



FLMSTA Newsletter | Feb 2025

February 2025 | Volume 19 | Issue 2

Welcome to the **Florida Gator Tale Newsletter** from the Florida Chapter of the MSTA! We've updated the newsletter to make it easy to read on your phone or tablet. However, you can still download a .pdf of this newsletter and archived newsletters from the FLMSTA website [here](#). The **Florida Gator Tale** includes all the news about rides, feature articles, Florida state reports and safety information to keep you current with the Florida MSTA.



Rides

Florida Rides This Month

IMPORTANT NOTE: Always remember to check the and/or your email for updates on scheduled rides. Changes in times, dates, and especially locations are often out of our control and with short notice. Please check the [rides calendar](#) for possible updates.

East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 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

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

Location: **Olympic Restaurant**, 504 U.S. 27, **Avon Park, FL (863) 452-2700** ([map](#))

Description: Greek and American food, pastries and desserts. Roomy, good for groups and has ample paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

West Central Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Broadway Diner**, 1380 N. Broadway Ave., **Bartow, FL (863) 537-7647** ([map](#))

Description: Adding a West Central option that Van will host. New place for us! Great menu, lots of parking! Join us, won't you?!?

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

South Lunch Ride

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

Location: **River Deck at Squid Lips**, 1670 Indian River Dr., **Sebastian, FL (772) 918-8220** ([map](#))

Description: New destination in a familiar location!! ON the water, tasty menu and even motorcycle parking!!

Contact: Van, busavanflmsta@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



Charlotte - My Cam Am Spyder

By Ellen Kocher

[Editor's Request: 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 have been riding motorcycles since the mid-1980's. Initially, my riding was limited to riding our Yamahas on mostly unpaved roads in the town of Suwannee, Florida, where the river ends at the Gulf of Mexico on Florida's west coast.

Included here is a not so clear photo of me on our Yamaha TT 200 taken in May 1986 in Suwannee. My husband, my children and our dog spent many holiday weekends, Spring Breaks, Thanksgivings and Christmases in Suwannee

at our small fixer-upper house
we purchased in 1981

Within a short time my riding skills were improved and I was ready to buy a bike for traveling distances and riding around the West Palm Beach area on paved roads! By July of 1986 a 1986 BMW R65 was mine. Fast forward to riding other BMW's (R1100RS, F650GS, R1200R) as far west as Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming and Colorado, and to BMW MOA and RA national rallies, not to mention MSTAR events all over the United States and into Canada – well, obviously I enjoy riding.

However, by the end of 2022, I was realizing that aging was catching up to me in terms of strength and I was losing confidence in my ability to keep my motorcycle upright on unlevel ground and unpaved surfaces. My height at 5 feet 2 inches has always been a challenge in making sure my feet reach the ground easily. Even with lowered suspension and low seats, I never even considered buying some motorcycles because they were too tall for my short frame.

Okay, I'm not in my 30's anymore but after almost 40 years of riding, I was not ready to give up riding. Solution – move from 2 wheels to 3 wheels by purchasing a Can-Am Spyder. When I was looking at my options in December of 2022, they were marking down the 2022 models to make room for the 2023 models. Sooooo, for the past two years I've owned a 2022 Can-Am Spyder RT Limited. I've named her Charlotte, and she's provided me with confidence to travel distances on my own if I don't have another friend to travel with. I have a feeling of safety since I'm not worried about tipping over when I least expect it. That was always a concern for me on 2 wheels.



My first trip out of Florida with my Spyder was in August of 2023 when Don Mroczenski and I rode to Marietta, Ohio, for Fly-By week. Charlotte has plenty of storage space for packing all the gear needed for touring. The stock seat is comfortable, and its 1330 cc Rotax ACE in-line 3-cylinder engine with 115 hp has plenty of “get up and go.” I will always miss leaning in the curves on 2 wheels, but the tradeoff is worth being able to continue riding. *Here’s Charlotte at the Comfort Inn in Marietta.*

[Read More](#)

Safety Talk



It's Your Path 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: This article is reprinted from the May 2018 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]

Right now, Becky and I are in Ohio, working yet another motorcycle event. We took time out for dinner and were sitting at the local chain dining establishment when it happened.

As we were looking out the window at the parking lot, we saw a rider pull in, astride a (Not Further Identified) large, V-twin motorcycle. You could tell he was a new rider. Both feet were paddling at slow speed, he was looking down...all of the signals were there. Then he tried to back his huge "potato-potato" beast uphill into a parking spot. That didn't work for him; go figure. Then he tried going forward, downhill. He almost lost control as he tried to turn at the same time, still looking down at the pavement. Look there long enough and you will go there. He just managed to save it. The drama went on until he managed to get his behemoth parked.

There is a time and a place for everything and every motorcycle. Unfortunately, lots of riders either don't understand the potential consequences of selecting the wrong motorcycle, or at least one that they are either not ready to handle, or physically can't manage.

This doesn't just apply to the new rider, captivated by his purchase of the tool for entry into the bad boy lifestyle. I've witnessed older, much more experienced riders struggling with larger, heavier bikes, just because they have an expectation to meet, either personal or community.

So, how do you figure out what bike is right for you? I am not about to touch that one, other than to say what the heart wants, it wants. However, there are lots of signs pointing to selecting or riding the wrong motorcycle.

The aforementioned event offers up just some of the signs. Here are some more:

- If you can't put your bike on its center stand (if it has one), you're on the wrong bike.
- If come to a stop and are balancing on your tip toes, you're definitely in the wrong dimension.
- If you've bought your bike because all your friends ride the same kind/brand/size, rather than considering what you really want to ride, you may be riding the wrong steed.
- If you look longingly at another bike passing you by, and feel your mount is somehow inferior, you probably have not achieved motorcycling self-fulfillment.

So what does all this have to do with safety? It's actually very simple. The wrong bike means you may not be comfortable with it. You may be struggling to maintain control. The motorcycle may have performance parameters you are either not comfortable with, or are even scared to experience. This list again goes on.

No one should tell you what you should ride. Sometimes bigger is not better. Sometimes simpler is more enjoyable. You need to assess your own skills and riding desires, not just join the crowd.

Motorcycling is about being one with the bike and the path. If someone else wants to come along, that's fine, but it's your journey.

Choose wisely.

Ride Safe! Doug Westly

Florida News



Florida News

We're off and rolling...

**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!!**

Four rides in January to get your motor running!! And Tom made all four!! It helps that he hosted two of them...You enjoyed his ride report to Peck's in last month's *Gator Tale*. Both rides were terrific, so catch up with his East Central ride report below!

We closed the month out with the South and West Central rides. Certainly, the proximity of the Outpost Grill & Bar in Indiantown to many east and southside riders contributed to a sizable turnout of 19! New attendee, Mitch G. from Boca, met up with six others at the Wawa for our roundabout route to the Outpost. Jim P. and I swapped roles for this ride, giving me a chance to observe the group from the tailgun position. I took some mental notes for future ride briefings. Great weather and familiar roads made for an uneventful ride.

Riding in Florida in January rarely disappoints. The numbers speak for themselves! For the South ride to The Outpost, we had "regulars" and several "where have you been" riders gather for lots of gab and good grub! Though the reservation was for eight, the 19 of us assisted the restaurant staff to lessen our impact on this little slice of heaven tucked away in Indiantown. Nobody was rushing for the door. In fact, the tire kicking and tall tales continued for some time out in the parking lot! Good times!! And our 50/50 raffle was well funded, with "member" Tom B. the winner of \$28. (Hosts don't participate in their own ride's raffle.) He in turn donated \$20 back to us, for \$48!



19 riders at the South Ride to The Outpost in Indiantown

Riding in Florida in January rarely disappoints. However, a week after the South ride, the West Central ride started out a bit nippy. With the jetstream benefiting from a warmer Arctic, it pushed some abnormal weather our way. My buddy, who's just west of Pensacola, had 6+ inches of snow!! Mike S. from Stuart met me at the Wawa, along with Joy and Larry. Off we went for a 2.5 hour ride to Punta Gorda. After a good 30 minutes into the ride, Joy and Larry decided that was too much to ask that day and returned home to warm up and be ready to ride another day. ALWAYS ride within your limits! Mike and I soldiered on, welcoming the planned comfort stop at Love's Travel Center in Moore Haven. As the sun rose higher, the temps got to 62°, and it became down-right beautiful to be out on a ride!! Tom B. from Palm Bay made his solo ride across the state, logging 166 miles one way. He did mention how the heated grips and seat on the RT were very welcomed as he left the house at 39°!!



Our reserved table for eight easily handled our group of three - the "Eastside Real Men" - Van, Mike and Tom (*at left*). As in the past, Laishly's treated us well and we'll look to return again. As a reminder of last year's double whammy of hurricanes, there was still a 35-ft boat "resting" on top of a portion of the municipal mooring/dock!! Fortunately, our three rides home were far less dramatic!

What's Next?

Join Tom on February 8th in Deland for the East Central Lunch Ride, held at the Deland Fish House. A week later, Van will head up the South Lunch Ride to the Smokehouse on the River, inside River Ranch, on February 15th. You'll still make it home in time for that

belated Valentine's dinner!! Van will also host the West Central Lunch Ride to Solomon's Castle in Ona, on February 22nd.

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:

Gregg Franklin of Davie - Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

- Thomas Batchelor
- James Beyerl
- Frederick Blackall
- Stephen Evans
- Larry Fitch
- Don Moe
- Jeff Reder
- Van VanSteelant
- Dennis Villarose
- Donna Villarose

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

- **Brian Carpenter**
- **Roy Clark**
- **Michael Demario**
- **Herman Greinstein**
- **Larry Gonzalez**
- **Claude Hayes**
- **Wade Osborne**
- **Charles Quesenberry**
- **Bob Shields**
- **Alan Spears**
- **Carlyle Swofford**

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

Keep on coming out to enjoy all the rides we have planned this year and bring a friend!

As more destinations recover from the combined couple of years, 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



East Central Ride

Harborside

Winter Haven, FL

Tom Blake

The East Central lunch ride in January was to *Harborside* in Winter Haven. The morning dawned overcast, damp and windy with a cold front passing through. Radar images showed little hope of staying dry. I had one cancellation. But Terry joined me in West Melbourne, and then we picked up Tulio and Brian at Yeehaw Junction. (I was

amazed at the number of motorcyclists gathering there - what with the crappy weather and all.) The worst of the leaky clouds occurred for a few minutes immediately west of YJ, and then it was just overcast the rest of the way over. None of the roads we were on got enough moisture to create noticeable sprays even from passing trucks.

Two-lane SR 60 west of YJ was tedious with long lines of traffic doing the accordion thing behind two well-spaced, but relatively slow-moving semis. The semis were doing the speed limit, but everyone else, as we've all experienced, wanted to do 80 or so and thought they could get wherever they were going faster by tailgating. Or maybe it's just an inane attempt to pressure the driver ahead, who also has nowhere to go, to somehow drive faster.

Hugh, his riding friend Richard, and Gregg were waiting at the parking lot when we pulled in. Hugh, who rode in on his new Spyder, said they were dry the whole way down from the Eustis area. Gregg said he hit a lot of rain riding up from Davie. What – Davie? Same for Tulio and Brian from the Treasure Coast (the front was working south and east). At about 61° and breezy, it was too chilly to stand around outside. A dry Eve, from the Bay area, joined us inside a little later. As you might guess, Gregg (*back, right in the photo*) was by far the LD champ for this meetup at 199.6 miles! It must be an Aussie thing, right mate?



Left (front to back): Richard, Hugh, Tom, Tulio

Right (front to back): Brian, Terry, Gregg

Harborside was ready for us and showed us straight to our tables about 11:20. Our server was very pleasant and quickly tended to our needs – mostly warm coffees and teas to start (sans spoons – maybe a subtle message?). The only food available was from their brunch menu (a weekend 10 AM – 1 PM thing new from last January). My Belgian waffle with berries and a side of perfectly done bacon was very good. Several others remarked favorably about their selections.

Blue splotches started to show up in the sky as we started home. Weatherwise, it actually turned into a fabulous ride with lots of blue above and temps into the upper 60's. Most headed straight home. But Terry and I had enough of SR 60 and the next best option was north through Kissimmee even though it gets highly congested. Tulio followed Terry and me east to SR 17 where he turned south and we went north. We took a back way through Kissimmee avoiding downtown traffic. Then onto Hickory Tree Rd southeast of St Cloud where massive development is just going to ruin one of

our very favorite high speed sweeper venues. Best to run it now 'cause it's going to turn into a crawl very soon.

Have to say, I left home with a lot of apprehension but arrived home feeling refreshed and very satisfied.

Next up: It's back to the *Deland Fish House* on February 8th. Easy to get to, very tasty food, motorcyclist-friendly and plenty of paved parking including in the lot next door. And, perhaps far enough north to attract some of our north state riders. Who knows, Gregg might just show up, too. You just never know about this great MSTA crowd. –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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FL MSTA

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