



FLMSTA Newsletter | Dec
2024

December 2024 | Volume 18 | Issue 12

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.

MSTA Holiday Lunch-North

When: **Saturday, December 7, 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Location: **Gator Joe's Beach Bar & Grill**, 12431 SE 135th Avenue, **Ocklawaha, FL** (352) 288-3100 ([map](#))

Description: Our “**northern**” **Holiday Lunch** destination!! Join Tom for some good cheer and warm wishes!

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

MSTA Holiday Lunch-South

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

Location: **Dock 633**, 633 Lake June Road, **Lake Placid, FL** (863) 699-6330 ([map](#))

Description: Our “**southern**” **Holiday Lunch** destination!! Join Van for some good cheer and warm wishes!

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.

MSTA New Year's Lunch Ride

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

Location: **Peck's Old Port Cove**, 139 N. Ozello Trail, **Crystal River, FL** (352) 795-2806 ([map](#))

Description: Let's keep the **New Year, New Miles** tradition going. Great seafood with Old Florida ambiance and 9 miles of twisty Ozello Trail to get out there. Bring something to put under your

kickstand. And invite a non-member riding friend or two to come along. We'll try to get the large dining room reserved if pre-ride responses justify it.

Tom will coordinate with Peck's. He'll even plan to see you there if the sky isn't crying.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

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



STAR 2024 - Texas in October

By Jim Park

[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!]

"The shortest distance between two points is a straight line." While true, I've never been accused of possessing this knowledge. So was the case of my travels to this year's STAR in Kerrville, Texas.



My trip started around a week ahead of the scheduled beginning of the event. On my first day of travels, I met up with my buddy Dennis Villarose near the north end of the state in Lake City, Florida. From there, we made our way to the north end of the [Natchez Trace Parkway](#), near Nashville Tennessee. Our first stop before getting onto the Trace was for breakfast at the [Loveless Café](#) located just a few yards from the beginning of the Parkway. It's a must stop for their famous homemade biscuits which they claim to serve an average of 10,000 per day!



The Natchez Trace Parkway is a 444-mile linear national park that passes through three states - Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi - and doesn't allow commercial traffic. The speed limit is posted at 50 MPH for much of its length, so you need to maintain a laid back mindset and simply enjoy the ride!

After completing our ride down the Trace ending in Natchez, Mississippi we continued

southwesterly through Louisiana and Texas to our destination, Kerrville, Texas.



Yes, Texas has hills!

[Y.O. Resort and Conference Center](#), the host hotel for 2024 STAR is located in the middle of the [Texas Hill Country](#). Having some twisty roads that rival a few in Western North Carolina, it also offers a landscape that can only be found in Texas. Much like Florida, Texas also has its heat; however, having this year's STAR in October, we experienced cool mornings and only slightly warm afternoons, near perfect riding conditions! In addition to some great riding the Hill Country also has numerous exotic game ranches. It is a common sight to see ostrich, antelope or even an occasional zebra as part of your roadside view!



This year's lunch ride allowed riders to take one or more of the famous twisty roads known as the Three Twisted Sisters en route to the lunch location at [Frio Canyon Bent Rim Grill](#). There we were served some great bar-b-cue brisket at an outdoor pavilion with a magnificent view of the Texas hills!



While this year's STAR was not our highest attended at 175 registered riders, it did not fall short of expectations. Thanks to the work of many behind the scenes volunteers, in particular our Texas members, there were plenty of activities to enjoy. The ride boards were top notch and a popular planning tool for riders in conjunction

with the GPS files that were available from the MSTA website or at the GPS download table in the hotel lobby including QR codes.

The evening activities offered a safety seminar and ladies meeting both presented by member Helene Villemure, a movie night (with popcorn) featuring a documentary “Deep in the Heart of Texas” narrated by Mathew McConaughey, which was followed by a whiskey social/seminar featuring a variety of bourbons. Also 15 local artisans set up their tables selling some interesting (and tasty) goods. There was also a massage table, but that seemed to be available only one evening.

Our new President, Norm Kern, did a stellar job for his first STAR at hosting the annual members meeting and the closing banquet. In addition to our annual raffle bike, thanks to the generosity of Steve and Sue Nemish of No-Mar Tires, Jerry James became the recipient of a brand new bike lift! And then of course, to wind up the Wednesday night banquet, the winning raffle bike number was drawn.

As with most STAR events, it was over far too quickly. And we are already looking forward to 2025 STAR in Williamsport.

Pennsylvania.



My wife Dianne flew to STAR this year. She did her usual job of putting out the little unforeseen issues that occasionally occur during STAR. So after STAR, she headed to San Antonio, for her flight back home. We took advantage of the opportunity to spend a few days in the downtown area. The city is known for its [River Walk District](#), where you can cruise via water taxi to numerous

restaurants, bars and shops that line the river for several miles.



Adjacent to the River Walk you can visit the famous Alamo where Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and others met their demise by overwhelming Mexican troops. Set amid the modern high-rise buildings, I must say it was somewhat underwhelming!



Leaving town, Dianne took an Uber to the airport, and I mounted my 2-wheel steed and headed back to the Sunshine State via I-10. The return trip was largely uneventful with few traffic delays through the larger cities, with only one exception where I was stopped for 45 minutes on a bridge due to an unseen accident several miles ahead.

Another STAR in the books and while missing some of our favorite Floridians this year, it was still a huge success. The Texas Hill Country crew pulled off a good one!

Safety Talk



Changing of the Seasons 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 November 2018 edition of the FLMSTA Gator Tale.]

This is the time of year when the colors change, although in Florida that means the colors of the license plates on cars and RVs heading south for the winter. Nevertheless, we do have nature adjusting to the slightly less tropical heat of the Fall and Winter months, even here.

I was headed to my local dealer the other day; a simple task of dropping off a bike for service. The road out of my neighborhood is lined with overhanging oak trees. I actually saw the acorn falling, just before it hit my glove...between the armored knuckle areas, of course. We can do the math, but suffice it to say a falling acorn impacting a rider's hand while the bike is doing roughly 40 mph... well, it HURT!

Of course, one falling acorn can't really do much, can it? A few leaves falling can't do much, can they? Well, maybe.

Fall brings different riding challenges. Roads can get coated with leaves, and wet leaves in corners could mean reduced traction...or no traction. I've had at least one biker friend who wadded up his beloved sport tourer on a wet leaves-coated turn in the mountains. He was fine (can you say ATGATT?), but the bike was a write-off. One acorn is no big deal. A few dozen of them sitting clustered in the middle of a bike's path of travel through a turn become a road surface of ball bearings.

How about something as simple as the temperature change itself? Colder morning temperatures change tire pressures. Cold road surfaces, added to those cold tires, change traction conditions.

As a general rule, tire pressures change (approximately) by about 1 psi for every 10° F. That means if your tires (cold) were at 36 psi in 70° weather, then at 40° weather they are now at 33 psi. Make sure you always check tire pressures!

The change of seasons means we have new riding considerations before and during our ride. In Florida we are usually more concerned with staying cool, but even in the Sunshine State, sometimes layering is a good strategy. A 35° morning can turn into an 80° day and pretty quickly once the sun pops up. (BTW, that also means your tire pressures went up about 4.5 psi...)

How about something as simple as rider hydration? If it's cooler out, we don't think as much about staying hydrated. After all, we can't dehydrate when we're trying to stay warm, can we? As it turns out, winter dehydration is accelerated by things like wearing extra clothing, respiratory water loss, and even the rapid evaporation of sweat. So the answer is "Yes". You can dehydrate in the cooler months. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.

The bottom line is to remember that as we move into the cooler riding months, we need to remain aware of the changing conditions. We need to take different riding challenges into consideration before and during our ride.

Florida News



Florida News

Oh, to be thankful...

Yeah, the official end of hurricane season...Yeah, the temps dropped out of the 90's...Yeah, we successfully held **4** lunch rides in November!!

Tom pulls double duty with two reports below. AND he was a traveling dude in November, attending all four lunches!! I slacked off and made only three... That's not all. Look closely at the lunchtime photos and you'll see repeat attendees as well. Maybe they've learned something about leaving the house and enjoying good company!!



It had been years since we successfully planned a lunch ride to Everglades City. Weather and the resulting aftermath really played an upper hand! So, we were thrilled to finally have nice riding weather, and plenty of establishments reopened for business this month! The Southies returned to an old favorite, the Camellia Street Grill. Four met at the Wawa and bumped our way down the agro-roads through the sparsely populated farmlands. Gregg Franklin met us at the BP station at CR 29 and Oil Well Rd. Long distance winners, Mike Clark (183) and Tom Blake (225) were waiting for our group, as Van "decided" to take the scenic route all around Everglades City before landing at the Grill...Ah, the wait was worth it!! The outdoor setting was picture-perfect, the food delicious, and conversations captivating!



Van pulled double duty as well this month. After a bit of google research, we shifted the West Lunch ride to Arcadia, where Champs 3 recently opened to good reviews. And 15 of us

filled up a corner of the small dining room! Though not much to look at, the "parts" that matter were terrific! Our expert server had us laughing, the food was spectacular and they let us hang around for nearly 2 hours!! Gregg Franklin recently rejoined our riding groups, and took long distance rider(175) from North Miami! So, Arcadia is back in rotation.

With four rides this month, our 50/50 raffles were well funded. The East Lunch netted \$22. The West Lunch netted \$48, as winner Mike Shooks donated his winnings back to us! And the Black Friday Lunch netted \$50, as winner Van donated his winnings back as well! Adding \$120 brings our total to \$695.00. As always, a **BIG THANKS** to all who participate!!

What's Next

As we front-load the rides in December to accommodate the holidays, Tom will head up the **North Central Holiday Lunch Ride at Gator Joe's in Ocklawahawha on December 7th!** Van will head up the **South Central Holiday Lunch Ride at Dock 633 in Lake Placid on December 14th.** We will have a gift for all who attend, so we hope to see a bunch of you!!

Look forward to our annual **January 1st ride to Peck's Old Port Cove!!** Details coming soon! And, we wish all our members 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:

Brian Brannon of Fleming Island - Welcome!

These Florida memberships have recently renewed:

- Richard Alleman
- Tom Blake
- Terry Casto
- Michael Clark

These Florida memberships have recently expired or will expire soon:

- Greg Cyr
- Stephen Evans
- Charles Fritz
- Herman Greinstein
- Mike Halburnt
- Buck Jones
- Dennis Mitchell
- Don Mroczenski
- Hugh Palmer

- **Tod Powers**
- **Bob Shields**
- **Chuck Waychoff**

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



East-Central Ride Renegades on the River, Crescent City

Tom Blake

Eleven riders made their way over good roads to

Renegades on the River on the 2nd. Five were from north Florida, five from East-Central and one the southeast.

Located west of Crescent City along the east shore of the St. Johns River, Renegades was as clean and inviting as I remembered from last year.

We sat on the covered screened porch. A live band was playing some good tunes in the chickee-like bar just west of us. We all enjoyed the banter around our table but eventually had to pay up and get on the road. Good riding, good food, good friends to share it with....The 50/50 netted \$22. I gave away a little more of my Halloween candy! Life was good.

On the way home, five of us did a portion of the Ormond Scenic Loop Trail over to A1A and followed it south a ways. I was surprised at how well that section of A1A withstood Milton. In Ormond Beach we took US 1 south to the new BMW / Triumph dealership. They

recently moved up from Daytona and have a really nice place. The old building is vacant.

Black Friday Ride

Cherry Pocket Steak & Seafood, Lake Wales

Tom Blake

For those of you who had the day off from work and preferred to ride rather than shop, we had our **Black Friday Lunch Ride** again this year to a location away from congestion. **Cherry Pocket Steak & Seafood** was our destination on a northern finger of Lake Pierce above Lake Wales. The last 9 miles was curvaceous and enjoyable country roads.





Cherry Pocket was way bigger than I remember. Our eleven riders barely made a dent in the available seating. Service was excellent. The food was very good. Those who ordered clam chowder or gumbo raved about how good they were. The 50/50 netted \$25 for Van! And Larry Fitch brought along an Apple Car Play unit he couldn't use. That (2nd ticket drawn) went to Lu Vencl. We did contend with a little precipitation, but it was more of a nuisance than a problem. I can see us going back sometime in the future.

Next up: We will have a **Holiday Lunch Ride - North on December 7th**. The destination is **Gator Joe's Beach Bar and Grill** with its Key West vibe. Lunch begins at 11:30 AM although an early arrival is suggested since they don't take reservations. Gator Joe's, in the town of Ocklawaha, is right on the north shore of Lake Weir and under 20 road miles southeast of Ocala.

I understand there will be a boat parade out on the lake. And there are usually seaplanes taking off and landing as well. So, it should be fun to watch. Also, in keeping with the spirit of the season, there'll be gifts for everyone this year. And we can all hoist our iced teas to those who confronted this fateful day on Oahu in 1941.

Note: The old 2-story wood frame house about ¼ mile west of Gator Joe's is where the FBI engaged the Ma Barker Gang in a 4-

hour shootout in 1935. It has been donated to Marion County and moved to the Carney Island Recreation and Conservation Area on the west shore of Lake Weir. Tours can be arranged.

The FLMSTA All State New Year's Day Ride: Peck's Old Port Cove near Crystal River has reopened since the hurricanes. Let's keep the **New Year, New Miles** tradition going. Great seafood with Old Florida ambiance and 9 miles of twisty Ozello Trail to get out there. Bring something to put under your kickstand. And invite a non-member riding friend or two to come along. We'll try to get the large dining room reserved if pre-ride responses justify it. We had thirty-three there in 2019 when the ride, originally made popular by Bill Royal, was resurrected.

I'll coordinate with Peck's. I'll even plan to see you there if the sky isn't crying.

If I don't see you until next year...

Best Wishes for a
Joyous Holiday
Season

—Tom



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!

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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