

# VIRGINIA RIDER

Serving the Riders of Virginia & West Virginia

Magazine™

SHENANDOAH VALLEY

MOTORCYCLE



EXPO

APRIL 4TH & 5TH, 2020

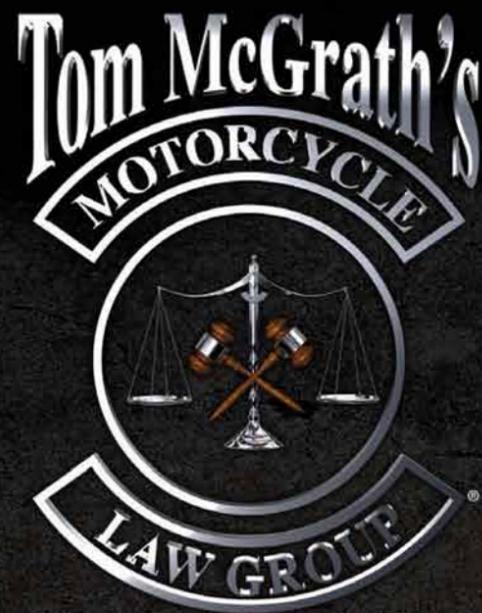
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### from the editor's desk

Greetings friends & fellow riders! It's so great to have you with us for this edition of Virginia Rider! Most of you know that I have been hoping for just one great snowfall before spring and here we are in February with no snow in sight. So, as I officially throw in the towel on rooting for a good blanketing of the white stuff, (at least until November/December :)), I am shifting our gears toward spring & next month's kick off of the riding season 2020. March through October are the usual riding season months for Virginia riders but we've enjoyed an endless supply of riding days, weather-wise, through this entire winter season.

Don't forget to "spring forward" coming up on March 8th! It'll be so nice to finally start getting those extra daylight hours. Many people avoid riding at night mostly because it's harder to see motorcycles in the dark unless you've got your bike well lit up. Virginia law now allows you to light up your bike a lot more so you can enjoy more night riding.

As the buds start popping on the trees, so will the events start popping on our events listing. There are so many events getting ready to drop so keep your calendars ready & try to get out to as many as you can. A lot of time, effort & money goes into creating a charity ride/event in hopes that there'll be a great turnout. If you can at least get to one event a month that would not only help those in need but it makes you feel good knowing that you're helping to make a difference.

About the events that you're riding for, be sure to check out the charity & make sure that your money is going to where your heart is riding for. Many people don't think about this but it's always good to know that the money that you're contributing for registration, poker hands, auctions or anything that the event is raising money for their charity is going directly to that charity. I'm not trying to raise any eyebrows but if you're helping to raise money for a cause, you have the right to know & see exactly where it's going...just a thought?

We've got some great reading for you this month along with the best rider-friendly businesses in our region! We hope that you enjoy this issue & please feel free to drop us a line anytime. We're open for your comments & suggestions. Let us know what you'd like to see in upcoming issues of Virginia Rider. We'll be looking forward to seeing you out on the road some time, some where. Thanks for being here with us.

Happy Trails 'til we meet again, be safe

Stay awesome,  
*Kelly*

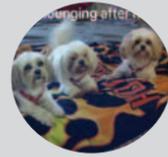
## IN THIS ISSUE



John Peterson delves into the "dark art" of tuning carburetors in this month's **BIKE SAVERS**. Specifically, Hitachi carbs, which are so temperamental, John says, "you HAVE to love them. They won't tolerate anything less!"



**MAKING TRAX** is better when you have someone to make them with. As Jennifer notes, most people started out on a motorcycle as a passenger before graduating to riding on their own. The ride is never too long when the company's good.



Steve Martin, Chevy Chase and Martin Short have nothing on these three amigos. Instead of one Ruff Rider, we've got three **RUFF RIDERS** this month, who travel in a custom carrier all over these United States.



**TOM MCGRATH'S MOTORCYCLE LAW GROUP** this month makes us aware of the Omnibus Highway Bill making its way through the state legislature, covering everything from motorcycle cell phone use to safety inspections, alcohol consumption and increased fuel taxes.



**GREAT PLACES TO RIDE** are easier in the summer. With winter and colds keeping M&R from new rides, Marc says, "Please enjoy another one from the vault and we'll catch up with something fresh in next month's issue, and we can tuck GRS (Grumpy Rider Syndrome) away for good!"



In **SHOTZ**, our monthly pictorial, we'll feature your pics of rides, bikes, friends and anything else relating to bikes that you'd like to share with us. Send 'em in!



For a man who never understood how to pray, an empty chair made all the difference. In the **LIGHTHOUSE**, we'll hear his story and perhaps take away a tip on how to pray better ourselves.



**GOOD FOR YOU** is concentrating on ways to get outdoors more and enjoy the fresh air, sunshine and the health benefits that result. Spring is coming, so start making your plans now to spend more time in the great outdoors.

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ON OUR COVER:  
Shenandoah Valley's Motorcycle Expo is happening April 4th and 5th. You don't want to miss this one, so make your plans to attend now.



# VEHICLE VS MOTORCYCLE

## SAFETY FEATURES

Most of what comes standard on the best-selling vehicles in America is missing on motorcycles. That's why it's so important for all drivers to help keep motorcyclists out of crashes.

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for motorcycles

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# EVENTS

★ Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Southside Harley-Davidson's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** – Virginia Beach, VA  
Save the date! Join us for Prizes, Food & Fun! 385 N. Witchduck Rd., Virginia Beach, VA,  
(757) 499-8964, southside-hd.com

★ Apr 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>

**Shenandoah Valley Motorcycle Expo** – Woodstock, VA  
Saturday 9am to 7pm; Sunday 10am to 3pm. Largest Inside Motorcycle Event in the Valley. Motorcycle Show. Motorcycles from Mild to Wild. Swap Meet. Live Bands. Cream Corn Wrestling Sat. at 1pm. Bikini Contest Sat. at 3:30pm; Tattoo Contest Sun at 2:30pm. Shenandoah County Fairgrounds, Woodstock, VA. Gate admission \$10/Day or \$15/Weekend Pass. Bike entry & vendor forms available at [jwwmotorsports.com](http://jwwmotorsports.com). For more info: (540) 533-7913 or email [jwilkins@jwwmotorsports.com](mailto:jwilkins@jwwmotorsports.com). Show committee and promoter are not responsible for accidents or injuries.

★ Apr 19<sup>th</sup>

**1<sup>st</sup> Annual MC, SC, CC Family Day & Blessing in the 804** – Hopewell, VA  
1pm to 5pm. Presented by Mz Sable Entertainment LLC. At 2:15pm Rev. Robin Robinson-Tyler will lead the Blessing. Car Club Ride Out at 5pm departing the park. Ride out will ensure that left over food will be delivered to the homeless. Bring your family, tents and coolers FREE FOOD! Let's fellowship and break bread together. Bring the kids. Kids activities. Adult games: Spades, Dominoes, Sack race, plank ride and one legged race. Crystal Lake Park, 3502 River Rd., Hopewell, VA 23860. Rain date: Sunday April 26<sup>th</sup>.

★ May 3<sup>rd</sup>

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Bike Display & Lunch** – Henrico, VA  
Display your favorite ride... New, Old, Antique or Classic, American, British, European or Asian. All Are Welcome. This isn't a Bike Show... There aren't any judges or trophies. Just enthusiasts coming to look, eat & have a good time!!! Free lunch will be served at 12:30 PM until it's all gone... Rain or Shine Event. 10 AM – 3 PM. Osborne Landing Park, 9530 Osborne Turnpike Henrico, VA 23231. Presented by the Virginia British Motorcycle Club. Information? Call Chuck @ 804/749-3118

★ Jun 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual South Central Bike Fest** – Chase City, VA  
Vendors, Games, Live Music, Great Food! Charity event to benefit the Barksdale Cancer Foundation and the Mecklenburg County Cancer Association. Vendors & Sponsors Wanted! Contact Lee Brankley (434) 210-1503. Also find us on Facebook!

★ Jul 17

**11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thunder N KVA In Memory of Tommy Brown** – Dugspur, VA  
Bands, Beer, Babes, Bikes and more! Band line up TBD stay tuned for more info!!

★ Sept 13<sup>th</sup>

**Red Knights 9/11 Ride** – Prince George, VA  
Join the Red Knights Chapter 8 for 80+ scenic miles while remembering those we lost on 9/1. Registration starts at 7:30am at Prince George FD Company 1, 6500 Courthouse Road, Prince George, VA 23875. Blessing of the Bikes and Safety Brief prior to. Kickstands up at 9:11 am. Ends at Namozine VFD. Registration before the event is encouraged at [www.RedKnightsVA8.com](http://www.RedKnightsVA8.com). Prior to 9/6/20, Driver is \$20. Passenger is \$10. After or on-site Driver \$25 & Passenger \$15. Part of the proceeds will be going to help those in our community. See our website for more information & to register.

To have your event listed in our event calendar here & online, send us an email with your event & your flyer if you have one. Events received by the 15th will be in the next month's magazine.

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## WE WANT YOU TO JOIN



Why should you join ABATE? For the preservation of your freedom to ride a motorcycle, on and off road, today and into the future. Meet other motorcycle enthusiasts in your community and join them to promote motorcycling through participation at State and Chapter meetings, meeting with Virginia legislators and local officials, chapter rides, rallies, benefit rides, bike shows and more.

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**BECOME INVOLVED AND JOIN TODAY!**

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Visit <https://vcomonline.org/vcom-events/lobby-day-2020/> for details



# MY RIDE

Virginia Rider: **JEFF ARMSTRONG**

**M**y dad has been the inspiration for my own riding and something we enjoy greatly together so my story and experience wouldn't be complete without him.

My dad, Mark, has been riding since he was a teenager growing up in Southwestern PA. One of the most memorable rides he ever took as a young adult was a trip to see Niagara Falls with his brother, Jack, and Uncle Billy (see pic). He stopped riding for many years, while he had a young family, but got back into it in 2006, realizing he needed a hobby and something to relieve stress. He bought a barely used 2001 HD Softail Heritage (see pic with my mom) and rode it from Atlanta, GA back to Richmond, VA where he lives today and he hasn't stopped riding yet!

I started, unofficially, riding in high school when I was pulled over for riding on a minibike, speeding, not wearing a helmet and operating without a license - I don't recommend it! Riding was in my blood and in my future (but legally!). I went many years without riding until I was divorced in 2015 and bought a slightly used Kawasaki Vulcan Classic (see pic with my dad) from a neighbor. This was the beginning of many new adventures! I fixed that bike up like a bagger then sold it and moved up to a 2003 Harley Davidson Electra Glide Anniversary Edition and have been addicted to riding Harleys and touring ever since!

Fast forward to today, my dad and I are both riding newer model Harley touring bikes and riding as much as our schedules permit.

**In 2017** we rode out to Milwaukee, WI to see the HD Museum and we rode up north to Mackinaw and around Lake Michigan.

**In 2018** we went to Sturgis (see pic) for 10 days and had the time of our lives seeing all the sites including the Badlands, Devils Tower, Mt Rushmore (see pic), Deadwood, Needles Highway, Custer State Park and more! Long, hot days and minor bike problems (all taken in stride) but the trip of a lifetime!

**In 2019** we rode US Route 15 north through Williamsport, PA up to Mansfield, PA where we caught Route 6 and rode west through the Allegheny National Forest. We eventually headed south to pay our respects at the Flight 93 Memorial near Shanksville, PA. This was one of the most moving experiences I've ever had. If you haven't been you need to go. I remember the day it happened acutely and found the memorial very stirring.

We love to talk about our future trips, where we want to go and what we want to see. Plotting our route the old fashioned way on big paper maps highlighting our possible routes. I think the big rally at Laconia, NH is high on our list and may be next. I want to ride to Key West too! When we're not on a touring trip we love to ride around Virginia and have some great times from Skyline Drive (see pic) to the Eastern Shore for Oysters.

One day I hope to share the love of riding with my own son too (see pic) and I got him started on a trike at an early age!

Safe riding!  
Jeff Armstrong



## GENERAL OPERATION

Every state has their own statutes and laws regarding the operation and maintenance of motorcycles. Knowing these statutes not only allows you to avoid needless charges, it helps you to know when your rights have been violated.

**In the spotlight for February:**



**VIRGINIA**  
Riding on motorcycles, generally  
(\$ 46.2-909)

**Comment:** The rule is that if you have a passenger you must have a seat and footrests for them. A two up seat is fine. Contrary to popular belief there is no requirement that the passengers use the footrests or even be able to reach them. However, the bike must be equipped with separate footrests for your passenger if you wish to ride with one.



Every person operating a motorcycle, as defined in § 46.2-100, excluding three-wheeled vehicles, shall ride only upon the permanent seat attached to the motorcycle, unless safety dictates standing on both footpegs for no longer than is necessary. Such operator shall not carry any other person, unless the motorcycle is designed to carry more than one person, in which event a passenger may ride on the permanent seat if designed for two persons, or on another seat firmly attached to the rear or side of the seat for the operator. If the motorcycle is designed to carry more than one person, it shall also be equipped with a footrest for the use of such passenger.



**WEST VIRGINIA**  
7; § 17C-15-44(d). Operator shall face forward, passengers must have seat and foot footrests; sidecar passenger must be belted.

(d) A person operating a motorcycle, motor-driven cycle or moped shall ride in a seated



position facing forward and only upon a permanent operator's seat attached to the vehicle. No operator shall carry any other person nor shall any other person ride on the vehicle unless the vehicle is designed to carry more than one person, in which event a passenger may ride behind the operator upon the permanent operator's seat if it is designed for two persons, or upon another seat firmly attached to the vehicle to the rear of the operator's seat and equipped with footrests designed and located for use by the passenger or in a sidecar firmly attached to the vehicle. No person shall ride side saddle on a seat. An operator may carry as many passengers as there are seats and footrests to accommodate those passengers. Additional passengers may be carried in a factory produced sidecar provided that there is one passenger per seat. Passengers riding in a sidecar shall be restrained by safety belts.

*At The Motorcycle Law Group<sup>SM</sup> they keep up with new and existing statutes affecting motorcyclists in Virginia. If you have a question about any specific motorcycle law or feel that your rights have been violated, call them at 1-800-321-8968 and speak with their attorneys who practice in Virginia and are familiar with current Virginia motorcycle laws. Visit [motorcyclelawgroup.com/motorcycle-statutes](http://motorcyclelawgroup.com/motorcycle-statutes) for links to all Virginia Motorcycle Statutes.*

# BIKE SAVERS

with John Peterson



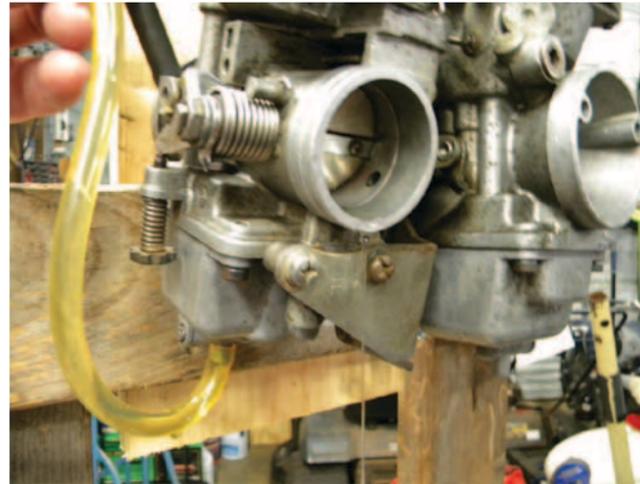
## My Hitachi Odyssey

A friend of mine once described carburetor tuning as a 'Dark Art', and after my experiences with Hitachi carbs, which drew me deeper into the world of bike repair, I would have to agree. Hitachi carbs – as I wrote last month, 'you have to love 'em – you HAVE to! They won't tolerate anything less...and as I found out, that's true!



Once Upon a Time, my 1985 Yamaha Virago XV700 - the bike I wrote about last month - started running really rich, black sooty plugs and all. After trying to adjust them, I took the carbs out, cleaned them and when I tried to set the float height on the bench, it kept overflowing through the carb throats.

No matter how exactly I set the float height, which is spec'd out to 19mm from the bottom of the floats to the top of the main jet boss, they would overflow. I used the clear-tube method and would watch the fuel level as it entered the carbs, start filling and climb up the tube, get to the seam between the bowl and the carb body where it's supposed to be, and keep on going, eventually spilling out the carb throat.



Again and again I would check the float height, check for a missing bolt, a hole or some other way or means that would allow the fuel to escape past the top of the float bowl and just could not figure out WHY the floats were not shutting off the flow of fuel. I even tested them by starting the fuel through the inlet tube and gently raising the floats with my finger to see if the needle and seat were sealing properly, and they did. Turn on the fuel and let the bowls fill naturally, and they overflowed. It drove me crazy!



After about two weeks of this aggravating, frustrating behavior I contacted two noted bona-fide Hitachi carb experts who informed me that these Hitachi carbs on these Viragos were – well, let's just say we all agreed that they were 'poorly designed'.

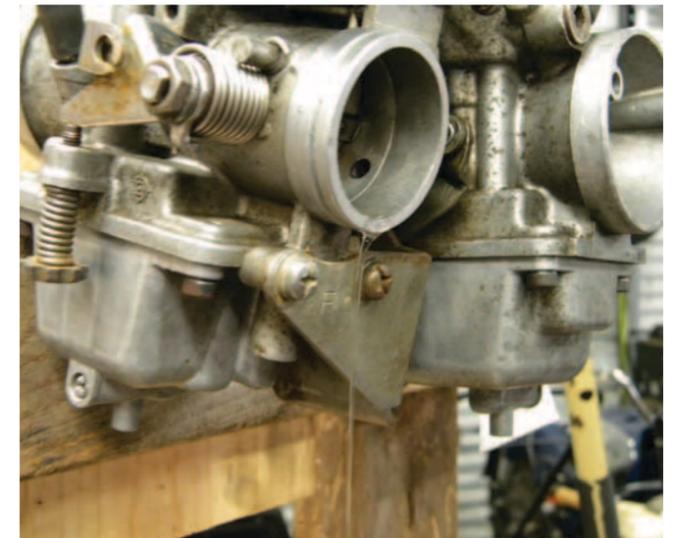
Now, here's where you can point fingers if you like and tell me the obvious – "Follow The Instructions In the Manual" – but there is more to it than setting a float height at the correct level, at least in these Viragos as confirmed by my two sources.

The manual states the floats are to be set at 19 millimeters from the bottom of the floats to the top of the jet boss when the carbs are upside down – I did that. Over and over and over. On the bench, the floats did not seal and it overflowed - over and over and over. I also tried setting the float height at 19mm with the carbs at an angle, with the float tang just resting on the needle – nope, no good.

Finally reading the manual word-for-word, the manual states the float height must be set at 19mm with the bike RUNNING, which would entail taking them out, adjusting the float tangs, putting it back in and starting the bike EACH time you needed to adjust the float height. So yes, I assume full responsibility for being lazy and thinking I could simply adjust the float height on the bench, it would reach the proper level and shut off the fuel flow, and everything would be great.

What the manual does NOT mention though, or at least the nearest we could figure out, is that SOME how the flow of fuel THROUGH the carbs with the bike running sets the fuel level, and setting the floats at 19mm on the bench is irrespective of the amount of fuel allowed into the carbs while it's running. Did you get all that? I'm still trying to wrap my head around that one...that float height has nothing to do with the amount of fuel going into the carb bowls. I know what you're thinking: 'but that's the needle and seat's job', right?

Nope; apparently not with these Hitachi's. Sure, the floats drop, lets the fuel IN, and the floats rise, and all things being equal the floats shut off the flow of fuel - but on the bench without these carbs on a running bike, it will overflow. It comes up through the needle in the main jet. And I don't know why!



But now the weird part: after gaining all this insight to Hitachi carbs, we set the floats at 19mm, put them back on the bike, and it started and ran like a Champ! The clear tube I was using to measure the fuel level in the carb with the bike running was spot-on to where it should be as indicated in the manual, plus-or-minus 1 or 2 millimeters from the carb-bowl seam.

Turn the bike off with the carbs ON the bike – and here's the weird part – the floats rise and cut off the flow of fuel. And it does not overflow. Take the carbs off, put them on the bench, and it does. Why it does this is still a mystery to me. But the now-adjusted carbs are back on the bike, it runs great, and I now have a deeper understanding of Hitachi carburetor eccentricities. To me, tuning these Hitachi's is like balancing a penny on a knife edge – you can do it, but it will test your patience, Grasshopper!

I don't know – maybe I'm an idiot when it comes to cleaning, rebuilding and synching carbs. Maybe I don't know anything about fixing carburetors. After all, I am by no means a professional mechanic or carb guru. But I have done enough of them to understand how they work, and on the bench the floats should have shut off the flow of fuel into the carbs, but they didn't. And I, and others with more knowledge than me, can't explain why.

Like I said - a Dark Art.



# GREAT PLACES TO RIDE

## SMITH MOUNTAIN DAM

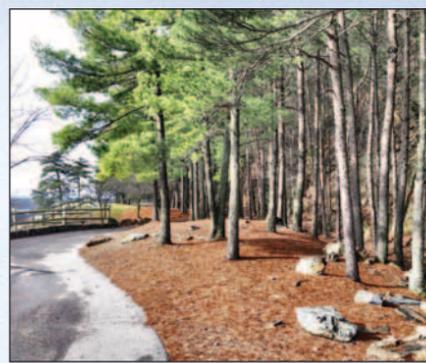
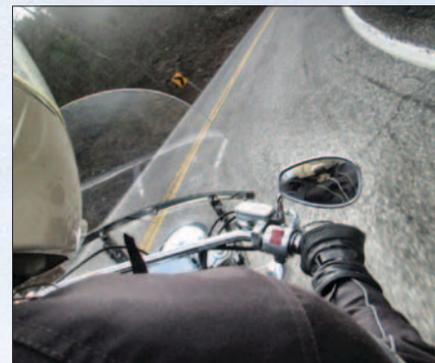
with Marc Ritchie and Rose Grant

Lakes and dams have long been a staple of ride-fodder for me. After getting back in the game several years ago, the digital age was firmly in place. And finding one of these on the computer, whether it be a map program, or content from an E publication or social media post, was about as easy as getting a drone caught in my hair, and less painful.

This was another ride a few years ago, as weather, roads and colds, still haven't cooperated with free time. This made the cut of reruns in a big way. Please enjoy another one from the vault and we'll catch up with something fresh in next month's issue, and we can tuck GRS (Grumpy Rider Syndrome) away for good!

All systems were "Go" for launch. The Bing Crosby, 40s-like temps, we started off with, made an easy decision to take "the juice" along, otherwise known as heated gear. Unlike the former NFL all pro, this game changer has nothing to do with white Broncos, but has been known to associate with leather gloves. Somewhere in the Blue Ridge Mountains, there was a dam calling. Google Earth showed it to be around 130 miles away, easily doable provided we got an early start, and didn't get lost anywhere. Lost is just a relative term anyways. We're never really lost on a bike, just extending our exploring.

I selected "avoid highways" on the maps app and took Rt. 11 south to Lexington. At the HOJOs we used to stay at for base camping near the Devil's Backbone Outpost Brewery, we bailed on I-81. Rolling the dice, we hoped it wouldn't be the notorious Talladega restart, two-wide, white knuckled, death grip on the bars, experience with trucks. Fortunately, traffic was light, and we smoothly made it to Rt. 60, avoiding the traffic lights, on our left behind four-lane.



Rose and I opted for 501 to Glasgow from Buena Vista. We were following two SUVs: one of which turned, and the other pulled over to let us by. How's that for timing? Excitement was building as Alter Bridge played over my earbuds. The awesome twisties that carve their way through the mountains, down to the James River, awaited us. The road was clean and dry, and we were pocketing all of the apexes, with childish exuberance, until we synched up with a buzzkill: the dreaded minivan. About that time, one of Journey's legendary ballads was playing, coinciding with the change of atmosphere. We paraded behind our emasculated friend, falling miserably short of posted speeds, retching as each perfectly paved curve was passed, ne'er a scrape to be heard. The next set of clear dotted yellow lines was quickly taken advantage of.

Rose and I made quick work of Bedford and enjoyed some clear sailing on 122 to our turn on 608. Boat yards and lake community real estate signs began to appear. The large power lines indicated we were close. The GPS app instructed me



to turn right, where we were met with a muddy road. Times like these I wish I had a Tenere or GS, or a real GPS app that includes "avoid gravel."

As it turned out, I should have approached from the southwest along Rt. 40. Re-vectoring around all of the coves to the dam found us in Clampett Nation. I pictured Jeff Foxworthy doing standup and joking, "If you own more cars than you have wheels for, you might..." Sealing the deal, was the loose pit bull charging at us in the middle of the road. I had no choice but to nail the throttle and cock my leg. My commitment made, the carnivorous canine, lunged as close as he could, as we zoomed by. Muddy roads, or otherwise, we weren't going back that way.

At last, we passed a sign for the dam. About that time, Rose said the camera quit working. We stopped at the park down river to examine the patient. It had been acting up for the last few months, making a clicking sound every time it would shut down. This time, no matter what, it would not open. Rose asked if I had any tools with me. I said I did. Long story short: The camera will never function properly again. Fortunately, we both had our smart phones which take excellent pictures.

Rose and I crossed a bridge below the dam. "Whoah!", I shouted. It was like a mini Hoover Dam. The road led us to a visitor's center above the lake. Inside there were restrooms



and exhibits including a large 3D map of the area. The displays were very interesting and presented very well. Even I could understand them. Here is an excerpt from smithmtn.com. "Smith Mountain Project is a 636-megawatt pumped storage hydroelectric facility on the Roanoke River that utilizes an upper reservoir (Smith Mountain Lake) and a lower reservoir (Leesville Lake). Water stored in Smith Mountain Lake first passes through turbine-generators in the powerhouse to produce electricity and is discharged into Leesville Lake. From there some water is released through the Leesville Dam or pumped back into Smith Mountain."

Outside there was a walkway that led to an observation area. There were pine trees and rock walls alongside a path which looked like something out of the movie, "North By Northwest." The views of the dam were spectacular! The water from the lake, was all the way near the top of the spillways from all the rain we had recently. It was holding back a massive amount of water! Workers could be seen hoisting platforms with the crane below. A labyrinth of wooden walkways could be seen on the other side. A head tower from the old trolley cable was at the end of the path, adding to my curiosity. Fortunately, there was a sign with a description with small words. Rose and I had the whole place to ourselves. There were benches along the fence we could have sat at all day.

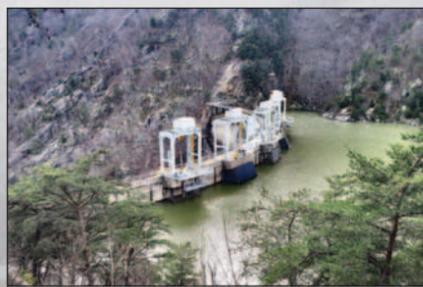
Unfortunately, it was time to go. The days were finally getting longer, but still way too short. We would have to come back another time to absorb the rest of the project. Rose, Nauti and I, had a long ride ahead of us and it was approaching 3PM. We found our way to Rt. 40 and followed the GPS instructions, turning on several roads we'd never been on. Sensing Roanoke approaching with the increased traffic, businesses and lights, the sun was getting low. I hopped on the ramp for 81 again. "Twice in one day. Oh Boy!", I thought. To those driving emasculated minivans and hybrids: The on ramp is for accelerating to highway speeds, not braking. Just sayin'.

Team Honda finally made it to Rt. 220 and friendlier roads. It was getting dark as we passed Warm Springs for home. We latched on to a "blocker", in the form of a pickup truck guiding us through the forest after a green flag pitstop. Just before Highland County, he turned at a driveway, leaving us to dance with deer by ourselves. Nauti was called on once again, to guide us home in the dark, breaking the silence and announcing our presence with her menacing growl. It was the icing on the cake of a truly extraordinary day!

All of the things we experienced on this journey, were the result of a passion to ride. I've said it before. These magnificent machines can be magical. They take us out of our comfort zones, where life begins. When I see a bike, I don't just see a motorcycle. I see an adventure waiting to happen, and another golden opportunity to enrich and fulfill an otherwise ordinary existence.

Cheers and thanks for reading!

Marc Ritchie  
Photos: Rose Grant





# The Lighthouse

God's light reveals what His Love can heal.  
Luke 1:79

## THE PRAYER CHAIR

A man's daughter had asked the local minister to come and pray with her father. When the minister arrived, he found the man lying in bed with his head propped up on two pillows. An empty chair sat beside his bed.

The minister assumed that the old fellow had been informed of his visit. "I guess you were expecting me," he said. "No, who are you?" said the father. "I'm the new minister at your church," he replied. "When I saw the empty chair, I figured you knew I was going to show up." "Oh yeah, the chair," said the bedridden man. "Would you mind closing the door?"

Puzzled, the minister shut the door. "I have never told anyone this, not even my daughter," said the man. "But all of my life I have never known how to pray. At church I used to hear the pastor talk about prayer, but it went right over my head. I abandoned any attempt at prayer," the old man continued, "until one day, about four years ago, my best friend said to me, 'Joe, prayer is just a simple matter of having a conversation with Jesus."

Here is what I suggest. Sit down in a chair; place an empty chair in front of you, and in faith see Jesus on the chair. It's not

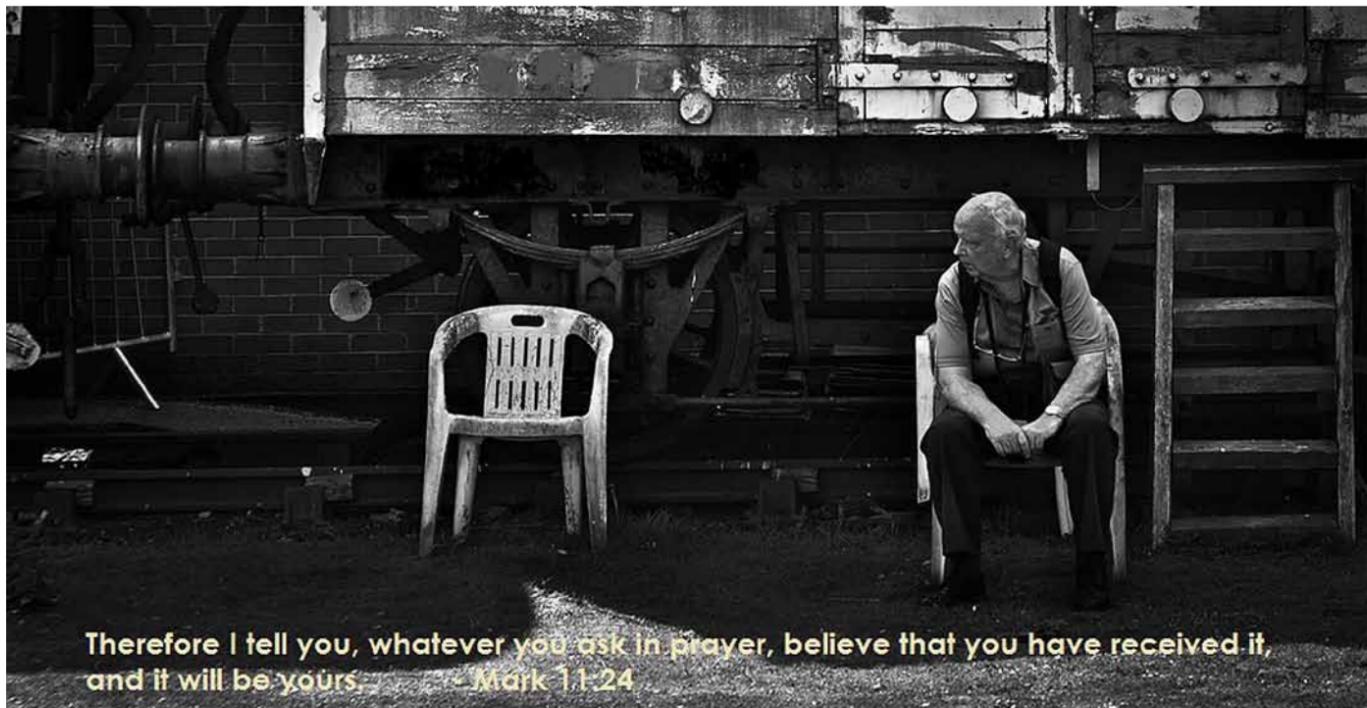
spooky because He promised, "I'll be with you always." Then, just speak to Him in the same way you're doing with me right now.'

So, I tried it, and I've liked it so much that I do it a couple of hours every day. I'm careful though. If my daughter saw me talking to an empty chair, she'd either have a nervous breakdown or send me off to the funny farm."

The minister was deeply moved by the story and encouraged the old man to continue on the journey. Then he prayed with him, anointed him with oil, and returned to the church. Two nights later the daughter called to tell the minister that her daddy had died that afternoon.

"Did he die in peace?" he asked. "Yes, when I left the house about two o' clock, he called me over to his bedside, told me he loved me and kissed me on the cheek. When I got back from the store an hour later, I found him dead. But there was something strange about his death. Apparently, just before Daddy died, he leaned over and rested his head on the chair beside the bed. What do you make of that?"

The minister wiped a tear from his eye and said, "I wish we could all go like that."



Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. - Mark 11:24

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- Neale Donald Walsch



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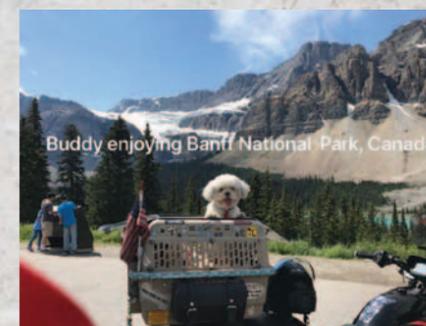
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# The Real Riders

## SASSY, BUDDY & EMMY LU The Three Amigos

We are Maurice and Brenda Le Blanc and we have been riding with our pets for over 25 years. Currently we ride with 3 Shih Tzu mixes. Sassy, Emmy Lu and Buddy. Sassy is 11 and Emmy Lu and Buddy are 10. They are all rescues and they travel everywhere with us. Sassy & Emmy have ridden since they were pups and Buddy since he was 3. They have clothing for every kind of weather and cooling pads and fans for heat. We never leave them out of our sight. They have ridden all over the U.S. and Canada. Our longest trip with them was 5,000 miles from Northeast Tennessee to Saskatchewan, Canada, on the road for 2 weeks. They love the junk food and hotels. We picnic for lunch and once they are settled in the hotel for the night we sneak out for dinner. They just want to be with us and we love having them. If they can't go we don't go. We love having them with us and they love going.



Buddy enjoying Banff National Park, Canada



Emmy at Americade Lake George, N.Y.



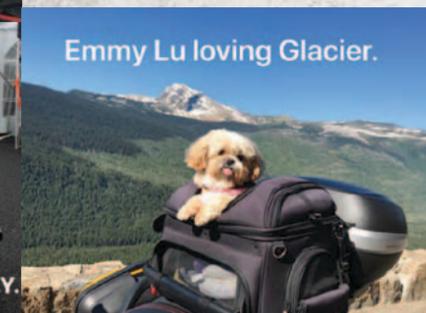
Emmy Lu taking in the sights in Glacier.



Sassy



The Three Amigos lounging after riding all day.



Emmy Lu loving Glacier.



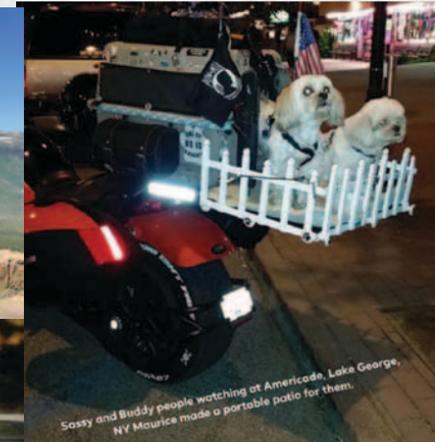
Mom and Emmy Lu riding the Smoky Mountains



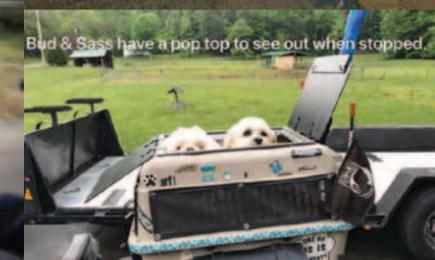
Sassy and Buddy ride with Maurice in a deluxe pet carrier.



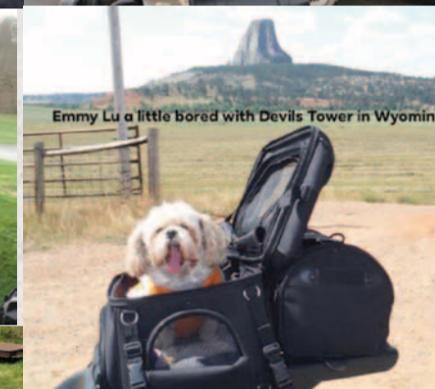
Mom and Emmy Lu



Sassy and Buddy people watching at Americade, Lake George, NY. Maurice made a portable patio for them.



Bud & Sassy have a pop top to see out when stopped.



Emmy Lu a little bored with Devils Tower in Wyoming.



Sassy sightseeing in Canada

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# Good For You THE GREAT OUTDOORS



Did you know that us Americans spend 90 percent of our lives indoors? Between commuting to and from our jobs, spending likely over eight hours a day working and going about our normal daily business, we see nature more on our TVs than we do in real life. This may not be true for those whose motorcycles are their only mode of transportation but unfortunately for most of us it is.

Not only is that a depressing statistic, but there are real health benefits of being outdoors that we're missing out on when we're confined to our homes and office buildings. Research suggests just 120 minutes (that's two hours) per week is associated with good health and wellbeing. From improving our moods to feeling more chill, being outdoors is something we all could use more of. Here's some other excellent reasons of why spending time outdoors is good for you:

**Breathe better air** - Between pollution, seasonal allergies and creepy crawlies outside, some of us would prefer staying inside as often as possible. But if you thought you're breathing better air inside, I hate to break it to you: indoor air pollution can be up to 10 times worse than what you're inhaling outdoors.

Most of us think of pollution as factory smoke or car exhaust, but indoor air pollution means our homes are loaded with it too, and often at levels significantly higher than what you'd find outside. Inadequate ventilation, paints, chemicals from household and personal products and mold all contribute. So if you need to get a breath of fresh air, it's time to head outside.

**Soak up that vitamin D** - One of the most common deficiencies among American adults is a vitamin D deficiency. What makes the vitamin different from most of the ones we need is that our bodies actually produce most of the vitamin D we need, instead of relying on the foods we eat to supply it. Our bodies convert the sunshine we soak up into chemicals that turn it into the vitamin D we all know and love.

However, if we don't get outdoors enough, our body struggles to get enough sunshine to make vitamin D. Whenever possible, try to get at least 10 to 15 minutes of unprotected time in the sun each day and reap the health benefits of being outdoors.

**Help counteract seasonal affective disorder** - While this might apply only for half of the year, it's a big one. Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is a type of depression that strikes in early autumn and worsens in the winter. While researchers aren't sure what causes it exactly, a lack of light and vitamin D is suspected to play a role.

Even if you don't have SAD, a lack of natural light during cooler weather can really affect your mood. Mitigate the effects and increase your vitamin D intake at the same time by heading outside.

**Indulge in forest bathing** - No, it doesn't involve an outdoor shower. It's closer to camping. But forest bathing, or forest therapy, is based on the Japanese concept of Shinrin-yoku, which emphasizes spending time away from the hustle and bustle of the cities and embracing nature.

The Japanese, already wise with their Okinawa diet, are on to something. Getting into nature can boost activity of a type of white blood cell that helps fight infection and tumor cells. It also help lower your blood pressure and reduce stress, something we can all use.

**Ease anxiety** - Feeling anxious about something? Taking a stroll outside can help. Researchers have found that just being outdoors in nature can improve your overall feelings of wellbeing and reduce anxiety. Escaping the indoors and heading outside can also boost creative juices — it's a reason why walking meetings are becoming more popular.

**Practice your grounding** - Have you heard of grounding, or earthing, before? It's a way of connecting to the earth's energy by going barefoot. Our feet draw in the earth's electrical charges, allowing them to flow through us. The results are improved sleep, reduced inflammation and more time in nature — all wins. And of course, you need to be outside to connect with the earth; carpet or hardwood floors don't have the same effects!

## How to Spend More Time Outdoors

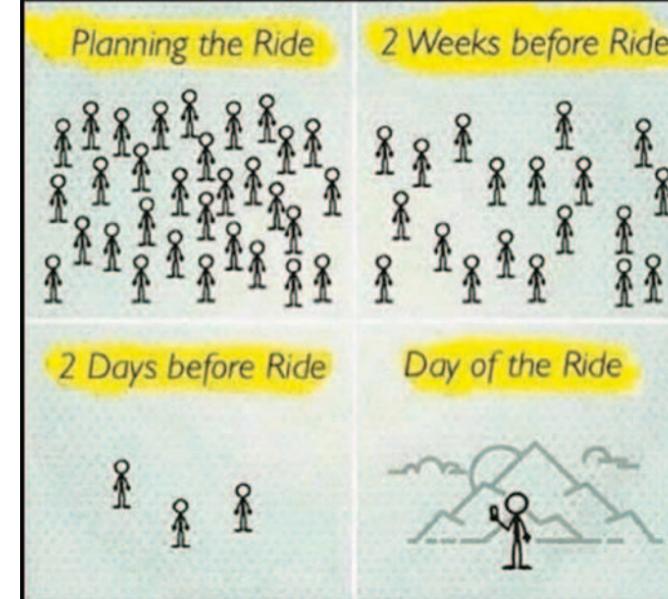
Struggling to figure out how you can add the health benefits of being outdoors into your lifestyle and spend more time outside? It's not as difficult as you think. In addition to enjoying time riding on your 2, 3 or 4 wheels, you can also...

- Exercise outside. Ride your bicycle. Take your yoga sessions to the backyard or skip the treadmill and visit the park instead.
- Take a walk. Break up the mid-afternoon slump with a short walk outside, or go on a walk as you chat on the phone.
- Eat outside. Enjoy a change of scenery and eat your meals outdoors.
- Embrace seasonal activities. Cold outside? Play in the snow, head to the park or go for a brisk walk. Warm out? Try hiking or watching your favorite baseball team play.

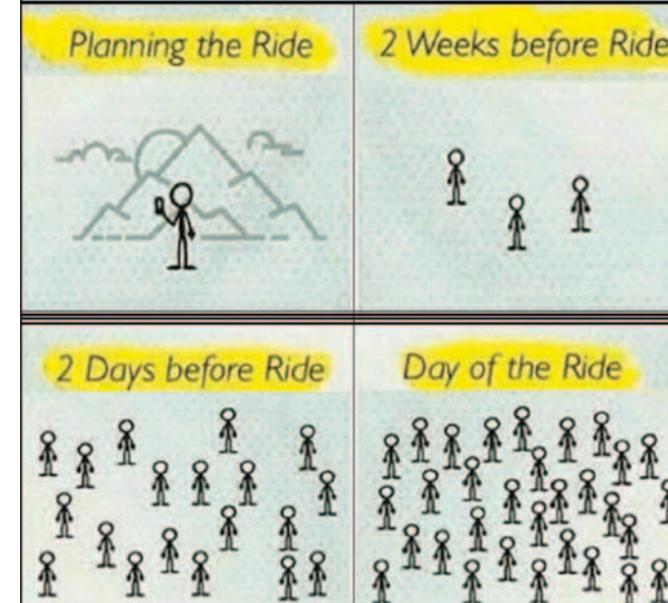
So no matter what the seas on, it's time to get off the couch and enjoy the great outdoors. Your health will thank you. *Source: draxe.com*



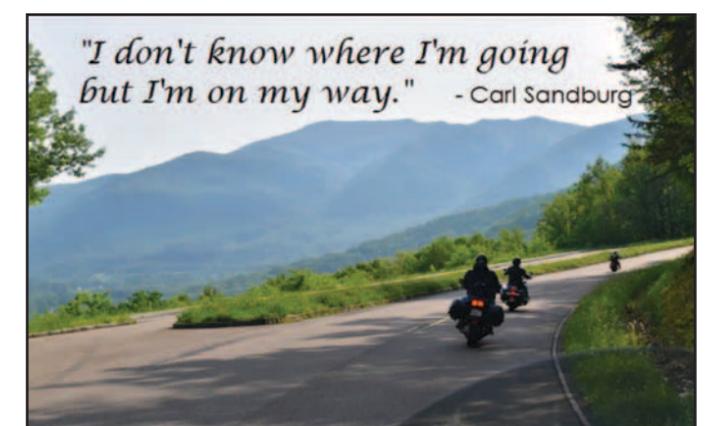
This is the unfortunate truth of many motorcycle events. Most of these are annual events so they are counting on you to show up to help out their cause. The event coordinators have donated their time & efforts into making the event as successful as possible so all you have to do is show up!



LET'S TURN THINGS AROUND TO GO FROM THIS TO THIS!!!



I'm not easily distracted. I just...  
OMG, do I hear a bike?



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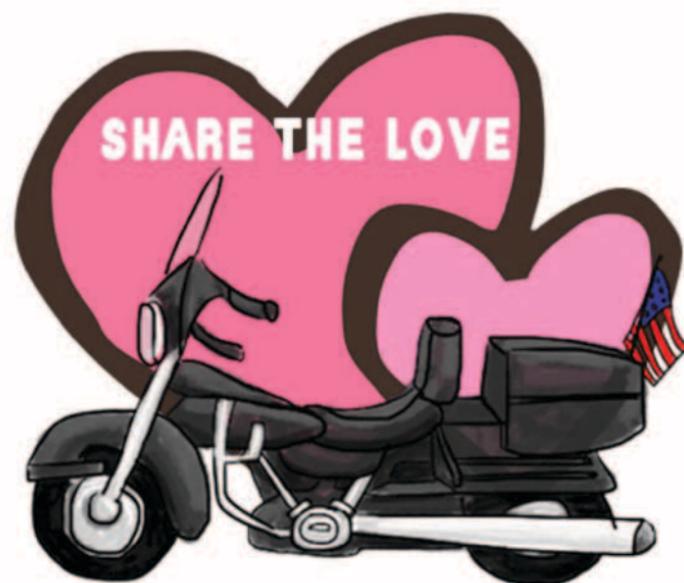
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# MAKING TRAX

With Jennifer Traxler



## Share The Love

The vast majority of people I speak with had their first experience with a motorcycle on the passenger seat. Someone shared their love of motorcycles with someone else. I'm no exception. I can remember, roughly thirty years ago, going to a family reunion as a child and (with my parent's permission) got on the backseat of my older cousin's Honda for a spin around the block. I can still close my eyes and remember the exhilaration I felt when he told me to hold on tight as he punched it. It was like riding a roller coaster! Fast forward to adulthood and I've had the same experience with more than one friend or partner. Yes, I ride my own motorcycle now, but I probably wouldn't have if someone didn't share their love of riding with me.

As with all aspects of riding, safety is the number one priority. Enjoyment is a given, but safety is crucial. I've seen and heard of too many taking risks while riding with or as a passenger and suffering the consequences. So with that said, please learn to ride safely with a passenger and ride safely as a passenger. I will discuss both in this month's article.

Riding with a passenger (or "two up") is a big responsibility. Not only are you taking your life in your hands but you have the duty to keep your passenger safe as well. The main thing to keep in mind as you get ready to share your love of motorcycles is the road readiness of your motorcycle. Are your tires properly inflated? Is your state inspection current? Is your bike equipped with a passenger seat and foot pegs? Will the weight limit on your bike even accommodate two people? And probably the most important of all, is your suspension adjusted to handle the weight of two people? Improper suspension and tire pressure can make your motorcycle handle in ways that are outside of your comfort level. It may swing wide in a turn or delay coming to a stop. It can

also cause uneven tire wear. Check your owner's manual for the proper suspension settings and weight limit. Another equally important consideration is your familiarity and experience with your motorcycle. If you just got a new motorcycle, I strongly suggest riding solo for as long as possible before inviting anyone aboard. I suggest spending time familiarizing yourself with your new bike, and to gain the experience necessary to make split second decisions (on that bike) that could possibly save both of your lives. Riding with a passenger is most definitely not the time to be learning the ins and outs of a new motorcycle. You should also definitely not show off or be prideful. Ride conservatively, don't impair yourself with drugs or alcohol, stay mentally aware and awake, and be ready for anything. It's important to have a healthy amount of fear. As we all know, riding around cars or in traffic can be dangerous so stay alert and rely on your skills. Keep yourself and your passenger's safety in the front of your mind. Now might be a good time to check the details of your motorcycle insurance.

Be sure to ride as smooth as conditions allow, so you don't catch your passenger off guard. You can anticipate a gear change or stop when you see a red light ahead, but your passenger may not, so shift gears gently. Brake earlier because your bike may take longer to stop, as well. Bumping helmets can be pretty awkward, but it can be avoided if you encourage your passenger to grip your hips with their knees and hold onto your waist so they don't slide into you. Turning might be a little wider than anticipated with the additional weight of your bike so make sure to head into corners a little tighter, keeping in mind your angle, weight distribution, and the amount of tread on your tires. Your bike is not only more top heavy with a passenger, but rear heavy as well. This can make your bike handle in a way that is totally foreign to you, so please be cautious. Getting up to speed with the additional load might take a little longer so give yourself lots of extra room when pulling out into traffic.

If you don't have Bluetooth communication devices either on your helmet or built into them, I encourage you to establish a few basic hand signals before you ride. If your passenger needs to stop for a break they need to be able to tell you. There are many universal hand signals to draw from, so perhaps sit down to YouTube and practice them together before your ride. Another thing to discuss before you set off is where and when you'll be stopping for food/hydration and bathroom breaks. When stopping be sure to park on clean level surfaces so it's easier to brace your bike when your passenger dismounts.

The underlying message is that passengers can change the balance and momentum of your ride, and can make an already top-heavy bike even more so, so be prepared, help them be prepared, and ride even safer than you usually do.

There is far more to being a passenger on a motorcycle than just getting on and hanging on tight. Even though Virginia has a helmet law, it is important for me to mention that you should always wear a properly fitting helmet, even if you're only taking a ride around the block. It is your responsibility to prepare yourself to ride a motorcycle. Please wear as much gear as possible and

practical. I will never forget the memory of a couple being wheeled in on stretchers when I was in the ER with a broken index finger as a child. They had been in a motorcycle accident and were wearing only the bare minimum of gear. I won't go into details but I will say that they probably lost half their tattoos that day. It's the kind of image that's burned into my mind every time I gear up to ride. I'd rather sweat than bleed like they did.

Make sure the person you're riding with is a skilled rider and is familiar with the bike you'll be on. Everyone, whether they ride or not, should visit a Virginia DVM or go to [www.dmvnow.com](http://www.dmvnow.com) and update your emergency contact information, in case the worst happens. I cannot stress this enough.

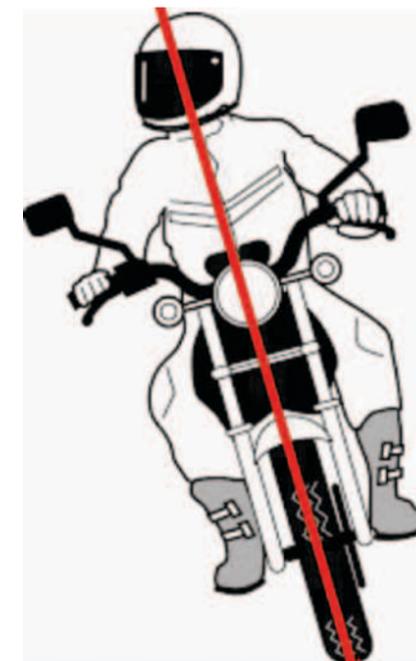
Practice getting on and off the bike before you set out. Let your rider show you what works best for them and always wait for them to tell you when it's safe to mount and dismount the bike. They need to brace themselves for the additional load on their bike. Their comfort while riding should be at the front of your mind. Once on the motorcycle, the best and safest way to hold on is to grip your rider's hips with your knees, and place your hands loosely around their waist. If you can't reach all the way around your rider or find it uncomfortable to do so, you may ask your rider to invest in some wearable handles (pictured). Make sure to keep your feet on the foot pegs at all times and NEVER hold onto your rider's arms. That could lead to them losing control of the motorcycle.

Many riders avoid or simply won't ride with a passenger because they've had a bad experience with a passenger who was distracting, got on and off their motorcycle awkwardly, or shifted their weight randomly. Don't be that kind of passenger! Not only is it unnerving for the rider, but it is dangerous.



As I mentioned previously, wear as much protective gear as possible, not only to protect your skin and head in case of an accident, but at minimum a pair of thick jeans will lessen the chance of being burned by a hot exhaust pipe. Chaps or riding pants are ideal. Make sure your pants are tucked into your boots and you don't have any shoelaces hanging. You definitely don't want to get snagged on the bike! Wear riding gloves at all times. They typically have extra padding in the palms and knuckle protection. If you wear a half helmet, make sure your eye protection fits snugly so it doesn't blow off in the wind, and wear a bandana or head wrap underneath to keep the wind out of your ears.

Remember, you are a guest on someone's motorcycle, so be sure to be a gracious one! Be steady. Don't make any sudden or unexpected movements that could throw off their balance. Don't surprise or distract your rider in any way. Take pictures only when it's safe to do so. If you do need to shift positions in your seat, check with your rider



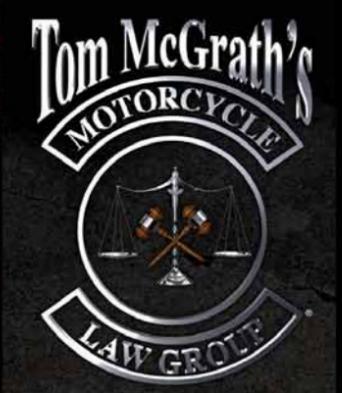
to see when is a good time to do so. For many, the best time is when you're at full speed going in a straight line. The centrifugal motion will help keep the bike upright and more balanced as you shift your weight. The bottom line is to be predictable.

The most important thing about being a passenger is to be "one with the bike". Really the only thing that should leave the center of gravity of the bike is your head, to look around your rider's helmet to see the road ahead. Your body mass should always be in alignment with the motorcycle. Leaning when your rider doesn't expect it, or too much or too little in any direction can make it more difficult for your rider to control the bike, and can lead to a frightening experience.

Thanks for sharing the love! Let's all make it a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone involved. And get out there and share your love of motorcycles with as many people as possible!



*No road is too long when you have good company*



## Motorcycle Safety Inspections, Cell Phones & Fuel Taxes

More from the Virginia General Assembly January 28, 2020

Last night I attended the House Transportation Sub-Committee on behalf of the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists (VCOM) in order to support the various hands free bills (also known as put down the phone and drive bills), as well as to follow the progress of the legislation to do away with the Virginia Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection Program. All of those bills were rolled into House Bill 1414, which is Speaker Filler-Corn's Omnibus Highway Bill - a 200 page behemoth containing numerous transportation safety and funding measures. If you would like to follow the progress of this bill and read the full text you may do so here: <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=201&typ=bil&val=hb1414&submit=GO>

Some of the highlights of this bill are as follows:

- It would prohibit the use of hand held devices while driving a motor vehicle.
- It would prohibit the possession of any open container of alcohol in the passenger area of a motor vehicle. A container would be considered open if the seal is broken.
- Motor vehicle safety inspections would be required every 24 months rather than every 12 months. VCOM is

working to understand how this would affect the Virginia Rider Training Program Fund due to the fact that the fund currently receives \$1.50 from every motorcycle safety inspection. It would cut registration fees using a formula that reportedly reduce fees by half.

- It would raise the gas tax by 12 cents per gallon over three years, and would then tie the tax to the inflation rate rather than fuel prices.

While the bill does far more than what I have listed here, these were among the issues discussed at the Motorcycle Lobby Day Meeting and I wanted to keep all informed as to the progress of these issues. VCOM will continue to keep you informed as to the progress of this and other bills making their way through the Virginia General Assembly that affect Virginia Motorcyclists. As always, if you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Matt Danielson  
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**Tips**  
to help your body adjust to daylight saving time

1. Don't change your schedule  
Stick to regular waking, eating, sleeping and exercise times.
2. Have a nighttime routine  
Prepare your body for sleep by engaging in a few relaxing activities before hitting the hay.
3. Avoid long naps  
Keep naps short (between 20-30 minutes) to avoid disrupting your sleep schedule.
4. Get some natural sunlight  
Sunlight helps regulate your body's internal clock.



# SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2020

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30



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