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CHUCK HILL (front) organized and led last year's ride as it started on Esperanza Boulevard.

SANDY LEWIS/NEWS PHOTO

THE RIDE CONTINUES

Bicyclists returning for Ride of Silence

By Christopher Boon
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Ten years ago, Green Valley resident Chuck Hill and the members of the Santa Cruz Valley Bicycle Advocacy Committee wanted to commemorate their two-wheeled brethren injured or killed in accidents.

The group started an annual rite of passage for local bikers each May with the Ride of Silence, a seven-mile, slow-paced bike ride that starts at the East Center in Green Valley.

The Ride of Silence is a worldwide event begun in 2003 in Dallas after Larry Schwartz was killed when his bicycle collided with a school bus.

The Green Valley Ride of Silence is one of 315 events in 22 countries on all seven continents. Last year's event drew a record number of participants locally and was dedicated to Sahuarita resident Albert Rich, who was killed in a bike accident in Tucson.

The first Green Valley ride was dedicated to Jean Gorman's son, who passed away in a bike accident while training for El Tour de Tucson.

Hill said the annual ride serves a definite educational purpose for drivers in Southern Arizona.

"It's just an additional way of letting vehicle drivers know that we are there and that we deserve respect," Hill said. "The overall purpose of the Ride of Silence is to raise that awareness about sharing the road with bicyclists."

Special anniversary

Hill said he hopes the annual ride has helped raise awareness of bicyclists on the roadways of Pima County.

SEE RIDE OF SILENCE, PAGE B6

WANT TO RIDE?

The 10th annual Ride of Silence launches from the East Center in Green Valley on Wednesday at 6 p.m. Interested bicyclists are encouraged to arrive by 5:30 p.m. for the seven-mile ride. Entrants are required to wear a helmet. Admission is free.



ABOVE: The cyclists make their way down Abrego Drive during last year's Ride of Silence.

RIGHT: The cyclists pedal along Abrego Drive on the last leg of the 2014 ride.

JOHN WEAKLY | SPECIAL TO THE GREEN VALLEY NEWS



GREEN VALLEY NEWS PHOTO

THE RIDE OF SILENCE got started in 2013 under the I-19 overpass on Esperanza Boulevard. This year's ride will begin May 20 at 6 p.m. at the East Center.



Thinking about a special day

OK, here's the thing. I kinda think we men need an annual national holiday honoring the female persons in our households and no, the missus did not coerce me into doing this.

When it comes to our spouses, co-vivants, life partners or significant others, I ask... what would we do without those special helpmates who, for instance, graciously satisfy our palates with seven-course meals featuring pot roast, fried chicken, corned beef and cabbage and good stuff like that instead of a seven-course meal of a pepperoni pizza and a six pack if we had to fend for ourselves?

I think it would be nice if we set aside a day once a year to make a special effort to show our appreciation for all those things

As I See It

FLOYD PARKER



they do to make our lives pleasurable. Can I get a big AMEN to that?

We have Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June, and that's good. On Mother's Day, my two boys always treated their mother to a lavish meal at a fancy restaurant. On Father's Day, I usually got a wallet. I didn't complain, though, because they came with a picture of a movie star in one of the inserts.

The wallet they gave me on Father's Day in 1979 has long been worn out, but I still have the picture of Brigitte Bardot tucked

away in the wallet my missus gave me two years ago on the anniversary of our wedding. I appreciated the wallet... after all, it's the thought that counts... but I figured it would have been somewhat more romantic if she'd booked a Caribbean cruise and paid for it with her own credit card.

It seems only fair that we pay homage to our ladies with their special day because woman has been solicitous to man ever since the time Eve presented Adam with a ripe apple she'd just plucked from the tree in her garden. King Henry VIII's devoted second wife, Anne Boleyn, purportedly exclaimed, "Henry, I left your supper warming in the oven" just before they chopped off her head. And who could forget Mary Todd Lincoln's solicitous words to her husband: "You've

been working awfully hard lately, Abe; why don't you take some time off and go to the theater?"

What about when Elizabeth Custer waved to her husband as he rode off, headed west leading the 7th Cavalry, and said, "When you get to the Little Big Horn, George, don't forget to write and tell me how your day is going?" Was that a wife's concern for her husband or what? And let's not forget when Josephine Hoffa kissed her husband, Jimmy, on the cheek and told him, "Have a nice day" the last time he left home to go to the office.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm well aware that throughout history men have shown due consideration for their ladies. For instance, Mr. Noah telling Mrs. Noah, "Cash in the flood insurance policy if this thing doesn't float

and buy yourself a nice chalet on a mountain top somewhere." And what about the 1836 letter Davy Crockett sent his wife, Elizabeth, from the Alamo Mission, inviting her to come on down: "There's a whole bunch of Mexicans headed this way and I know how much you like Mexican food."

Over the years I've learned from a few sad experiences that there are certain gifts men should not give their spouses on any occasion. Like a George Foreman indoor/outdoor grill on her birthday. That and a Craftsman 127-piece chrome socket wrench set.

Wanting to do something really nice for the missus, I recently presented her with a Rosetta Stone Spanish language tutorial, thinking she'd like to impress the wait-

ress at a Mexican restaurant by asking, "Puedo tener algunas mas patatas fritas y salsa, por favor?" which to us savants who think we are sufficiently proficient in the language because we are able to correctly pronounce "huevos rancheros," means "May I have some more chips and salsa, please?"

So maybe you'll agree that our ladies are ones we should treasure, that their value is more than all the world's treasures. That we should always appreciate their commitment to us, and not take for granted what they've given us. Most importantly, I think we should treasure each day with them as if it were the last.

Thank you, Judy.

Opine if you wish to
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ACROSS THE VALLEY

Festival Kino celebration

Tumacácori National Historical Park joins the state of Sonora, Mexico in celebrating the life and missions of Father Eusebio Francisco Kino as part of the Mexican state's annual Festival Kino. In its fourth year in Arizona, the Kino Festival has been an annual event in Sonora since 1967. Beginning in Magdalena on the first anniversary of the discovery of Father Kino's remains, the event has grown

to include all of northern Sonora, plus three historic sites in southern Arizona: Mission San José de Tumacácori, the Tubac Presidio, and Mission San Xavier del Bac.

Tumacácori will host a lecture followed by a program of music inside the historic mission church on Saturday, May 23. At 1 p.m., speaker Rene Córdoba will present a journey through the culinary, historic and geographic diversity found in the favorite Mexican dish, posole. At 2 p.m., classical guitarist Avelino Vega

will present a concert of popular traditional songs from Mexico and Latin America, and regional songs from Sonora.

The celebration is included with regular park admission. For more information, call Tumacácori National Historical Park at 520-377-5060 or visit the park's website, at nps.gov/tuma.

The annual Festival Kino runs throughout northern Sonora on May 20-24. For more information, visit the Sonoran Institute of Culture website at isc.gov.mx/festivalkino.php.

RIDE OF SILENCE

CONTINUED FROM B1

"The publicity the event's received has helped drivers be aware of who we are and what we're doing. We've had great community support each year," Hill said.

According to the Tucson bicycle crash database, the number of bicycle-involved crashes in 2011 was 378 — down from 454 in 2010.

Matt Zoll, manager of the Pima County Bike and Pedestrian Program, which oversees bicycle safety courses in Pima County, said gauging bicycle safety is a tough task.

"I think (the Ride of Silence) has had a positive impact," Zoll said. "It's a bit difficult to measure the

numbers because we've seen an increase in the number of bikers in Pima County, and though the number of crashes might go up, the number of people biking has as well."

Zoll believes the county is heading in the right direction, thanks to programs like the Ride of Silence.

"I think if we look at the last decade, (bicycling) has gotten much safer," Zoll said. "We have a lot more bike lanes than we did a decade ago, which helps a lot."

Zoll estimates that more than 100 miles of bike lanes have been added in Pima County, and he believes the driver and bicyclist education programs the county offers have helped lower the risk as well.

He added that the annual bike ride brings much-needed attention to the risks associated with bicycling.

"I think (the Ride of Silence) brings people back to the reality that you always have to be cautious on our streets and roadways as bikers or drivers," Zoll said. "It gives us time to reflect on loved ones who passed because of these accidents. If we can see both bikers and drivers being more aware of each other than that will make a positive impact over time."

Zoll said events like the Ride of Silence can only help bolster bicy-

clists going forward.

"I think things are pretty positive as a whole in Pima County," he said. "I think we can certainly make things better, but we're definitely on the right track."

Special rides

Because of the emotion around the loss of Rich, Hill said last year's ride was probably the most memorable one he's experienced in the 10 years he has helped organize the event.

Hill said the ride was special because Rich's family members and friends came from Tucson and Sahuarita to memorialize their fallen friend.

"It was really great to see his family and friends come out for it," Hill recalls. "That was probably the highlight of all the rides I've been on."

Hill thanked the community for its continued support of the annual ride, saying its help and involvement makes it all worthwhile.

"It's neat to see a whole bunch of people show up and ride in it, and it's pretty heartwarming to see the support that we get from the community, too," Hill said. "They really enjoy doing it and enjoy helping us, and we couldn't be more thankful for their support."

Christopher Boan | 547-9747

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