



FLMSTA Newsletter | August 2026

August 2026 | Volume 20 | Issue 8

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 rides 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. Please check the [rides calendar](#) for possible updates.

East Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 8, 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

Location: **La Crepe de France - Downtown** 707 E. New Haven Ave., **Melbourne, FL** (321) 837-3760 ([map](#))

Description: **NOTE: NEW 9:00 AM start time** for East Central Brunches. Their crepes are delicious though a tad pricey. On-street parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 15, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM**

Location: **Blue Ridge Grill (fka Mike's Original Grill)** 1037 N. Broadway Ave., **Bartow, FL** (863) 800-3130 ([map](#))

Description: **NOTE: NEW 9:00 AM** start time for West Central Brunches. New name!! But still an oldie but goodie!! Enjoy this brunch ride!!

Look for details in our Ride Announcements!!

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

South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, August 29, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **The Red Rooster LaBelle**, 100 Main St., **LaBelle, FL** (863) 342-8034 ([map](#))

Description: Another new-to-us destination, and easy to get to!! Extensive brunch menu!! Lots of parking!

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

MSTA FlyBy Week

When: **Monday-Sunday, August 17-23**

Location: **Comfort Suites, Marietta, OH**

Description: FlyBy Week is MSTA's largest regional rally - with 36+ Road and ADV routes to choose from. Come for the full week or any part. Evening dinner tours with transportation to downtown Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Outdoor lounge behind hotel for evening

socializing. Bike wash with all equipment and supplies courtesy VEI.
Free Therapeutic Massage Thursday - Saturday with Anne-Marie LaFrance.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://flybyweek.com>

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 Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, September 12, 9:00 - 11:00 AM**

Location: **Sunnyside Cafe** 300 Ocean Ave., **Melbourne Beach, FL**
(321)733-5590 ([map](#))

Description: **NOTE: NEW 9:00 AM start time** for East Central Brunches. New-to-us destination! Member recommended. Delicious breakfasts and fresh squeezed orange juice. Friendly service. Many praise the generous portions and cleanliness. Paved parking.

Contact: Tom (321) 794-6147

West Central Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, September 19, 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **Gloria's Restaurant** 4816 U.S. 17-N, **Bowling Green FL**
(863) 375-9955 ([map](#))

Description: **NOTE: NEW 9:00 AM start time** for West Central Brunches. This is the last SUMMER ride for the Westsiders! We hope to have events for the October and November.

Look for details in our Ride Announcements!!

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

South Brunch Ride

When: **Saturday, September 26, 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

Location: **Eggshells Kitchen**, 204 NE 7th Ave., **Okeechobee, FL**
(863) 623-4124 ([map](#))

Description: We were treated so nicely here last year!

Deserves a repeat visit!!

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

MSTA Fall Colors Rally

When: **Thursday-Sunday, September 24-27**

Location: **Quality Inn, Lewisburg, WV**

The Fall Colors Rally has been a long running tradition in MSTA. Lewisburg, WV, has proven to be a great location- easy to reach from all directions and close to lots of great riding. We have been fortunate to have a good relationship with the Quality Inn hotel, which has provided us with a reasonable cost and good accommodations for many years. Event coordinators **John Smith** and **Chris Shoop** want you to have a good time and have a great collection of routes from Doug Pippin and others.

Contact: For information and registration: <https://ridemsta.com/wv-fallcolors/>

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.



MSTA STAR 2026

October 17-21

Springdale, Arkansas

STAR (Sport Touring Association Rendezvous) is the annual national gathering of MSTA members and friends, a multi-day celebration of great roads, good company, and unforgettable memories. Whether you're a longtime member or attending your very first STAR, this is the event you won't want to miss!

Experience the magic of the Ozarks like never before. STAR 2026 brings you some of the best motorcycle roads in America—smooth sweepers, technical twisties, and breathtaking mountain views around every corner. Whether you're carving through pavement or tackling adventure routes, every mile offers a new story to tell. With both road and ADV options available, your perfect ride awaits right here in the heart of Arkansas.

STAR is more than just a rally—it's a family reunion for riders who share the same passion for two (or three) wheels. Meet old friends, make new ones, and join a community that welcomes everyone. From the New Members Ride to the Ladies of the MSTa Meet & Greet and countless impromptu conversations in the parking lot, you'll find that connection is what makes this event truly special.

When: **Saturday-Wednesday, October 17-21**

Location: **Holiday Inn, Springdale, AR**

Contact: For information and registration: <https://ridemsta.com/star/>

STAR Coordinators: [Jerry & Jamie James](#)

Feature Article



Brick's Backyard Boogie 2026 By Tom Blake

[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 *Big Lynn Lodge Rally* got a new name this year. As most know, Dave "Brick" Brickner was the beloved founding father

of the rally and built it into a hugely successful event. His health deteriorated a few years ago and he passed the event on to a very capable Chris Parker. Brick, who lived in nearby Morganton, passed away last year and it was decided to rename the rally in his honor. Hence, very aptly, it's now - *Brick's Backyard Boogie*.

Big Lynn Lodge main building includes check-in / lobby, bathrooms, a long reading/game room, an adjacent large dining area and the kitchen. And downstairs there a rec room that was used for massages this year. Outdoors next to the reading room is a nice, covered patio with chairs and a bench. It's where the bands normally set up. Cottages, where guests stay, are across a paved roadway and rap around to the east. Other buildings with rooms are situated around the large property.

Most rally-goers arrive Thursday and leave Sunday – the official rally dates. Rose and I got there Wednesday after her flight from Sanford to Fletcher (Asheville Regional). Long-time riding buddy and good friend, Ken, originally from Palm Bay but now living in central NC was sitting in the lobby when we got there. Fellow Floridians Wayne from Port Orange (but in the process of moving to TN) and Tom from Bradenton both showed up . Also, The Villages snowbird, Rick, from eastern Ohio was there. He's a good rider and lots of fun to be around. We all sat together at breakfasts and dinners. I've ridden with Wayne before out of Suches, GA. He's fast and fearless on his big Goldwing. I've never had the pleasure of riding with Tom. Most folks left Sunday. Tom pulled out Friday, Rick left Saturday, Ken hung around until Monday. Rose and I left Tuesday to get her back to the airport.

This year rains threatened every day but, depending on where you rode, mostly held off until late afternoon on Thursday and Friday. From Saturday onward, however, it was a washout. At least temperatures dropped back to refreshing levels.



Cottages at Big Lynn Lodge are across a paved roadway from the main building and rap around to the east.

Chris Parker, the coordinator for the MSTA rally, developed 5 road routes for this year's event ranging in length from 127 to 230 miles. Described on the event website, they were downloadable to our GPS's. Some ran clockwise and some counterclockwise. All included tons of twisties and sweepers, some with big elevation changes. All were pretested for road continuity – a critical detail because many of the roads in the area were impacted by the late 2024 Hurricane Helene. And even now, despite ongoing repair work, some are still unpassable. Hats off to Chris for his diligence in putting the new routes together for all of us and for pretesting them.

Ken, Rick and I got together and rode route #4 on Thursday. At 184 miles, it looped clockwise west then north through Hot Springs, NC where we stopped for lunch at the Smokie Mountain Diner – an old favorite of mine from my Goldwing days. Then it turned northeast and east and finally south back to the Lodge.

And on Friday we opted for #1, the shortest route, a 127-mile loop which ran counterclockwise south then northeast past Lake James State Park, then northwest through the Linville Falls area and on up to Roan Mountain in TN before turning south. We stopped for a break at Mountain Crossing Mercantile in Jonas Ridge before getting to Linville Falls. It turned out to be a stunningly appealing place. Then we stopped near Roan Mountain to don our rain gear as the approaching storms to the west turned the sky very dark and menacing. Fortunately, we avoided the heavy rain and lightning and made it back relatively unscathed.



Looking south into the valley toward the town of Marian

[Read more...](#)

Safety Talk



Motorcycles and Bicycles 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 safety tips merit repeating. This safety article is a repeat from the April 2016 issue of The Gator Tale.]

In honor of the recently completed Tour de France, we offer this sage advice regarding newly inspired bicyclists...

If you have spent any time riding the back roads around Florida, you've probably seen the bicyclists out and about. Most of the time it's just one or two at a time, but occasionally you may encounter entire groups of bicycling clubs out for a ride on a sunny weekend morning. In some cases, particularly

if you ride regularly in the central part of the state, you will encounter organized rides and races on the back roads.

Bicyclists on the back roads offer their own particular challenges to us as motorcyclists. First off, remember that they have as much right to the road as we do. That being said, we have probably all encountered bicyclists that are impeding traffic. Technically, bicyclists, except when on paths or lanes designated for their vehicles, must ride to the right of the lane, may not ride more than two abreast in any lane of traffic, and may not impeded the regular flow of traffic in doing so (FS316.2065(5b)). Unfortunately, bicycle clubs are just as guilty of impolite road usage as some motorcycle clubs, and we often find them blocking the entire lane. So how do we handle this issue?

Remember that regardless of the law, you as the motorcyclist are in control of the faster and more responsive vehicle. Additionally, as you will undoubtedly be the overtaking vehicle in the lane, it is going to be up to you to avoid the bicyclists. Florida law says you may pass the bicyclist in the same lane, but must do so at a safe distance of at least 3 feet between you and the bicycle, to the bicycle's left. In other words, if either you or the bicyclist could hold out an arm and be at risk of touching the other, you are too close. When the bicycle pack takes up the entire lane, what do you do? Again, it is pretty simple. DO NOT risk an unsafe or inappropriate pass. Wait until the opposing lane is clear and the road lane markers allow, and then pass the pack as you would any other vehicle, safely moving into the clear, opposing lane of travel.

The final warning is that bicycles appear when you least expect them. Blind corners on back roads tend to be where they show up most unexpectedly. If you live or ride (or drive, for that matter) in an area where bicyclists normally congregate and ride on the weekends, you should be expecting these appearances, around blind corners, over the tops of hills and rises, etc.

Don't expect the bicyclists to know the rules of the road, and/or follow them. Bicyclists are like any other vehicle drivers. There

are good ones and bad ones. Expect them to do the unexpected. I've seen bicyclists do some weird (and totally unsafe) maneuvers right in front of me, sometimes ending up right where I intended to be in order to avoid them in the first place.

In warm weather, we see more and more bicyclists on the road. Be ready for them. Expect them to be there and don't expect them to follow the rules of the road. You can be guaranteed that if an incident does occur between you and a bicycle, you're going to be fighting an uphill battle to prove you were in the right!

Ride Safe!

—Doug Westly

Florida News



Florida News

**Two months done, four more to wait out!
The Atlantic is behaving...**

So far, hanging out in Florida has been prudent compared to most everywhere else! Hope you enjoyed Tom's Feature Article.

Look for Tom's East Brunch report below. And the self-hosted Western Brunch rides are working out just fine!! Six Westies and Alan S. from the Eastside enjoyed The Mulberry Cafe on the 11th!

The South Brunch Ride turned into an adventure for some of the attendees. Three rode down to the Wawa to start their ride back north, making for an ideal morning ride! Five of us cruised up our usual "scenic route" to Jensen Beach for our brunch at Lures Bar & Grill. As we stuffed all of us into one parking space, Rick A. joined us from around the corner.

Our timing was great, as we pulled two high-tops together and got the orders rolling. Though Lures clearly appeals to the biker crowd, our early morning arrival allowed for our ATGATT

sensibilities. Service was good, though I know I got some other table's omelette, and we thoroughly enjoyed the vibe and each other's company. Even Rick H. enjoyed his brief visit with us, as he chilled out after crawling through traffic due to a significant vehicle accident on the road ahead of him.

We departed for home in several directions, with the southern riders choosing to retrace our route back to PGA Blvd. before finishing the ride down I-95. The last two of us did encounter a brief, yet significant, downpour just before hitting our driveways!!



South Ride to Lure's in Jensen Beach - Good riding and vibes

Member Promo!!

Sena update! Look for another FLMSTA email detailing Sena's latest update and their new phone app. They have introduced a few versions of the S60, along with updates across the rest of their model line. Some of us update regularly, some never at all. Even if you have recently updated, please read the email when it arrives.

If you have purchased anything motorcycle-related that has blown you away with its features or price or performance, send

me and/or Kim an email with a short write-up and website. We'll include a **Member(s) Promo** each month that you send something in...

What's Next??

You *are* making plans for STAR '26, right?!?! Registration is open, the hotel is taking reservations and Jerry has a substantial website up and running! Get with it!! I'll see you there in Springdale, Arkansas, in October!!!!

<https://ridemsta.com/star/>

We have three rides planned for August!! Tom will host the East Central Brunch ride, August 8th, at La Crepe de France in Melbourne. Note the **NEW 9:00 AM start time** for his brunches!

The West Central Brunch ride, August 15th, will be self-hosted at the Blue Ridge Grill, in Bartow. *Note the name change! Same location!!* I'll ensure the restaurants know you are coming, and those who attend can enjoy each other's company and share some seriously good grub! This would be a great time to email some of the contacts at the bottom of our announcements to see who might be considering the ride-to-eat!!

On August 29th, Van will host the South Brunch at a new-to-us location, The Red Rooster LaBelle, in LaBelle!! Always check the Rides Calendar on our website for last minute changes!!

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 our MSTA Membership Director! We have adapted to the new presentation of monthly data over these last few months. So far, Pat has introduced several improvements with a few more tweaks to come. **Big Thanks!!** patrickmogavero@gmail.com Contact him directly with any membership issues.

The following MSTA memberships have or will be expiring soon:

- **Michael Kwon**
- **Dennis Anderson**

The following MSTA members have recently renewed their memberships:

- **Bruce Genck**
- **Larry Gonzalez**
- **Dell Haverland**

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 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. 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!!

Don't stop riding this season! Get up earlier and bring some water along!!

Smile every morning that you see yourself looking back in the mirror!!

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



July 2026
East Central News
Tom Blake

By popular demand we visited *Country Ham & Egg* in Sebastian on the 18th. However, only four of us could make it. Alan, Andy, Rick and I had some good chow and lots to discuss. Andy already traded his new Honda for a small Kawasaki dirt bike! We left the restaurant about 10, and it was already up to 89° and muggy.

Next up: *La Crepe de France* in downtown Melbourne at 9 AM on August 8th.

Safe Journeys - *Tom Blake*, East-Central FL Area Rep

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!!

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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