



FLMSTA Newsletter | Jan 2026

## January 2026 | Volume 20 | Issue 1

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.

## West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 10, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Eagle Lake Family Diner** 185 5th Street, **Eagle Lake, FL**  
(772) 489-2285 ([map](#))

Description: Eve is your host the first quarter of rides in 2026. Behave, and we may be able to keep her onboard for more...

The place looks terrific, with breakfast all day, and home cooking no matter what you order!!

Contact: Eve Blazsur, [6saturdaysretired@gmail.com](mailto:6saturdaysretired@gmail.com)

## East Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 17, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Airport Tiki**, 2982 Curtis King Blvd., **Fort Pierce, FL**  
(772) 489-2285 ([map](#))

Description: A hidden gem. Enjoy a good meal and watch the planes land and take off! Plenty of seating and paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

## South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, January 24, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Scotty's Tiki Bar**, 920 E. Del Monte Ave., **Clewiston, FL**  
(800) 473-6766 ([map](#))

Description: It's been a long while since we stopped by here. New management, tiki-style vibe and a good menu!!

## 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 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Varied and reasonably priced menu, with plenty of seafood options! Paved parking and biker friendly.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

### South Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 14, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Dune Dog Cafe**, 421 SW Federal Hwy., **Stuart, FL** (772) 266-4360 ([map](#))

Description: I know... Valentines Day! This is close by for most of the Southies/Easties, so you'll be home in plenty of time to make your dinner plans...

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

### West Central Lunch Ride

When: **Saturday, February 28, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

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

Description: Always a favorite!! Funky vibe, good eats!! CASH ONLY!!

Contact: Eve Blazsur, [6saturdaysretired@gmail.com](mailto:6saturdaysretired@gmail.com)

For additional Florida events and information, to see the Florida MSTA website's Events page.

The Florida MSTA chapter also has a presence on Facebook with upcoming events and past photos:

## Feature Article

*[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](mailto:editor@flmsta.org) to publish an article. Thanks!]*



### Road Trip to Maine and the Canadian Maritimes

By Van VanSteelant

**The 23 days before STAR '25**

**The last 9 days in Cape Breton Island and New Brunswick**

Our round trip from the Isle Madame in Nova Scotia to Fortress Louisbourg was very moving. The

social history from nearly 300 years ago has implications right through to today. Near the very end of our visit, we walked through an exhibit covering the reacquisition of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building skills/trades by 20<sup>th</sup> century contemporaries, by newbies and skilled alike. As one who spent his working life in multiple aspects of construction, I was gobsmacked.

"I do not know why a low idea has been attached to this word; it is to the *trades* that we owe all the things necessary for life."

Denis Diderot, French philosopher [parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/louisbourg](http://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/louisbourg)



**Day 13. Onto the Cabot Trail**  
on Cape Breton Island, we are now in our travel rhythm, with the best roads yet to come!! Pack, ride, take in the vistas, settle into another stunning B&B, the Williams Beach House in Ingonish right on the Atlantic Ocean. A retired chef and his talented wife sold their restaurant after 25 years, built the

B&B just before COVID, opened a weekend-only dinner service in-house, and just recently decided to scale back to only preparing meals for their guests. Just stunning-meals served on our 2nd-floor balcony overlooking the ocean.



**Day 14.** Starts with a walk on the beach with a calm North Atlantic offering a soothing soundtrack! Then off on the Cabot Trail for a few touristy sites. First up, The Groovy Goat! A working farm, animal rescue mission and fine goods for sale! Several years ago, the community rallied behind them after a tragic fire took everything, including the animals. Rebuilt and

better than ever. Back on the road, up the stunning coastline. Now we're talking!

Then inland to the Arts North Nova Scotia Artists' Gallery. My oh my, at an arts center featuring local artists, we found our "thank you" gifts for our neighborhood support system as well as a few gotta haves for ourselves! And back south along the Cabot Trail coastline and another dinner with a view!!



**Day 15.** Cheeze...We must pack and RIDE the Cabot Trail, again!! We had a few kilometers to cover today, so left right after breakfast on the porch, again. Kim maxed out the route to cover two "detours" on our way to Pleasant Bay. If you are following along with a map, here goes: north on Bay St. Lawrence Rd. past Aspy Bay and Sugar Loaf

to Bay St. Lawrence. We swing back northwest on Meat Cove Rd. until it turned to dirt just past Capstick. Our timetable didn't allow for added adventure risks. All the way back to the Cabot Trail, over the North Mountain Look Off and to our roadside MacToimin Cottage in Pleasant Bay.

The weather prediction for the next day was awful. And it would be the only sour weather day we had the whole trip! So, we made haste and drove further south to take advantage to the sun and the vistas! A late lunch at the Rusty Anchor and onto Cheticamp to capture *the* ubiquitous shoreline photo of Cape Breton along the way.

We saw a speeding Zodiac boat heading back to Pleasant Bay, which was as close as we got to our whale watching adventure. We were fully prepared for a wet and wild ride the

next day, but the pouring rain brought 30-40 mph winds and 4-6 ft seas...Reading the cancellation email was a bummer.



**Day 16.** The waterproof bike cover worked. We caught up with delayed "have to's" and got ready for a very special night out for dinner. Kim found a spectacular establishment, the Woodroad Restaurant. Well worth the 75km/1:15 one way drive...Especially as the sky cleared just enough as we traveled south.

[www.woodroad.ca](http://www.woodroad.ca) for the complete experience.

It's a passion project of two brothers from very different backgrounds. One was in forestry and taught himself how to build a timber framed structure!! They used trees from the waterside property for some of the construction. The other, a stellar chef with a very talented wife who chose all the design elements. Altogether, they have created a one-of-kind experience. We were in sensory overload all night! I took 21 sunset photos during the cocktails, 7-course meal with wine pairings and after dinner chocolates. Oh my!!



[Read more...](#)

## 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 2026!]*

- 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 2026. 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 2026?

***Ride safe! – Doug Westly***

## Florida News



## Florida News

**We are back! 30 days on the road, and lots to share!!**

The feature article gives you my take on last of our adventures in Maine and the Canadian Maritimes. Good times and great roads!!

Tom hosted the December 6th North Holiday Lunch ride to Gator Joe's. Ten riders endured an iffy weather day and a lovely lunch!! See his report below.

On December 13th, 22 riders gathered at the Dock 633 for the South Holiday Lunch ride. We spread out over the entire back patio. Our weather could hardly have been better! As usual, the food and service was good, and the company and great stories carried the day! Swag was handed out, and Tom B. won the 50/50, donating \$43 back from his winnings!! Adding \$90, our year end total is \$1,510.00. A **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!! *We did send our \$500 donation to the MSTA Dan Clark Safety Fund*, as the response to the donation inquiry was all for it!! So, 2026 starts with \$1,010.00.

Several Southies gathered at the Wawa and enjoyed a ride over familiar roads. We did pick up two more at Love's, and bumped up the fun along the Venus bypass! After lunch, a few of us decided to keep the fun rolling, and rode home the same way!!



*We took up the whole patio at the South Holiday Lunch ride at Dock 633*

Last, but not least, thanks to all of you who take the time to send your comments and suggestions to me/us!! They are most welcome!! Remember, this is YOUR club, and to make it better often lies with the membership rather than the leadership. I thank you all for your support!!

## What's Next?

We have **four** rides planned for January!!

Tom will host the January 1st New Year's ride to Peck's. Read his chilly report next month!! Eve will host the West Central lunch to Eagle Lake Family Diner on January 10th. Tom will host the East Central lunch at the Airport Tiki in Ft. Pierce on January 17th. Van will host the South Lunch at Scotty's Tiki Bar in Clewiston on January 24th. We'll be looking for the usual big turnouts!

We have inserted an email response "button" to our announcements to assist our coordinators with the reservation headcount. Click on the green "button", then hit the send arrow. The pre-loaded email will be on its way!! Easy peasey!!



## Membership News!!

If you are receiving the *Gator Tale*, but not my announcements, **PLEASE** email me ASAP to correct my files. I believe I'm up to date...

Pat Mogavero is Officially our new MSTA Membership Director! We will be adapting to the new presentation of monthly data over the next few months. So far, Pat has introduced several improvements with a few more tweaks to come. **Big Thanks!!** [patrickmogavero@gmail.com](mailto:patrickmogavero@gmail.com) Contact him directly with any membership issues.

MSTA added two new members: **John Crittenden of Palm Harbor, and Marc Bradley of St. Petersburg.** Welcome!

The following MSTA memberships have recently renewed:

- **Thomas Batchelor**
- **John Bettua**
- **Tom Blake**
- **Michael Clark**
- **Hugh Palmer**
- **Victor Salisbury**
- **Michael Shooks**

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Terry Casto**
- **Claude Hayes**

We urge all our members to renew their memberships and continue supporting their MSTA. If you have a question about when your membership expires, please contact the **NEW MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM** at <https://ridemsta.com/membership-account/membership-levels/> or simply visit the **MSTA Website** at [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com) and **LOG IN** and then click on **MEMBERSHIP.**

When you encounter a rider who would seem to be a good fit as a new MSTA member, please direct them to the **MSTA Website** at [www.ridemsta.com](http://www.ridemsta.com). For each new member you recruit and who provides your name and/or membership

number on the application, you will receive a coupon for a **raffle ticket for the motorcycle touring package drawing at our next STAR event**. Any new or current member who joins or renews as a Sustaining Member will likewise receive a coupon for a raffle ticket for each year of the new membership term.

## Random Ramblings

Our best riding weather is upon us!! Packing up the holiday decorations can wait another day - get out and ride!!

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



Dec 2025 East Central News  
Tom Blake

**Gator Joe's** in Ocklawaha was the **North Holiday Lunch** destination again this year. Despite my strong desire to just stay in bed... Larry, Terry, Jay and I left West Melbourne at 8:00 and rode up via Deer Park, Christmas, Chuluota, Geneva, Sanford and Umatilla – a 3-hour ride plus a break near Sanford.

Several of the roads up near Umatilla were curvy enough to bring out the smiles.

I was pleased to see and talk to Ron McNary, a long-ago HSTA member who decided to join us. He was quite familiar with the likes of Sam Ubling (former north Florida director from Gainesville) and several guys who used to be active in my area. I look forward to talking with him again. Hugh was just back from Hiawassee on his very red Spyder. Great to see him. Alan has become a regular and we all enjoy his company. Roy Clark (no, not the singer) was looking and acting quite chipper despite the crappy weather he no doubt rode through from the northwest. Jeff from the Boston area popped in a bit late. Believe he's staying nearby. Glad he could join us. And Garth made the short hop over from The Villages. Great to talk with him. So we all enjoyed the gab and grub outside on the covered deck with a good view south across Lake Wier (though the overcast and mist painted a gloomy picture). No one from the northeast or gulf coast showed up. A few left-over FL MSTA koozies from last year were handed out. We skipped the 50/50. Ho! Ho! Ho!

**Mother Nature was not our friend.** All in all, turnout was disappointing. I had quite a few "yes" responses to the invitation who did not show. No doubt the overcast and strong likelihood, or actuality, of showers working in from the north and west had something to do with it. My group started off in dense fog then got sprinkled on for a while west of Sanford going up. We got quite a bit of rain heading east from Ocklawaha after lunch. So we detoured south to clearer skies and the same roads we went up on rather than east to some other hidden gems I had in mind. My heartfelt thanks to those of you who clinched your teeth and pressed on. At least it was just rain.



**Up Next:** For a needed change of pace, our January EC ride is heading south to *Airport Tiki* at the Fort Pierce airport. For the EC riders, it will be a welcome change not to go through Yeehaw Junction (S) or Deer Park, Christmas, Chuluota (N). The restaurant looks good online. I'm looking forward to it.

**Best Wishes** to you all for 2026 and may that include many happy miles ridden here in Florida to have a bite and chat with good friends. MSTA also has a national rally (the **Sport Touring Association Rendezvous** or STAR) and a slew of regional rallies worth attending. Pick out a few. Then go, enjoy some truly fun new roads and make even more friends bound by our love of spirited but safe and smart riding.

## 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](http://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!!



## **2019 KTM Super Duke GT For Sale - \$11,495**

Contact: Tom Blake at 321-794-6147 or  
email [tblake1@cfl.rr.com](mailto:tblake1@cfl.rr.com)

Current mileage: ~18.3K  
(Approx 3,600/yr.)

Well cared for and  
maintained

New Michelin Pilot Road 6's  
at 15,869 miles

Battery replaced April 2022,  
maintained with Battery  
Tender

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To find a buyer for your motorcycle items, please send your ad and pictures by email to [editor@flmsta.org](mailto: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](http://RideMSTA.com)

**SE Regional MSTA:** [MSTA-SE.com](http://MSTA-SE.com)

**Florida MSTA:** [FLMSTA.org](http://FLMSTA.org)

We're also on **Facebook:** [facebook.com/FLMSTA/](http://facebook.com/FLMSTA/)

More contact information:

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**P. "Van" VanSteelant, FL State Director**

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**Tom Blake, East Central Area Rep**

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