

Life

Number of women riders growing

Liz Jansen held the first Professional Women's Networking Ride this summer in Orangeville

By **RICHARD VIVIAN**
Banner Staff Writer

"You're just so much more a part of everything when you're riding."

That's how Orangeville motorcycle enthusiast Liz Jansen says she felt when she first climbed aboard a bike 39 years ago, and how she still feels about it today.

"I just finished riding out to Colorado on my motorcycle and there's just nothing like it," she says, explaining she made the 2,500 kilometre trip to attend the American Motorcyclist Association's International Women and Motorcycling Conference.

"You're out in the elements. You're just so much more alive — you feel things, you see things, you smell things. You've got the wind. You've got the sun. You've got everything and you have to deal with whatever gets thrown your way."

Jansen has been riding motorcycles since age 16, touring the family farm. She says she did that for four or five years, then earned her motorcycle licence so she could head out on the roads.

"It was fun to ride around on the farm. We had a large farm," she says.

"It's an adventure all the time," she adds, suggesting, "It's a good way to clear your head."

More than the ride itself, Jansen loves to share the experience with others. That's why she's made a career out of doing just that.

Jansen is a motorcycle instructor at Humber College and also runs Orangeville-based Trillium Motorcycle Tours. For the latter, she leads groups of riders on scenic rides through Dufferin County and the surrounding areas.

Like motorcycle riding in general, she says the tours are largely male-dominated. But Jansen's working to



Richard Vivian - The Banner

Orangeville's Liz Jansen loves introducing others to the world of motorcycles.

change that ... or at least even things out a little.

Earlier this summer she started a Professional Women's Networking Ride. It's a chance for business women to gather and talk business.

"I would like to get to the place where we don't have to talk about men and women, we can just talk about riders. We're getting there. As women get more equal in riding, that's what's happening," Jansen says. "It's the same in the business world. Women have had to fight and, in some cases, be legislated to get into executive positions because it's mostly males.

"In motorcycling, nobody's legislated that a certain percentage have to be women, so you have to take that on yourself."

The number of women riders, and motorcycle owners, has been on the upswing in recent years. According to the Motorcycle Industry Council, female ownership across the United States jumped from 9.6 in 2003 to 12.3 per cent last year. Women also accounted for 23 per cent of American

riders in 2008.

Jansen believes those numbers are reflective of the picture on this side of the border. She says some women have to "unlearn some of the things they've learned about why they can't do it," while others take to motorcycles without a problem.

"Women have been brought up [to think] it's a male thing — a lot of women have, not everybody. And if you have, then you have to overcome that to realize you can do it too," she says, suggesting people gain self-confidence from doing something new.

"I'm pleased that women are trying to do something that stretches their comfort zone."

Feedback from Trillium Motorcycle Tour's first all-female ride was so positive, Jansen is planning another tomorrow (Sept. 9). Like the first, it will be a day-trip; about 250 kilometres, with several stops so the riders can get to know one another and talk business.

"It was actually the most successful start of any kind of tour that I've had. I had an immediate response, and more than anything I've done to-date," Jansen says of the Professional Women's Networking Ride on July 15. "They really liked it, really appreciated it."

Visit www.trilliumtours.com.

Community Calendar

Tuesday, September 8

The Orangeville and District Horticultural Society will be meeting for a social and refreshments at 7 p.m. at the Seniors Centre (26 Bythia St., Orangeville) followed by a presentation promptly beginning at 7:30 p.m. by member's panel and local experts. Visitors are always welcome and for more information, contact Jill Cutter at j-cutter@sympatico.ca.

Wednesday, September 9

The Orangeville Chorus, Sweet Adelines International is hosting new membership evenings at 7:15 p.m. on Sept. 9, 16, 23, and 30, at the Horizon Events Centre (behind Mono Plaza, Hwy 10). Call Linda at 519-943-0343 or Fay at 519-927-5370.

Saturday, September 12

Caledon Fire and Emergency Services Station 308 in Mono Mills is hosting an open house from 9 a.m. to noon with Caledon O.P.P. and Peel Regional Paramedic Services. This annual event helps the community learn to make a home escape plan and get educated about emergency preparedness. There will also be an auto extrication demonstration, a child car seat clinic (by appointment) as well as an opportunity to meet local volunteer firefighters, police officers and paramedics while enjoying a pancake breakfast. To book an appointment, call 905-857-3304 and ask for Karen or Rosalyn.

The Orangeville fairgrounds (247090 Five Sideroad, Mono) hosts the Military Show. Phone 519-942-9597.

The Orangeville fairgrounds (247090 Five Sideroad, Mono) hosts the Ducks Unlimited dinner and auction. Call 519-942-9597.

Sunday, September 13

Westminster United Church is hosting a Welcome Back BBQ at noon at the church. For more information, please call the church office at 519-941-0381.

This year's Grand Valley Terry Fox run/ walk/cycle will be held on Sunday, Sept. 13. Register anytime between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at the Grand Valley District Community Centre then enjoy a run/walk/ride through Grand Valley and the surrounding area. Contact Heidi Rooyackers at 519-928-2245.

Caledon Knox United Church (Charleston Sideroad and Hwy. 10) is holding a Rally Sunday service featuring Steel Panache. A potluck lunch will follow.

Monday, September 14

The Ontario SPCA is holding its Fore the Animals Golf Tournament in support of the Orangeville and District Branch and the Upper Credit Humane Society. The tournament is being held at the Caledon Country Club in Inglewood. Enjoy a box lunch, 18 holes of golf in a best ball format, a putting contest, silent auction, dinner and prizes for \$170. Call 519-942-3140 or visit www.orangeville.ontariospca.ca for all the details.

Dufferin www.mydufferin.com
Handy with a Camera?
Email us pictures of your next outing, along with a few details about the event, including names of your subjects, to mydufferin@orangevillebanner.com.
Photos must be between 1 and 4 megabytes.

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Liz Jansen,
motorcycle enthusiast