

# Just East of the Rockies by Dan T.

As the season progresses, I find myself wondering how many times I'm stuck at work for the sunshine, then ride day is finally here and bam, it's raining. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining, it really just seems this way I'm sure. One case in point though was the 2nd annual Bluffton Rock ride. I asked founder Chris Graham about his view of the weekend n this was his response.

## Bluffton Rock Ride 2017



2nd annual Rock Ride Bluffton AB. happened June 23,24,25 2017.

Lets start with 1st Annual in 2016. It rained cats and dogs so bad, the bike games had to be canceled, because it was to dangerous. The poker Run had to be delayed till Sunday, because we could not get the bikes out. When we did it went good, all and all. Everybody had a good time.

Because the people that own the golf resort are not riders, they didn't know what to expect, so we didn't do a lot of advertising, to try and keep the numbers down.

Aprox. 70 people showed up. We had good response from the owners, so the 2 annual goes on.

We advertised a little more, aprox. 250 people showed up. The weather was awesome. The bands rocked, the poker run was cool, a really nice run. The bike games went over great. The Youngstown Hotel donated their burn out pit for the weekend and shipped it over to us. It was used



and abused.

Some cool stuff happend. The pot luck supper went great. All and all everybody had a good time.

End result we lost a lot of money the first year, and made it back this year. Plus covered this year, still a little short but over the 2 years calling it even.Can't wait for next year, it will be bigger and better.

Thanks to all that attended, Spruce Haven Golf Resort, and the sponsors. Special thanks to my brother Len, for all his hard work, helping set up the web sight, getting sponsors, and advertising.

All you riders have to come next year, and check out the Spruce Haven Golf Resort. It is a beautiful spot and the owners are awesome people, and now understand us riders. They are all in for next year.

Thanks from the founders of the rock ride Chris and Julie Graham. HAVE A GREAT YEAR!!!!!!

2018 Rock Ride Bluffton Alberta. June 22,23,24. Spruce Haven Golf Resort.

For more info [www.rockrideblufftonalberta.com](http://www.rockrideblufftonalberta.com). [blufftoncitygeneralstore@gmail.com](mailto:blufftoncitygeneralstore@gmail.com) or phone 403-843-1106.

LOL, thanks Chris. Your words from the central Alberta area are much appreciated.

As we can see, the weather has not been a factor in keeping riders away from the local events nor has it affected many attitudes. When looking at how bad off British Columbia is right now with the forest fires, we have to welcome all of the moisture we can get n embrace what Mother Nature offers. Fortunately for Drumhellers (yes back to my home town) Motorcycle Madness, the weather was cooperating, for riding anyhow. The valley was alive with activity as events throughout the area



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provided options and directions unique to the area. Top Rockers bikini bike wash was a huge hit, Dinosaur hotel (Newcastle bar) had pie throwing and some prize winning water balloons with a kick ass lunch for the poker run on its way through. Of course the show and shine and bike games out at Last chance saloon in Wayne were definitely a hit with the spectators, participants, and visitors alike. Although turnout was not the highest it has been, everyone attending had a great time with some awesome prizes won throughout. Most important of course were the monies raised for our local charities such as our local school food programs and the Drumheller Community Cancer Clinic. One thing is for certain though is that rain or shine, if you are attending and event here in Alberta, plan on seeing some pretty nice country and some pretty great people.

So far this season, we have enjoyed some great gatherings and have accumulated some substantial kilometers doing what we love and supporting those around us. For some, this dedication to the community goes a step further producing some truly amazing results. One such individual, Liane Langlois has championed for motorcycle safety in the province and is making a real difference. Recently, the Alberta Motorcycle Safety Society was recognized for its efforts. Another quick email and I had it, a full update from Liane.

**Alberta Motorcycle Safety Society...  
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Liane Langlois

In the summer of 2015, I reached out to long time, now retired, media guy Marty Forbes about concerns I had for the safety of the motorcycle community. I had been very active in leading other initiatives in the motorcycle community for several years watching how events had been unfolding. Marty still writes a bi-monthly column for the Edmonton Sun where he has frequently wrote about the dangers on the road that face motorcycle riders.



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That particular riding season started off with two horrific hit and runs a day apart that results in 2 serious injuries and one fatality. The online reaction from the general public was disheartening. They didn't seem to care that people were hurt or dead, and the comments were getting increasingly harder to read. It was almost as



if the animosity towards the small minority of noisy or "reckless" riders has grown to paint us all with the same brush and our lives no longer mattered. The stories of riders being purposely run off the road were growing; it was like it was becoming open season. Marty had seen this trend as well, along with the growth of distracted driving, and through that the newly formed registered non-profit society called the Alberta Motorcycle Safety Society (AMSS) was born.

The vision for the AMSS was simple – make riders human again and advocate for motorcycle safety on Alberta roads. To do this, I wanted to create Public Service Announcements (PSA) to air on TV, radio and print if we could. The first two media riders in Edmonton that we approached were Terry Evans (K97) and Gord Steinke (Global News). Terry quickly became a champion asking what he could do to help and Gord felt the same but was also able to hook us up with Shaw TV who went on to create our now 11 PSA spots. In fact, every door we knocked on we were welcomed with

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open arms. We couldn't even get our ask out to the media execs, they just simply wanted to know what they can do, what did we need from them. It was a very overwhelmingly positive response from the Edmonton media.

Our inaugural campaign was twofold –something high impact, and something humanizing riders in the eyes of the public. The high impact spot featured the reenactment of the left turn scenario where a vehicle will turn in to the path of an oncoming motorcycle. In 2015, this equated to 40% of the collisions with the majority at fault being the vehicle. The reason is simple, we are small and your brain is trained to see the biggest things on the road. Riding season requires the reminder to look twice for motorcycles and for motorcyclists to be diligent in intersection. To humanize riders, we developed the We Are campaign which consists of 10 spots where some air on TV, some just shared through social media, depending on what media personality has tagged the spot. These also include every day Albertans from all walks of life including business professionals, volunteers, parents, grandparents, military veterans, paramedics and more. They are all dressed as they would be in their normal life, not appearing as a rider, but all do in fact ride. We felt that showing the general public that we are all somebody's someone might make people think twice about their attitude towards motorcycle riders and want to share the road respectfully. Currently these spots are running on Global, CTV, Omni and CityTV in both Edmonton and Calgary during at minimum the month of May, tapering off during June.

For radio, each station that has an on air personality that rides was able to create a personalized message with a "watch for us" theme. We had a professional voice over person record a generic version for stations without an on air personality. These were 30 seconds PSAs were geared towards getting that stations listeners to share the road whether they are driving or riding. As of our 2nd campaign launch in May 2017, these spots are being played in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer.

Post media has been very supportive as well running a quarter page advert in all of their papers. New to 2017 was the addition of digital billboards from a couple of companies, Pattison and Signpatico. Pattison is a long standing name with province-wide billboards that allowed us to reach even further than expected earlier with a simple 6 second image featuring our Think Bike campaign which we introduced in time for the 2017 Motorcycle Shows in January.

Think Bike is a concept that came out of Europe and Africa. It is a simple message of Think Bike in big bold letters on a bright yellow background. I reached out to the Think Bike creators asking if AMSS could use the slogan and coloring but put an AMSS feel to it. Working with our graphics designer, we created an image that the founders of Think Bike were thrilled with. This birthed our bumper stickers and our round stickers for people to acquire through our store which also includes a full array of clothing including tshirts (mens and ladies), long sleeve shirts, hoodies and hats. All proceeds from our sales go directly back in to creating even more messaging and buying more air time for our PSAs to run.

Finally, our website serves to be a hub of all motorcycle safety and awareness information. This is where the education part comes in as well. We are currently growing our resources tab to include podcasts and videocasts on a variety of topics from laws to mechanics to gear. If anyone has a question whatsoever, submit it to us as you might not be the only one asking. And where debating opinions on social media is great, we have built amazing relationships with so many industry experts that we can find a proper answer for you! We share everything through social media; twitter, facebook, Instagram, soundcloud,

youtube. We are trying to be everywhere and accessible to everyone. We also create a monthly newsletter containing news and events happening around the province.

For anything to work properly, everyone has to work together. Enter our Corporate Membership program which offers three levels of sponsorship; Gold, Silver or Bronze. With even a still struggling economy, we are up to 6 Corporate Members with a couple of them offering discounts to our paid society members. Society members get a card with their number on it to provide proof of membership dues paid to access programs through our Corporate Members. A membership to the AMSS is a mere \$20/year again with all proceeds going back into this important initiative.

Our Corporate Members have been stepping up, each in their own way to help fundraise even more money for the society. We have hosted hot dog sales, had membership



drives at the dealerships and more. We were even given a safety trailer from Honda Canada to cart around the province promoting motorcycle safety with videos, demonstrating proper gear and providing information for people to take home.

With buy in from the media and industry, the last piece to our puzzle was levels of government. Typically the Province of Alberta has always celebrated motorcycle awareness month in July where the rest of the country has done so in May. And with that, we never did see any positive messaging directed towards the motorcycle community, it was mostly enforcement ensuring we were all compliant with the Traffic Safety Act. This was until 2017 when we started seeing some fantastic messaging out of the Province of Alberta! We also applied and were approved for a grant through the Provincial Office of Traffic Safety which has helped immensely with travel, signage, promotional items and much, much more.

Law enforcement is also an entity in government and a huge key player in our initiative. We have worked closely with the Edmonton Police Service to create a series of podcasts that discuss various traffic rules and regulations that the public may question. Further to that, the Alberta RCMP were not only in attendance but spoke at our launch event in May 2017 that was held at City Hall in Edmonton.

On a municipal level, the City of Edmonton is a leader in Canada for the international program of Vision Zero. This program is dedicated to reducing fatalities to zero in all traffic related collisions. From our inception, they have looked to us for guidance and help on their motorcycle messaging. The partnership that we have formed with the folks at Vision Zero Edmonton had us speaking at the International Conference before even our first campaign was launched. That gave us an opportunity to play our spots for our peers who all were impressed with our approach. We knew then we were definitely on the right track. As our relationship continues to grow, we hope that can only have a positive impact on statistics going forward. We hope to build this same relationship with the City of Calgary and other municipalities around the Province.

Throughout the 2017 season, we are trying to get to as many events as possible in the province. With the AMSS being a purely voluntary initiative, this can be challenging to get outside of Edmonton while we are looking to build teams in other regions. 2017 will see us at both Motorcycle Shows (Calgary & Edmonton), in Calgary twice for the Awareness Ride and Two Wheel Sunday, Sylvan Lake for the Stollery Car Show, Wetastiwinn for the Ride to Reynolds, Nisku for the Indian Motorcycle Riders Group Show & Shine and speaking at any of the charity rides who wish to have us do a pre-ride safety talk. We are in the stages of planning our own fundraising events. It is a busy time but we need to be where we can to promote safety and awareness.

We are always looking for people to get more involved, especially in other communities. We need like-minded people who want to help promote safety and awareness by being at events passing out informational cards, speaking with people. We need champions in each region to help drive the initiative forward and liaise with their local government, working together for safer roads. It's a lot of work but

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The biggest perk that comes with this is the knowledge that if you have changed one person's behavior, you could also be saving someone's life. That in itself is an amazing feeling. A solid second is when you receive recognition for the work you are doing. At our launch in May 2017, the Mayor of the City of Edmonton officially proclaimed May as Motorcycle Safety Month. This is a first in Alberta! And where we thought that was pretty sweet, it was recently followed up with a Community Traffic Safety Award from the City of Edmonton Office of Traffic Safety presented in Council Protocol in Council Chamber. Just one week after the award was presented, I was recognized by the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations in their top Canada 150 Volunteers. The recognition is great exposure and simply means people are noticing our efforts. Hopefully this can translate into a reduction of serious injury and fatality statistics in the motorcycle community province-wide.

We can only grow in the province and continue to fight to enact positive change. Become a member, follow along on social media, sign up for our newsletter, get involved. Together we can do better!

Wow, thanks again to the AMSS for your hard work and dedication. For me, its dedicated people such as this that can and do make a real difference.

Speaking of dedication, another update from Momma Mandy from the south east part of the province.

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### Momma's Motorcycle Adventures

WOW, what a wonderful fun filled month of June I had. So much riding to do and so many events to cover. Did I tell you all how much I love the riding season? Not only am I able to get out on my bike but I get to reconnect with my fellow riders and reap in the benefits of being the Momma. Not a day goes by that I don't love and appreciate all the wonderful people I have in my life. Being a part of a Motorcycle Family has to be the most rewarding thing in life.

### IRVINE CAMPGROUNDS FUN RUN

June 10<sup>th</sup> was the Irvine Campground fun run, so I sat down with Ivan Mytton one of the Guys responsible for organizing the run. When I asked what the proceeds of the run was for, I realized that I needed to give a little background in order to make sense of Ivan's answer.

In the late 1940's a small group of bikers helped take care of the Campgrounds located across the #1 Highway from the small town of Irvine. They did what they could to help the County take care of it. In 1950 the bikers



around the area became more vigilant in the upkeep of the Campgrounds so they could host bike rallies, poker runs and assorted other events bringing the bike community together.

You would think that this would be the perfect solution to the bikers need to have a gathering spot as well as the County having someone to share the upkeep. Unfortunately, the Campgrounds have been plagued with Mother Nature's wrath among other hurtles. Each spring the Campgrounds floods, seems that a family of beavers have taken a liking to the creek that runs through it. Between Mother Nature and the beavers, the Campgrounds sometimes resembles a lake.

In 2010 a major flash flood occurred destroying the camp house that had been built on the property.

Shortly after the water receded the bikers got started on tearing down the old camp house, cleaning up the debris and rebuilding a newer, better, campgrounds.

In 2014 tragedy struck again this time vandalism, the new camp house was burnt to the ground by a young man looking for a thrill. You would think that would have been enough for "normal people" to say fuck it but we all know that Biker's are a breed of their own and don't take kindly to the destruction of something that they've worked hard for. We never back down from a challenge!!

Yet again the bikers prevailed and rebuilt. They planted trees and built the cookhouse on higher ground. This would help a bit with the spring flood, but a permanent solution needed to be found. The 6 - 8 bikers who are vigilant in the care of the campground decided they needed to work with the county to get rid of the beavers first of all and possibly purchase a pump. Normally everything done at the campground comes from a \$20.00 a year donation from the biker's that use the campground but a pump would be a little out of their reach. So, the Idea of having a fun run June 10<sup>th</sup> to raise the money was planned.

40 bikes showed up to help with the task. They raised enough money to purchase the pump they so desperately needed to control the watery springs in the future. A great time was had by all and the Campgrounds was full of riders and their support to keep this Campground going.



The Irvine Campgrounds has its annual dogs and cobs gathering closer to the end of the riding season as well as they are looking forward to hosting a fundraiser August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> for a young family whose mother Jen Cobler has been suffering from Brain Cancer. Camping is always by donation and respect is the moto. Original old school values. I will be following up with this event in next months info.

### Toy Run Meeting

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, I was invited to attend the second meeting

for the Toy Run by the members of the Toy Run Committee. I was excited to sit with these people and find out what exactly was involved in the planning of the Toy Run. I have attended the Toy Run for many years but never really had a clue as to how much work was involved with it's preparation.

The Committee starts meeting in April and it takes 6 months of planning. The 15 members of the Toy Run committee all have a job to do to make this run come together without any glitches. Almost 200 volunteers volunteer their time for many different jobs. The Medicine Hat News every year donates the advertising and Rock 105.3 "The Hat's Best Rock" donates the Air Time, with Poncho Parker coming out to do his part as the DJ. The Cypress Center has graciously donated the Venue and parking area for the past number of years.

Everything for this event is donated by local business and private Individuals. Insurance needs to be lined up, Pins and posters need to be ordered, food, water, prizes, music, as well as activities for the kids need to be in place. The venue needs to be secured. All of this has to be done at no cost to the committee.

The Parade Route takes between 800 and 1,000 bikes down the #1 Highway from Irvine and straight down the one of the busiest streets in Medicine Hat. Safety meetings need to be held to ensure both the riders safety as well as traffic control. There are anywhere from 55 – 75 blockers needed to stop the traffic so no vehicles can get into the parade. The RCMP, Sheriffs as well as the MH Police Service help with the high-risk areas. An arrow truck is in place to direct motorists away from the parade route. An ambulance follows the parade so if there are any medical issues they are there to assist. This is the biggest Toy Run in Western Canada Per Capita, so everything must run as smooth as possible.

September 9<sup>th</sup> will mark the 31<sup>st</sup> year for the toy run. The Parade starts every year at the Irvine Hotel in Irvine, Alberta where every rider is provided with the route, door prize ticket, as well as a Toy Run Pin. Louis Hashem at the Irvine Hotel puts on a breakfast each year. There is no charge for the breakfast but a donation pot is placed out so those who feel the need to donate can do so. Louis as a rule usually donates the money he receives for the breakfast back to the Santa Claus Fund.

The blockers congregate at the East end of Irvine to lead the Parade with Santa and Mrs. Claus right out in front of everyone. The Parade Route takes approximately 30 minutes from start to finish, only making right hand turns. The highway and streets are lined with families waving and clapping for the riders. The Parade ends at the Cypress center where there are burgers, beverages, prizes and entertainment. The riders are directed to parking areas and at least 50 kids volunteer to gather the toys from the riders to be placed in the mountain of toys. Not everyone can strap toys to their bikes so each year there is thousands of dollars donated not only by the riders but by the community to ensure that every child gets a toy for Christmas.

September 9<sup>th</sup> is the Toy Run in conjunction with the Santa Claus Fund. Next Month I will give a little more information about what the Santa Claus Fund does with all the toys and money they receive from this event.

June 17<sup>th</sup> was a super busy day for this old bird. 4



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different events were on my radar for the day. The weather was perfect for riding.

Lol, thanks Momma, That's all the page space we have this month but we will carry the rest of your tales in future editions, looks like great times with great friends, hopefully I can make it down yet this season for one of your upcoming events.

In bringing this to a close, I can't help but to reflect on just some of these facets of our riding life that we are presented with daily. Our destinations, Donations, friends, families, and our safety. They are all part of what brings us together and keeps us coming back. If you would like to get your charity or event into the mag, shoot me an email and I will do my best to work it in.

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Dan. T.

