

CANYON CARVING WITH CURVES ON CHROME

The Ann Arbor based chapter of Women On Wheels®

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We are rockin'!! CCC had 6 new members join us this past April! I'd like to personally welcome Mary, Terri, Denise, Linda, Vicky and Brenda! We *are* the fastest group chapter in Michigan – maybe in the Nation. Let's see if we can get 6 in May. I'll do my part, will you do yours?

If you bump into another female rider, make sure you have your business card handy or at least give out our website address. If you need business cards, let Anne know, she can probably help you out. And if you have any ideas on how to get the word out about our chapter, please share them with me. I know our new member Denise has some great ideas ready to go, and we'll be working on those in the near future. (Don'tcha love it when new members jump right in and help out?). And we can't forget that Mary, another newbie, has offered to bring the next raffle item to the May 11th chapter meeting – thanks Mary!

New business: I'd like to get a group picture at one of our upcoming events. I'll send out an email (surprised, no?) when I figure out the best date. Please, please, please make every attempt to make this photo op. It's a great way to commemorate our group.

Old business: I still need bio's and pictures from a lot of you. I am happy to take these for you, but feel free to email it to me if you already have one. Julie
Co-Chapter Director

New Member Shout Out:

Terri rides a 07 Honda Shadow.
Mary rides a HD Road King
Denise is currently looking to purchase a motorcycle
Linda rides a Spyder!!
Vicky rides Honda Nighthawk
Brenda rides an 05 HD Sportster 1200

May Events

- May 1st – International Female Ride Day
- May 2nd – Women's Ride V (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 21st – Dinner Run (TBD – email Julie for time/location)
- May 22nd – 25th – Niagara Falls ride (email Anne for details)
- May 30th – Cycles in the City (See website for more info Biker Bob's)
- May 31st – Group Riding Lesson <if needed> (10:00 a.m. – Location TBD)

Upcoming Events:

- June 2nd – Ice Cream Ride (Jaz's choice)
- June 8th – Chapter Meeting (6:30 p.m. – Plymouth Coffee Bean Co)
- June 14th – To Hell n' Hickory n' Back ride (email for more info)
- June 18th – Dinner Run (Shirl's choice)
- June 27-28th – Lewiston Overnight Ride (email for more info)

Motorcycle Lingo:

Biker Friendly: Any business that welcomes bikers, judging them on who they are and how they act rather than the leathers they happen to be wearing.

Biker Wannabe: Nickname for folks who dress in riding gear all the time, wear nothing but branded apparel but rarely ride, even if they own a motorcycle at all. Also called a *poser*. (Jaz-I put this one in for you!!!)

Safety Tip of the Month:

Night Riding Vision - Fight The Night

By Andrew Cherney

Photography by Adam Campbell



By the time you read this most of the country will have made the switch to Daylight Saving Time. Sure, I'm tickled to have that extra hour of light, but I'll still face the occasional post-sunset commute home. And night riding just ain't the thrill it used to be when I was a young buck. Generally speaking, your ability to see at night deteriorates with age, and a twilight spin in my mid-40s demands way more preparation to keep the excitement meter from going off the dial. You've probably heard the sobering stats: A disproportionately high rate of accidents occur between dusk and dawn.

The most basic issue-get ready now -is lack of visibility. The wonks at the National Safety Council (NSC) confirm that 90 percent of a rider's reaction depends on vision. And the nighttime riding disadvantage is compounded by the vagaries of getting older. At the back of my mind I keep hearing "The eyes are the first things to go."

Add roads with no overhead lighting, the sensitivity to light (headlights) many riders and drivers experience and the compromised distance vision of aging riders, and it's easy to see why it can be a battlefield out there at night. And if you think it's a stretch for drivers to spot motorcyclists in the full light of day, our single headlight is essentially invisible to the cagers after sundown. Apart from watching out for tired, clueless drivers, there's also Bambi to consider; wild animals tend to be more active after dusk.

That's a handful, so we asked Los Angeles optometrist Dr. Diana Risko (also a longtime rider) for some, uh, clarity. "The retinas are mostly designed for light situations," she explains. "Only around 15 percent of their receptors are made for the dark. Darkness makes the eye's pupil expand [dilate], and the headlights of an oncoming car basically set off all the receptors in your eye, giving you only a white flash in your vision." She adds, "Astigmatism [a curve to the cornea] is fairly common and often doesn't require correction. But it can make blurred vision more likely and can contribute to eyestrain."

Before you get all gloomy, know there are ways to prepare for your ride once the sun goes down.

Prep

A simple way to arm yourself against the evening is to prep your ride. That means giving everything a thorough scrub before you hit the street. Headlights, taillights, signal lights, windshields and helmet visors should be cleaned at least twice a week.

If you ride with a full-face helmet, make sure the shield is scratch- and fog-free. A scored visor can create light refraction and make two headlights seem like four; you won't know what's coming from where. Keeping fog at bay is a breeze with our favorite home remedy: Remove your helmet's visor and spit over the inside of it. Wipe your drool off with a clean rag, and bam!-antifog coating. (Shaving cream has a similar effect.) There are a variety of inexpensive solutions available that do the trick, too-we like Cat Crap (\$3.99) for the cool name. Bigger spenders can spring for Fog City's Pro Shield antifog inserts (\$17 at modernworld.com). Any of them are

more effective than sliding your fingers behind the shield to wipe it on the road.

Blinded By The Light

Remember that glare is in the eye of the beholder. Middle-aged and older riders are more sensitive than younger guns, so if you're running high-output auxiliary lights, give the other guy a break. The brighter beams can easily blind the very people you're trying to get to notice you. A teacher at the AARP Driver Safety Program course (participants age 55-plus) tells us he often hears complaints about motorcycle headlights being too bright. With the average driver's age on the rise, it's food for thought.

HID lights are also showing up on more bikes and cars in the U.S. Mounted on your machine you'll love their broader, brighter light. If you're on the other side of those bluish beams, though, you'll curse the blinding rays. As a common courtesy keep your lights on low when you're behind the other guy. And if a driver zaps you from the opposite direction, training your eye on the right edge of the road can help as a steering guide.

Dial'er Down

Because night riding reduces both the distance and quality of what you see, you might want to keep a lighter touch on the throttle-especially if you're in the boonies. It'll be tougher to determine surface condition as well as the road's general direction at night, key points on unlit country lanes. Be prepared to stop if you're confused-don't guess. If you can, use the lights of other nearby vehicles as well as your own to keep an eye on the road and give yourself room to react.

In turns, make sure you have plenty of lean angle in reserve. If the turn tightens or the pavement changes, you may need the extra runoff.

Pick A Spot

Don't settle in behind a large truck or any vehicle's blind spot-get your motorcycle where it can be seen. The center of the lane is probably your best bet (you'll blend into street lighting if you ride too far on the road's edge). Give yourself plenty of room when passing other vehicles so you can adjust if they decide to shimmy over.

Rest Up

It's not a good idea to ride when you're tired, anyway. Long hauls in the evening can easily leave you in autopilot mode. You may not react to hazards as quickly as you would during the day. Changing up your speed and taking regular breaks is the best way to fight fatigue on long nighttime journeys. Snack and stretch-the movement and light food will help ward off tiredness.

Over Here

It's also in your best interest to make yourself a little larger than life. We've said it repeatedly in these pages: Wearing bright clothing and reflective material makes you pop at night. The biggest thing a following driver sees is your back, so get some reflectivity back there. Streetglo.net stocks DOT-approved, motorcycle-specific stick-on tape for less than \$10 a roll. Oh, and make sure you use your turn signals so the zomb . . . er, people around you know what you're about to do.

Let There Be Light

As you might expect, your bike's lighting is your biggest weapon. Even simple things like ensuring your headlight and taillights have good-quality bulbs and clean lenses will yield big gains. If light quality is subpar, consider adding dual running lights; three properly aimed headlights are much more noticeable than one. Current styling

trends have also led many manufacturers to use undersized brake lighting. If your rear light is a dot, think about swapping in a larger model. Halogen lamps-up to 30 percent brighter than stockers-can be had for less than \$15.

Ready, Aim

In their dogged quest for style many manufacturers aim the headlight lower than the legal angle. Consult your owner's manual, then peek into the headlight area to find the adjustment hardware and tweak away.

Eye, Aye

Last (but perhaps most importantly), get your eyes checked. One quick visit can diagnose any problems. Dr. Risko says, "People with astigmatism are more likely to be disturbed by glare or light sensitivity. But almost all astigmatism can be corrected. Contacts are better for riding as they don't compromise peripheral vision like glasses do."

All things considered, it probably isn't as bad as it seems. After all, 45 is the new 25, right? Just tell that to my wife-she's ordered me a walking cane and already agreed to take me shopping for bifocals and orthopedic boots.

Question of the month:

What have you learned since becoming a biker about bikers that you had a different outlook on before becoming a biker?

Here are some of the answers received:

- Most bikers care a lot for others, especially children. They do an enormous amount of charity work for kids, as well as our enlisted men and women and veterans.
- Never be afraid to slow down
- A good mechanic will let you watch without charging you for it.
- Work to ride & ride to work
- Everyone crashes. Some get back on. Some don't. Some can't.
- Don't argue with an 18-wheeler

My view point of bikers before I became one was that they were cool :) Of course I have agreed with my findings since that bikers are cool. I also wondered about the "outlaw" mentality of some bikers and they scared me a little. Mostly because I didn't understand them. Having met many of the rebel type bikers I have found them to be a great group of people. Even the average, tattooed, bearded, leather wearing, sleeveless etc biker has proven to truly nice people. I find bikers to be very loyal people, but also people who believe in freedom. I have also found bikers to be much more safety conscious than I imagined before. Others think bikers are just free-spirited rebellious types and do everything without thought, totally untrue.

On the flip side of my learning I have learned that non-bikers just don't get it. There is a general mis-trust and misunderstanding about what bikers are all about. I feel there is much fear as well when a non-biker talks to me. Not so much fear about me, but fear of riding and the terrible dangers of it. Most everyone "knows" someone that was maimed or killed, and they assume we are just as irresponsible as they imagine the person was who was injured. If these people could be informed about the dangers that cages pose to motorcyclists and how irresponsible they are to riders it would be better for all.

So, back to the basics.... bikers are cool!!

- I've been kind of surprised by how many Wannabes are out there - people who sport the Biker Look but don't actually ride. Maybe even have never ridden. It's kinda funny to me how people are attracted to the H-D brand and the gear but don't put a bike between their legs. I don't mean to pick on H-D, but I'll see someone at a social occasion, or standing in line, or whatever, and I'll start some small talk when I see their H-D shirt/jacket/hat etc... by saying "Oh, what kind of bike do you have?" and a surprising number of people respond that they don't have a bike! I think it says a lot about the appeal of the biker life or look, and speaks volumes about the power of the H-D logo and lore in particular!

Since becoming a biker, I have learned a few important things:

- Pigs smell bad when you are in your car - they smell REALLY bad when you are on your bike!
- Fresh mowed grass, newly turned soil, rain, and freshly bloomed flowers smell good when you are in your car - they smell REALLY good when you are on your bike!
- Keep your mouth closed while riding. Not only does it keep the bugs out - it also saves you from smacking your teeth together when you hit bumps.
- Don't take yourself too seriously - it spoils the fun of riding!
- Seasoned bikers aren't necessarily safe bikers