

Nov 2024



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Happy Halloween, Vin ↑

It seems that nearly everyone has remarked about the absolutely perfect weather we have enjoyed during these beautiful Fall months. As we anticipate the normal approach to winter, let's all get out there and ride as often as we can get a few bikes together. By all accounts, our regular trip to Eureka Springs went very well with quite a few bikes, perfect weather and a few creative day trips. Thanks go to Mike, Brush and Jan for putting it all together. Our next group event will be our annual Christmas party at the Desoto Club on December 9th. Let's have a full turnout for that. Ride HAPPY, ride SAFELY and ride OFTEN.

2023 Activities



OFFICIAL AER EVENTS (AR Eagle Riders)

2024 Staff

President

Vin Hayes

Vice President

Mike Neal

Treasurer

Butch Robbins

Newsletter/Webmaster

Valerie Hewett

Ride Coordinator

Bill (Brush) Brusenhan

Membership Enhancement

Don Hewett

Facebook Administrator

Sherri Stuckey

Meet to Eat

Dan & Angie Drennon

Safety Enhancement Advisor

Vin Hayes

12/9 - Christmas Party at Desoto Club 5:00 pm



***Even the Zombies do Yoga
At the Fitness Center***





Drinking, distraction, dozers

Three takeaways from federal crash statistics

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released its full overview of 2022 traffic crashes and its preliminary estimate of 2023 on-road fatalities and the news for motorcyclists is neither surprising nor positive.

The final statistics for 2022 show that the total number of crashes reported to police dropped 2.8% from 2021 even though estimated vehicle miles traveled rose by 2.0%. Overall highway fatalities were down 1.7% to 42,514 and the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled fell by 3.6%. Meanwhile, motorcyclist fatalities increased by 1.2% over 2021 and accounted for 15% of all deaths on the road.

That was the picture for 2022. For 2023, we only have NHTSA's preliminary estimates so far and they only provide overall numbers, not a breakdown of the stats by category, such as the type of vehicle. So we can't yet deduce anything about motorcycles from that. The overall number of fatalities in 2023 was down 3.6% from 2022 but we'll have to wait for the final numbers to see if the recent trend continues: fewer people in cars and trucks dying, more pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists dying.

Three points caught my attention from the 2022 stats. Readers who have been following our coverage for a long time will realize none of this is new, but since we're talking about our lives on the line, I think it's worth revisiting. Here are my takeaways.

Drinking and riding is one of the few risk factors that's completely under our control. Photo by Bill Andrews.

Drinking and riding: Still our own worst enemy

This is a topic I've pointed out for years, and it remains true. The number of motorcyclists involved in fatal crashes in 2022 who were impaired by alcohol rose 1.3% while overall fatalities involving drinking dropped 1.7%. That continues recent trends of disproportionate numbers of riders dying because they've been drinking, and the numbers continue to climb.

We all know why. For many people, riding is a social activity and that often involves some drinking along the way. Riding a motorcycle is more physically demanding than driving a car, but when you've had a drink or two, the first thing that goes is your judgment, and it's easier to convince yourself you're OK to ride if you "take it easy."

There's no point in going on about this, because we all know the score. The bottom line is that this is the one risk factor that is totally under our control. So it's easy to improve our odds.



Drinking, distraction, dozers

Distraction: Hard to pin down

If you've noticed some messages about distracted driving lately, it's not a coincidence. NHTSA is in the middle of a \$5 million media campaign (the video below is part of that) called "Put the Phone Away or Pay" that's targeting distracted driving and law enforcement agencies are supposed to implement high-visibility enforcement efforts today through Sunday, especially aimed at drivers age 18 to 34, who are the ones most likely to die in a crash related to distracted driving.

As motorcyclists, we often rage about the number of people on the roads who are paying too much attention to cell phones and not enough attention to driving. And we have reason. NHTSA reports that 19% of the fatalities in 2022 related to distracted drivers were people who were not in the car or truck, meaning vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists.

On the other hand, the numbers are still smaller than you probably think. Just 8% of fatal crashes and 11% of all crashes were related to distracted driving. NHTSA defines distracted driving as diverting attention from driving to another task, so that's not just using a cell phone, but also adjusting the radio or climate controls, eating, or even talking to a passenger. Just 12% of those distracted driving fatal crashes were listed as involving cell phone use. So cell phones were blamed for for less than 1% of total traffic fatalities.

On the third hand, NHTSA admits that the distracted driving statistics could be inaccurate. NHTSA collects data from police reports and different jurisdictions have different ways of recording data about distraction. Plus, in the event of a fatal crash, there may be no way to know if a driver was looking at a phone or doing something else. A surviving driver may not give a truthful answer and there may be no witness accounts.

Those of us on the road on motorcycles are aware of the dangers and often have better visibility so we can spot drivers using a phone. We intuitively believe it's a real threat, and to some degree it is. But it's hard to pin down with precision.

The trends are small but steady. People in four-wheel vehicles are getting less likely to die on the highway, while everyone else is getting more likely to die. Is the increasing size of trucks and SUVs contributing to that trend?

Drinking, distraction, dozers

Speculation: Bigger vehicles are killing us

This is my speculation, not NHTSA's findings, and I'm definitely not the first to suggest it. Plus, it fits with all the NHTSA data. I think the gradual decrease in passenger car and truck deaths and simultaneous increase in motorcyclist deaths — and much bigger increases in pedestrian and bicyclist deaths — can be partially explained by the increasing size of the vehicles on U.S. roads.

In 1992, the best selling car in the United States was the Ford Taurus. If a Taurus hit you on your motorcycle, odds are you'd flop onto the hood. In 2022, the best selling car in the United States was the Ford F series pickup truck. If one of those hits you on your bike, odds are you're going underneath the truck, because the hoodline may well be higher than your head when you're in the seated position.

This theory fits with NHTSA data. NHTSA splits vehicles into categories of passenger cars, pickups, SUVs, vans, motorcycles, and large trucks. The stats show increasing numbers of crashes by pickups and SUVs and fewer involving cars and vans, which no doubt reflects consumer shifts toward those kinds of vehicles. There are more hulking pickup trucks on the road (Ford today doesn't even sell anything in the United States, other than the Mustang, that would have been recognized as a "car" back when the Taurus was king) and when those larger vehicles hit pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists, they're more likely to kill.

Bottom line, we can control our risk exposure to drinking and riding. We can't totally control our risk exposure to distracted drivers and bro dozers mowing us down, but we can keep our situational awareness sharp, consider adjusting our tactics, and embrace life-long training.

Motorcycling is fun but also involves risks, and those risks are not diminishing, as the NHTSA stats show. Do what you can to improve your odds.



Why Do We Celebrate Halloween

If you think Halloween is a uniquely American tradition, grab a mini Snickers and settle in, because you've got some learning to do. Dressing up in a creative costume, traipsing around in the gathering dusk to collect the best candy or throwing a monster bash with friends are all time-honored holiday traditions. But Halloween didn't start stateside at all.

In fact, the origins of Halloween go back thousands of years to the Celtic celebration of Samhain (pronounced "sow-win"), a festival that marked the end of the harvest season and ushered in a new year. During Samhain, the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead was thought to be especially thin, so people could communicate with loved ones who had passed on.

Whether or not you buy into the supernatural, it's still fun to learn a little something about the meaning behind your favorite Halloween traditions before you head out trick-or-treating. Turns out, the holiday has a much more interesting (and sometimes even spookier!) backstory than many people realize. Travel back in time with us to learn what some of the very first celebrations of Halloween looked like, including throwback ghoulies and ghosties, what people used to carve in place of pumpkins and even the elements that Valentine's Day and Halloween have in common. We can guarantee there wasn't a glitter pumpkin or superhero costume in sight.



Halloween Has a Dark Spiritual History

The Celts also believed that the spiritual communication on Samhain made it easier for Celtic priests, or druids, to predict the future, according to History. To appease the deities, they built bonfires and sacrificed crops and animals. Villagers also attended the bonfire ceremonies wearing animal heads and skins, which may be where the tradition of Halloween cos-

Christians Are Behind Why Halloween Is on October 31

Fast forward a few centuries, and the festivals that would become Halloween had evolved. Several Christian popes attempted to replace "pagan" holidays like Samhain with their own religious observances. By 1000 A.D., All Souls' Day on November 2 served as a time for the living to pray for the souls of the dead. All Saints' Day, or All Hallows, honored the saints on November 1. That made October 31 All Hallows Eve, which later became Halloween.

Americans Spend a Lot on Candy

Trick-or-treating skyrocketed in popularity by the 1950s, when Halloween became a true national event. Today, over 179 million Americans celebrate the holiday — and spend about \$9.1 billion annually in the process, according to the National Retail Federation. That's a lot of miniature candy bars!

Eureka Springs

We had a great party in Eureka Springs last week. There were about 16 of us plus 2 more that rode halfway and had lunch with one of our groups. We had 4 great days of riding. The weather cooperated for us although slightly warmer than we could remember for this time of year. The colors were beautiful in the trees, lots of yellows, orange, red, bur-gundy and a little green. Green is also a nice color when mixed in with all of the other colors of the leaves! Mike Neal has locked us in for another stay at the same time next year.



Eureka Springs



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Eureka Springs



Eureka Springs



Eureka Springs



Eureka Springs



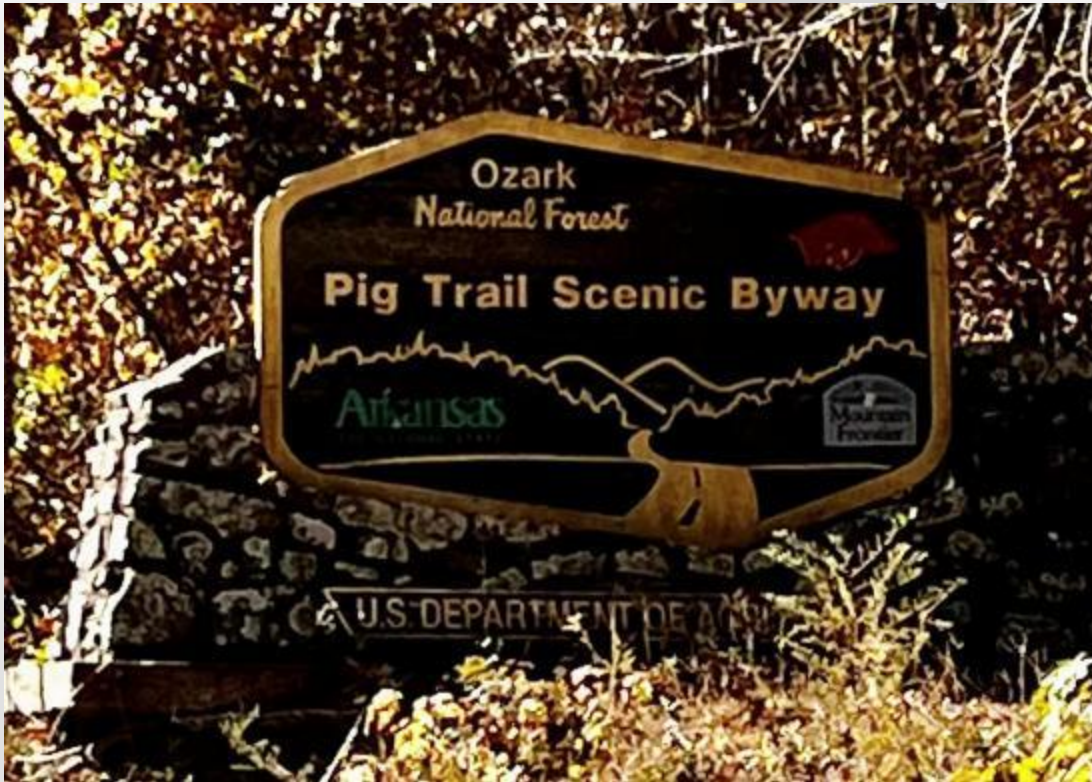
Eureka Springs



Eureka Springs



Pig Trail



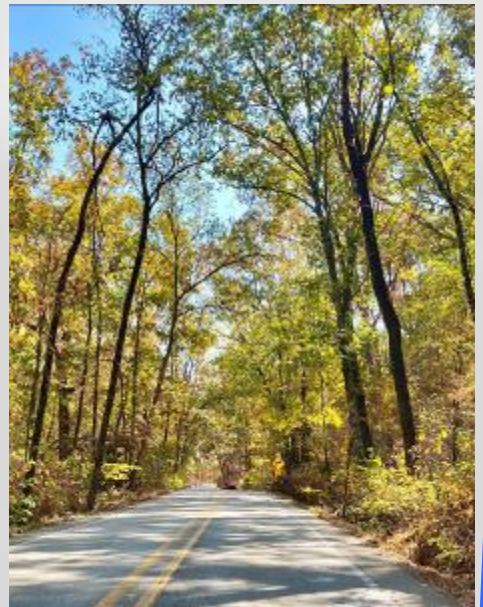
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Pig Trail



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Buffalo Point



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Buffalo Point



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