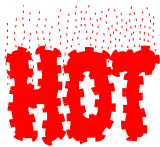




The Hogtown Lowdown



Chapter 0675
July/August 2003



Chapter Sponsor

Gainesville Harley-Davidson & Buell, Inc.

Gail Lytle, Owner

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Director's Column



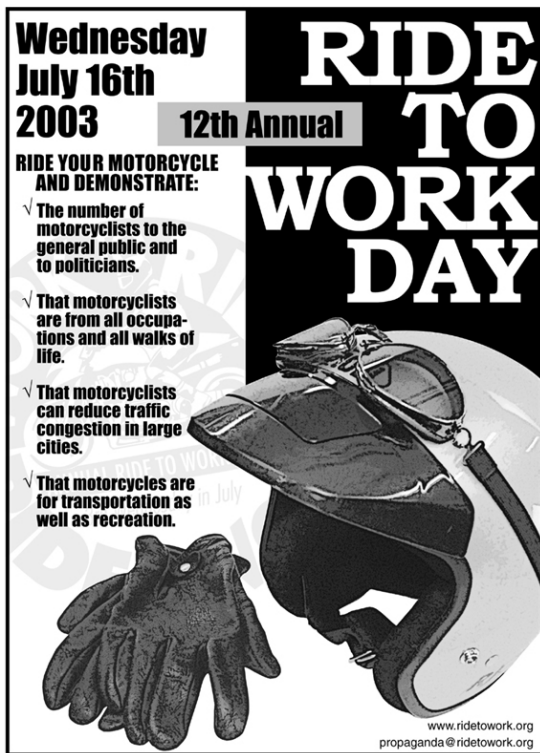
Well, here we are again in the rainy, hot, muggy days of the Florida summer. That can sure put a cramp in your riding style. But, if you do get rained out, hop in the car and take a ride over to Gainesville Harley-Davidson and check out the new additions. The new retail, sales, and parts are up and running and looking magnificent. Thanks to all who helped in the move. (See later in this newsletter for many pictures taken by Webmaster Grant Thrall.)

OK, back to HOG business. If anyone is interested in being a HOG officer for 2004, please feel free to e-mail me or any of the other HOG officers, so we can keep you in mind for next year. The officers are listed in the box to the left.

Also, if anyone has any ideas for any rides or get togethers that the HOG group could enjoy, please make sure to let me know at the next meeting, or by e-mail at lizzie@gru.net.

As always, Ride Safe!
Joan





"Ride to Work Day" is not a HOG event and Gainesville Harley Davidson and Gainesville HOG chapter are not affiliated with "Ride to Work Day". However, we think this is a great idea. Get out and ride – for any reason. We think this is more than any reason. This is a great reason to ride.

Gainesville Harley Owners Group – Help Wanted

by Grant Thrall, GF HOG Webmaster and Road Captain

High level of enthusiasm required to compensate for no pay. Make job application to Joan Brewer at lizzie@gru.net

Activities Director. Job starts January 2004. Responsibility includes ride organization such as poker runs, dinner rides, organizing road captains to lead rides, and organizing other activities in cooperation with Gainesville Harley-Davidson.

Newsletter Editor. Job starts January 2004. Responsibility includes publishing the Gainesville HOG Newsletter every other month. Authoring and editing stories of local interest – and getting others, to author articles. Updating the HOG events calendar. Organizing printing, mail labels, and mailing.

Secretary/Treasurer. Job starts January 2004. Responsibility includes all those things that secretaries and treasurers need to do, such as keeping the bank accounts, paying bills, etc. If you can't balance your own checkbook, don't apply for this job.

Webmaster. Job starts January 2004. Responsibility includes HTML programming, web page design, and creation of content. Several web pages updates each week are required, such as when breaking news happens or last minute activity announcements or changes.



Gainesville Harley
Davidson,
moving day at
the dealership
June 3, 2003.

Photos by
Grant Ian Thrall



**From John Boots, General Manager of Gainesville Harley-Davidson:
A big Thank You to all HOG members who helped out in the move. We could not
have done it without your help!**

Experienced Rider Class a Blast!

by Susan Thrall

If you missed the Experienced Rider Course on May 10th, you missed a great course! The course was held at Central Florida Community College in the motorcycle safety-training parking lot. Ron Wright and Mike M. were the instructors of twelve intrepid motorcycle students, 11 males and 1 female, or to put it better 9 Harleys, 2 Hondas, and one BMW.

Joan Brewer, Gainesville HOG Director, and Grant Thrall, Gainesville HOG Webmaster and Road Captain, organized the course over several months, collecting names of interested riders, collecting money, and organizing a date, time and place with the instructors, and posting continual emails to those who indicated they were interested.

The course came together on May 10th. The course took place between 12:00 noon and 5:00 pm. As it turned out, May 10th was one of the hottest days so far this year. It was well into the 90's. One of the riders of a Honda had a temperature gauge on his bike and reported that it was 113 degrees on the asphalt. However, all were experienced riders and resolute so we toughed it out. The parking lot where the course took place had a magnificent live oak tree next to it and the instructors had put up a portable canopy with chairs underneath and provided an ice chest full of cold water. It turned out not as bad as we all thought.

The course itself consisted of nine types of exercises that we observed and then did ourselves over the five-hour period. Ron Wright would read and explain the

exercise along with its safety purpose. Mike demonstrated the exercise with great agility on his sleek black Harley Road Glide. Then we students, divided into two groups of six riders each, would get out onto the course and try the exercise multiple times. The instructors stood on the course and would give us helpful hints as we rode our way around the course.

The exercises were both fun and challenging. We started with very simple things like weaving between cones, sometimes with our left hand on our hip, and riding over obstacles. The obstacle was a long two-by-four. (Riding over the two-by-four was nothing after having to ride over three very large speed bumps along the Central Florida Community College roadways – the college's speed bumps were twice the size of the two-by-four!)

After several relatively easy, but important, exercises and after all riders were somewhat "warmed-up", came the more challenging exercises. These included, what I call, the dreaded U-turn exercise. We had to try and do a figure eight on our motorcycles within the confines of a small box painted on the parking lot. My Harley suddenly doubled in size when we rode onto the field to begin this exercise. However, despite my trepidation, instructor Ron Wright got me to where I could actually do one of figure-eights inside the box. He stood in the middle of the eight as I began turning and cried, "Look at me! Look at me!" Lo and behold, when I looked at him which was actually looking over my shoulder as I was

turning, I was able to do the tightest U-turn I ever done my entire life. I was exuberated that I had finally done one. (I think Ron was also exuberated that I didn't run into others who were doing figure eights on another part of the course since when I started out my figure eight were HUGE!

Other exercises included doing quick stops while downshifting, swerving around cone obstacles, doing multiple turns of all kinds, and leaning around a curve then straightening the bike before stopping . As it grew to be 4:00 and all were getting worn out due to the heat, we did some easier and my favorite fun exercise – large S-curves. The S-curves were done within a painted area. After the challenging exercises, this seemed pretty simple to me – probably because I had learned and had improved my skills so much.

After each exercise, each group of six riders parked our bikes so they would not get overheated, and returned to the chairs under the canopy to icy bottles of water so we would not get overheated. All in all, the weather did not turn out not to be as bad as we thought and the time went very fast. Though I was quite daunted at first, I felt really great after the class was over because I knew I had really accomplished something.

Ron and Mike were the best. They were patient, kind, and very talented. Ron mentioned at the beginning of class that most anyone can ride easily at faster speeds, but it takes lots of practice to become an expert at slow speeds and to keep these slow-speed skills honed. One can only dream to have the knowledge

that Ron has about riding skills and to maneuver as well as Mike, who did all the demos, on his big Harley. In reality however, if you have ever taken a Motorcycle Safety Training class, you know the concepts we practiced here in this class. This was a great and needed re-affirmation of what experienced riders know but need to make automatic in many traffic situations.

At the end of the class, (and there were neither a written test nor practical test) we all received our Experience Rider card. We also received an application from Harley-Davidson for reimbursement for up to \$50 for the course. I understood from the Honda riders and the BMW rider that both Honda and BMW also do a reimbursement.

The course itself was \$60. After the course you can get the reimbursement mentioned above and many insurance companies will give a discount on your motorcycle insurance for taking this course. From Harley you will also get a patch and pin. So all in all, the cost of the course for most riders is negative. The skills learned from the course were priceless.

Another Experienced Rider Course is being organized for October. There will be no more courses during the summer because of the heat. Please contact Joan Brewer at lizzie@gru.net if you are interested in the October course. Take it! You won't regret it. Requirements for the course were listed in the May-June HOG newsletter, which can be found on our HOG web page at www.gfhog.cjb.net

Wilmer Nichols Retires And Rides

by Grant Thrall, GF HOG Webmaster and Road Captain; photos by Grant Thrall

Harley riders come in all shapes and sizes. Wilmer Nichols is a Harley rider. Wilmer began riding early and was to be the second owner of a near new 1949 Harley-Davidson panhead. He paid \$250 for that panhead soon after completing his tour with the US Navy. Wilmer had dropped out of high school in the 10th grade to join the Navy. The Navy had given him a tour of the world, a GED, and the GI Bill to pay his way to college. But he had to get from his family home outside of Tupelo Mississippi, to college 300 miles away. Tupelo, as you might know is the hometown of Elvis Presley. (Wilmer's cousin had a country band that eight-year-old Elvis had asked to join. But you know the rest of that story.) This story is about Wilmer, the tenth son of sharecroppers, growing cotton in delta country. Wilmer grew up picking cotton, but he would have more in his future life than cotton.

Wilmer graduated from college with a major in math and minor in physics. Why did he go to college, and why did he study so hard? He did not want to pick cotton all his life. He would go on to become a world-renowned PhD cardiology research scientist. Along the way he kept riding motorcycles. And he traded that \$250 panhead for a BSA, the rocket bike of the 1950s.

After his Ph.D., Wilmer did post doctoral work in Europe and then joined the medical school faculty of Johns Hopkins University. But Baltimore was too far north and too big a city for the cotton picking country boy whose had had been so far out in the country that he "had to go toward town to hunt." Then

University of Florida called, and he decided that Gainesville would be home for himself, wife Arlene, and two small children.

Back then the cardiology department at UF was known to perhaps the county line. Johns Hopkins University medical school was then the place to be for cardiology research, and the place to go as a patient with heart problems. But the deep southeast was calling Wilmer - fortunate for us. Wilmer became one of the major forces in growing the cardiology department faculty at UF to an internationally renowned cadre of over twenty members. Yep, if you are going to have a heart attack, Gainesville is THE place to have it today. Thanks Wilmer! I hope I don't need to use your colleagues' services anytime soon.

The photos you see were taken at Wilmer's retirement party, June 5, 2003, at Gainesville Golf and Country Club. The photos are of Wilmer and his motorcycle-riding buddies. All in the photo are university/college faculty. Bet you never saw these folks outside of their riding leathers! They clean up pretty good, don't they?



(L to R): HOG members Grant Thrall, Susan Thrall, Wilmer Nichols (seated), Tom Kerkhoff, HOG member Wayne Wallace, Harry Daniels(seated).

Wilmer's riding buddies in the photos pooled their funds together to buy Wilmer some retirement gifts. What better to prepare their buddy for riding every day than Harley-Davidson nick knacks: coffee cup, beach towel, and Willie G Davidson's 100th Anniversary Harley-Davidson book.

For years, most Saturdays you would find Wilmer, and his riding friends, at the OBSC breakfasts. That's not going to change. But his motorcycle is.



HOG Newsletter editor Susan Thrall sharing a good laugh and yarn with Wilmer Nichols.

Wilmer's current ride is a red 1998 Dyna Low Rider. Always maintained at Gainesville Harley-Davidson, Wilmer says he now wants to sell the bike, and

apply the proceeds to a new Harley-Davidson Classic. Better for the long distance rides he has planned for his retirement, and better for Arlene who rides behind him.

From the end of Wilmer's Navy days, to the end of his active working career, Wilmer has found a place in his life for riding. He has ridden with State governors, State Senators, and the likes of you and me. If you talk to Wilmer, there is no mistaking that he comes from southern cotton tenant farming poverty. But it is only after you get to know him will you find that he rose from high school dropout to one of the world's leading cardiologist researchers, having written one of the internationally recognized texts in basic cardiology, and having authored or co-authored over 500 articles and eight books.

Harley riders come in all kinds and types of people. People like Wilmer are among my favorite. Good luck Wilmer and good health to you and Arlene as you take that long retirement ride





Gainesville Harley Owners Group, Inc.
Attn: Susan Thrall, Editor
2605 NW 38th Street
Gainesville FL 32605

There is no calendar of events because the events listing was not received from Gainesville Harley-Davidson by press time. Please call the dealership for dates and times of events. The next HOG meetings are: June 26 at 6:30 pm and August 28 at 6:30pm.