



Since 2014

Valley Riders

February 2017



Volume 4

Number 2



What's Happening



Annual Memorial Frozen Bun Run: We filled a table for breakfast this morning at Brook's Ranch as we began our Annual Memorial Frozen Bun Run. We had 12 members for breakfast and 10 members who left for Avila after breakfast (Sindi and Big John came to have breakfast and wish us a safe trip). So heading for Avila were 4 bikes and two cars. We picked up a 5th bike with John meeting us in Lemoore. We stopped for a break at Reef City then headed for "old 41". Great ride through the hills and curves, then another break in Atascadero. Thank goodness we had Ken & Linda reserving a table at Fat Cats for us in Avila. When we arrived, we waited about 3 minutes and then sat down to a great lunch. We remembered and saluted those who no longer ride with us. After lunch we headed back to Fresno with another break in Kettleman City. Today was the start of a great riding year for Valley Riders. Have a great new year!



Monthly Dinner Social: We had a great time tonight at the social at Farmer Brothers in Clovis. We had a wonderful opportunity to talk with some of our newer members. Nice meeting Mac and Sharon, talking with Dean and Ruth, and it's always good company talking with Jerry and Suzie.



Monthly Meeting: We would like to thank everyone who took time out of a Saturday morning to come out to the meeting today. We had 23 members attend and met some new faces today. Many thanks to Dean & Ruth, Oscar, and Mac for joining us! It was also nice to Richard back out. We sang a very happy birthday to Glen, who later told a funny story about a memorable date Johnnie went on years ago. We talked about upcoming rides and Jerry spoke about making sure to T-CLOCK our bikes for the ride season. It looks like we have several people going on the Death Valley Ride the weekend of February 18 - 20th. It seems most are staying at the Stagecoach Hotel and Casino. Our other big trip is to Mammoth in June and we have heard we have about 6 couples going so far. It's going to be fun! The 50/50 give away was won by Ruth and Oscar. The both won \$54 by drawing their own tickets! What are the odds! Congratulations to them both. Wendy updated memberships and let us know we have about 70 members now and Sindi took lots of pictures and put them on our Facebook page. Many thanks to both of them for all they do.



Ride to Mono Winds: I counted 15 bikes and 18 riders, a great group and a good lunch too!



Celebrations

Birthdays: Feb 2: **Jim Bingham**; Feb 15: **Hans Mikkelson**; Feb 22: **Gustavo Paffen**; Feb 23: **Bob Felker**

Anniversary: Feb 20: **Ken & Angie Gong**



Safety



The Pre-Ride Motorcycle Inspection

Debrief your motorcycle after each ride to make sure it's mechanically ready and safe for the next ride.

Motorcycles have become so reliable that it's easy to take them for granted. Back when I started riding, you were cautioned about carefully examining your clutch cable and avoiding holding the clutch lever in while you waited at a light, lest the cable break and propel you into crossing traffic. These days the recommendation is to keep your bike in gear with clutch in to permit an immediate escape if a car veers toward you.

In the bad old days, fasteners routinely vibrated off bikes, spokes broke, steering head bearing needed regular attention, drum brakes required cleaning, ignition point timing and gap had to be monitored closely, and you needed to check your oil frequently to see how much had leaked or burned.

Tremendous strides in the quality of materials, the design of components, and manufacturing tolerances have given us much more reliable machines. It is tempting to simply assume that everything is right and nothing hangs on the brink of failure. But as the service tech at a shop said to me recently after double-checking something and finding that a near disaster would have occurred otherwise, "You know what they say about assume."

It is therefore prudent to pay attention to the mechanics of your motorcycle. Check those things that you can see or get a wrench on. Feel or measure for proper adjustment. And, most of all, be sure that your last ride didn't do some damage that will spoil your next one. The Motorcycle Safety Foundation has developed a simple checklist, outlined in the accompanying list, summarized with the acronym T-CLOCK, for the headings of each section.

After, Not Before

Although this is usually described as a "pre-ride" inspection, the best and most convenient time to perform it is shortly after your last ride. This helps to ensure that the motorcycle will be ready for your next ride because it gives time to correct any discrepancies you find. A nail lodged in a tire will, if discovered on Sunday morning, probably scrub your ride that day. But if you find it after riding home on Friday night, you can get it repaired on Saturday. If you discovered it after your ride on Sunday, you'll have time to arrange an alternate means of getting to work the next morning.

One of the best ways to find problems is through the post-ride cleaning many riders give their bikes. I have no doubt those riders who routinely clean their motorcycles do uncover the small problems that would become big problems much earlier than riders who simply walk around their bikes, look them over and shake a few pieces to make sure they are attached. Loose pieces, small leaks, the first signs of corrosion and components out of whack are much more obvious when you are touching every external part of your bike.

Wheels and tires should be looked over carefully, which is not easy with a cruiser with only a sidestand and deep fenders. A tool which makes both cleaning and inspecting your cruiser much easier is a work stand, such as the Craftsman Motorcycle Jack. Getting the wheels off the floor of your garage helps buff the grunge off the rims all the way around and simplifies the process of checking the tires for foreign objects and other damage that might be signs of a pending blowout.

Avoid Big Surprises

Tires are the most vulnerable component of your bike because they stand the most in harm's way. I have discovered nails and other objects in my tires before rides several times. Those pre-ride checks, along with the fact that I often carry tire-repair gear, are the reasons that flat tires have only stranded me twice in over a million miles of riding. I can recall two occasions when I found puncturing objects before they penetrated far enough to deflate the tire.

One time to be extra scrupulous is after maintenance has been performed. Of the hundreds of test bikes I have received in a quarter-century of testing them, three arrived with loose drain plugs. All had just left the in-house service facilities of major motorcycle manufacturers. Since some service people are offended when I start double-checking their work, I have learned to ride around the corner before I do it, but I usually don't go much farther than that. On my own bikes, I keep an eye on things that have been removed or replaced recently. For example, I pay extra attention to the seal of a new oil filter and double-check a recently installed fastener to be sure it isn't loosening up. One time I discovered that a front axle clamp had fallen off. I know two riders who adjusted chains and shortly thereafter lost their rear axle nuts, though one took over 100 miles to depart the bike. Rechecking those recently serviced maintenance points avoids such problems.

A good inspection program should uncover more than the immediate black-and-white problems like failed bulbs, punctured tires and missing fasteners. Some components may gradually slide out of spec, and cause smaller problems that the rider may not notice because they happen so gradually. A common example is throttle-cable adjustment. The rider may not notice the small, steady change, but the growing play causes a small deterioration in throttle-control precision. Another item that may not be obvious is worn or damaged steering head bearings.

If your routine inspection includes checks and even occasional measurement of the adjustment of the items that gradually change over time, your motorcycle will operate with more precision.

Among the potential threats to your safety while riding, mechanical failure is fairly low on the list. Wearing bright colors, staying off the bike after having a beer or practicing your braking are much more important. But that won't much matter if the nail you missed causes a tire to blow out or if the recently installed drain plug in your drive shaft housing falls out in heavy fast-moving traffic, locking up the rear wheel. Motorcycles are more reliable than they have ever been, but that still doesn't mean you can ever ignore your bike's mechanical completely.

The T-CLOCK Inspection

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation created the T-CLOCK mnemonic as a memory and organization aid for a pre-ride safety check of a typical motorcycle. Each letter represents a particular inspection category, as follows:

- T - Tires & Wheels
- C - Controls
- L - Lights & Electrics
- O - Oil
- C - Chassis
- K - Kickstand

Tires and Wheels

Tires: Pressure correct (cold), tread condition. No cuts, bulges, puncture of foreign objects.

Wheels: Spokes tight and intact; rims true; no free play when flexed; bearing seals intact; spin freely.

Brakes: Firm feel; sufficient pad depth, no leaks or links in hoses or cables.

Controls

Levers: Pivot bolt and nut; action and position correct; pivots lubed.

Cables: Ends and shafts lubed; no fraying or kinks; no binding when handlebar turned; proper adjustment.

Hoses: Check for damage or leaks, proper routing.

Throttle: Snaps closed freely when released; no excess play.

Lights

Brake and Taillight(s): All filaments work; both levers actuate brake light.

Headlight: All filaments work; properly aimed; no damage.

Lenses: Clean; no condensation; tight.

Reflectors: Clean; intact.

Battery: Fluid level; terminals clean and tight; held down securely; vent tube not kinked or mis-routed.

Wiring: Check for pinching or fraying; properly routed; no corrosion.

Oil and Fluids

Levels: Brake fluid, oil, final drive, transmission, coolant, fuel.

Leaks: Check all systems for leaks.

Condition: Check color of brake fluid & coolant.

Chassis

Frame: Paint lifting or peeling may indicate cracking.

Steering head & swing arm bearings: Lift wheels off floor, grab lower fork legs and pull and push to feel for play; repeat at rear. Turn fork to feel for detents in bearings.

Suspension: Smooth movement; proper adjustment; no leaks.**

Chain or belt: Tension; lube, look for wear.

Fasteners: Look for missing or loose threaded fasteners, clips, pins.

Kickstand

Sidestand: Retracts firmly; no bending or damage; cut-out switch operates; spring intact.

Centerstand: Retracts firmly, no damage.



Rides/Activities



Sat, Feb 4: Ride to **Hilmar Cheese Factory** Leaving McDonalds (Herndon/Hwy 99) 8 am

Sat - Mon, Feb. 18-20: **Death Valley Trip** Check your E-Mail or Facebook for information



Next Get Together



Monthly Dinner Social: Thurs, Feb 9: Chili's Restaurant, 7010 N Fresno St 6:30 pm

**Monthly Meeting: Sat, Feb 25: Yosemite Falls Cafe 4278 W Ashlan Ave
8:30 am**



Valley Riders

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