

Quoteworthy

"The motorcycle is a stress reliever that helps me block out the corporate bull at work."

Sandy Couture of Toledo, Ohio, as quoted in "Hear Me Roar; Women, Motorcycles and the Rapture of the Road," by Ann Ferrar

WOMEN

pages

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IN BUSINESS

RAPID RESPONSE

Q: *When you go on vacation, do you really leave your work completely behind?*

"No. Just as we cannot leave our family life behind when we depart for work each morning, the job is not left behind during family moments. We may not bring the entire workload with us, but part of our minds, thoughts and even actions are geared with our work in mind."

Liz Novak, senior vice president, First National Merchant Solutions

"No. I use my vacation to mull over ideas or options for clients and the challenges they face. Then I come back to work renewed and with fresh ideas for the client to consider."

James W. Grass, senior account manager, Executive Media Communications Consultants Inc.

"I am the owner of an independent telecommunications consulting firm. Yes, I do take my laptop with me on vacation. I respond to e-mails and voice mails. Last year on vacation, I landed a large project simply because I was prompt in returning an e-mail."

Barb Grothe, owner, Telecom Resources

"Until this year, I have never taken a vacation where I didn't spend some time working. E-mail, laptops and cell phones make it very easy to work while on vacation. This year, our vacation took us out of practical reach of technology."

Tim Hewitt, vice president of corporate relations, United Way of Central Indiana

Embracing the freedom of the road

Some businesswomen have found the lure of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle irresistible

By **Shari Held**
Special to **IBJ**

As part of the Indianapolis 500 Festival activities last month, parade grand marshal and country singer Wynonna Judd took a spin around the Speedway on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

But the thrill of riding a Harley is not just for famous women. The percentage of customers who are female is on the rise, up to 9 percent in 2001 (the most recent year for which figures are available), according to the Milwaukee-based Harley-Davidson Motor Co.

Many businesswomen are hopping on Harleys as well, which may not be too surprising since many of the same traits that have helped women excel in the business world—confidence, independ-

ence and courage—have enabled them to break through the male-dominated world of Harley-riding.

While boyfriends with Harleys and possibly teen-age rebellion attracted Tracey Anderson, 41, to Harleys at an early age, that's not the reason she rides a Road King, one of the larger Harleys, nowadays.

"It's the freedom," said Anderson, a broker with Indianapolis-based Sycamore Group Realtors. "You are in your own little world, and it's just like meditation. I've got a high-stress job: I'm an investor, I buy and sell properties, I represent investors, and I have my real estate practice. It's almost like two or three full-time jobs. So when I can get time off, I ride."

Anderson grew up around Harleys and bought her first one



Tracey Anderson, a broker with Indianapolis-based Sycamore Group Realtors, said she often rides her Harley when showing homes.

Behind-the-scenes work is her forte

Project director for life sciences initiative likes to put the emphasis on collaboration

By **Kathy Maeglin**
E-mail: kmaeglin@ibj.com

When Anne Shane was president of the Junior League of Indianapolis in the mid-1980s, she met then-Marion County Prosecutor **PROFILE**
ANNE SHANE

Stephen Goldsmith when she introduced him at a function for the service organization. Little did she know he would introduce her to a whole new career path that would lead to her current position as project director of the Central Indiana Life Sciences Initiative. Goldsmith, who now works in

Washington, D.C., as senior vice president of e-government and strategic development for Dallas-based ASC, a technology consulting firm, recalled he was impressed with Shane's leadership.

"She had a terrific way of working with people to produce results, and others were inspired to follow her," he said.

So Goldsmith enlisted Shane to set up an online database—a very cutting-edge prospect in 1985—to connect non-violent youthful offenders with services outside the criminal justice system. Although Shane had a master's degree in education and had done

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Anne Shane learned a lot during her years in the mayor's office.

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HARLEY

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in 1995. Since then, she has racked up thousands of miles on the road—ranging from Sturgis, S.D., home of a huge annual motorcycle rally, to Hilton Head, S.C., and New York state.

Becoming a Harley owner was “just a fluke” for Rita Mascari, director of specialty restaurant accounts for Indianapolis Fruit/Piazza Produce Co., an Indianapolis-based distributor of produce and food products. “It wasn’t like I always had this dream that I’d have a Harley,” she said.

Mascari offered to go along with her brother when she found out he was taking a motorcycle safety class sponsored by American Bikers Aimed Toward Education (ABATE). After the class, she found a Honda Rebel that fit her 4-foot-11-inch stature perfectly. “I thought I’d ride that forever,” she said.

But it was the sound that only a Harley can make that lured her into the rank and file of Harley-riding women. Less than a year later, she bought a Sportster, a smaller Harley with a narrow frame that is popular with women riders. In order to touch the ground flat-footed, she had to have the bike modified. She also had it customized to look like one of the bigger models.

Mascari, 51, has been riding for six years now. “It’s just an adventure,” she said. “Every time you go out, something differ-

“I was riding by myself and dropped my Sportster once. Trying to figure out how I was going to pick up a 600-pound motorcycle by myself was quite interesting.”

Martha Pearson, Lee’s Enterprises controller

ent happens”—like the time she stayed at a slaughterhouse during a rainstorm.

When asked what kind of woman rides a Harley, Mascari rattled off a number of traits: “Adventurous. Willing to live on the edge. Willing to get out of her comfort zone. I had to go out of my comfort zone big time. I thought I’d get on the bike and be a natural. Well, I wasn’t a natural, and I was scared to death.”

Martha Pearson, controller for Lee’s Enterprises, an Indianapolis-based group of businesses that includes liquor stores, cash-and-go stores and a communications company, has faced her own share of challenges in the two years she’s been riding. “I think you have to be sure of yourself, independent,” she said. “I was riding by myself and dropped my Sportster once. Trying to figure out how I was going to pick up a 600-pound motorcycle by myself was quite interesting.”

A way of life

Those who embrace riding often find it develops into more than a sport or hobby. It can affect their entire lifestyle.

Pearson, 36, wanted a Harley since the

first time she rode on the back of one at age 16. “Riding Harleys is a way of life,” she said. “But I feel like I’ve got the best of any world I want. I can put on my leathers and my leather boots and gloves and go for a ride on my bike with my hair pulled back, not caring what it looks like. But I can also put on a really nice evening dress and go to the opera or the symphony and enjoy that just as much. That’s what it is like for me.”

But more often than not, she can be found riding on the outskirts of town. She admits to neglecting her car in favor of polishing the chrome on her Sportster.

Anderson said she rides any spare minute she has. “Except for my old high school friends and people from work, it’s my whole social life,” she said. “It’s hard to even think about what I would be doing with my time if I hadn’t bought a bike eight years ago.”

Mascari shares that feeling. “If I hear a bike go by and I can’t be on it, it just tears me up,” she said. “I fell off the step the other day and hurt my ankle, and the first thing I thought was, ‘My God, I won’t be able to ride!’”

“I don’t think you can half-step riding,” she added. “I think your heart and soul have to be in it.”

Part of the Harley lifestyle includes fund-raising rides. Both Anderson and Pearson belong to a club called BABI (Bad Ass Bikers of Indianapolis). BABI adopts several families at Christmastime and sponsors rides to raise funds for gifts. Until last year, Anderson served on the board for the Loop for Life charity fund-raiser, which has provided thousands of dollars to entities such as Methodist Children’s Hospital. The 2003 Loop for Life will benefit Special Olympics Indiana.

BABI is a club that includes both men and women, but there are clubs that cater to women only, such as Ladies of Harley, a subchapter of Harley Owner Group (HOG).

Perhaps another reason the Harley lifestyle attracts professional women is because the motorcycles run from about \$6,700 for a Sportster to \$30,000 for a Screaming Eagle Road King, according to Motorcycles of Indianapolis, a Harley-Davidson dealer.

Safety concerns

The women said co-workers and customers don’t seem to have a problem with their riding; it’s their families, concerned about safety issues, who often have difficulty accepting it. But that doesn’t stop them.

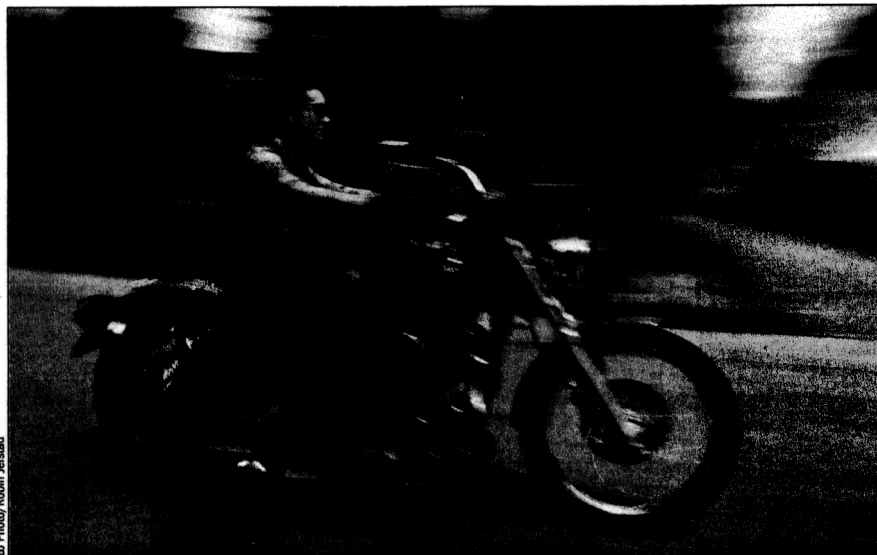
The vanity plate on Anderson’s Harley reads REALTR, and she often rides her Harley when showing homes. In fact, she’s the agent-of-choice for many Harley-riders. Last year, she had a “pretty serious” accident on the way to a showing and still hasn’t recovered completely. “Mom would probably rather that I didn’t ride, and the rest of the family just tolerate it,” she said.

Mascari, whose clients are mainly chefs, said even though it isn’t practical for her to ride her Harley on the job, her customers want her to come by and show it to them. “My industry is probably more responsive to it than if I were an attorney or doctor,” she said. Her family, however, is less thrilled. “Nobody in my family is tickled pink. My dad says, ‘You’re not like those other bikers. You’re more like a Yuppie biker.’”

Sometimes even professional women have to contend with the “biker” stereotype. One weekend, Pearson, attired in motorcycle leathers, found the inner door of the office locked. When she jumped the counter to get inside, her office mates were ready to call 911, until she told them who she was.

“There are people who stereotype us and think that we are thieves and on drugs, and that they should lock up the mothers and children when the bikes roll through,” Pearson said. “I was at a stoplight the other day, and when I pulled up beside a little old lady, she reached over and locked her door. She didn’t want to take any chances, evidently.”

But Mascari offered a contrasting story. “I was at the makeup counter at Nordstrom’s,” she said. “The saleswoman, who knows me, said, ‘Have you been out on your Harley lately?’ Another lady at the counter turned to me and said, ‘My husband and I have a Harley, and after I get my Ph.D., I’m going to take that ABATE class and get my own Sportster.’”



Rita Mascari, director of specialty restaurant accounts for Indianapolis Fruit/Piazza Produce Co., said if she hears a bike go by and she can’t be on it, it just tears her up.

GALLERY 116

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we can achieve our career goals through a business where we can share the work hours and still give ourselves some family time.

“The concept also works well for other women who want to pursue a creative passion and still have room for other careers and their families,” she added. “Retail space is so valuable and often expensive. But by selling here, they can make money and be entrepreneurs with less risk than if they’d done it on their own.”

The contributions of each artist and the store owners’ findings are what make the shop appealing to customers, Town said.

“What we do buy from out of town comes from one-of-a-kind shows in places like Dallas, Atlanta and Chicago,” she said. “Each item is unique, and that’s also especially true with the things locals sell here. About 20 local artists currently have things in our store, and this year we’ve already offered the works of more than 60 people.”

One shopper who tries to visit the store at least twice a month agreed.

“You can find so many things here that you can’t find other places,” said Fishers resident Christy Vinson. “It’s the perfect place for gifts for friends on special occasions and holidays. I know I can always go there and find something unique with no problem.”

Vinson shops the store regularly to keep up with frequent additions to inventory, she said,

“and also because most things are reasonably priced for the quality and craftsmanship.”

Word-of-mouth from customers like Vinson has driven growth, Rhiver said.

“So many people don’t like to trek to the mall,” she said. “When they hear about us or come once to check it out, they find something they like in a place they wouldn’t expect it. A gallery should be a showplace for a lot of things, so we try to make it that and not get stuck with one kind of look.”

Gallery 116 offers private evening shows for groups of women who want to make an event out of a trip to the shop, and it also offers “men’s shopping nights” before holidays such as Christmas and Mother’s Day.

“We feed them snacks, do the gift-wrapping and help make sure the women get

“We provide a great way for someone who wants to be in business, but not deal with all aspects of business ownership, to participate.”

Denise Town, Gallery 116 co-owner

what they want,” Town said. “Overall, we’re just trying to bring something to Fishers that wasn’t here before. And we’re always changing or doing something special, because that’s the lure for return business.”