

THE TALON



A NEWSLETTER FOR AND ABOUT THE
MEMBERS

Tidewater HOG Chapter 5344



TO RIDE BEYOND—HEAD ROAD CAPTAIN—TOM SANCHEZ

As we finish off the last Talon of the year, enjoy the fall colors, and focus on the upcoming holiday season, I wanted to take a few lines and talk about our Road Captains. The Road Captains are the backbone of our Chapter, and we have an amazing group that work very hard to ensure everyone has safe, fun and interesting rides. They plan routes, seek out restaurants, and look for hazards to avoid so they can accomplish this goal. Tidewater HOG Road Captains work together to keep our communications consistent and familiar so riders, whether new to the group or long-time attendees, can be comfortable and safe. I've taken some excerpts from something Bill Jackson wrote some time ago to share because I want you to understand our Road Captains and be as thankful for them (especially since we're focusing on thanksgiving during this time of year!) as I am! Motorcycling is inherently dangerous. To truly enjoy it, we need to be wise and aware as we ride. Without exception, it is the responsibility of every rider to ride his/her own ride within his/her own level of skill, comfort and safety. However, Road Captains play a major role in achieving the goal of safety for the group. They plan and share details of an upcoming ride including route, use of hand signals, and stops. They are aware of rider experience in the group; they must be ready if needed for unplanned stops, and they must be prepared for an emergency.

Road Captains stay mentally well ahead of the Group, to maintain good situational awareness, anticipate upcoming traffic or roadway situations and make Group riding adjustments as necessary. They try to be aware of how all riders in their group are doing, keeping in mind many things from speed – especially in curves – and temperatures to fatigue and road conditions so the ride is enjoyable for everyone. Group riding is not the time or place to push the envelope. This is why Road Captains focus on maintaining good group riding safety discipline. They watch for group spacing (2 second and 1 second) to avoid big gaps. They check that riders are comfortable in their track when in stagger formation so there are no issues with other vehicles. And, they keep the Group in the safest formation for the road being traveled like singling up when on narrow, winding roads or in a defensive riding location on multi-lane highways (i.e., the right lane is not always safest due to on ramps). They communicate from front to rear on all these things, not just assuring safe lane changes.

SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT. The Road Captain is much more than the guy or gal up front who's supposed to know where we're going (...and when we're going to eat!). There is responsibility involved, requiring planning, communication, heads up leadership and full-time attention to the riding situation at hand. Our Road Captains do all that. They are volunteers who do an amazing job! We are thankful for our Road Captains! Next time you enjoy a Chapter ride, let your Road Captain know you appreciated their efforts!

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Art Verdin
Editor



How Daylight-Saving Time Affects Riders

By the time November rolls around, autumn is in full swing, Halloween is in our rear-view mirror, and winter is fast approaching. In the early morning hours of November 2nd, we're to set our clocks back one hour thanks to the end of daylight-saving time.

An extra hour of sleep sounds like a gift. Whether you get that extra sleep or stay up later is a personal choice. The return to standard time means the sun will rise and set an hour earlier, with the hours of daylight continuing to shorten until the winter solstice. Does this one-hour time shift affect us as riders?

Science and time change

Studies have been conducted regarding the health and safety effects of shifting from standard time to daylight saving time and back again. Statistics from these studies often have limited widespread use since the data sets are often very localized. Still, some studies suggest that traffic accidents increase slightly immediately after the time change, particularly around sunrise and sunset. While not universally conclusive, this would suggest we riders need to be extra alert and cautious when riding during these times.

Clock time vs. natural time

As motorcycle riders, we could benefit from considering how the time shift can affect us and other road users. Clocks move back one-hour overnight, however, our sleep cycles don't change that rapidly. It might take a week or more for sleep rhythms to adjust.

While you adjust to the change in daylight hours, you might experience the following:

- Drowsiness
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration
- Reduced alertness
- Reduced reaction time
- Impaired reasoning
- Poor problem solving

During the morning rush hour, the sun will be higher in the sky, which can affect the vision of eastbound commuters. The evening commute will now start at sunset—most drivers will need time to adjust to driving home in the fading light.

Beat the clock

The timing of the day's events is changing, and we have to change with it. It's a fact of modern life. Even though one hour seems like a modest change, it's an abrupt change to our natural sleep rhythms. Most of the adverse effects we experience come from trying to make a sudden change. We do have options on how we change our sleep schedules. Change the time you go to bed slowly over a period of a week, going to sleep 10 minutes earlier each night. Start the routine on November 1. By making the change to your sleep cycle slowly, you ease the transition and might avoid the adverse effects of disrupted sleep. You will maintain your sharp riding skills when you need them most—when all of the already distracted drivers are still drowsy. Sleep tight, and till next time, ride safe!

FROM THE DIRECTOR

As my time as Director comes to an end this year, I want to thank everyone for making my three years so enjoyable. I look back at the past years to January 2009 when I joined as an older new rider and am amazed at the growth as a motorcyclist I have experienced. Between my three motorcycles I have just about 200,000 miles under my belt riding with the Chapter. I remember my “introduction” at my first meeting where I was asked to stand up, introduce myself and what I ride. I was so excited about being there, someone finally cut me off to get to the “what I ride” part. My first ride was very eventful. I purchased my motorcycle in late October of 2008 after I completed the Basic Riding class and had been practicing around the neighborhood. One of my neighbors invited me to join Tidewater HOG and I am so glad I did. On my very first ride I dropped my bike about 30 feet into the start of the ride at a stop sign. Everyone was very encouraging and I completed the ride. That ride started my journey of riding with but also getting involved in the Chapter itself. My first position was as MDA Officer in 2011 and I also became a Road Captain. In 2012 I became Secretary until 2014. In 2016 I became the Assistant Director until 2019. I became Head Road Captain after that until 2023 when I became Director. I have made so many good friends during my time with the Chapter. We have traveled so many places together as a Chapter but also as friends. I had the opportunity to attend the International Harley Officers Training in 2013 with other Chapter Officers from all over the world. I have attended many HOG Rallies with the Chapter and have such great memories from those events. Our Chapter was established in 1983, three years before HOG actually acknowledged Chapters in 1986. We have a long history of being in existence and I can’t even imagine how many miles the Chapter has ridden during that time. Very few can say they have members who have been with their organizations for over 40 years. It’s also so great to see new faces on our rides and at our events. What a great ride is has been but it’s time for me to step back. I look forward to continuing to be a Road Captain and to help out with events the Chapter has. Let’s continue to live up to our motto of “We Ride the Most” and making Tidewater HOG the best Chapter it can be.

Linda Knowles
Director

It's Fall Riding Time...

Some people are fair weather riders. I am not. Except for heavy rain or strong winds, If I can be on my bike, I am. Unfortunately, Fall is probably the most hazardous time for 2 wheels. Yes, I know some of you think winter is but, fall brings, leaves. Not only leaves but, a lot of times, wet leaves. Enough leaves to conceal potholes, gravel and other hazardous things in the road. And, leaves are slippery. Just a few of these on a damp road during a turn can put you in a very dangerous slide. You also need to remember that temps fluctuate a lot during the Autumn months, frost and icy spots happen, and heavy morning dew making the roads slick.

Then, we have Shorter days, which means riding in the dark more often, and the low-hanging sun can cause distracting glare. Use polarized goggles or a tinted visor, and ensure your headlights and taillights are working.

Never mind the fact that Fall is the peak season for deer and other wild life activity. I have seen the damage a deer can do to a car, It would be a life altering event on a motorcycle.

And, of course, because of the changing temps, we need to maintain the bike. Check tire pressure constantly, also check your oil. And, always check your lights. We also need to maintain ourselves! Bring a jacket, wear gloves, dress for the weather. Layers that you can take off or put on as needed. If you don’t have saddle bags, get a duffel and strap for your tank or seat. They make all sorts and sizes so you can fit what you may need. Also, make sure you stay hydrated. Just because it’s a little colder, we forget that all important thing, have some water with you.

And then the biggest issue is that there are a lot less of us on the road, which means the cages forget we exist even more. And, although we share the road with them, they don’t always remember that.

So, if you are like me, and you enjoy riding all year long, keep your head on a swivel, be aware. Have fun but always be safe.

Mike Pastore

A Pleasant Surprise

It was a warm fall day, sunny with few clouds. Unusual for this time of year in northern New England. I had been up at the cabin since the 3rd week of Sept. A good time of year to do maintenance, such as replacing 18 windows, without the bugs trying to carry you away. Today though, I felt it was time to saddle up and take a ride. After-all I did not ride 800+ miles from Va. Beach, to not ride the beautiful roads up here. One of them being the Kanc (Kancamagus Highway). So, I quickly formulated a route, in my mind, that would incorporate this awesome road.

I rolled the bike out of the barn, and was off. The winding roads calling out to me. Because of the Fryeburg Fair going on, I took a, locals known only, back road around Kezar Lake. Getting into Conway about 20 minutes later than usual for a 38-mile ride. Through the traffic of the town, I came to the turn for the Kanc. With a smile on my face, I kicked it up to 5th gear, and started the 33 mile ride of this twisting Mtn road. The foliage was beautiful. With leaves slowly cascading to form a carpet on the ground. This afforded me a view of the Swift River, which you normally don't get to see when riding during the summer.

Coming out of a switch back and onto a long straight-a-way, I noticed traffic stopped up ahead. After several minutes a county sheriff, coming from the opposite direct, was telling us that the road would be closed for a while due to a fallen tree.

Cars were starting to turn around. Normally I would have done the same. But for some reason the hard pack road to my right, was calling to me. It led down to the river, and since I had brought a lunch with me, decided...Why not?

At this point, the Swift river turns north, away from the road, so it was about a half mile ride to the small camping area. In all the years that I have ridden or driven the Kanc, I had never stopped to "smell the roses." After all, it's the scenic, twisting mountain road that held my interest, but this time I did, and I was greeted with the scene below. Just goes to show that there is more to riding than the roads. Its where the roads go that should also be enjoyed. Anyway, I sat by the river, ate my lunch and relaxed. An hour or so later the road was cleared and I continued my ride.



Rick Leighton

EVENTS**Urbanna Oyster Ride—November 1****Ride to Toys for Tots—November 2****2 Chapter Challenge—November 8****Chapter Meeting—November 12****Smokehouse Ride—November 15****Poor Man's Fall Foliage—November 16****Food Bank Ride—November 22****"It's a Hawaiian Shirt" Party—November 22****Tryptophan Ride—November 28****Please note:** There are a number of rides yet to be named and posted—please see Facebook, emails and the website calendars for updates.**Ride to Snowball Express—December 6****Chapter Meeting—December 10****Ride 365 Ride—December 13****Lake Taylor Breakfast—December 14****First Ride of the Year—January 1**

A Heartfelt Thank You to Tidewater HOG

In the rumble of engines and the open road, gratitude binds us tighter than any chain. Today, we pause to honor the volunteers of the Tidewater HOG Chapter 5344—the unsung heroes who turn passion into purpose.

To every volunteer who has poured countless hours into planning rides, organizing events, and keeping our community thriving: thank you. Your dedication, from early morning setups to late-night cleanups, makes every gathering possible. Those donated dollars and volunteer hours aren't just contributions—they're the fuel that keeps our wheels turning and our spirits high.

A special shoutout to Southside Harley Davidson for their unwavering support. As our dealership partner, you've provided the space, resources, and enthusiasm that amplify everything we do. Your backing turns good ideas into great memories.

We cherish the comradeship that defines us—the laughter shared over lunch stops, the stories swapped at rallies, and the unbreakable bonds between members and friends. Whether you're a longtime rider or a new face, your presence strengthens our club.

Finally, thanks to those with us today, revving alongside us, and to those who have passed on, whose legacy echoes in every mile we ride. You all remind us why we ride: for the freedom, the friendship, and the gratitude that makes it all worthwhile.

Ride safe, ride grateful. We ride the most.

Art Verdin



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DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT**

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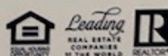
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HOG Members—We could use some ads. Ask some of your friends, or post one of your own. Even if it is just for a partial year or one issue. Your group needs it. Dues are also due now. Thanks in advance, and please request a copy of the form from me at taloneditor@tidewaterhog.com



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