

THE TALON



A NEWSLETTER FOR AND ABOUT THE
MEMBERS



Tidewater HOG Chapter 5344

To Ride Beyond—Head Road Captain—Tom Sanchez

The last few months have not been the greatest for weather. I'd love to be chatting about the rides we've been doing since the start of the year, but there just haven't been that many.

Maybe it all started with the Valentine's Ride at the beginning of February. This is normally the coldest ride of the year. What were our temperatures? In the 60s? Unseasonably warm for this area! I guess we should have expected a course correction. Sure enough, we had the largest snowfall here in over a decade in February, and that has impacted our ability to conduct rides. Furthermore, we haven't even talked about the rain we've had since the start of the year! Well, I hope you've been able to get out riding. After the snow cleared, we've experienced temperatures in the 60s and even 70s! (Just not on the weekends when we've had rides planned.) However, that shouldn't stop you from getting out. Take some time and find great back roads – just be careful to think about how the weather may have affected your route before getting into a situation that you'd rather not be in!

I can think of one that happened to me a few months ago. We experienced several days of rain and the weather had turned nice. I was itching to go out and went for a ride. I avoided many of the roads I know would be flooded, but not one particular single-lane, country road. I know this spot tends to flood and hold water long after the rain has passed. I was cautious, but I went that way anyway. Sure enough, it was flooded. Not bad, but I'd never take a group through that area. I was by myself and trying to get home (not a good combination!), so I pressed it and went along the highest part of the road – the middle where the yellow line was still present. As I proceeded through the "puddle", I started to get concerned about how deep the water was. What would happen if I got stuck? Should I turn back? Should I keep going?

It is times like this and experiences like the one above that helps us become better, wiser riders. Learn from every chance you get. Try to learn from others. Talk about what you've done, where you've been, and what you're thinking about doing. We used to say in the Aviation Community, you'll never live long enough to make all the mistakes yourself. So, learn from others!

As you can guess, I made it through the water, didn't damage my motorcycle, and didn't get hurt in the process. But I did come away with a good reminder that we should think about what we're doing, where we're going, and never be afraid to turn back and change the plan to something safer if concerned about the outcome.

Hopefully, the next few months will give us many opportunities to ride and enjoy the weather, the roads, and the company of friends. We look forward to seeing you out there on a HOG ride with Tidewater HOG!

Inside This Issue

TO RIDE BEYOND.....	1
SAFETY.....	2
EVENTS.....	3
TRIKES EYE VIEW.....	3
FROM THE DIRECTOR.....	4
TIME TO DITCH THE HEATED GEAR.....	4
WE ARE MORE THAN PEOPLE SEE.....	6
COLLAGE.....	7
STURGIS ROAD TRIP RECAP.....	8
OFFICERS.....	9
ADVERTISING.....	10

MAR-APR 2025

Issue 2
Art Verdin
Editor

SAFETY

SAFELY

When packing for a motorcycle ride, you can keep yourself safe by placing heavy items on the bottom, use bungee cords and zip ties and covering your luggage.

Pack heavy items on the bottom

- This helps you maintain balance while riding.
- If the weight is too high, you might lose your balance when turning.
- Distribute the weight evenly and balance it left to right.

Use bungee cords and zip ties

- Use bungee cords to secure extra luggage to your bike.
- Bungee cords can also help you save space.

Cover your luggage

- Covering your luggage can help deter thieves and prevent your bike from catching their eye.
- Some experienced travelers recommend using a cover that looks a bit rough.

Consider adjusting your suspension

- When riding with a loaded motorcycle, you might need to adjust your rear suspension.
- This prevents the back end from sitting too low and the front end too high.

Motorcycle Safety Foundation



EVENTS

Fred's P&E—March 8

Pool Tournament—March 9

Chapter Meeting—March 12

Employee Luncheon—March 15

New Member Orientation—March 15

St Patrick's Ride—March 22

Country Roads Ride—March 29

More to come...See Facebook, emails and the website calendars for updates.

Chapter Meeting—April 9

Let's Go See Captain Bob—April 12

Go North Young Man—April 19

Hookie Ride—April 23

US58 Ride—April 26

Panama Thunder Beach Rally—April 28-May 5



Riding when you have a chronic illness:

For many people, riding a motorcycle isn't just about transportation; it's a lifestyle, a passion, and a means of freedom on the open road. But when living with a chronic illness, (in my case fibromyalgia) this comes with additional challenges. Keeping the right approach and mindset, I can continue to enjoy riding while managing my health condition properly.

Mostly, it is a common sense and safety thing. Some things I consider for riding are understanding my condition and what might cause me more pain and fatigue than usual.

The weather affects it greatly. This is why I don't ride in cold even with heated gear. Winter can be a bummer though. Cool weather is ok when I use it though.

My bike is adapted to me with things I need for comfort in general and I always plan my rides out. I always check the weather and have what I need on hand if anything changes while I'm out. I carry OTC meds to manage any painful symptoms effectively so I can continue my ride safely. I stay hydrated because being dehydrated can worsen symptoms such as fatigue and muscle cramps. I'm always mindful as to how I am feeling throughout the ride and take breaks to stay refreshed. So even though I have a chronic illness I still enjoy riding and plan accordingly so that I can continue to for years to come.

Always let your Road Captain know if you may need accommodation.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Wow, Mother Nature has not been very kind to us so far for 2025. The Road Captains have planned rides only to have them cancelled due to weather. Don't worry, we have plenty more rides and events already planned for this year and even more will be added on as the year progresses. We have already arranged with our sister Chapter, Hampton Roads HOG, to get together for our Two Chapter Challenge and combined Fall picnic. Our Fall Festival in October is already on the calendar. We have several multi-days trips already planned and others are being considered. We hope you will make plans to join us for our rides and events this year. Thanks to Road Captains and members who have been planning our rides and events. Please know your time is appreciated.

One event we have participated in for many years is not included in our events for 2025, which is the Annual State Chapter Challenge. The idea is that Chapters from all over the State would get as many members as possible to ride to the Challenge to win. Originally it was scheduled for Sunday, April 27th, but then moved to Saturday, April 26th, with check in between 9a-1p. As the challenge is being held in Bristol, VA it would be about an 8-hour trip to get there. This means many members would have to take off a day in order to participate. We have had some die-hards who have ridden up the morning of the check in would have to leave around 4am to make sure they arrived in time. We are aware that many only have a numbered amount of vacation days to use during the year. The Board and Road Captains came to the conclusion that we would be at a disadvantage from the start of not having many members able to attend due to having to leave on Friday. Along with taking a day off, there is a monetary consideration with gas, room and food costs. Again, the whole idea of the Challenge is to have as many members as possible to participate and over the years we have won our division many times. Due to the date being Saturday and an early morning check-in, we felt we could not encourage members to attend when we know some members who would normally attend would not be able to. We hope next year the check-in date will be back on Sunday as it was for many years so those Chapters who are literally at the other end of the State could be able to participate at their fullest potential.

Finally, we are always looking for folks to not only help out with events but to be willing to run an event. The Chapter is only as productive as the members are willing to participate and help. If you have a suggestion, please let us know.

Linda Knowles
DIRECTOR

TIME TO DITCH THE HEATED GEAR—

As the snow melts and we find the opportunity to ride in 60-degree weather, we evaluate before a ride what we need to wear and what we need to carry in anticipation of the weather changing for the worse. This is especially important when packing for an overnight trip, or longer, when storage space management becomes critical. Some essentials never go “unpacked”, like a rain suit and first aid kit. As the warmer riding season approaches, most will remove heated gear and save that extra space for something else. I made that mistake twice, once in May and another time in July. I didn't pack heated gear for the Myrtle Beach rally in May because, well, it is in May, and we were farther south. Leaving Myrtle Beach to return home early on a Sunday, we hit a rain shower, and the temperature plummeted. The rain suits helped a little bit, but both me and my passenger were cold for over two hours. I made a decision to pack heated gear for any overnight ride after that experience. Then I ignored it. Fast forward three years and I am planning a longer trip to Milwaukee in July. With storage critical, I decided not to pack heat gear, after all IT IS JULY!

Oops.

On a two-day ride to our destination, we stopped for fuel and coffee with only 110 miles remaining to ride. Before we headed back on the road, we checked the radar, knew we were heading into a terrible storm (that is another story), and on came the rain suits. We headed out with an overcast but very bright sky and ran into a torrential rain, black sky and a temperature drop of 30 degrees. It was the worst ride of my life. I had not been that cold in a long time. Had I worn heated gear it would have been so insignificant I would have forgotten the experience.

If we head for the Blue Ridge parkway in August, regardless of the forecast, I will bring my heated gear.

REGIE FARR, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



THANKS FOR THE MEMORY—

A long time ago, while my wife (Lu) and I were attending a HOG National Rally in Greenville, South Carolina, we decided to get away from the crowd. It was a well-attended rally. A day trip for just the two of us sounded like what the doctor ordered. We looked on the map and saw that Chimney Rock was not too far with a straight route through some small towns. I might mention that Lu was riding her 1995 1200cc Sportster. Lu had ridden on the back of my bike for 18 years, or as she called it, she was luggage. The Sportster was a newer member of the family. Lu did have quite a bit of experience riding as she had a 1982 Shovel head three-wheeler for about 8 years before deciding to go with a two-wheeled bike.

It was a beautiful day, and we were enjoying the back country roads. We came to the outskirts of a small town and noticed more people milling about. When we got to the first stop-light (might have been the only one) it was yellow. I went through it and immediately noticed a large crowd of people to my left on the raised sidewalk yelling and screaming at the crowd on my right. The crowd on my right was in a park and they were all wearing brightly colored robes and pointed hats. Hmm I thought I don't want to be here between these crowds, but where was Lu? Well, it seems she stopped for the light. So, I pulled over just past the crowds. Right away someone tapped me on the shoulder and said you need to leave right now.

I turned and saw a large N.C. State Trooper standing there. I said not until she catches up pointing back at Lu. He nodded his head and said OK but then GIT. Just a moment later Lu caught up with me and we GOT! We rode to the next intersection which was out of sight of the town and stopped at a small convenience store to get a soda and talk. As soon as I turned off the bike I realized that almost all the parking lot was full of young men leaning on pick-up trucks drinking beer. It was barely noon and most of them looked like they had been at it for some time. We decided to make haste and continue our journey. We got to the entrance of the park paid the fee and were directed to go up the road instead of parking in the lot right there.

The road turned out to be one of the most difficult I had ever been on. There were hair pin turns back and forth working its way up the mountain. I was following Lu and could almost see the cussing she was doing. The road was also a two-way and we were meeting busses on their way down. We had a great time after we got there and an uneventful trip back to the rally. Later Gary Hansen a Tidewater chapter member and instructor with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation told Lu that if she was able to navigate that road she would have no difficulty passing the Experienced Rider Class. The ride home was uneventful but beautiful.

DICK STEGER

WE ARE MORE THAN PEOPLE SEE...

After I got back from the military, I was already in the motorcycle culture. I had a shaved head with a goatee, had tattoos, jeans and a t-shirt were my everyday attire and boots. I'm short but muscular, stocky, and in the "attire" I was, what could be called, intimidating. Its not the look I thought of myself as having but, I was told this often enough. If you got to know me, you would find out that I was a Special Agent in the Military (Law Enforcement) and a generally nice person.

So, why the preamble explaining all of that? Well, a long while ago, I was with my Grandmother and Aunt having lunch. My Grandmother starts a conversation about how she got stuck at the grocery store for over an hour. Of course we all were concerned and wanted to hear what happened. She tells us that after shopping as she was getting ready to head out. She had to go right back in because she was afraid to go to her car. At this point, the protective part of me came out. Did someone try to hurt you? Were you threatened? Was someone messing with your car?

After a bombardment of questions, she said "there were a bunch of hoodlums hanging out near the front of the parking lot". "Hoodlums?", I asked. "What does that mean?". She then proceeds to tell us about this group of people sitting on and leaning on their motorcycles. She was very afraid because they were scary. I tried not to laugh so, I asked, were they doing something that made you think they would hurt you? No. Were they being loud and obnoxious? No. were they harassing anyone? No. I then asked her why she felt afraid of them, she said because they were biker hoodlums, she's read about those groups. Again, I tried not to laugh.

At this point I want to make her understand. I asked if they were wearing jeans and a t-shirt like me? Yes. A leather jacket, like me? Yes. Rode a motorcycle like me? Yes. And did they have tattoo's like me. At this point she gets frustrated and says YES but, You are My Grandson!!! Then I laughed and told her about how I am judged like that all the time. She got upset about that as well. But, I think she finally understood.

We, in the biker community, have a stigma. Mainly from some bad apples and movies. But, it is what people see when we ride around or hang out somewhere. They don't see their brother, father, grandson or son. They see a "hoodlum". They see a "biker gang". They don't see a group of motorcycle enthusiasts out doing a charity ride, raising thousands of dollars for a cause they might be affected by. They don't see someone out enjoying the peacefulness we get from our ride, in solitude.

A lot of us say, well, that's their problem but, it really is our problem. We need to get out more and be a part of our community. DO things like visits to nursing homes, volunteering for community cleanups, being in parades. The more people see us and get chances to interact with us, the more they see we are not what is shown on TV or what they read about in the news. That group my grandmother had seen, although I don't know who they were, more than likely would have offered to help carry her groceries to her car before they did anything to harass her. But, she will never know. It's up to us to make that impression on everyone we meet.

MIKE PASTORE



STURGIS ROAD TRIP RECAP

THIS ARTICLE IS AVAILABLE IN ITS ENTIRETY ON THE WEBSITE AS A SUPPLEMENT
TO THE TALON

SUBMITTED AND WRITTEN BY REGIE FARR

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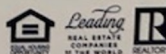
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