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The Ann Arbor based chapter of
Women On Wheels®

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Director's Update:

Hey everyone, I feel like the title of this month's directors update should be: *Too Much Rain; Not Enough Sunshine!* But I don't want to rain on this newsletter.

On the brighter side --- we had a fantastic turn-out for our recent 'impromptu' ice cream run, I heard a lot of our members saying they really preferred these last minute rides, so let's plan some more. We do have a lot of scheduled rides in the next few months, but if you feel like just jumping on your bike after work and you want some company, be sure to post an invite on our yahoo chat site.

I want to encourage you to consider riding over to Muskegon for Muskegon Bike Times. This annual event is huge and has a lot of beautiful bikes to check out. There is also a Harley Davidson dealer on the strip with lots of fun stuff to see, last year they had demo rides, and hopefully they'll have those again. There is a Holiday Inn on the strip and right in the middle of the action for those considering a ride over.

I'm going to close for now but I want to remind you to always carry your CCC business cards with you just in case you meet another female rider on the road. Here's to a dryer and warmer July, ride safe!

Jules – Co-Chapter Director

New Member Shout Out:

CCC is really excited to welcome: (we have several potential members sitting on the fence, let's do what we can do get them to join our group!)

Congratulations to Char for being our **Recruiter of the Month** for July!

July Events:

- 7/7-7/9 – WOW Ride-In; Kerrville, TX
- 7/12 – Waltz Inn – New Boston, MI; 11:00 a.m.
- 7/13 – Chapter Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Classic Cup, Jackson Rd next to Nicholson's
- 7/17-7/19 – Muskegon Bike Times
- 7/23 – Dinner Run; TBD; Email Julie for info
- 7/25-7/26 – Thumb Ride (Frankenmuth on Sunday)

Upcoming Events:

- 8/4 – Ice Cream ride; TBD
- 8/8-8/9 – Covered Bridge Weekend; Email Julie for info
- 8/10-11 – Chapter Meeting; 6:30 p.m. Stivers in Chelsea
- 8/19 – Women's American Motorcycle Association; Keystone, CO
- 8/20 – Dinner Run; TBD
- 8/22 – Ruth's Mystery Ride; 11:00 a.m.
- 8/25 – Michigan Ride for Kids; Washtenaw Community College
- 8/28-8/29 – Michigan WOW Member Meet

Motorcycle Lingo

2 Second Rule - The minimum gap or distance between two vehicles travelling in the same direction. As the vehicle in front of you passes a particular mark on the road or sign along the road, count two seconds and your vehicle should pass the same mark or sign. If road conditions are poor, the gap should be extended to three seconds or more. If you are following less than two seconds, there is not sufficient time to react to emergency evasive maneuvers to avoid the possibility of hitting the vehicle in front.

Safety Tip of the Month:

Riding Motorcycles in the Rain

By George Tranos

Nothing beats riding with the sun shining on your back. A nice warm fall day seems to bring out motorcycles and falling leaves in equal numbers. Unfortunately, there will be times when the skies open up and riding in the rain becomes unavoidable. Let's go over some strategies for riding in wet conditions.

First, Don't Panic!

If you're caught out unaware, consider slowing down or even stopping. Some showers and thunderstorms pass quickly and by stopping you might be able to avoid the rain entirely. Check the weather forecast, be prepared for the rain with the proper clothing and motorcycle gear, and plan your trip accordingly. If you don't stop, you should be aware of the additional risks.

Slick Roads

The first few minutes after the rain starts can be the most dangerous time to ride. The water mixes with the oil, dirt and road debris creating a slick surface. Motorcycle tires put down a very narrow footprint and once the pavement gets slippery, traction is limited. Try to avoid riding during this initial period. The water eventually washes away the road grime and the pavement will just be wet. While traction is still reduced, modern tire technology will still supply up to 80 percent of the grip of dry weather riding. Even so, a rider must exercise restraint and be smooth in the application of all controls. Throttle and clutch control must be smooth -- avoid sudden acceleration or braking especially in a curve where traction is already limited. Turns should also be taken more gradually with reduced lean angles and less aggressive cornering. Certain roadway features like railroad tracks, bridge gratings and even painted lines and markings will be very slippery and should be crossed with the motorcycle as upright as possible. Above all, leave extra time and space so you don't have to take any sudden actions.

Hydroplaning

A vehicle will hydroplane when water builds up to the extent that there is a layer of water between the tires and the road. This is a complete loss of traction and will cause a skid or a fall and must be avoided at all costs. Normally, hydroplaning will occur when you try to drive through a deep puddle, but it could also occur during periods of heavy rain when the roadway does not have time to drain sufficiently. If you notice these circumstances, slow down and consider stopping if you continue to encounter possible hydroplaning conditions.

Reduced Visibility Makes It Hard To See

Riding in the rain has other risks as well. Your ability to see ahead of you is reduced. Rain droplets will hit your shield or goggles and, depending on temperature, they may also fog up, impairing your vision. If you normally ride with a tinted visor, as I do, make sure you bring a clear shield that you can use when the rain starts. You can also treat your shield with an anti-fog product. At the minimum, your shield or goggles should be clean and have a minimum of scratches that impair visibility. Wear gloves that have a rubber wiper on the left hand so you can clear your shield quickly if needed. Do not override your visibility, leave sufficient room and look as far ahead as possible to anticipate hazards.

Reduced Visibility Prevents Others From Seeing You

Just as you have difficulty seeing, other drivers will have a hard time seeing you. Now is the best time to use bright and reflective material as part of your riding gear. Consider purchasing a reflective vest. It can be carried with you in a tank bag or saddlebag and taken out when visibility is poor (or at night). Add reflective tape to your saddlebags, travel trunk, rear fender or other spots to help other drivers see you. If you normally drive in the rain or at night, you might also want to add additional lighting. These simple additions can make you visible from twice the distance in bad conditions.

Rider Comfort and Hypothermia

Nothing is worse than being cold. The body shuts down blood flow to the extremities first to protect the inner core functions. When body temperature is reduced even more, hypothermia can set in. When that happens your body functions slowly deteriorate.

Coordination, judgment and reflexes diminish. A person who has hypothermia can initially appear drunk. Their coordination is lost and their words may be slurred. You don't want to be driving a motorcycle under these conditions.

Being wet in addition to being cold will bring on hypothermia even faster. Proper riding gear is necessary to keep your body warm and dry, especially in early spring when the ambient outside temperature is already cold. Choose and use jackets, gloves and pants that either have waterproof, breathable liners such as Gore-Tex, or bring appropriate rain gear. Remember that riding with non-breathable gear might cause moisture buildup inside the garment which can be uncomfortable, but will still keep you dry and is preferable over being wet and cold. Good riding gear pays for itself in comfort.

While riding in the rain may never be as pleasurable as being out on a bright, warm, sunny day, it can be tolerable if you're prepared with the right gear and attitude. If you're aware of the weather, prepared for the rain and cold and outfit you and your motorcycle properly then riding in the rain doesn't have to be unpleasant. If you practice riding as smoothly as possible, avoid panic and leave yourself enough space and time to avoid any sudden actions then you will be able to ride in wet weather more safely.

George Tranos lives with his wife and fellow instructor Diane Ortiz in New York. They are certified instructors and MSF RiderCoaches. Together they run the Big Apple Motorcycle School.

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CycleTrader.com set out to answer that very question by researching over 500 women motorcycle enthusiasts online, talking to dealers, and hanging out in some of the top online motorcycle forums. We found that the motorcycle models women love to ride are as varied as the women riding. However, the numbers do show some interesting trends. Many women prefer the quick agility of sport bikes, versus the lower, heavier cruisers, used primarily for touring at "flower-sniffin' speeds", says Marci, a dedicated V-Star riding, Cycle Angel. Women riders themselves weighed-in setting us straight about why women choose different bikes. Whether they choose one that "just fits", or choose to modify the only one they want in the world, women are riding more than ever.

Visiting several websites, searching the photo galleries and discussion boards, we found data for over 500 women riders. We've broken the results down by makes, models, and by models within makes.

TOP MANUFACTURERS

Harley-Davidson	161
Honda	131
Yamaha	79
Kawasaki	52
Suzuki	50
Custom	13
BMW	8
Ducati	6
Triumph	5
Buell	5
Indian	3
Aprilla	1
Total	514

TOP 20 MODELS WOMEN RIDE

Harley-Davidson Sportster	65
Honda Shadow	57
Yamaha V-Star	32
Harley-Davidson Softail	29
Yamaha Virago	23
Kawasaki Vulcan	23
Kawasaki Ninja	18
Honda Rebel	18
Honda CBR600RR	18
Harley-Davidson Wide Glide	12
Harley-Davidson Fatboy	12
Harley-Davidson Low Rider	11
Harley-Davidson Heritage	11

Honda Valkyrie	9
Suzuki SV650S	7
Assorted Custom	7
Yamaha Venture	6
Yamaha Road Star	6
Suzuki Intruder 800	6

TOP MODELS WOMEN RIDE BY MAKE

HARLEY

Sportster	65
Softail	29
Wide Glide	12
Fatboy	12
Road King	11
Low Rider	11
Heritage	11
Shovelhead	3
FLH	3
Trike	2
Ironhead	1
FXRS	1

KAWASAKI

Vulcan	23
Ninja	18
ZX11	4
ZX6R	3
Nomad	1
KZ750	1
400LTD	1
454	1

BMW

R1100	4
R1150RS	2
650GS	2

CUSTOM

Assorted	7
Big Dog	4
Ridley	1
A.I.	1

DUCATI

998	2
SS800	1
Paul Smart	1
750SS	1
600 Monster Dark	1

HONDA

Shadow	57
Rebel	18
CBR600RR	18
Valkyrie	9
Nighthawk	4
Goldwing	4
VTX1800C	2
Voyager	2
Sabre	2
Dual Sport	2
550K	2
XL600	1
VFR800	1
Superhawk	1
ST1300	1
RC51	1
Magna	1
CL450	1
CBR900	1
Aero	1
Ace	1
1100 Blackbird	1

APRILLA

Falco	1
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INDIAN

Chief	2
Scout	1

TRIUMPH

Bonneville Triple	2
Adventure	1
Legend	1
Chopper	1

YAMAHA

V-Star	32
Virago	23
Venture	6
Road Star	6
YZF R6 1	4
Seca Trike	2
XJ550J	1
FXR250	1
FR1300AS	1
FLR1100	1
FJR1300	1
Fazen	1

BUELL

Blast	4
Lightening	1

SUZUKI

SV650S	7
Intruder 800	6
GSX750	6
Volusia	5
Savage	5
GSXR600	5
Katana	3
Hyabusa	3
Boulevard	2
VX800	1
RF600	1
Maruder	1
LS650	1

GS500e	1
GS1100L	1
Bandit	1
550	1

Motorcycle dealers we talked to seemed to notice a recent trend in the direction of sport bikes. They find more experienced women riders are choosing the Suzuki GSXR600, and less experienced riders choosing the Kawasaki Ninja 250 and 500. Dealers mentioned the reasons for purchasing the sport bikes varied, but the majority of women buyers seemed to be emphasizing speed, light weight, and overall look, along with comfort and fit. Dealers recommended the following models for women just starting to ride: Kawasaki Ninja EX250, Kawasaki Ninja EX500, Honda Rebel, and Yamaha V-Star. These recommendations also checked out with research concerning the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) safety courses. The MSF courses provide a variety of motorcycles to both men and women, some specific models are Honda Rebels, Honda Nighthawks, Kawasaki Ninjas, Yamaha Viragos, all in the 200-250 cc range.

The best information we gathered came from speaking directly to experienced riders. We learned that women will do whatever it takes to ride the model they want to ride. From cutting out seat padding, lowering bikes, extending handlebars, women were willing to modify the motorcycle of their dreams to get the right fit. The Cycle Angels of CycleForums.com were glad to help us try to iron out how and why women choose their favorite rides.

When it came to recommending particular models, Cycle Angel Kitfoxx had this to say,

"Kawasaki Ninja 500R - Popular with a lot of women because they are short and light and easy to maneuver. I flicked mine around for 10k with no chicken strips before moving on! It has great get up and go, handles great on the corners, and is all around a great reliable bike. Plus the Candy Thunder Blue is the perfect color for me! Love it!

Suzuki SV650 - Man, just a great bike. So much fun! Great for track days or daily rider or the twisties. Very reliable. Doesn't usually take too much work to find or modify it to be low enough to comfortably flat-foot.

Suzuki GSXR 600/750 (after 2006) or 1000 (after 2005) - The gixxers were lowered in the years mentioned and suddenly became far more accessible to shorties like myself. I got to ride a gixxer 1000 through the twisties one afternoon and LOVED it. Even before that blissful ride, I was planning on making the newly lowered GSXR-600 my next ride."-Kitfoxx

Many of the Cycle Angels seemed to be driven toward sport bikes, but not all.

"Well, my first and favorite bike so far is my baby. 2005 Yamaha V-Star 1100 Silverado. I've never much been into sport bikes as I am more comfortable and happy riding at "flower sniffin'" speeds! I am rather short at 5'3" with an inseam of 29" my choice of bikes has been rather limited. There is plenty of power (approaching 60 horses with my mods) and handling is fabulous. The V-star's center of gravity is rather low so the weight is really not an issue." - Marci

When we asked which ages of women preferred which models, we were resoundingly told it's just not that simple. In fact Cycle Angel Dawn said,

"We all buy our bikes for different reasons and there isn't an all encompassing "woman's bike". If you check other forums, you'll probably find just as much diversity unless it is a specific bike style forum. I always thought I was more

of a Harley girl (never having ridden at that point) until I started "trying bikes on" and fell in love with sport bikes. Who'd a thunk it!?" -Dawn

One Cycle Angel warned against being plunked on a cruiser just because a significant other has one. Just because a bike is low to the ground doesn't mean it's the bike for you. In fact, if you want a bike made for women, there are a couple of custom manufacturers who do just that. Wicked Women Choppers and Street Diamond Motorcycles are just two custom manufacturers we found catering to women. That number is likely to grow. At the end of the day, we hope we've given readers an idea where to start, or at least the knowledge that taking your time, "trying bikes on", can make an educated choice possible. While our numbers show cruisers are the vast majority, it looks like sport bikes are on the rise. The biggest lesson we learned is that ultimately which model you choose depends on you.

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Anne & Mary's Excellent Adventure

Wed 6/17

Well, made it to Texas and have to say, it's HOT here. Bank thermometer said 104 yesterday at 6:30 pm. Not riding yet, but not looking forward to that heat. Made it here on the WOW ticket, hopscotched from one WOW friend to another. Had great hospitality and some wonderful food. Heading to San Antonio today for my athletic training convention then on to Kerrville Friday to leave the car/trailer. I'll keep y'all posted.
Anne

Fri 6/19

Made it to Kerrville, and it's really nice here. Actually not as hot as San Antonio, which was HOT! I'm just not used to days in the low 100's. Walk outside from a super air conditioned conference center and it takes your breath away. Anyway, Kerrville will be nice to hang out in when we return here in 2 ½ weeks. Two nice gentleman helped me get the bike off the trailer and I took it for a short ride. Kawboy felt happy to be set free! We take off tomorrow on our two-wheeled journey. First stop Carlsbad Caverns. Hope the weather is nice back home and you are all enjoying it!
Keep ya posted!
Anne

Sun 6/21

Thought I'd share my funny GPS story. Mary and I were riding down the road and needed to exit at FM 1459, which in Texas stands for Farm Road 1459. But not to Jill (my GPS), she told us to exit at "Federated States of Micronesia 1459". The first time she said it I wasn't sure what I heard, but Mary repeated it correct. Of course I thought she heard it wrong and that Jill just mumbled. As we were exiting Jill repeated it clear as day "Federated States of Micronesia". We are still laughing! Not sure what Jill was thinking, but really don't think Texas is too close to Micronesia. You all are a busy bunch! I'm on the road a few hours and check my email and poof, 46 emails most from this site!! Way to go gals!!!

Mon 6/22

As for the continuing saga of adventures on the road...

We are holed up for the night in the Navajo Nation otherwise known as Arizona. Our hotel looks out on Monument Valley and I have to say it's pretty damn cool! We got to the four corners today after spending the night in Albuquerque last night. Heading to Grand Canyon tomorrow. Weather is great, hot as we get in in the afternoon, but we hit the road early every day and are done usually by 3:00 when the heat really gets going. Hope you like my updates, if not, too bad :)

I do enjoy hearing about what's going on back home and what we're missing. Have fun at the ice cream ride and have some Superman for me!
Anne

Wed 6/24

Well we found the heat! We have been blessed the past few days to avoid the really hot days by leaving early, by 7 or 8 and ending the day by 3:00 when it heats up. Not so for Nevada! We left the Grand Canyon this morning promptly at 7:00 am to a lovely cool morning. About two hours later the heat started coming, slowly. By the time we hit Hoover Dam we were cooked! It was about 105 in the valley and going 15 miles an hour is not easy. It took about 30 minutes to get 10 miles and my thighs were toast by the time we got out of it. I really didn't enjoy the going over it part at all. Stopped for lunch in Boulder City and cooled down, and let Kawboy cool down as well. By the time we arrived in Las Vegas it was about 100, so cooler than the valley :) but busy and hectic. We are checked into our hotel now for three days and get to rest and recuperate. Our rental car is arriving in the next hour, so any exploring we are doing around here will be with air! Mary's son is driving in from LA this evening and Kawboy doesn't fit three well :)

But he does have an appointment for an oil change and once over tomorrow, so we'll be good to go Saturday morning. I think we are going to hit the road at 4:00 am!! Only problem with that is the earlier you leave the better chance to have to miss the heat, but also a better chance at critters on the roads. You can't win!! Miss you all!
Anne

Wed 6/24

Yeah, but it's a dry heat! Like that matters, it just sucks the moisture out of you really fast! I think I drank a gallon of water and then some today.

Anyway, I'll post the one I took on my cell phone in the photos section. The rest are on my camera and I didn't bring the cord. Mary got some great shots crossing Hoover Dam, and some of the back of my head :) But really, I'm so over Hoover Dam, it's really crowded, and much hotter in the valley and they are doing a ton of construction. So now I can say I've done it, and that'll be the end!

As for states, we added two more states when we went to the Four Corners, and when we take off Saturday we'll add California. Hopefully we'll make it to Oregon and Idaho, but that's as far as I think we can go and make it back to Kerrville in time. The final tally should be 48 states. Will still need Washington and Hawaii.

Lucky for us and the rains, a bit down pour hit here in Vegas an hour after we arrived. Then it started sprinkling on the way to the dealership and just poured after I was parked. It's worked out well so far :)
More to come...
Anne

CCC Photos of the month:

