



FLMSTA Newsletter | Jan 2025

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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 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, January 11, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Harborside**, 2435 7th St. SW, **Winter Haven, FL**
(863) 293-7070 ([map](#))

Description: Roomy lakeside restaurant with great views and a varied menu but weighted toward seafood. Inside and outside seating, plenty of paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 18, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **The Outpost Bar and Grille**, 14057 SW Golf Club Dr., **Indiantown, FL** (772) 597-3790 ([map](#))

Description: A truly south ride for the Eastsiders!! Out of the way location that will surprise you!

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

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 25, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Laishley Crab House**, 150 Laishley Ct., **Punta Gorda, FL**
(941) 205-5566 ([map](#))

Description: Adding a West Central option that Van will host, and likely a few Southies will attend. It's been a while since we landed here. Great views and plenty of parking (compared with the wharf-side options).

Contact: Van, busavanfilmsta@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 [rides calendar](#) for possible updates.

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 8, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Varied, reasonably priced menu with plenty of seafood options. Paved parking. Bike-friendly.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 15, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Smokehouse on the River**, 3200 River Ranch Blvd.,
River Ranch, FL (863) 692-1321 ([map](#))

Description: The waters have receded, and back we go to an old favorite!

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

West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 22, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Adding a West Central option that Van will host, and maybe a Southie or two...A perennial favorite, reachable by many.

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

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](#)

Feature Article



Kicking Tires for 2025

By Van VanSteelant

[Editor's Note: We were away for the holidays, so this newsletter is arriving later than usual. Fear not, it's packed with plenty of good reading!!]

As we start off a new year, I offer a departure from our normal feature article format. We have a bit of catching up to do, and plenty of planning for the rest of the year! **AND**, we truly need a fresh supply of Feature Articles moving forward. We have one or two months covered promoting regional events, but we have exhausted our supply of other articles to recycle each month. ***You all have great stories to tell***, and we all would love to hear them!! From travel stories old or recent, successful bike alterations, on-the-road tips and do's and don'ts, new-to-you bike reviews...All are welcomed! And fear not, Kim will gladly work with you if you feel the need for her help polishing anything up. We aren't handing out grades in English class here!!

First off, **WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS FROM 2024!!**

I have been delinquent with my usual On Boarding/Welcoming Letter. I apologize and will do better in '25. Here's what you should have received. And, for those who might need a reminder, read on!

A warm and hearty welcome to the Florida Chapter of the MSTA!! Catch up with the details below, and we look forward to seeing you soon. You can contact Tom Blake (East Central Area rep) or me (for the South Area) anytime you want about our monthly rides - see our contact emails at the end of the newsletter. We are still looking for

West Central Area and North Area reps to coordinate ride destinations on behalf of the membership. As an all-volunteer Club, small and large volunteer efforts are always needed!! Look for the separate regional email requests that were recently sent..

Locally, start at our award winning website, www.flmsta.org We have general member info as well as our RIDES calendar, where we keep you up to date with our Floridian events, and try to keep current with the Regional and National events. We have a terrific PHOTO section, filled with shots from our local rides!! And our NEWSLETTER section, where you can find copies of our monthly Gator Tale dating back to 2014. Kim makes sure ALL of the upcoming Local, Regional, National, AND Just for Fun events are promoted in the Gator Tale's "Rides Section"!! She often finds other truly interesting "happenings" to include on the list!! Most of the listings also include websites and/or emails to get LOTS more info about any event that peaks your interest!!

And of course, our National MSTA website, www.ridemsta.com is full of info about everything MSTA!!!! Membership info for accounts and renewals. Two pdf versions of our Blue Book Membership Directory. Our Vendor discounts, which are substantial and can easily recoup the costs of membership each year. More details and links to regional events - everything but the local stuff. Club and STAR Event Photos. Past STARreview issues....And, you can sign up to participate on our FORUMS there too!!

So, do yourself a favor, and bookmark our sites for easy access. And, both sites are mobile friendly, so you can stay current anywhere, anytime!! Check 'em out!!

ATGATT Van

MSTA Florida State Director

Safety Talk



New Year's Resolutions 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 reminders and resolutions merit an annual repeat. See how many of them you completed or instituted and what you may still need to work on this year...Knowing this, we all could benefit by being 'more perfect' in 2025!]

- I will always check my bike before I ride. That includes checking the tires, tire pressures, brakes, drivetrain, lights, controls, etc. I will also check my wife and riding partner's bike, as that is part of our agreed division of pre-ride duties. Nothing is more important to me than her safety! (Yes, she cross-checks me as well.)
- I will also check myself. Am I ready to ride? Is my mind on my riding, and not distracted? Am I rested and not tired? I promise to walk away from a ride if I am not ready. I have nothing to prove.

- I will always wear All The Gear All The Time (ATGATT). I will routinely inspect my gear, particularly my helmet, to ensure it will protect me if needed.
- I will ride responsibly and safely. That means cooperating with other traffic. I will not be a squid on the public streets.
- I will carefully decide with whom I ride. My riding partners should demonstrate the same care towards riding that I do. I will not ride outside my comfort zone. I will ride my own line and ride.
- I will practice good riding techniques. I will focus on my riding. I will stay alert to possible hazards (Remember the MSF's Search-Evaluate-Execute strategy?).
- I will seek out more rider training in 2025. For me, that means my annual RiderCoach refresher and this year probably another track school!
- I will always maintain my motorcycles. That means following the maintenance schedule in the Owner's Manual. It means regularly cleaning my bike, not just to show it off, but also as a means to detect possible problems or maintenance issues.
- I am an experienced rider. I recognize that newer riders may look to me or watch how I ride. I will do my best to present a good example of a mature, safe rider. At the same time, it is also my responsibility to show newer riders that safe riding is also fun riding.
- If I see unacceptable riding behavior or unsafe riding techniques, I will take it upon myself to address these issues. I will do it politely and positively. I recognize that, as much as possible, we should all watch out for each other.

Ok, none of us are perfect. I'm sure there will be times when I'll forget something. The important part of this is that I recognize how much motorcycling is a part of my life, and how I want to be able to continue riding. These resolutions are how to make that happen.

How about you? Ready for another year of riding in 2025?

Ride Safe! Doug Westly – Safety Editor



Florida News

Two, two, two times the fun!!

This year, we separated our Holiday Lunch Rides into North and South regions. Tom hosted 23 at Gator Joe's, and I had 19 at Dock 633!! Be sure to read Tom's report below. There's an added history lesson as well!!

Though the weather was brisk, yet superb, for the North event, the South-end ride endured statewide gusty winds and spotty showers all day long. Undeterred, we had riders from near and far. From Sun City Center to Melbourne to Boynton Beach to Okeechobee. We sort of established our own "beach head" on the Dock 633 back patio with the "early on time" crew. Fortunately, our reservation was on record, and we could vouch for the caller... me! The staff was accommodating, as we spread out over several tables, and provided stellar service. The food and drinks were delicious, the moto-gab was entertaining, and the Koozies were well received!! Just a terrific way to end a wonderful year of moto gatherings here in Florida!! Join us again next year, won't you??



With two well attended rides this month, our 50/50 raffles were well funded. The North Holiday Lunch netted \$50 with an additional \$10 donated back. The South Holiday Lunch netted \$49, with an additional \$20 donated back to us by Larry S.! Adding \$129 brings our total to \$824.00 for 2024. As always, a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!!

We will ask the EC/Treasurer for reimbursement for the cost of the custom FL MSTA Koozies from the State Chapter "banks" that were established by the EC on Jan.1 this year. We still have 85+/- for other promotional efforts. Look for them again next year.

What's Next

Tom will once again head up the New Years Holiday Lunch Ride at Peck's Old Port Cove in Crystal River on January 1st! Join Tom again on Jan. 11th in Winter Haven for lunch at Harborside. Van will head up the South Lunch Ride at the Outpost Bar and Grille in

Indiantown on January 18th. Van will also host the West Central Lunch at Laishley's Crab House in Punta Gorda on January 25th.

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR WEST AREA AND NORTH AREA REP(S) FOR 2025 AND BEYOND. Contact Van for details. We can entertain a flexible schedule(ing) where 1-4 different members could organize events throughout the year. **THIS IS YOUR CLUB, MAKE IT INTO WHAT YOU WANT IT TO BE!!**

We hope all our members had a Joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!!

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...

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!!

FLMSTA added a new member this month:

Todd Mason of Boynton Beach - Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

- Mike Halburnt
- Buck Jones

- Don Mroczenski
- Hugh Palmer
- Tod Powers
- Chuck Waychoff

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

- Stephen Evans
- Charles Fritz
- Herman Greinstein
- Claude Hayes
- Don Moe
- Wade Osborne
- Charles Quesenberry
- Jeff Reder
- Bob Shields
- Alan Spears
- Van VanSteelant
- Dennis Villarose
- Donna Villarose

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.

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 ! 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

We have a new year right around the corner. How about a resolution to make 12 out of 36 rides next year...

Especially after the last few months, we will continue to support our local, small business restaurants. Please send your recommendations to any of the ride coordinators.

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



Holiday Lunch Ride- North

Gator Joe's Beach Bar
& Grill, Ocklawaha

Tom Blake

Well, 23 attended the Holiday Lunch Ride – North at *Gator Joe's Beach Bar & Grill* in Ocklawaha. It was a very crisp morning, and thankfully they

had no trouble seating us all inside. We were the 2nd group there, but the dining room was huge. They said it was OK to pull tables together, but we just took them as they were and engaged in the usual friendly chatter which lasted over an hour.

I'm not sure where everyone rode in from. Twelve rode 100 miles or more to get there, including six from the Melbourne – Vero Beach area. The two Vero guys, Larry and Charlie, shared LD honors at 170 miles each. Two were from Sun City Center. And I think most of rest were from Winter Park north. Several of the latter mentioned their appreciation for having a holiday ride in their area. I was pleased to be able to do it.



Top left: Larry S, Larry F, Mike, Jeff, Chuck, Bob, Garth, Charlie

Top Right: Tod, Wayne, Renny

Bottom: Sam, Dave, Angela, Mark

We didn't see any sign of a boat parade – probably a nighttime thing. There was a small Cessna seaplane floating next to the restaurant when we got there. One of our group went out and talked to the pilot for a few minutes. We got busy with the small talk and I was selling raffle tickets. When I had a chance to look outside again, it was gone. In fact, we were all having such a good time that no one thought to mention Pearl Harbor Day. So a belated toast to the brave souls who confronted that day in 1942 at Oahu.

The 50/50 grossed \$100. Winner Bob Kehl donated \$10 back to the club. Thanks, Bob, and thank you all.

I can't speak for everybody, but my group of six riders had a really nice day of riding mostly secondary roads up and back. They had their share of curves and in some cases stretches of canopied trees and other interesting scenery. Gator Joe's for us is not only a great destination - all of these fun roads make it a joy to go.

I can't sign off with relating a little history about Gator Joe's, Ocklawaha, Lake Weir and the notorious Ma Barker Gang hideout:

Gator Joe's opened in 1926. The name refers to a big alligator known in the area as "Old Joe". In 1934, while trying to find the Ma Barker Gang, the FBI intercepted a letter from Ma to one of her son's mentioning "Old Joe" near the Barker hideout. Lake Weir was pinpointed because there was a big gator there by that name. Meanwhile, Ocklawaha citizens had been noticing someone shooting at gators with a Tommy gun. On January 16, 1935, the FBI found and surrounded the hideout - a 2-story wood frame home the gang was renting about a quarter mile west of Gator Joe's. And in a 4-hour gun battle, Ma and one of her sons were killed. They were found in the left, upstairs bedroom supposedly with a Tommy gun laying on the floor between them. The rest of the gang had left the

area before the raid. “Old Joe”, on the other hand, lived until 1952 when a professional hunter brought on his demise.

The house, now called the Bradford-Ma Barker House, was donated to Marion County in 2016 and relocated to Carney Island Recreation & Conservation Area (a park) on the northwest edge of Lake Weir. The bullet holes have been patched but are still visible. Tours are available. Here’s a video link well worth watching:
https://youtu.be/aJ_jXROXNSc

Next up: “New Year, New Miles.” It’s lunch at *Peck’s Old Port Cove* near Crystal River on January 1st. You don’t want to miss it. And then on January 11th, we head back to *Harborside*, a very nice lakeside restaurant in Winter Haven.

Happy New Year everyone! –Tom

New Year's Day Lunch Ride

Peck's Old Port Cove, Crystal River

Tom Blake

We got 2025 off to a royal “*New Year, New Miles*” start with the ride to *Peck’s Old Port Cove* on the 1st. Mother Nature blessed us with sunny skies and temps mostly in the 60’s. She could not have treated us better. It was absolutely a beautiful day to ride (once the sun came up). Check out the sky in the parking lot picture that Doug Westly took. Larry Fitch and I (both from the Melbourne area) were the LD riders with 166 and 178 one-way miles, respectively. It took a little over 4 hours of seat time to get there on mostly back roads and about 3¼ hours to get back home via mostly toll roads. I slept well and long that night.



We had a very nice response with 21 in attendance and sold \$100 worth of 50-50 tickets. Thank you. The indoor pictures only show the 15 on-time arrivals. We filled two additional tables before it was

all said and done. Thanks to all for making it such an enjoyable gathering.

Sadly for us, Doug Westly announced that this would be his and Becky's last FLMSTA event as they're moving to the Ozark's next month. We thanked them for their long-term support and contributions to MSTA / FLMSTA and wished them the best in their new endeavors. And can you believe it – Doug won the 50-50! Sort of fitting, I think.

Our main server did a great job. She had a pleasant demeanor and a very keen sense of humor (something that I certainly appreciate). I announced right off **that we planned to give her a very good tip** which was "Don't smoke in bed!" She came right back with her own – "Don't fry bacon naked!" So we were off to a roaring start. In all respects, Peck's did not disappoint. She was the one, BTW, to draw Doug's winning ticket.

–Tom

Florida MSTA Apparel



Florida MSTA Apparel

As a reminder, our Florida State Storefront is open online for your MSTA-branded apparel! Go to mstaflorida.qbstores.com. We have made arrangements with the supplier for our National Gearbox to allow our State membership to buy shirts, hats, etc. with our State logos directly from the source!!! No

muss, no fuss!! Order yours today!! They offer both embroidery and digital print options. Click onto the Embroidered Apparel or Shop By Logo for each option. Don't hesitate to contact Queensboro directly with any and all questions. They are very customer friendly. They also offer Polo shirts and T-shirts with pockets!! 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>.

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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