



Republic Photo by Thelma Heatwole

Sun City Power Rider Club members Dr. Joseph Herzog, great-grandmother Celestia Spurlock and Gerard Janzen, 82, huddle before trail ride.

## Sun City oldsters make 1st motorcycle trail ride

APR 29 1970 By THELMA HEATWOLE

SUN CITY — The Sun City Power riders, ages 60 to 82, took off on their first motorcycle trail ride yesterday.

The "bold ones" with a yen for adventure zeroed in at 99th and Peoria avenues before nosing into the brisk wind for rendezvous and chow at the Moon Valley Country Club.

Power Rider President Celestia Spurlock, a great-grandmother, rode a pink Yamaha with a fringe trim. Her wind-breaker jacket was pink and so was a scarf that peaked from beneath her white helmet.

*Az. Republic*

Gerard "Jaco" Janzen, 82, took being the oldest cyclist in stride.

"I was always collecting the price as the oldest at our pilot club meetings when I flew a Piper back in Iowa," he said.

On the subject of safety, he said, "Darn right, you got to be careful. You have to drive defensively, be alert, on your toes. You can't sit and dream."

Jansen said he took up motorcycling two years ago because he belonged to a men's club 2 miles from his house here.

"That's too much for a bicycle on a windy day, so I bought myself a motorcycle.

"It's good transportation," he added, inviting a reporter to ride double on his motorcycle on the premier run.

Dr. Joseph V. Herzog rode a motorcycle extensively in Wisconsin and, since moving here, has racked up 600 miles on his steel steed.

The club was organized six weeks ago for the camaraderie and enjoyment of riding.

"It's for fun," said Mrs. Herzog, who rides as passenger with her husband. "There are no dues or long speeches."

Members exclaimed with pride when Lewis Morgan drove up on his Moto Guzzi cycle.

"That's the big one," one said. Morgan said the engine has the equivalent of 50 horsepower.

Dr. Cliff Millard said the club emphasizes safety, the rules of the road, the need to be a good driver. As a safety

measure, they planned to split up and take two routes to their destination.

Herzog reported later that all arrived safely for lunch and, after kibitzing, planned a ride home on side trails.

# You don't have to be young to go **HOG WILD** over motorcycles

By Susan Leonard  
Staff writer

**T**ibby Berglund took her first ride on the back of a Harley when she was 16.

She was hooked for life.

Now 74, Berglund still rides a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. But now she's the driver.

"There's nothing like the purr of a Harley."

Berglund, who lives in east Phoenix, said she enjoys the breeze on her face and the exhilaration when she rides.

"You feel free and like the sky is the limit," said Berglund, who works six days a week running an insurance company with her son.



Local motorcycle dealers say she is part of the growing number of older people who hop on their Harley (or Honda or Yamaha) looking for fun. Along the way they defy stereotypes of the over-50 set and redefine what it means to be a biker.

Berglund usually rides with her sons or son-in-law on the weekends. Most people don't realize how old she is until she takes off her helmet. Then, they're surprised.

Berglund specializes in selling insurance to motorcyclists and has about 3,000 clients, about half of them over 50. She has no plans to retire, fearing she would be "bored."

Across the Valley, Gene Grassie, 80, has found there's no reason to fear retirement, if you keep riding.

Grassie, a retired engineer and electrical-plant manager, started riding a motorcycle after he retired and moved to Sun City from Chicago in 1981.

"It keeps my mind alert because you know you can get killed on this thing," he said.

Grassie bought a cycle after his grandchildren urged him to ride their moped when he visited them in Ohio. He drives a 1985 Honda Elite 250.



Suzanne Starr/Staff photographer

"It keeps my mind alert because you know you can get killed on this thing," says 80-year-old biker Gene Grassie.

— See **BIKER GANG**, page NW7

## Biker gang not exactly bad to the bone

— **BIKER GANG**, from page NW6

"I only wish I could get the bigger ones," said Grassie, who is 5 feet 7 and weighs 150 pounds. "But I'm a little guy and can't handle those."

Grassie usually takes a breakfast ride, often 50 to 200 miles long, on Saturday mornings with a group from Sun City called the Flying Wheels.

Grassie is probably the oldest rider in his group but estimates there are more than 100 Sun City residents who ride motorcycles or scooters.

Although hooked on the two-wheel habit, the thought of quitting has been creeping up on him.

"Every time I realize I'm 80, I think, 'You can't keep this up — don't try and kid yourself.'"

People like Grassie serve as an inspiration to Jerry Ciptak, 53, of Chandler, who got his first motorcycle when he was 19. "I'm going to ride

until I can't ride anymore," said Ciptak, who sells equipment for gas stations and auto-repair shops.

Ciptak and his wife, Karin, 53, often ride with a group of 285 other Harley owners that belong to a club in Mesa. About a third are over 50.

Most wear leather but say they aren't outlaws and spend part of their time raising money for charity and delivering presents to poor children.

"A lot of people think we wear black leather because we want to look bad," he said. "We want to stay warm, and if you do take a spill on a bike, the leathers will protect you."

Ciptak said his wife had not ridden a motorcycle until several years ago when he brought home a new one.

"She used to grit her teeth and was very nervous," he said. "She was not sure which way to lean. Now, it's like she's sitting in a rocking chair."

MOTORCYCLES

OVER



Peter Schwepker/Staff photographer

Like most members of the Sun Cities Power Riders, Dave Jackson has had a long love affair with motorcycles.

## Retirees develop taste for eating up **THE ROAD**

By Julie Newberg  
Staff writer

Riders roll their motorcycles into town under the watchful eyes of local residents.

"They just kind of laugh, seeing that we're old people. They get a kick out of it," said Ruth Cole of Sun City West. "They always wave at us."

These bikers aren't the intimidating sort.

And onlookers are more apt to strike up a conversation and ask questions than to shy away in fright at the sight of senior motorcyclists.

No matter where they are, the Sun Cities Power Riders attract some degree of attention simply because they're motorcycle riders in a pack.

"You always get looks from some people. It's different to see a bunch of bikes," said Dave Jackson of Sun City.

Most riders in the group have had a long love affair with motorcycling.

Jackson started his in the 1940s when he bought his first bike. He sold all of his gear before he moved to Sun City. Then, one day, he spotted his neighbor's motorcycle.

A 1986 Honda Gold Wing was soon Jackson's proud possession.

"I enjoy just riding. Out here you get the camaraderie. It's fun, you know. It kind of just gets in your blood," Jackson said.

It's tough to pin down exactly what holds people to motorcycling for so long. Perhaps it has to do with the feeling of freedom, the wind in your face and the smell of places, whether a field of flowers or a feedlot.

"You get it all," said Ed Tower of Sun City, who rides with his wife, Pat.

About one-third of the 141 members are ex-pilots.

— See **MOTORCYCLES**, page NW7

### Motorcycles keep ex-pilots high on life

— **MOTORCYCLES**, from page NW6

Some are former Marines who served during World War II. Others flew in different capacities, such as Lester Cole, who landed airplanes on top of cars as an acrobatic pilot with his siblings in the Cole Brother's Air Show.

"When you're flying an airplane, it's almost like the airplane is an extension of your own body," said rider and retired pilot Walter Stonebraker of Scottsdale.

"You and the airplane are all one. You love that feeling of power and exhilaration and grace that an airplane has. To a lesser extent, you feel that on a motorcycle. . . .

"A motorcycle has tremendous power and acceleration. That's one of the things that pilots like," he said.

Just having fun is another reason

that they're drawn to bikes.

"We can't afford airplanes, so we got motorcycles for kicks," said John Willett of Sun City.

Not all of the members are former pilots. Some are just getting into the sport, while others have grown up with bikes. "There are some who have raced bikes, owned shops. It runs the whole gamut," Jackson said.

Don Hofstetter of Sun City is a relative newcomer to the sport, joining the group three years ago. Since then, he and his wife, Jeanne, have hit a major Harley-Davidson show in Sturgis, S.D., and have toiled around Oregon on a bike during the summer.

"It's the most fun thing to do in Sun City," he said. "I'm not that good of a golfer."

# Sun Cities' motorcyclists respond to national survey

By Dorothy Steck

On recent TV shows, several networks such as NBC and PBS profiled the new breed of motorcyclist as the "person next door." Citing motor industry statistics, the report stated that an increasing number of Americans, average age 38, with an average income of \$45 thousand enjoy biking and are spending \$8 billion on motorcycles and related accessories last year.

The stories coincide with a Progressive Auto Insurance study of 1,100 male policy holders across the country, half of whom were motorcyclists, and half who were not. According to Phillips

and Partners, "Progressive is the largest insurer of motorcyclists in Arizona with 12,500 policy owners."

"Our survey showed that today's male motorcyclists are quite different from the biker stereotype of the 50's," said Mike Randall, Progressive's Arizona general manager.

The Wester surveyed the local Flying Wheels Motorcycle Club to identify how closely members compared to motorcyclists in the national survey. President Jim Braschler spoke for the 52 club members who are mostly retired, live in the Sun Cities area and

comprised of 98% men and 2% women. The average age is 63 with 55 the youngest and 83 the oldest. Braschler clarifies, "A lot of people in the group, like me, never rode a bike before coming here." Flying Wheels Club members ride together on Mondays and Tuesdays with a breakfast ride on Saturdays.

The National survey showed on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the most romantic) motorcyclist who rode their bikes everyday rated themselves on average as an 8, that is, very romantic. Braschler said Flying Wheels members, "would rate a definite 10." The

national group said "The Lion King" was the movie most likely to make them cry. Braschler said no one had seen it. Other comparisons between the National and Flying Wheels responses by Braschler revealed the following:

Those moved by poetry: National 62%; SC Flying Wheels-Braschler 50-50.

Money is important to happiness: National 55% said no; SC Flying Wheels-Braschler, 90% are happy retirees.

Life's biggest thrill: National their kids; SC Flying Wheels-Braschler, waking up in the morning.

Dream Vacation: National Venice and California Redwoods; SC Flying Wheels-Braschler, Going to the kids' house for a couple of weeks and letting them feed you.

More comparisons included:

See **MOTORCYCLISTS**, Page B4

## MOTORCYCLISTS: Respond to survey, from Page B1

Celebrities/Characters they'd most like to be: National Cyclists: 1. Paul Newman, 2. Tony Soprano, 3. George Bailey (It's a Wonderful Life character), 4. Clint Eastwood, 5. David Wells, 6. Oprah Winfrey. Sun City Cyclists: 1. "Old movie stars such as James Cagney or Pat O'Brien, 2. Ex-cowboys—does anyone even know Tom Mix or Gene Autry?"

Favorite TV Shows: National Cyclists: 1. Melrose Place, 2. Ally McBeal, 3. NYPD Blue, 4. ER. Sun City Cyclists 1. "News since we can't read the paper

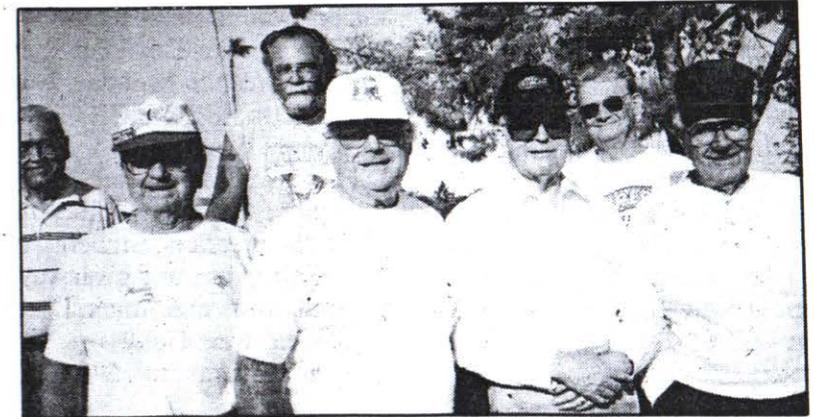
much anymore," 2. Mysteries.

Favorite Movies: National Cyclists: 1. Shakespeare in Love, 2. It's a Wonderful Life, 3. Jerry McGuire, 4. Prince of Tides, 5. Titanic. Sun City Cyclists: 1. "We don't go to the movies. We watch TV instead. We're in bed by 8 o'clock so we can get up early to go riding."

The Wester's survey shows today's Sun Cities motorcyclists are quite different from the national bikers of today and do not fit the stereotypes. Thank heavens!



The Flying Wheels Motorcycle club of the Sun Cities picked a hot, sunny day for a ride to Flagstaff. Shown are (l. to r.) Ted Torrence, Jim Salyer, Pres. Jim Braschler, Dick Hoffman, Dick Russell and Fred Yarger. Below (front, l. to r.) Leon Anthony, Jack Provo, Roy West and Jack Gleb. (Back, l. to r.) Jack Russell, Fred Yarger (who owns the only Harley in the club), and Henry Reiss. Photos, Dorothy Steck



# Open Road, Open Air... Opens New Horizons

By Dick Kemp

The closest the Sun Cities Power Riders ever came to a brush with the law, was when several inadvertently parked their motorcycles near a fire hydrant, then watched two police cars roar up.

"Turns out they were after a van of illegal immigrants just across the street," laughs Bev Taylor.

Bev, who has held various Power Riders offices, says that in the 14 years she and husband Tom have been riding with the club, no one, including police, has been unfriendly to members.

"When we take off our helmets to enter a restaurant, with our white hair, we make friends quickly," she chuckles.

## Safety record no surprise

The club's safety record and excellent public reception is no surprise to its 238 members, certainly not to current president Bill Pritchett.

"We have a safety talk each meeting, and require a safety course every other year," he says. "Figures show that, nationally, cyclists over 40 years of age, with two or more years of experience, have a better safety record than car drivers.

"We make sure all riding members use helmets and proper attire, and strongly suggest would-be members take a safety course in advance.

## Members are "close"

What might well surprise the general public is the closeness of members, and their devotion to motorcycle riding.

"Is there a mystique to the open road? To me, there is," says Bill. "I like the wind, the weather, the freedom, the smells of the outdoors and the 360 degree views."

Bill's wife Carol, an avid co pilot, loves the camaraderie. "For me, and many others, the social side is as important as the travel," she says.

Power Riders are perhaps more active than any local club, of any kind. While Wednesdays are for scheduled rides, informal groups often ride and/or socialize daily, and sometimes twice on Sundays – breakfast and lunch. Tuesday is movie and

"happy hour."

(A smaller Sun Cities club of about 40 members, the Flying Wheels, ride on Mondays. It's not unusual for Power Riders members to join in.)

## Care for each other

Power Riders really care for each other – and the general public, too.

The front page of the club's *Flying Wheels* monthly newsletter always includes *Social Concerns* – who's ill, news on recoveries, etc. – and a *Welcome New Members* column.

The annual Christmas party involves collecting toys for underprivileged children. And twice a year, members clean up a 2.5-mile stretch of designated highways.

Meetings attract an average of 100 members, and Wednesday trips an average of 25 bikes (40-50 people).

The scheduled rides – usually one-day trips, sometimes overnights, or rarer trips as far as Big Bend, Texas or Monterey, California – are meticulously planned.

## Lead rider plans

A lead rider schedules restaurant, sightseeing, lodging and other stops for the club, often after riding the designated route him(or her)self. Members always ride two abreast, slightly staggered, three seconds between pairs. Bringing up the rear is the "tail gunner," always in radio communication with the lead rider.

Scheduled rides are usually accompanied by the Quad Squad, one or more vehicle drivers who have retired from active riding, who bring along such things as extra batteries, cables and happy hour goodies.

It's not unusual for members to take long trips – often during the summer, non-meeting months – by themselves.

Bill and Carol Pritchett (he's ridden for about 23 years) have vacationed as far away as Florida and the New England states, averaging about 250 miles a day.

OVER



▲  
**THE DECEMBER DAY** was bright and chipper as the Sun Cities Power Riders exited Bell Rec Center's parking lot for a day trip to Ajo and Casa Grande.

Incomes and former livelihoods range widely, from mechanics to doctors to pilots. If there is a common occupation, or former occupation, it's a love of flying.

"About a third of male members were/are commercial or private pilots, says Bill Pritchett. Boating is another favorite avocation – Bill kept a sailboat in San Diego for years.

As for speed during club trips, usually it's right on the limit. Members consider it unsafe to travel much slower.

#### **Riding isn't tiring**

Motorcycle riding probably isn't as tiring as it may appear to auto drivers.

"I'm less tired after a day of cycling than when I drive a car," says Bill.

"And because a cyclist sees the whole scene before him, unencumbered by a car's framework, I think he or she is more alert to traffic and other situations."

"Of course, riding isn't for everyone," Bill points out.

If you think motorcycling might be for you, and the scheduled trips sound tempting, just two of the Power Riders many 2000 outings could provide guidelines.

Last January a Moonlight Eclipse ride left at 4 p.m., with the dinner destination a mystery. Then last month, the club scheduled a day trip to Lake Havasu City – dining on In & Out Burgers.

Are you up to it?

The open road awaits!

*Anyone interested in joining the Power Riders, which is not restricted to Sun Cities residents, can call Bill Pritchett at 623-974-5844.*



# Riding asphalt ribbons

**POWER RIDERS:**  
Arizona winters can't  
ground high-flying Sun  
Cities group

JEANNE WINOGRAD  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A brisk 41-degree morning couldn't keep 40 members of the Sun Cities Power Riders from revving their motorcycles' engines Wednesday.

Gene Adee, who organized the 250-mile trip and tour of Florence Prison, said cold temperatures are irrelevant.

"Are you serious? We buy the bikes to ride them. Everyone dresses in layers, some with down, some with leather. We all stay very warm," Adee said.

The tour started at 9 a.m. sharp from the Bell Recreation Center parking lot in Sun City. Adee said several members are retired law-enforcement officers, and one with a connection to the prison helped arrange the tour.

"We always take Christmas cheer wherever we go," Adee said.

About a fourth of Wednesday's group were women, said Billie Henry, who winters with her husband in Surprise's Happy Trails Resort. The Henrys have been in the club for three years.

Past President Bill Pritchett said the 238-member club formed in 1966.

"We've done a lot of different tours," Pritchett said. "We've visited Laughlin and the motorcycle museum in Las Vegas. We have a five-day trip to California planned in April, a Colorado trip in the summer, and a ride to Sturgis, N.D."

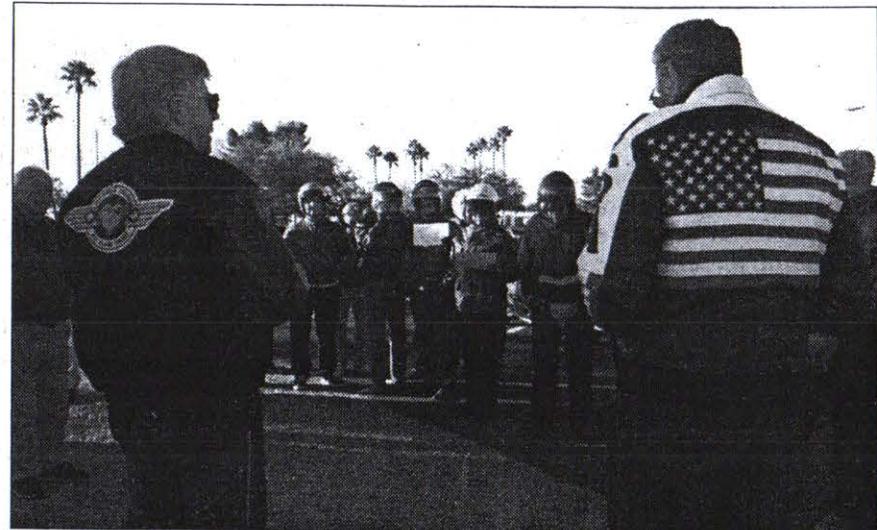
Pritchett said most members of the club repair their own bikes. They also rely on Glendale Harley on Grand Avenue, Metro Motorsports on West Bell Road in Glendale, and Motorsports Unlimited at 103rd and Olive avenues in Sun City.

The club just had its annual Christmas party, with 125 members attending, and is planning a New Year's Eve party.

"We have a lot of airline pilots, engineers, policemen — and I was a pharmacist," Pritchett said.

Before each ride, the group is called together in a huddle by the group leader. Wednesday morning, Adee called the riders' meeting.

"We're going to be splitting into two groups because of our size," he told members. "The second group will be riding a half-mile to a mile behind the first."



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun Cities Power Riders members listen to instructions Wednesday for their day trip to Florence.

Adee handed out maps of the route with estimated ride times for each segment, with a first break an hour and a half into the trip, just outside of Fountain Hills. He also provided the dress code and asked riders to remove their helmets when entering the prison.

Jim Hudson of Sun City West said he prefers riding Harley Davidson "hogs," although people in the club ride all types of motorcycles.

"I've ridden a Harley for 17 years," Hudson said. "I prefer the excitement of it. I also remember Pearl Harbor, and I buy American when I can."

Pritchett said different leaders schedule rides Wednesday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

"We have 12 rides on Sunday

Club President Jerry Van Wandenberg of Sun City West, a former auctioneer, said he has been riding a Harley since 1987.

"I like the fellowship of the club, and it's a safety-oriented club," he said. "Ninety-five percent of our members are retired."

As members readied for the ride, the lilt of Christmas carols competed with classic oldies from some cycle radios. Just like a parade, many of the bikes displayed American flags waving colorfully in the breeze as the group drove single-file up 99th Avenue.

For information about the club, call Jerry Van Wandenberg at 975-1604.

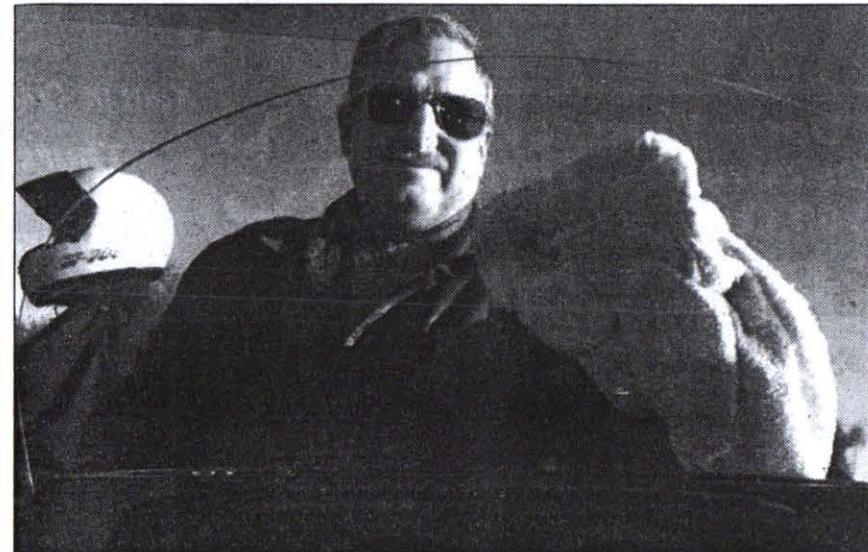
Jeanne Winograd can be reached at 876-2532 or

OVER



**MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN**

Sun Cities Power Riders members head for the exit from the Bell Recreation Center parking lot in Sun City on a group ride to Florence Wednesday.



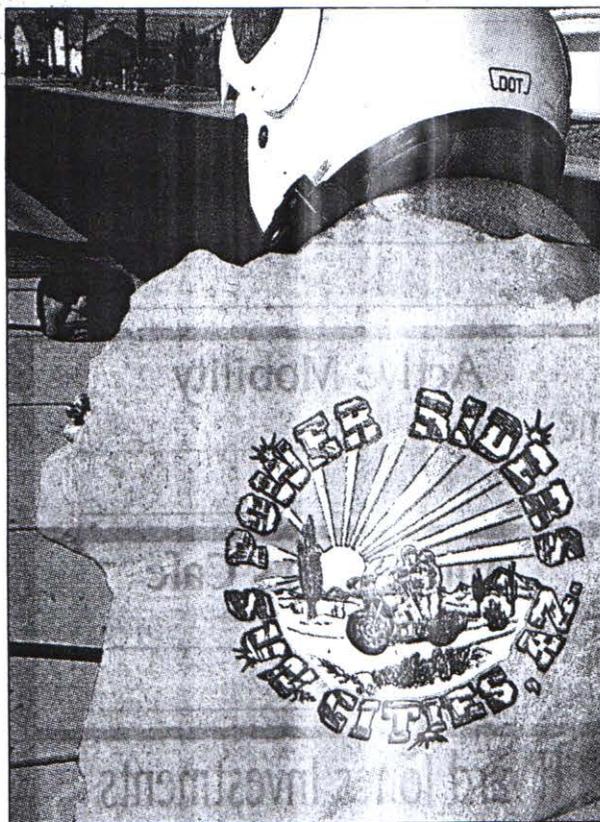
**MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN**

Bud Johnson cleans his windshield Wednesday in preparation for a trip to Florence with the Sun Cities Power Riders.

SATURDAY, DEC. 4, AND SATURDAY, DEC. 5, 2004

DAILY NEWS-SUN

# Power Riders gear up for cool trips



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Jerry Van Wandenberg of Sun City West is a member of the Power Riders motorcycle club.

**ANNIE BOON**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arizona's somewhat chilly winters do not stop the Sun Cities Power Riders from zipping up and cruising the country on their motorcycles.

Jerry Van Wandenberg, member and past president of the Sun Cities Power Riders, urges fellow motorcyclists not to park their Hogs and hang up their helmets just yet.

"We're riding five days a week," Van Wandenberg said. "The cold doesn't stop us."

Formed in 1966 and now 280 members strong, the Sun Cities Power Riders just returned from a road trip to central California and are back to weekly group trips to local cities and attractions, like Casa Grande and tours of the prison in Florence.

Cold weather is no match for the latest technology in motorcycle heating equipment and apparel, Van Wandenberg said.

"We've got heated handle bar grips and electric (heating) vests," he said. "We're equipped to ride in cool weather."

Most cold weather riders dress in layers and wear jackets with zippers to adjust for ventilation. Electronically heated apparel is actually plugged into the motorcycle's battery for nearly instant and lasting warmth.

Being prepared for cool weather can make a late-season ride more enjoyable, said Paul James,

**See RIDE, A5**

## Winter trip

For those motorcycle buffs who opt not to ride during the winter months, here are a few quick tips to properly winterize your bike so your ride is smooth and clean come springtime:

- After your last ride of the season, top off your gas tank to prevent water condensation in the tank.
- Treat your gas with a gasoline stabilizer (such as Stabil). This will ensure that your fuel stays "good" through the winter.
- Take the time to change your oil. Once your oil is changed, make sure you run the engine briefly to ensure that the oil circulates completely through the system. Used motor oil is contaminated with acids, which you don't want sitting in your engine for long periods of time.
- Drain your float bowls. You can do this in two ways: Either run the engine, shut off the fuel, and let the engine use up the fuel in the float bowls, or use the float bowl drain screws (if you've got them) to release the fuel. This second option is messy — fuel will drip all over if you're not careful.
- Remove the battery and store it in a warm, dry place.
- Charge the battery once a month or put it on a maintenance charger. Periodically check the water level in the battery, topping it off if necessary.
- Clean your bike thoroughly and cover it. Make sure it's dry before you cover and store it.
- Check your tires and inflate them to the proper pressure.
- If you have a water-cooled bike, make sure you have the proper antifreeze in the system.
- Check in on your bike every couple weeks, to remind yourself that you'll both be back on the road in no time.

Source: [www.motorcycleworld.com](http://www.motorcycleworld.com)

### From A1

communications manager for Harley-Davidson Inc.

"A motorcycle rider can encounter a wide range of temperatures, from a cool morning to a warm period at mid-day and back to cool again in the evening," James said. "It's best to dress in layers that you can shed and put back on throughout the day."

James recommends riding gear with zip-out insulated liners that are ideal for changing temperatures. Other options, he said, include a sweater that fits

under a riding jacket and leather chaps that are easy to take off when the weather warms up.

Most motorcycles can be equipped with heated hand grips, as well as a 12-volt outlet that can be used to power the electrical apparel.

"In addition to dressing appropriately for the weather, it's also a good idea to plan to stop more frequently in cold weather, just to warm up," James said. "When winter arrives, you'll be glad you took the right steps to cherish the memory of that last ride of the year."

Annie Boon can be reached at 876-2532 or [aboone@aztrib.com](mailto:aboone@aztrib.com).