch at Indian Riverside Park
(l-r) Chuck, Larry & Eckert*

Afterward, we turned north. Indian River Drive above Jensen Beach hugs the edge of the river -- rising, falling and curving left then right all the way back to Fort Pierce. The posted speed limit is only 35 mph. But it's a scenic ride with only one or two stop signs in the whole 15 miles - a worthy alternative to backtracking on A1A.

Before reaching downtown Fort Pierce, [Old Fort Park](#) lies just west of the road. On the rise toward the back there's a substantial earthen mound containing Ais Indian remains. This area was the centerpiece of the Ais

culture, which was the dominate indigenous group in east, central Florida prior to Spanish contact. And then in no time they were all wiped out by superior arms and no science to contend with diseases their immune systems had no natural defenses for. They had dated back 500 to 1000 years. (I think about that knowing that most of our own ancestors haven't been here nearly that long. Survival is not a given.)

A U.S. army fort, built in 1837 - 38 during the Second Seminole War - was also located here, on ground adjacent the mound to the north. It served briefly as headquarters for over 1000 men of the Army of the South and was named for Lt. Col. Benjamin Pierce, a well-liked artillery commander and brother of future president Franklin Pierce. Never engaged in battle, the fort was deactivated in 1842 and was consumed by fire in late 1843. A permanent settlement grew up around the site beginning in the 1860's.

In Fort Pierce (the town), we picked up Old Dixie Highway which parallels US1 on higher ground to the west and the FEC RR tracks immediately to the east. No traffic, no stops until in Vero. Then we bypassed the worst congestion by taking Indian River Blvd around the east side of town. Larry, who lives in mainland Vero, peeled off just north of the Route 60 bridge turnoff.

Back out on US1 north of Gifford, the three of us pinned out ears back because the weather had changed. Gone were the sunny skies and mid-70's temps. Now it was very gray, damp and cooler. Approaching cars had their lights on. We were going to get wet. I split off at Valkaria Road in south Brevard County getting home with, surprisingly, just a few tiny spritzes on my face shield. Eckert would turn west a few miles further north and reported hitting several drops. Poor Chuck had another 15 miles to go and the skies looked really bad. But he wrote that he only got a little wet, none of it penetrating. Guess we timed it about right. No doubt, these are the conditions we would have had to contend with all day, had we gone north at the outset.

So, for the four of us – it was a mid-January Florida day (for the most part) well and pleurably spent. Plus, we got some ideas for future exploration. Life was good! –Tom

Florida News



"Van" VanSteelant

South Director's Report

Just another laid back month of January...

Last month, I had hopes that 2021 would show us a brighter side of humanity. Inauguration Day was a good start.

On our home front, we continue to be healthy and utilize as many guidelines as possible. The life we save may be yours...We sincerely hope that all of you have marked off another month of good health for yourselves and those near and dear to you. With several credible vaccines almost being delivered at a rate that will ensure country-wide inoculation by the end of this decade... 😞 (I just can't help it!!) We do hope you qualify for one or more categories that will have you vaccinated much sooner than later. A few members have reported their success stories!!



Well, several riders "walked the walk" and made *Just For Fun* riding arrangements with members in their local areas this month. You've just read Tom's report about the alternative lunch ride a few enjoyed on Jan. 23rd. On Jan. 1, a group of Eastsiders gathered at **Sandspruit Park in Stuart** for a mid-morning gab fest! Facing a 4-hour ride to and fro to Crystal River, they decided to shorten up the commitment and make time for some college bowl games! The day was 70° perfect, the incoming tide was blue-green beautiful, and they had a waterside pavilion all to themselves!!

A few weeks later, the Southies “crashed” the **Central Lunch Ride** to the **Westgate Smokehouse Grill**. For the full story, see Carl’s report below! Some of our group stayed for the good cooking, while others made their way to the **Shady Oaks Rec Area**. An even split, 4 Central Riders and 4 Southies, enjoyed a “refreshing” day waterside. Everybody layered up for the Floridian “winter conditions” and once again remarked about the number of really nice park destinations to be found all over the State!! Check out the ride PHOTOS on our website. Especially the drone shots of the park and Lake Kissimmee, courtesy of James!



Great Central Ride park destination – Coleman Landing at Shady Oaks Rec Area

A week later, the South Lunch Ride headed way south! With decent weather in our favor, we made our way back to **Everglades City** to enjoy the southwest region of Florida. Our last attempt to venture there was thwarted by hurricane #28 or so!! The ride down and back was pleasant and uneventful. We anticipated more diners at the restaurant but ended up with nearly everyone at the **Everglades National Park**. Once again, plenty of shaded tables, good gab and wonderful scenery!!



South Ride lunch at Everglades National Park

What’s Next??

Ok, I intend to support and encourage everybody's decision on whether to ride, eat or be merry. I’m leaving the LUNCH rides as scheduled WITH CONDITIONS!! Though restrictions have been lifted for several types of restaurants and bars, I will continue to contact the restaurants to listen to how they are operating. I will send out the usual email announcements after my research.

Of course, we will continue exercising an alternative option to a "regular sit down" LUNCH by brown-bagging our own lunch refreshments and finding a welcoming park to “s p r e a d o u t” to eat and gab! Additionally, we have "regionalized" the email addresses of members in your area within a 60-mile radius of

each other. This enables you up to reach out and set up "local rides" all over the state any time you're motivated! Of course, the ultimate definition of "social distancing" is a solo ride!!

We have two destinations scheduled for **February**. Join Carl and the **Central** riders on the **6th at Tillie's Tavern & Grill**, at 31 E Magnolia Ave, in **Eustis** for an **11:30 am** sit down. Just down the street from the 1884 Restaurant. A nearby park will be included in the upcoming announcement.

On the **20th**, the **South Lunch Ride** will return to a recent favorite – the **Sunset Grille** at 2650 US-27 in Sebring. Hopefully, we'll see some Central members joining us here as well. For the park goers, we'll be going back to the **Veterans Beach Purple Heart Memorial Park**.

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...

My heartfelt 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...



These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

Tom Batchelor	Fred Blackall	Roy Clark	Carlyson Delgado
Juan Gomez	Laura Gonzalez	David Hammer	Ray Harcourt
Keith Harrison	Chuck Headrick	Kevin Healey	Brian Johnson
Dale Kallaway	Steve Marcum	Kristen Metza	Alan Miller
Don Moe	David Noyes	Leslie Noyes	Wayne Seminick
James Siler	Alan Spears	Dennis Villarose	Donna Villarose
Jeffrey Withrow	Ilse Zeigler		

These Florida memberships have recently renewed their membership in the MSTA:

Chad Barker	Stephen Evans	Don Mroczenski	Bob Shields
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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 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!!

2021 started out a little rough... The uplifting, positive vibe during our gatherings is certainly welcomed!!

We continue to encourage our small gatherings AND to fully respect the needs of those who gather!

This too shall pass. Be a patient contributor to the efforts to hasten the decline in the deaths from and the spread of COVID-19. *The mental, economic and medical recoveries are simply all tied together with the behavior of our populace.*

When you can...

Join one of our monthly rides!!

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

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Co-Director



Carl Swofford

Central Director's Report

January's **New Year's Day ride** took advantage of the clear, bright, sunny, a bit breezy and unseasonably warm weather. In short, a near perfect day for a ride. Five members gathered at Carl's house for a 9AM departure. Ilse joined them from Ft Lauderdale. She wanted to explore the back roads. The route took them through rural Florida on mostly two-lane backroads, easy riding and nice scenery.



New Year's Lunch Ride in Crystal River



Everyone enjoyed lunch at beautiful Old Port Cove.

They arrived at **Pecks Old Port Cove** in Crystal River at 11:40 and met two MSTA members from Ohio. Everyone ate outside on the deck or at the Tiki Bar. Four other members headed for the park just up the road. In total there were 15 folks enjoying the outing in the beautiful Old Port Cove setting. The food was delicious as always. The catches of the day were red snapper and grouper. The camaraderie was great, a pleasant lunch in a relaxing setting.

Everyone left for home around 1:30 PM with our group taking a more southerly route through old Florida. A good day, a good ride and a fine way to start 2021!

Considering the Covid19 threat and the cold weather, we had a really good turnout for the **Central MSTA Lunch Ride to River Ranch Acres**. Saturday morning was cold, at least by Florida standards – 46° F when four of us headed out for our 94-mile ride to the **Westgate Smokehouse Grill**. I-4 was only a bad dream at that hour instead of a nightmare. Traffic was relatively light. It was a pleasant ride down US 27 to SR 60.



Even with the cold weather, we had a good turnout at the Westgate Smokehouse Grill.



14 riders enjoying delicious food and great camaraderie

We arrived at the Westgate Smokehouse Grill at 11:05 and met two other riders who had seen our ride on the website. At 11:30 we were all seated and ready to eat. Fourteen MSTA riders were at the restaurant and eight other riders went to the park for their picnic. The food was delicious and the camaraderie great. It is always fun to get together with other MSTA riders.

For the trip home, our little group chose back roads. We took SR 17, which you long time Floridians may remember as US 27 Alternate, to Haines City. SR 17 is scenic - it winds through citrus groves, around lakes and passes through small towns.

North Director Needed

If you would consider taking the position of North Director, please contact Van, busavanflmsta@gmail.com.

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!!



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 Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, February 6th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **Tillie's Tavern & Grill**, 31 E Magnolia Ave, Eustis, FL ☎ (352) 602-7929 ([map](#))

Description: Hugh, Carl and several other North Orlando guys tried this place out and thought it was even better than the 1884 Restaurant that everyone else thought was so good. Tillie's is just down the street from the 1884. Tillie's is located in historic downtown Eustis. Just minutes away, right on the edge of Lake Eustis, the BYO crowd will enjoy **Ferran Park!**

Contact: Carl, ndnhawk44@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, February 20th, 12 – 2 PM

Location: **Sunset Grille**, 2650 US 27, Sebring, FL ☎ (352) 795-2806 ([map](#))

Description: We return to a recent favorite! The back patio and lakeside location makes this simple establishment a must visit... I bet we'll see a few Central members join us here as well. For the park goers, **Veterans Beach Purple Heart Memorial Park** will serve you well!

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 Florida MSTA [Event Calendar](#) for any updates.

MSTA Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: MSTA Lunch Ride – Thursday, March 11th, 11:45 am – 2:15 pm

Daytona Bike Week - Friday-Sunday, March 5th – 14th

Location: **St. John's Marina & Resort**, 2999 FL-44, DeLand, FL ☎ (386) 736-6601 ([map](#))

Description: This year, we're returning to St John's River just west of Deland. It's only about a half hour from the Daytona Speedway. As you approach the bridge on SR 44, turn right at the KOA sign and follow the paved road back and then along the river to the Grill. Great river and marina views. The food's not bad either.

Daytona Bike Week - Possible bike races: Flat Track, Supercross and Daytona 200 Road Race

Contact: www.officialbikeweek.com

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, March 20th, 12 - 2 PM

Location: **Waldo's Restaurant**, 3150 Ocean Dr, Vero Beach, FL ☎ (772) 231-7091 ([map](#))

Description: It's been years since we were here! Still looks inviting, and it's ON the ocean!! Mere minutes south of Waldo's, the BYO group will enjoy **South Beach Park!**

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

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, March 27th, 11:30-1:30 PM

Location: **Woody's River Roo Pub & Grill**, 5717 18th St E, Ellenton, FL ☎ (941) 722-2391 ([map](#))

Description: We shouldn't have as much competition for chairs and tables in March verses the winter snowbird season! Join us for some riverside grub and gab! For those looking to BYO, we'll likely to return to **Tom Bennett Park.**

Contact: Carl, ndnhawk44@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

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](#).

We welcome articles and comments from our members for publication. Contact the editor at: editor@flmsta.org.

The MSTA National [website](#) has extensive event information.

National MSTA RideMSTA.com

Florida MSTA FLMSTA.org

More Contact Information

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Don't trash it, recycle it! One man's trash is another man's treasure!