

CANYON CARVING WITH CURVES ON CHROME

The Ann Arbor based chapter of
Women On Wheels®

www.curvesonchrome.com

Director's Update:

If our luck holds, riding season will be under way sooner than we expected! The weather has hovered between not wonderful and not too nasty for most of March; and April should be grand! Note: my fingers are crossed behind my back!

March is business month, as well as dusting off the bike month. We worked on by-laws this winter; read them and be prepared to vote on them soon. Also, Curves on Chrome renewal is due; and to keep all i's dotted and t's crossed, we want everyone to have their motorcycle endorsement and insurance rewitnessed. And, of course, Women On Wheels(R) membership is renewable whenever each individual's expiration date nears, so, please, keep tabs on that.

In April, we will start our ice cream and dinner runs. E-mail Julie or I, if you are interested in choosing a location for either. We also, have a group riding lesson on the 5th, Advanced Accident Scene Management (for those who have taken the beginner course), a ride to Vermontville on the 25th and a new member coffee and a bike maintenance demonstration presented by Brian, followed by a barbeque on the 26th. And this is just the beginning of a new riding season!

----- Mary, Co-Chapter Director

April Events:

- April 5th – Rider's meeting & Group Riding Lesson (11:45 a.m. – Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor)
- April 7th – Ice Cream Ride (TBD – Anne's choice)
- April 13th – Chapter meeting (6:30 p.m. – Drowsy Parrot, Saline)
- April 18th – Rider's meeting & Group Riding Lesson (10:00 a.m. – Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor)
- April 18th – New Member meeting (1:00 – Dino's Dugout, Milan)
- April 19th – Advanced Bystander Assistance Training (TBD – email Anne for more info)
- April 23rd – Dinner Run (TBD – email Paula for time/location)
- April 25th – Vermontville Maple Syrup Festival (TBD)
- April 26th – FREE MC Maintenance Class for CCC Members (12:00 p.m. – email Julie for more info)

Upcoming Events:

- May 1st – International Female Ride Day
- May 2nd – Women's Ride (Napoleon Harley, Napoleon, OH)
- May 5th – Ice Cream Ride (TBD – Char's choice)
- May 11th – Chapter meeting (6:30 p.m. – The Wolverine, Chelsea)
- May 17th – New Member meeting (Plymouth Coffee Bean Co., Plymouth)
- May 21st – Dinner Run (TBD – email Julie for time/location)
- May 22nd – 25th – Niagra Falls ride (email for details)
- May 30th – Cycles in the City (See website for more info)
- May 31st – Group Riding Lesson <if needed> (10:00 a.m. – Location TBD)

Never Stop Learning

Even An Instructor Can Learn A Thing Or Two

by Sarah Lahalih

About five years ago, I was asked by the operators of a motorcycle touring company to accompany their next tour, a 10-day ride through the Tuscany region of Italy. At that point, I had owned and run a private motorcycle training school in Illinois for several years, and they wanted me to give the tour participants a few pointers throughout the ride.

They thought I had a pretty impressive resume, and, at the time, so did I. As it turned out, though, I was the rider who wound up learning the most—and in a way I certainly didn't expect.

While I was filling out the application before the tour, I confidently listed all of my qualifications and certifications and types of motorcycles I own, have owned or have ridden, which was a lot. When asked to circle my level of riding proficiency among the choices of beginner, intermediate, or expert, I naturally chose expert. With 10 years of uninterrupted riding experience, and my own training school, there was no other choice.

Once we arrived in Italy, my job was to look after three riders in particular who had only about 500 miles of riding experience. I was to ride sweep (at the tail end of the group), observe, and offer some tips at the end of each riding day.

Piece of cake, right? Well, no.

On day two, we found ourselves amid some of the most beautiful scenery I'd ever seen, the weather was perfect, the roads were perfect, and we were approaching higher altitudes and curvy mountain roads. Ahead of me were about 60 miles of soaring switchbacks—a motorcycle enthusiast's dream.

There was only one problem. I had been riding in Chicago for 10 years. We don't have turns like that—or potential drop-offs like that—anywhere. Suddenly, I felt very unconfident about my riding ability, and it was almost paralyzing. I couldn't believe it, but I dropped very far behind the group that I was supposed to be observing!

As it turns out, those three "inexperienced" riders may have had fewer than 500 miles of riding under their belts before the tour, but they got most of them on California's sinuous Pacific Coast Highway. Even better, they had taken a racetrack school to prepare for the trip to Tuscany. I had not. It was very humbling.

For the next two days of riding, I had a few very scary moments. I had to fight hard to maintain my focus and keep the same pace as the others. Luckily, there was a seasoned rider in the group who was a former Ducati club racer. He noticed that my riding lines were all over the place, and he gave me some very helpful tips. He suggested that I follow close behind him and try to take the same lines. Eventually, I was able to gain back some of my confidence.

My riding did improve throughout the trip, but the obvious point was made. I tell my students all the time about the need to continue learning throughout their motorcycle careers, but suddenly, I was confronted with the lesson myself.

I found myself really regretting that I hadn't taken a track school, which can be a great learning experience even if you never plan to race. What you can learn about taking corners, positioning your body on the bike, and the feel of doing it all correctly can be invaluable on the street, too.

As soon as I returned to Chicago, I registered for my first track day. I learned so much—and loved riding on the track—that I became a track-day junkie, and even acquired an amateur racing license.

Ultimately, I beat my switchback demons. But I also learned something more important: Even a teacher needs to continue learning.

Sarah Lahalih is the founder of Chicago's Motorcycle Riding's Cool, at www.MotorCycleLearning.com. You can also find her at www.MotorcycleSarah.com.

New Member Shout Out:

CCC is really excited to welcome:

Theresa K.

Safety Tip of the Month:

Before You Dismount Six things to do

By: James R. Davis

We all have our own unique way of doing things. Some people, for example, do exactly two things before they dismount their bikes: they turn off their ignition switch and they put down their side stand. Given a little thought about it, however, I think there are a few more details to attend to (however 'uniquely') before we dismount our motorcycles, and if we make a habit of doing them we can avoid some major trouble for ourselves.

- Use your engine cutoff switch to shut off your engine

Some people seem to think that switch is there for use only in an emergency. Not true. The reason you use the engine cutoff switch rather than the ignition switch to shut off your engine is because you do not have to take your hand off the grip in order to do so. Further, if you make a habit of doing so you will build 'muscle memory' as to where it is so that you can quickly and unerringly find it in the event of an emergency.

- Turn your ignition switch off

Obviously, unless you do this your lighting system is still on and your battery is discharging. By the way, it is good form to get into the habit of using your LEFT hand to turn off the switch (if possible) so that you can keep your front brake lever activated.

- Turn your fuel valve (if you have one) to the OFF position

A stuck needle valve in one of your carbs can allow a great deal of gasoline to leak past it. If a needle valve should happen to stick while your motorcycle is left in your garage overnight, that leaking gasoline can cost you your house and your life. When you start your motorcycle you should always turn your fuel valve to the RUN/ON position. Thus, by making it a habit of turning the valve off at night you also eliminate the risk of having left it in the reserve position (had it been there when you last dismounted) and running out of gasoline on the road somewhere.

- Put your side stand down - and confirm that it is locked in place

After leaning the bike onto the side stand you have insured that it is stable from side to side before you try to dismount. (Your bike should be in first gear and you should push the bike forward until all the play in your gears is gone before leaning the bike onto the side stand.)

- Turn your handlebars full-lock left

A motorcycle is several times more resistant to movement when the front wheel is not pointing straight ahead. Even a gentle nudge from behind can cause a motorcycle that is on its side stand to roll forward unless the front wheel is not pointing straight ahead.

- Squeeze the front brake lever

If you build these six steps into a habit that you always perform before dismounting, you are serious about ALL aspects of motorcycle safety.

The ride is not over until you are safely dismounted.

Announcements:

- If you have any articles or additions to the newsletter, please send them to newsletter@curvesonchrome.com.
- Thanks to Pat R for a great story for last month's newsletter. You always have great stories and memories!!!
- Check the our public site often for the most current ride information

Motorcycle Lingo: Farkles

Motorcycle enthusiasts may install accessories, called farkles (also spelled farkels), to customize their machine. The word is generally accepted to mean a combination of "function" and "sparkle", hence, farkle. The term is well known in the North American sport touring community. Radar detectors, Global Positioning System receivers, heated grips, and satellite radios are some of those farkles. Other accessories could be aftermarket seats or bar risers, which make the motorcycle more suitable for long miles

Member submission by Pat - (Woodstock)

(Mis)Adventures of a Snow-Fly

For those of you who didn't know, Pat Rountree and her husband Rick have been in Florida and Texas for the winter. Below is some of her commentary on their trip:

(Mis)Adventure #1

My bike was ransacked one night in the parking garage. :) Both saddle bags were opened, my rain suit and baklava (not a pastry - a hooded neck warmer thing) were on the floor. (cost ~\$175), the extra wires I had from my Lizard lights were under the bike (for a moment there Rick thought they pulled the wires), I had a penny in my cup holder - they took the penny, I had a chrome ignition cover that I was going to put on - that was opened and thrown down, but it's fine, my dirty old sock that I use to clean the seat was taken out, my wonderful tire gauge (big and new and it was free) was taken so were my old registration and insurance papers. The resort doesn't have cameras in the parking garage and they claimed they didn't know who the bikes belonged to, even though Rick offered all the plate information when we first got there. The criminals and the security guards left all my stuff on the ground - evidence? The head of security told us these guys were caught, but we haven't heard anything from Daytona Police.

Oh yea, and we both got parking tickets in the resort parking garage because the rent a cop didn't know what Bike parking passes looked like. Rick complained - they destroyed the tickets and apologized to the big bad biker.

(Mis)Adventure #2

We are currently staying in a resort on Daytona beach <http://www.oceanwalk.com/index.htm> (Don't let the pictures fool you, this place is so small you can't make a sandwich in the kitchen!).

Bike week was two weeks ago and these past couple of weeks it's Spring Break, or as Rick calls it Bimbo Week. We are on the 18th floor with no windows (the window opens to a public hallway so we keep it closed.) It's kind of like living in a big closet. We take everything with us when we leave to ride, including leathers, my helmet, computers and so forth. One of the elevator Bimbo's asked us if we were confused because Bike week was last week and don't ya' know this is Spring Break and everyone goes to the beach? Oh shit, you mean I'm supposed to be wearing a bathing suit in this elevator? Anyway we were only allowed to park one car or four bikes, so we opted to park two bikes, left the truck at his mom's and the trailer at the VFW. This past Saturday we went to Hillbilly and Ruby's wedding (USMVMC). She wore glitter and he wore his "good" leathers. Lots of people, we left early because we rode and our hotel was about 80 miles away.

(Mis)Adventure #3

And a few week ago, while at Bonnet Creek <http://www.wyndhambonnetcreek.com/> Rick decided to find his cousin, who reportedly lives somewhere in Florida. He tracked her down on Google so we "rode" to find her house. I was a passenger on this trip. It was a beautiful day, breezy and warm. Following the GPS we turned down several streets which appeared to be getting narrower at each turn until we came to the street Rick thought we needed to turn down. It was dusk and the road ahead was no longer pavement. As Rick forged ahead I noticed the front wheel was plowing thru the sand instead of gliding on top of it. Before I could say let me off, we were over. My right foot got caught under the foot rest and I swear the entire back weight of his bike was resting on my ankle. A few good screams - and he picked up that bike in record time! I was impressed! Nothing broken, slight twisted foot, but all is okay.

(Mis)Adventure #4

This past Wednesday, riding to the VFW for dart night we stopped at Krystal Burger for dinner. Rick grew up in this area so he is somewhat familiar with the streets - unless of course during those past 30 years or so there was street construction that may have changed a few routes (because that's never happened before). As we were leaving Krystal, Rick said we are turning right (it was the only way to turn), but what he thought or maybe did say was we are turning at the next right, which by the way didn't exist, only in his memory. So when we left the parking lot and he turned immediately right, down this "street that should have been there" he ended up going into a gas station. I didn't realize he was making a sharp right, right in front of me (as we are riding staggered), and damn those emergency stops actually work! Everyone for miles around probably heard my tires! And I didn't drop the bike! So Rick was impressed.

Closing Thoughts

I just came back in from a ride to Coco and then the lighthouse, so my brain has not unwound yet - I have to pick the tar off my windshield sometime tomorrow, there's road construction all over the place.

See ya' all soon!

-Pat

CCC Photos of the month:

A few pics from whirleyball. Never had so much fun while getting whiplash!



Char and Jaz team up. Char receives the pass and Jaz is getting ready to slam #20 out of the way!