

Cruisin' News

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3

APRIL 2006

Looking Down The Road...

A letter from the Director...

Happy April to all!

It's time to get the bikes all cleaned up and polished with this years plates and then ride.

In March we were able to take the bike out and do some riding and boy! did that feel good.

For those of you who missed the March meeting, let me tell you about our very successful Texas-Hold-Em. We made around \$1800.00 for one day. This is the most that we have ever made on a single fund raiser. Once again a very big thank you to all that helped especially the Auxiliary.

Did you make your reservations yet for the "Thank A Vet Ride"? This event is coming up on April 29.

Those of us that attended "Help-A-Veteran" Dance on March 25 had a really great time and all the money went to the organization. Everything for this event is donated and so everything is profit. What a great way to give. Hopefully next year we can have more Riders attend.

Also in March was the Benefit Dinner for Amy Firth who has leukemia. Her broth-in-law is the owner of Stevenson Cycle, who always donates to our cause and The UPC when asked. This was another great charity event and a good time was had by all.

Dr. Bob now has a new knee and is doing better. He is going into therapy so he can still ride with us this year.

Penrickton Center Easter egg coloring is 6pm on April 11, so please plan on coming to this and helping some really great kids. We will pass the hat for things that are needed for this at the April meeting,

so bring a couple of extra bucks if you can.

Rolling Thunder is coming and we do have a group attending this year as always. There will be some riding and some driving, but if you are planning on going you must have reservations made. We will have the Saturday evening bar-b-cue as always at the Marriott Residence Inn.

Speaking of May activities, Pat "Bobcat" Babcock will be going to Rolling Thunder this year so Kirk "Crossbones" McMahon will be heading up the Wayne-Westland Veterans Parade. Be sure to get with Kirk to find out what time you need to be at the Post May 28 in order to support.

Also in late April or early May is the blessing of the bikes at St. Dunstan as always, lets hope for good weather and maybe a nice ride (Date TBD).

We are planning a ride and bar-b-cue in July out at Sherwood Forest in Jackson where some of our members have places. You can camp there if you would like and it does have some great places to ride. So hold a weekend open for this, more details to follow as soon as Gentleman Dave gets things worked out.

We are still looking for at least one new way to do something for the Vets this year. If you have any new ideas please come to the meeting and let us know, someone out there must have something on their Vets wish list.

And, finally, congratulations to member Shawn "Pitbull" Babcock and his wife Tran on the birth of their daughter, Shayla Marie!

Ride Safe & Stay Happy.
Porky



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MILE MARKERS

- ALR General Membership Meeting—6 Apr 7pm
- Easter Egg Coloring @ Penrickton—11 Apr 6pm
- ALR Dinner Run—13 Apr 6:30pm
- Ladies Night Out —20 Apr 6pm

BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL:

- Bob "Ornry" Ross—18 Apr
- Animal Reynolds—25 Apr
- Amy "Razzle" Rafferty—26 Apr
- Bernie Diehl—27 Apr

Safety First

Ah, spring! That happy time of year when I get all preachy about motorcycle safety!

It's time, folks, to give your scoot the once-over for the season's start. Check your tread depth, and the condition of your sidewalls. Check your springs and shocks, your belt or chain, and make sure all your lighting and levers are in good working order. Check the chassis out to ensure no cracks formed last year—you know the drill. (If you don't, let me know, and I'll repeat it here.)

It's also time to hone up our skills from the disuse of the sleepy dol-drums of winter.

This past winter, I got drawn into several discussions regarding my particular views on helmet use, and, in the course of some of these, I was referred to websites having descriptions of various wrecks—a few of which had full “rider on the bike” or “rider behind the bike” views of the crashes, thanks to those “rider cams” that are starting to become affordable.

Most of these were offered up because, in each case, the full-face-bake-your-turkey-in-the-oven helmets were credited with having saved the rider's life. While I cannot denounce nor support their assertions regarding the helmet without more data than any of these provided, I did take something away from each discussion: In each case, there was another point to be made. I'll summarize as follows...

- Follow your intuition
- Ride within your limits
- Look where you want to go
- Some things can't be helped

Odd list, hey?

The first comes from an accident involving a helmet-cam equipped lady. As she's moving down the highway, she keeps turning her head toward a car in the left hand lane—the multi-occupant lane, in her state. The driver's the only one in the car, so it is clear that he will be, at the very least, getting out of that lane soon, but there are

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The Runs...

Well hello y'all.

T'is march, spring is closing in fast. I can't believe this weather. (Well that's Michigan for you). Hope y'all got your scoots out. I got a couple good days, and took advantage of it. This past Sunday put on about 44 miles.

Lot of good runs coming up. Just want to remind everybody, the Vietnam moving wall will be at Westland city hall, June 29th-July 4th. Volunteers needed around the clock. See (americanlegionriders.net/gc_mi_alr) for details.

Hope everybody that's going to Rolling Thunder got their reservations booked.

Just in case you're interested, I'm back to work, but on afternoons, so you won't see me at any meetings or many runs. I will make a few. I just hope all my bros and sisters show up and have a good time. I also want to set up some fun runs. Please e-mail me and let me know of any run ideas. E-Mail me at

(Continued on page 4)

...And Don't Call Me "Ed"

One day I'm running around yelling "It's warm outside! It's warm outside!!! Thank God almighty! It's warm outside!" And then, the next, I'm trying to keep from freezing unnecessary body parts off. Ah! Michigan weather! Wouldn't have it any other way (mostly because I have no choice in the matter...)!

I got out into the garage and started the two bikes 8 March. This is the first in many a year that I didn't have all kinds of trouble getting my scoot started up. Changing plugs in the spring has almost become habit! Still, I need to get 'er in for that ECM code it's throwing. That's the one drawback to the fuel injection: when something goes wrong, you need a doctorate in computer programming and another

in rocket science just to figure out what's going on...

A heartfelt "thank you" goes out to our new run coordinator, Kirk "Crossbones" McMahon, for taking up the gauntlet thrown down at the last meeting. I can go to Rolling Thunder in peace, knowing that he's got the Wayne-Westland Veterans parade well in hand!

Again, if you're not planning on going to Rolling Thunder, please support the parade. Last year was almost depressing with the lonely four ALR bikes in the parade (and thanks again to Greg Hills, Big Bill Compton, and his buddy-whose-name-I-unfortunately-forget for being there to support!). I think it was the first year in many in which we were outnumbered by the

mounted police circling the parade as it moved along.

Remember that the Wayne-Westland parade is called the VETERANS PARADE. That should be a bit of incentive for a Veterans' motorcycle association such as the ALR, dontchathink?

There is much in the works this summer for the ALR. New to our usual line-up is the Vietnam Moving Wall coming to Westland City Hall. They need many volunteers to pull this off. You can volunteer at AmericanLegionRiders.net/gc_mi_alr or Post396.org using the online volunteer forms there, or call Ken Mehl at 734-261-5955.

Ride Safe, FREE, and Often!

- *Tobcat*



Safety First (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

“patterns” in how the car is moving that suggest an aggressive driver.

The rider starts to pass him, but second guesses and slows down to follow for a while, then starts to pass again. Suddenly, though there’s nothing anywhere around the car to suggest any emergency, the car locks up its rear wheels and spins out into her path. She hits the side of his car at around 50MPH.

Clearly, the rider felt something amiss with this car—in fact, in the attached story, the rider specifically stated so, and was kicking herself for not following her intuition and leaving him behind when she first thought to do so.

Intuition isn’t a sixth sense. It is subconscious decisions made based on observations you may not even be aware you’ve made. Trust it. If your inner voice says the yutz next to you is going to do something strange and unusual (usually read: stupid and dangerous), follow your intuition and protect yourself. I’d rather be wrong about the driver than dead wrong about my intuition.

In the next case, a group of Tupperware Pilots were screaming through some twisties—until one of their group can’t negotiate a curve at the testosterone-induced pace the leader of their group has set, and makes an unplanned visit to the woods at the

side of the road.


Folks, there is no shame in going slower than the pack if you are not comfortable with the pace being set. Only fools out-ride their skills just to be “one of the gang,” but most don’t do it for very long. I would rather have some yutz laughing in my face than over my casket—there are a lot of grave markers over those who felt otherwise. This rider was lucky to be alive, helmeted or not.

Next, I was sent off to a site that chronicled an accident where a rider hit a pickup truck at a combined velocity of over 90MPH. She was pretty torn up, but, again, her helmet was credited with saving her life. The “other story” here is something we call “target fixation”, and can be a deadly thing. This rider fixated on the oncoming pickup truck on the outside of the curve she was riding. The ONLY reason this lady wasn’t killed outright was because the driver saw and understood what was happening and veered toward his shoulder, turning a fatal head-on collision into a near-fatal sideswipe.

I’ve said this here before: you just have to look where you *want* to go. “Look where you’re going” has a whole new meaning on the back of your scooter. It’s the tendency to steer where your eyes are pointing. If you’re staring at something you *think* you might hit, you’re sure-as-


shootin’ gonna hit it.

The last bullet point, *some things just can’t be helped*, summarizes many of the sites I was sent off to. A few of these were oddball animal encounters that didn’t fit the usual “look for signs at the side of the road.” A deer darting out of an alley in a major city was one of the more interesting ones. Not much you can do there—even if you spotted it in time, your mind may not have been able to process a deer deep in the city. In any case, deer or car, my mantra about being aware of your environment at all times is about all that could have helped out here.


A few sites showed equally sudden and mysterious equipment failures resulting in accidents. Here, the best defense is to be vigilant in your inspection and maintenance, and, again, be aware of your environment while riding. There are precious few things that just suddenly deteriorate to failure without giving *some* warning—most being caused by things in the road. Always be aware of what your scooter is telling you through your senses. If something doesn’t look, sound or feel right, and there is nothing you can see on the road surface to explain what you’re picking up, get off the road and inspect your bike as soon as you can. Case in point? Remind me to tell you about the breather bolt that went flying past my head last year... 

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Sanity note: NALRIC.com and
www.AmericanLegionRiders.net both go
to the same site...

**Is this newsletter correctly ad-
dressed?** Contact the editor if *anything*
is wrong—name as displayed, address,
etc. *Thanks!*

Read this online at
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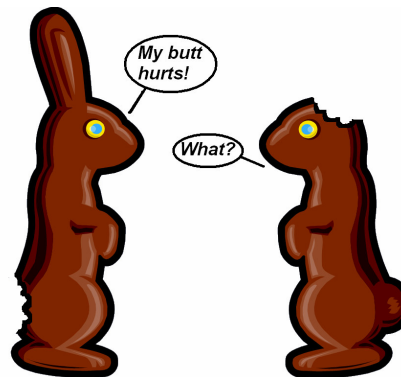


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www.AmericanLegionRiders.net/gc_mi_alr

TO:



The Runs (cont.)...

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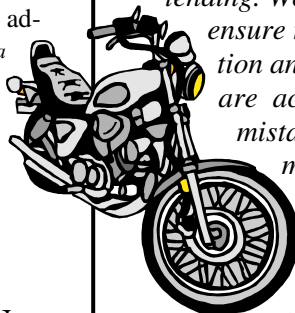
'Til next month: y' all be safe.



Crossbones

Biker Events In and Around our Area...

*As in the past, be sure to follow
up on these events before at-
tending. We do our best to
ensure the dates, loca-
tion and contact info
are accurate, but
mistakes are easily
made and hardly
corrected...*



**2 Apr—Giant
Motorcycle
Swap Meet—**

The Deltaplex Grand
Rapids, MI Contact 800-968-4242

**9 Apr—Giant Motorcycle Swap
Meet—State Fair Grounds Detroit,
MI Contact 800-968-4242**

**11 Apr—Easter Egg Coloring—
Penrickton Center, Taylor, MI**

**23 Apr—Giant Motorcycle Swap Meet—Birch Run
Expo Birch Run, MI Contact 800-968-4242**

**30 Apr or 7 May—ALR Blessing of the Bikes—
St. Dunstan's, Garden City, MI (~1pm, date TBD)**

**12 May—Warlocks Annual Fish Fry—Detroit, MI
www.warlocksmc-detroit.com**

**14 May—Blessing of the Bikes—Hell, MI 517-
540-572**

**18 - 20 May—Myrtle Beach Bike Week—Myrtle
Beach, SC**

25 - 29 May—Rolling Thunder—Washington DC

**28 May—Wayne-Westland Memorial Day Pa-
rade—Westland, MI**

4 Jun—Ride For A Reason—Dundee, MI

**10 Jun - 19 Jun—Route 66 Ride Across Amer-
ica—[www.sp-foundation.org/events-
Route66Ride.htm](http://www.sp-foundation.org/events-
Route66Ride.htm)**

**16 Jun - 18 Jun—Indiana State Party (ALR)—
Contact: dawgj@psci.net or
812-367-2793**

**25 Jun—Ride For Freedom IV—Clinton Town-
ship, MI 586-463-7700**

**29 Jun - 4 Jul—Moving Vietnam Wall—City Hall,
Westland, MI**

7 - 9 Jul—Michigan Hog Rally—Ionia, MI

7 - 13 Aug—Sturgis Bike Week—Sturgis, SD

**31 Aug - 4 Sep—Bluegrass Romp—
Shepherdsville, KY**

