



The Florida Gator Tale

Newsletter of the Florida Chapter of the
Motorcycle Sport Touring Association

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Feature Article

Riding The Talimena National Scenic Byway By “NoGutsNoGlory” from near Dallas, TX

[Ed. Note: This article was previously published in the February 2015 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale.

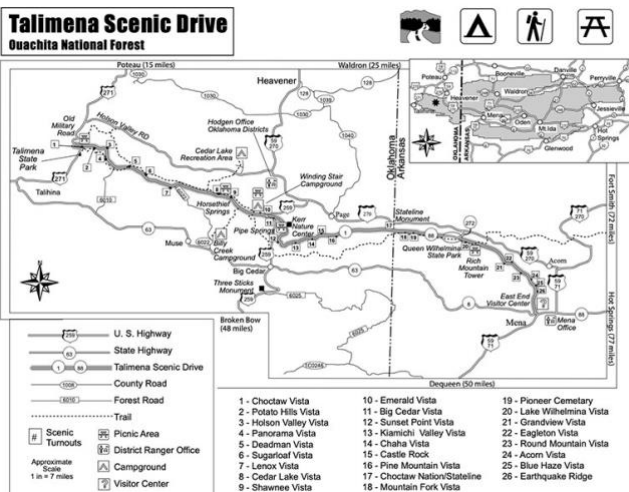
An anonymous rider posted this article on the [AdvRider.com Forum](#) for a trip in November 2012. It has been slightly edited for publication. Many of our readers may find this ride report of interest in planning their visit to STAR 2022 in Cape Girardeau, MO in June. Photos are from the author’s collection on SmugMug. The map was created from author’s route description. Links have been added.]

Talimena National Scenic Byway

The Talimena National Scenic Byway is very unique as it runs atop the ridge of the Ouachita Mountains, which is one of the few mountain ranges in the USA that runs east-west, instead of north-south. It is approximately 54 miles long and runs between Talihina, OK and Mena, AR, hence the name Talimena. Both towns are nice but I prefer Mena so we rode north to Talihina to start the trail there and then spend the night in Mena, AR.



Talimena National Scenic Byway in fall



This road was designated as a National Scenic Byway in 2005 and since it runs on the top of the mountain ridge, it provides spectacular scenery along with plenty of twisties and elevation changes. This short, 54-mile stretch includes 22 scenic vista pull-outs and 13% grades – it’s an amazing ride!

The Talimena Scenic Drive runs 54 miles atop the
Ouachita Mountains from Talihina, OK to Mena, AR



A 54-mile stretch includes 22 scenic vista pull-outs and 13% grades - an amazing ride!

We ride out of Plano and head northeast to Paris, TX. From there we took Hwy 195 towards the Red River and the Oklahoma state line. This little stretch of road is populated with some stunning farms and ranches and old growth trees covering the road as you leave Paris. It is a great ride that I wasn't expecting as we were still in the flats and couldn't even see the mountains yet.

After you cross the Red, you go through Idabell and end up in Broken Bow, OK. At this point it was time to stop for an early lunch and to fuel up as there aren't too many fine dining establishments in Talihina. Turns out there aren't too many fine dining establishments in Broken Bow for that matter. Either that or our GPS and cell phone apps both found all the out-of-business restaurants in the entire town. The one restaurant we found that was still in business – [Papa Poblano's Mexican Café](#) - turns out to have great Mexican food. Thank goodness we all liked Mexican. [Note: Papa Poblano's is on US-259, just three blocks north of US-70.]

After a leisurely lunch, we headed north past the [Beavers Bend State Park](#). We are finally getting into the hills with lots of pine trees, but not much color yet. As we continued north, finally we hit some color as we headed towards Talihina. Just **outside Talihina** is where you pick up the west end of the **Talimena National Scenic Byway**.



Talimena National Scenic Byway – an amazing road

This is what we came here for!!! It is an amazing road and we hit the colors at almost full peak on a gorgeous day to be alive and riding motorcycles. As we headed east and started climbing up the ridge, the colors and scenery changed and got even better. The colors were more frequent, vibrant and the vistas were beautiful.



As we climbed the ridge, the colors and scenery changed and got even better!

Coming back from Talihina heading towards Broken Bow, we stopped for gas and asked the Park Ranger, who was also there getting gas, where is a good place for lunch. He says right here, at the gas station, and I say really? He says, “Yes, they have the best BBQ around.” OK, so they are the only BBQ around , and yes, it was very good. The shed to the right of the bikes is the smoke shack. Smelled wonderful and tasted even better!

[Note: Duncan’s is located with the E-Z Mart on US-259 at Stevens Gap Road just north of SR-259A.]

We had a great time doing this trip and planned to do it again this year. However, my friend’s wife recently underwent major surgery on one foot. Once that heals, she’ll get the distinct pleasure of having the same operation on her other foot. Since she won’t be riding for the rest of the year, maybe I’ll grab the Triumph and make a day trip out of it. It’s about 500 miles RT, but if you leave early it makes for an incredible trip!

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 June 2014 edition of The Florida MSTA Gator Tale.]*

Mentoring Others By Doug Westly



As I write this, I'm at [Road America Raceway](#) in Elkhart Lake, WI. I've spent the last couple of days here, working at an event and watching the riders doing their track days. I've also been observing a [Motorcycle Safety Foundation \(MSF\)](#) Basic Rider Course being conducted, on a different part of the facility. What's interesting has been to watch the difference between those struggling to master basic motorcycle techniques and the riders on the track; those who are comfortable with 170+ mph on the Road America front straight. As experienced motorcyclists we often take our skills for granted. Regardless of whether we are on the track, street or in the dirt, we've spent a lot of years building those skills and the experience that (hopefully) keeps us safe while we enjoy our sport. However, there was once a time for all of us when we too were struggling with basic motorcycle skills. We also sometimes see others who, despite successfully completing their Basic Rider Course, and sometimes even advanced riding courses, still struggle with basic skills.

Part of being a good motorcyclist is helping others. We all need to be ambassadors of our sport, as well as remaining concerned for our safety and the safety of others. In MSF advanced riding classes we talk about mentoring others; that is to pass along our knowledge and experience to other riders, to help keep everyone safe as well as for enjoyment of the sport. The challenge is to mentor in such a way that it is a positive approach. Motorcyclists can be fiercely independent individuals (that's one reason we enjoy the sport...), so trying to suggest new techniques to a rider, to help them stay safe and enhance their riding, can be a daunting task. Nevertheless, it is up to all of us to keep one another safe.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to pass along your knowledge, skills and experience to others. Be a mentor for our sport. When you see a rider struggling with basic skills, or even with just little issues, step in and with a friendly, positive approach, offer up some sage advice. It is up to all of us to keep ourselves and our motorcycling companions safe out there!

Ride safe! – Doug Westly



South Director's Report

Started off wrong...but finished just right

The Central Lunch Ride to Tillie's (one of our faves) started off on the wrong foot when everyone got to the restaurant and it was no longer there in downtown Eustis. Luckily, Tillie's had moved just down the street, which saved the day, with great food and awesome service. See Carl's report below.

The South Lunch Ride to the Seminole Casino Immokalee for the all-day Rockabillaque Florida Car and Bike Show started off wrong when everyone met at the casino and realized that parking for the car and bike show was a ½ mile away! Yikes! However, Don M. saved the day and knew a place in Immokalee, The Kountry Kitchen, with great food for lunch and plenty of bike parking close by. Fun riding and finished just right...

I wasn't able to make the South Lunch Ride because I was preparing for hip-replacement surgery, so Jim Park led the ride, and it seems everyone enjoyed themselves, despite the parking situation at the Immokalee casino. My hip surgery was successful, and I'm in recovery and rehab mode. So, my riding activities will be curtailed for a few months. However, I'll be seeking volunteers to lead the South Lunch Rides in my absence...

What's Next??

Ok, I intend to support and encourage everybody's decision on whether to ride, eat and be merry. I am leaving the LUNCH rides as scheduled WITH CONDITIONS!!

All restrictions have been lifted for all enterprises across Florida. No new warnings or mandates will be forthcoming. We will continue to contact the restaurants to listen to how they are operating. The latest variant news will likely cause some concern in the near future. I will send out the usual email announcements after our research.

On **Thursday, March 10th**, it's the MSTA Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride to **St. John's Marina & Resort in Deland**. **Daytona Bike Week** starts Friday, **March 5th** and goes to Sunday, **March 14th**. Then, for the **South Lunch Ride** on **Saturday, March 19th**, we ride up to **Sebastian** to **Blackfins at Capt Hiram's Resort** (hope to see some Central riders there, too). On **Saturday, March 26th**, we head to **Woody's River Roo** in **Ellenton** for the **Central Lunch Ride**. Come on out – it's a great time of year to be riding!

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:

Frederick Christ	Kevin Healey	Brian Johnson	Adrian Jones	Prior Powers
Judy Powers	Victor Salisbury	Eckart Schneider		

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

Tom Batchelor	James Beyerl	Frederick Blackall	Raymond Harcourt	Bob Shields
Alan Spears	Van VanSteelant	Dennis Villarose	Donna Villarose	Ilse Zeigler



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 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!!

With the latest surge of the scourge having peaked, I do hope to see more riders roll up their sleeves for a shot to regain any positive momentum!! Most of us qualify for the booster shots, which I gladly took. I did so because I know I'm surrounded by unvaccinated persons on a daily basis, who are aiding and abetting the constant creation of COVID variants.

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 Co-Director



Central Director's Report

February Central Ride – Tillie's Tavern & Grill, Eustis

We had been on a lunch ride to Tillie's Tavern and Grill in downtown Eustis in February 2021. However, we did not know that in March 2021, Tillie's moved. They moved into the building vacated when the 1884 Restaurant went out of business. Fortunately, there is only a half a block distance between the two locations, so it was a quick transition for us.

Two of us left Altamonte Springs at 09:45 AM on a cool, overcast morning with the possibility of rain. We had a pleasant ride on rural backroads for a 42-mile ride to Eustis. We arrived at Tillies at 10:50 AM to find two riders already there. Roy Clark and Jim Beyerl joined with us from North Florida. Larry Solomon rode the longest distance, 140 miles. Hugh rode the shortest distance, 10 miles. Altogether, we had 12 riders. Not bad for an overcast day threatening rain. I think the riders from the East Coast had hit some rain on their way to Eustis.



We went to Tillie's, but they had moved – only a half block away!



The new Tillie's kept the great décor of the 1884 Restaurant that had closed.

Tillie's is a great place to meet and dine. The decor and atmosphere are superb as Tillie's has kept most of the 1884 Restaurant décor. The staff are great. They were able to put tables together and seat us all at one long table. The service was excellent and the food delicious. We had good fellowship, and it is always good to see old friends and meet new ones. Garth Jenkins was our newest member, and this was his first ride with us.

Around 1:00 PM we said our goodbyes and began to saddle up for the rides home. The ride home was pleasant but a bit breezy. We hit a few sprinkles but nothing major. It was a good day and a good ride!

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 Daytona Bike Week Lunch Ride

When: MSTa Lunch Ride – Thursday, **March 10th, 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.

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **March 19th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Blackfins at Capt Hiram's Resort**, 1606 Indian River Dr., Sebastian, FL ☎ (772) 589-4345 ([map](#))

Description: Oh, it's been a while since we enjoyed this river side venue! Early arrivals will find bike parking right by the front door!! Join us and see if we can spot a few dolphins in pursuit of their own lunch!!

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

MSTA Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, **March 26th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM**

Location: **Woody's River Roo**, 5717 18th St East, 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!

Contact: Carl, carltr6@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

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 Florida Central Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, April 9th, 11:30 am – 1:30 PM

Location: **3 Bananas**, 11 S. Lake St., Crescent City, FL ☎ (386) 698-2861 ([map](#))

Description: Everyone who's been to 3 Bananas knows this is one of our most popular destinations. Indoor and outdoor seating is right at the edge of scenic Crescent Lake. They have a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, not to mention a good selection of sandwiches and wraps at moderate prices. Nice rural 2-laners get you there!

Contact: Carl, carltr6@hotmail.com, or ☎ (386) 793-0030

MSTA Florida South Lunch Ride

When: Saturday, April 30th, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: **The Boathouse Tiki Bar & Grill**, 17101 State Road 31, Fort Myers, FL ☎ (239) 332-2628 ([map](#))

Description: We have been passing this place for years! Time to stop in and see what's what!! Lots of space and riverfront lunching!!

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

MSTA North Georgia Classic

When: **MSTA North Georgia Classic, Helen, Georgia**

Friday-Sunday, April 22nd – 24th

Location: Quality Inn Downtown Helen, 15 Yonah St., Helen, GA ☎ (706) 878-2268

Description: The North Georgia Classic 2022 - A Just for Fun Rally with no rally fees

No meals provided. Contact the hotel directly for your room reservation at 706-878-2268.

Rooms are \$89.00 plus tax per night....ask for a room in the MSTA block.

Contact: Coordinators:

Andray Hubble 256-572-2719 andrayhubble@gmail.com

Doug Pippin 828-490-6529 doug.pippin@bellsouth.net

MSTA STAR National Rally 2022

When: **Sunday, June 19th – Wednesday, June 22nd**

Location: **Drury Plaza Hotel/Cape Girardeau Conference Center**

3351 Percy Dr, Cape Girardeau, Missouri ([map](#))

Description: The MSTA National Rally. STAR= Sport Touring Association Rendezvous

Officially opening up on Sunday evening and closing on Wednesday evening with a banquet.

However, many people come in early on the Friday or Saturday and stay until Thursday. On- and

Off-Road routes will be available. Registration will include the Tuesday Lunch Ride, the

Wednesday evening banquet, door prizes, and a goodie bag for all attendees. The hotel serves an evening happy hour every day that includes drinks and some food. This is part of your room rate.

Contact: www.ridemsta.com

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](#).

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!! Shopping finds online... We found some fun motorcycle t-shirts you can order online. Click the image for this particular t-shirt. There are other fun motorcycle t-shirts online at <https://teespring.com/shop/motorcycle-tshirts>.



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

National MSTA RideMSTA.com

Florida MSTA FLMSTA.org

We're also on Facebook: facebook.com/FLMSTA/

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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!