



BMW Club  
Washington State Riders



## Monthly Newsletter of Washington State BMW Riders

November 2018 - Vol. 46 No. 6

### Ready to Give You The Shaft

by Marina Starbuck - Editor



"You ride a motorcycle?? I have always wanted to do that."

I have heard this many times over the years. My answer is always the same, "Go for it!"

I, like so many people, thought riding a bike was for speeding drivers, or crazy single-track riders. Certainly not me. But then I thought "Why not me?"

My name is Marina Starbuck, and I have been riding since 2006. My husband started riding about 1 ½ year prior. I rode as a passenger for a little while, but realized very quickly that I wanted to learn how to ride for myself. I actually decided to learn when a lot of people give it up: when my kids were little! I can't tell you how many times I heard how crazy and unsafe that was. How could I take up something so, "dangerous"?

Now, thousands upon thousands of miles later, I still get a little thrill in my stomach when I buckle my helmet, throw my leg over the saddle and take off on whatever adventure awaits. Steve and I have ridden all over western Canada, Vancouver Island, the Northwest, Idaho and Montana, Glacier National Park and the Redwoods. Twisties, open highways and everything in between.

We are new to the world of BMW motorcycles. Up until May of this year, we rode our trusty Honda VTX's (his an 1800, mine a 1300). We still have love for those bikes and break them out now and then, but we are truly enjoying the agility, speed, handling and FUN of our 1200 GS's.

When we purchased our BMW's, the first thing we did was seek out like-minded riders, as we knew very little about these 'ultimate riding machines'. And here we are. We are happy to be a part of this group, and I look forward to riding with you and sharing the love of riding "shiny side up".

**PLEASE NOTE:** I am excited to take over the position of [Newsletter Editor](#)! This will be a work in progress (formatting and content) for a bit, as I set my bearings! I look forward to contributions and please know if you don't see it in the current newsletter doesn't mean it won't be in the next! Please feel free to reach out any time.

## Club Calendar

### November

- **11/04 - 9:30am**  
**WSBMWR Monthly Club Meeting** at The Rivers Edge Restaurant in Tumwater \*see pg.5 for details
- **11/04 - 1:00pm Turkey Run** at the home of Chris Earle in Olympia \*see pg.5 for details

### December

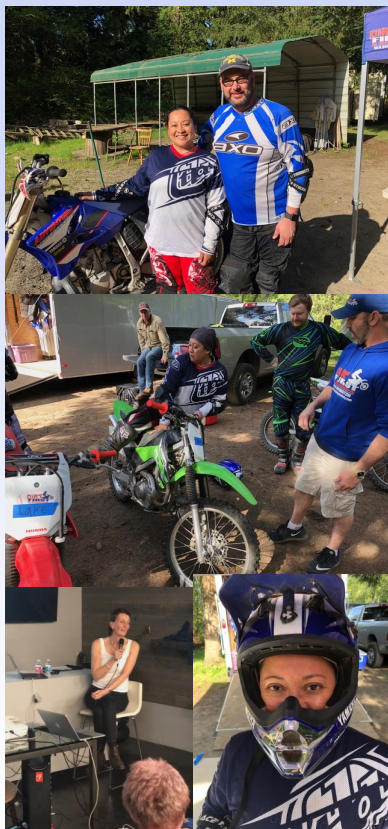
- **12/02 - 9:30am**  
**WSBMWR Monthly Club Meeting** location to be determined

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# Gettin' Dirty!

by Troy Wollenslegel



I never thought getting dirty would be so fun. Back in April, Sonia and I took the Dirt Bike Safety Training Level 2 class. This class is for people that know how to ride motorcycles, but may be new to riding on dirt. The cost was \$255, but we decided to use their motorcycles so it was an additional \$100. I got to use the instructor, Jason's, Honda CRF 250F. Even though I have a BMW R1200GS, I am glad that I decided to use their bike, especially for my first time on the dirt. Going from a 1200 down to a 250 I thought I would be bored, but man those dirt bikes have a lot of power for their size. They also have Level 1 & 3 training, ladies only classes. For more advanced riding they have private coaching, motocross training, and something that is interesting to GS owners, ADV training for adventure motorcycles.

The day started out early, we got to the range in Tulalip, WA around 8am and started putting our gear on. One advantage to using their bikes, is they also provide full gear including boots, dirt bike helmet, pants (with pads), chest protectors, and even gloves. After teaching motorcycle classes at other places and seeing how bad some of the gear was, I was pleasantly surprised how clean and well taken care of their equipment was.

Since we knew how to ride, the class started out with some of the basics and trying to learn what makes riding on the dirt different than riding on the road, in particular, stopping. Then we moved on to more active riding and learning how to turn in the dirt, going around cones and back. We learned that putting our leg out in front of the tire helps with keeping the weight over the front tire and center of gravity low. After a while we started incorporating sliding/skidding turns. After lunch we worked more on body positioning including standing turns. As we got more experienced, every couple exer-

cises we did a loop around the single track course. This, I think, was the most fun, since it allowed us to start to practice some of the skills we were learning. When we got back, we were on to more advanced exercises including learning how to turn the motorcycle around if you got stuck on a steep hill, riding along a sloped hill and hillside turns. On the last loop around the course, I found that hitting a rut in the dirt can force you into a direction you didn't want to go. In my case, it was right off the course into the brush. I am glad we didn't go too fast and these motorcycles were pretty light. A good lesson learned.

The final exercise was to learn how to jump over logs. About 1/2 of the people skipped this, I tried the small log and considered it an accomplishment that I got over and didn't want to push to try to get over the bigger log. When we were all done, the instructor took his motorcycle back and we saw how an experienced off-road rider rides, including jumping and getting 5+ feet of air.

I really enjoyed this class, but the one thing that did stand out with me is that it was really designed for the people that wanted to do single track trails. While, this is fun, I won't be doing that anytime soon. However, I would like to take the Adventure class sometime, and use my R1200GSA and see if I can learn to ride that a little more off-road. While most of the things will carry over from the smaller bikes, I would expect that there are some differences with a 560lb bike vs the 220lb Honda.

You can find out more information here: <http://www.dirtbikesafetytraining.com/>

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Contact:  
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## Did you know?

*If you want to take a riding course, our Rider Safety Training program will pay a once per year / per member stipend of \$50 for any motorcycle related training class or seminar. Just present your receipt to any club officer.*



*great course at a fun venue.*

Have you always wanted to improve your riding? Have a blast with like-minded riders? Myles recommends you head south to Oregon for the [Advanced Rider Training Course](#) and spend your day improving your skills!

## Advanced Rider Training

*by Marina Starbuck*

Club member Myles Cowan writes:

*Given the interest in rider training, I looked up a class I have taken twice in the past. It is a*

## Motorcycles, Cougars and Deer...OH MY!

*By Marina Starbuck*

You're on a backroad, enjoying the ride...wind at your back, maybe enjoying the twilight hours after a fantastic long day of winding roads in the mountains...and then...WHOA!!

A massive buck jumps out, nearly causing you to lose control of both your bike and your inner organs.

Club member Andy Vaughn contributed this article, [Cougars Could Save Lives by Lowering Vehicle Collisions with Deer](#) about how cougars who hunt deer are helping to control deer population, which in turn can lower collisions with vehicles.

## October meeting raffle winners

As you know, at every meeting we raffle off cool prizes, then we do what's known as the 50:50.

Special thanks to BMW Motorcycles of Seattle and RideWest for the gift card and shirt!



Prize winners: Mike Vakerics, Marina Starbuck, Chris Earle, Troy Wollenslegel, and Kim Chase (not in order)



Jason McCord rolls with his winnings! \$66 dollars richer!



## Lane Splitting

I'm sitting in traffic in the aptly named Mercer Mess in Seattle. Maybe dreaming of being on my GS when I see it from the corner of my eye: A guy zips past me to the right, negotiates in between a few more cars and heads up to the next stop light.

You more than likely know what he is up to: splitting the lanes. Part of me is envious, but part of me is furious. As a motorcycle rider, I have thought about it, but will never do it. I find it a dick move and definitely unsafe.

Have you noticed more of this in the recent past? Is it me, or does it seem like more and more riders are pulling this move, whether it's on city streets, or even on the highway.

What do you think of lane splitting? [Share your opinion!](#)

## Tom's Tips & Tricks

by Tom Mehren

A continuing column of tips to make your ride all the better and tricks you may never have considered from our resident tipster and trickster, Tom Mehren, the publisher of [Sound RIDER!](#)

### **Book your spring service early**

Setting up your spring service sooner than later is always a good idea. In areas where there truly are four seasons, when the days warm up so will the wait for service. When arranging the date, talk with your service manager about what parts will be needed this time around and confirm he/she has them or will get them on order so they are there when you arrive.

Some shops do winter service specials to keep things busy during the slower months and ward off having to lay off staff. Take advantage of those specials and feel good about keeping your tech employed.

### **Clean House**

The old saying goes, if you haven't used it in 60 days, get it out of here. Using a packing list you create specific to you, pull together all the gear you'd take on a ride. When you come upon something you used to use, but not any longer (like a bulky camera, crusty tent or flashlight), set it aside. When you're all done, gather everything in the pile and take it to the Goodwill center near you.

### **Finding E0**

Some manufacturers recommend the use of E zero fuel in their bikes whenever possible. This is fuel that is free of ethanol, a.k.a. 'corn water.' But it's not easy to find. The most likely place to locate it along your route is near lakes and rivers where boating is popular, since many boat motors are also rated for E0 fuel. Several websites exist that track stations who provide E0 so you can pre-plan your trip.



### **Read your owner's manual annually**

There's so much to know about vehicles, we can't possibly retain all the information. You may or may not have read your owner's manual when you got the bike, but regardless, take some time to do so annually. This may remind you to take care of a few things like checking your chain for extensive wear and keep you out of trouble later down the road. Call it "new bike night" and snuggle up in bed with the manual and a notepad.

### **The history of roads around you**

We know a rider who went around the world in six weeks. Stunning, but he missed a world of knowledge in his haste. Take time to learn a little history about the roads you'll be travelling on, near or far. Many roads existed as Indian trails, wagon trails and commerce routes long before they ever had pavement laid upon them. Knowing a little about them allows you to imagine what they may have been like back in the old days.

*Tom Mehren is the publisher of [www.soundrider.com](http://www.soundrider.com) and founder of two annual 5-day tours in the Pacific Northwest – The Road Trip GPS Tour and The Sasquatch Dual Sport GPS Adventure Tour. His guide books for PNW rides can be found at [store.soundrider.com](http://store.soundrider.com)*

# Club Meeting and Turkey Run Info!

Ready for some fun after November's club meeting! Rain or shine, let's ride!

The Club Meeting will be Nov. 4th, 9:30 am at [The Rivers Edge Restaurant at 4611 Tumwater Valley Drive in Tumwater](#). From there Chris Earle will lead a group ride through rustic Thurston County, ending at his home southwest of Olympia.

His wonder-wife Bonnie will be there to greet us with chili (courtesy of neighbor Don Chase) and fixings at 1:00 pm.

For those who make it for chili, there will be a drawing for gift card for a free turkey. (That's why we call it the Turkey Run)!





## Review:

# Throttle Control Devices

by Dan Muir

Let's face it. I'm cheap. Maybe just like some of you. I'd like to think my motorcycle preference is the result of my highly refined, classic, and debonair taste, but the reality is that I own older BMW's (and that red W650) because I'm too darned cheap to trade those in on a new machine.

I do love my old Oilheads. The way they sound, the way they handle, and I can do a fair amount of routine maintenance on them too. The same with the old Airhead—a fabulous classic motorcycle, though I'm not that fond of it's stopping capability!

But on longer rides on these older bikes there's one thing you almost always discover, especially after some time on modern machinery: There's no cruise control! Every inch of progress down the highway requires you to hold that dang throttle open against spring tension. That throttle *wants to roll off to idle*. It's a great safety feature that's required on bikes for many, many years. (*Go check out an early Knucklehead: No return spring, ya wanna slow down, ya gotta roll that throttle off—no return spring to help*).

Let's say you're riding your old machine along I-90 en route some distant exotic location (well, OK, maybe just Boise!) and your right hand's falling asleep. Or it's just tired. Or you need to adjust some zipper on the *left side of your jacket*. What to do? If you let go of the throttle with that right hand, the big Peterbuilt semi right behind you might run you over like a squashed turtle. If you don't do something, your right hand feels like it will certainly fall off and tinkle down the road like a shattered piece of glass.

With no cruise control on those old bikes, what's a rider to do?

There's a couple of options here, none of them perfect and all with some glaring faults. But for sure worth looking at.

First, to help alleviate that sore hand or wrist, you could consider a simple device like a *Throttle Rocker* or *Crampbuster*:



All either device does is provide a larger platform for your right palm, making it easier to hold the throttle open against the return spring tension. I've got 'em on all four bikes (my preference is the *Throttle Rocker* but YMMV).

That helps but doesn't do anything that lets you take your right hand off the throttle without letting that Peterbuilt run you down. A potential answer for our ancient—or not so ancient—machinery is a throttle control device. There's a plethora of them on the market. I've only tried a few so here's my take on those. Some of the one's I've not tried could be much better, or maybe much worse. I'm only gonna write about those I've used.

(*Big note here: These devices work by holding the throttle open against normal spring tension. Unlike a real cruise control most of them don't release when you use the brake or squeeze the clutch. You could easily have a serious problem (i.e. a crash) if you don't remember to either release the throttle control or roll the throttle off when you need to slow. I can't imagine any OEM manufacturer or safety organization would endorse any of these. I use 'em only on long straight roads, never in traffic, curves, or any other place where I've got only a limited space cushion. You've been warned, so if you crash don't blame me or the manufacturers of these devices*).

Having stated that obvious safety reminder, here we go:

First up is the [Go Cruise](#)

There are several versions of this little device; I've got the cheapest on the W650. Supposedly it was inspired by old-time riders who would bend an old wheel spoke to wrap tightly around the throttle and rest against the front brake lever. To engage, simply roll it down with your forefinger while you're riding at speed. To disengage, just roll the throttle off. Simple friction against the grip holds it in place. Pro: Cheap, effective, simple. Con: Takes up handspace on the grip, has to be pushed down again for any speed change.



Second is the [Excel Throttle Control](#). I first noticed these

in the BMW MOA Owner's News. I suspect Tom, the gentleman that builds these, is a one-man shop and he's not set up for electronic transactions. I simply e-mailed him my bike info, he sent me the control, and I sent him a check. Old fashioned but it worked.



Continued on pg. 7

I've got two of these:

Generation 2 on my R1150GS:



and Generation 3 on my R1100S:



They both work by setting the tension you want to put on the throttle by using the knurled wheel, then pulling the knob toward you to engage.



Disengage by pushing the knob away. You can still roll the throttle on and off while the throttle control is engaged, but it's stiff. This photo shows the Generation 3 device engaged.

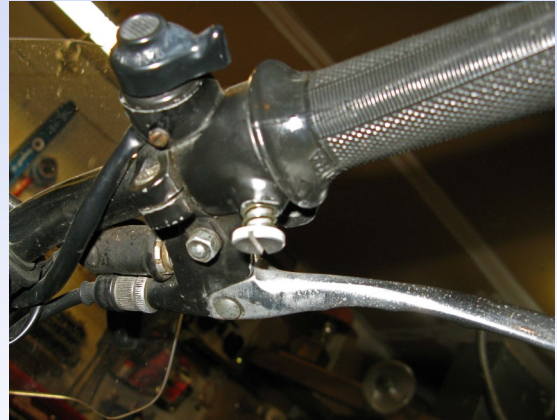
Pro: Simple to install and use. You don't have to re-set the tension every time you want to use it. The knob makes it quick to engage and disengage.

Con: Pricey. When you used heated grips the tension must be re-adjusted.



Third throttle lock is a little screw. Really. Check out item 16 in this Airhead parts fische. [Handlebar Parts](#).

Early Airheads had a threaded hole in the underside of the handlebar throttle housing. The knurled "locking bolt" can still be purchased and simply screws into that hole.



It has a nylon tip that when screwed all the way in bears against the throttle tube and keeps it from springing closed. The throttle can still be rolled on and off against the friction from the locking bolt. To engage, you've got to reach underneath the grip and turn the screw in until you get the tension you wish. To disengage, reach underneath again and turn the screw out. Don't turn it too far, it'll drop out in your hand! (DAMHIK). Pro: Simple, cheap, very effective. Tension on throttle tube is consistent. Con: Pain in the rear to engage, disengage. Only works on some old Airheads! (*Interesting aside: When chatting with Voni Graves I noticed this same screw on the top of her R1150RS throttle housing. Seems husband Paul had custom made a threaded hole at the right spot for this Airhead part to ride against the throttle tube. Much easier to use on top of the housing*)!

I'm told BMW quit drilling that hole at some point because either the German TUV authorities wouldn't approve, or the lawyers decided it was a liability risk. But as you can see, the screw is still available from BMW.

So there you have it. A short, incomplete list of throttle control devices that might work on your older bike. A great way to be able to take your hand off the throttle for a few seconds to shake your fingers back to life, adjust a zipper, or whatever else you might need to do.

*Just remember, all these come with a warning: When you use any of these, the throttle won't roll off until you roll it off! I use mine a lot but I want you to be careful if you choose to use one!*



## October Club Meeting Minutes

WSBMWR Oct 7 Meeting Minutes- 38 attendees, 17 motorcycles

Five new members were present – Dan Woxland from Bellevue rides a 2016 R1200 RT, Rick McPherson rides a 1600 Bagger, John Parsons from Chicago rides a 2013 R1200 RT, Victor Vassena rides a 1994 R100 GS, Jasson Ball rides an SV650.

Doug Barritt introduced his son and daughter-in-law Darren and Hunter that are moving back to the Pacific Northwest. Darren is a commercial airline pilot and flew F15's in the military. Bob Mott introduced Barry and Bev. They ride a Suzuki 800.

CCR 2019 – We are looking for volunteers to organize and take the lead for our annual rally. We had 190 attendees this year. So, we need many volunteers to step up.

SHAFT Editor - Marina Starbuck stepped up to take the Editor position. Look out for her debut issue for November. Thanks to Marina for volunteering.

Duane Pelerine put out a plea for new officers. Positions available are Co-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. There was a request for a brief summary of each position so members have a better idea of the responsibilities involved. The Board will meet to update position descriptions and to review the club By-Laws. That date will be advertised to all current members for everyone to have a voice and participate.

There was a discussion to remove the club minutes from the SHAFT by either sending them out via email blast or posting them on our website under a MINUTES tab.

Turkey Run – Chris and Bonnie Earle have graciously offered to host this year. After our November club meeting, Chris will lead a group ride and we will end up at their Olympia home for a chili feed. Thanks so much to the Earle's for volunteering.

Kim Chase discussed an upcoming Woman's Ride. If you are in B.C. and need to shop for tires, she recommends you visit Imperial Motorcycles Burnaby.

Marina Starbuck discussed her and Steve's Mountain Loop highway ride around Lake Cavanaugh on to Oso.



*Enjoying a fantastic, rainy post-meeting ride!*

Edie Pelerine discussed the Pacific Coast & Volcano tour through AvidMoto Tours.

Rick talked about his trip to ride the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Troy suggested a charitable group ride. Toys for Tots, Salvation Army ride, or having a food drive was mentioned. Think about it and come to our next meeting with suggestions. He also put out a call for ideas for alternative meeting venues.

Lee Spurlock led a great group ride. Eight bikes with nine riders started the ride and two finished the entire 181 miles.

The Raffle – Mike Vakerics, Marina Starbuck, Chris Earle, Troy Wollenslegel, and Kim Chase were our prize winners. The 50/50 paid \$66 to the lucky winner Jason McCord.



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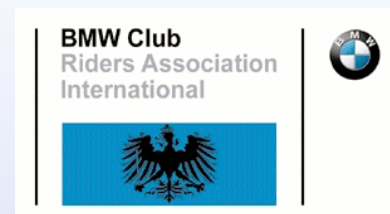
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