

## FIRST PERSON: Ride it like you stole it



By Al Carlos Hernandez

I make it a point to schedule a three-hour time block during the day, once a week, to ride my motorcycle, usually down the coast. I call this process my "Cycle Therapy."

It is truly liberating to virtually soar like a bird down a windy two-lane road, perched high on a hill, with the green-gray ocean off to the right, white-capped waves crashing onto the rusty tan sand below. The stings of the salty air, brisk breeze and wind currents nudge you back and forth. Pillowly fog blankets, flashing swords of crisp sunlight illuminate a blue sky ceiling, feeling the hum of the warm engine below.

The trip is always perilous and thrilling, like riding a remote controlled two-wheeled roller coaster. Time out-of-mind indeed; it's an exuberant experience that causes your mind, body and soul to re-boot and defragment.

There is something about riding a motorcycle that allows you to be a participant in the environment you are passing through, rather than being a glass-enclosed observer. On a bike you can smell the scents and feel the temperature changes, all the while knowing that you control your own fate. Biking gives you a cocky rebellious-type demeanor, and whether you maintain a Harley style, you pilot a "rice rocket", or even sport a BMW, most people who do not ride think that you do not have both oars in the water.

Live to ride, ride to live. You never see a motorcycle parked in front of a psychiatrist's office.

Motorcycling nowadays is dangerous with folks amped up on Starbucks, jaw jacking on cell phones while driving with their knees. Two-wheeling has become increasing more perilous. The operation of a motorcycle — particularly a high powered one — requires multitasking. You have to balance speed with gravity, sound and sight, while maintaining a Zen-like focus on the road. Anything less and you are a potential organ donor.

A word of caution: Do not ride when angry or emotionally upset. If the stock market is

taking your IRA for a ride, don't go on one.

Motorcycling, like politics, gives you a false illusion of power and road superiority. All you have to do is take a turn a little too fast, causing the back wheel to slide out just a little, and... it's a sobering experience.

Bikers are literally run off the road. People open the doors while you are splitting lanes. Hitting the ground at any speed hurts. That is why people were leather. Riders are encouraged to wear what you want to be wearing if you fall off. A thick jacket, strong boots, two pairs of jeans, (instead of leathers), gloves, a good helmet, and eyewear are necessary.

Come to think of it, this attire also comes in handy if you are a contemporary Latino columnist with a proclivity to insult attorneys and write Whack TOP Ten lists.

There are two major adages when it comes to motorcycling. The first is that there are two kinds of riders: Those who have fallen off and those who will fall off. The other is that there are two kinds of police officers: bike cops, and those who want to be bike cops.

I ride what is called a sport bike street fighter, a lightweight, high powered 1000cc Japanese bike that causes one to slightly stoop over the gas tank. The riding posture is very much like the one adopted when riding old-fashioned ten speed bicycles with the handlebars that curved down.

These types of bikes are capable of producing incredible horsepower. Some can do three times the speed limit, but if you need to go that fast you need psychotherapy. There should be a law here like in Europe that licenses people to motorcycles based on the bike's size and one's level of riding experience.

Although these Ninja-styled bikes are in vogue and can walk any car on the street, I am finding that after a long ride and being bent forward for miles at a time, my neck, back and wrists cause me some serious pain. I end up walking around the house like Fred Sanford, having a hard time straightening out. My Highway 1 therapy, albeit good for the soul, has wreaked havoc on my Baby Boomer body.

During my quiet times of canyon carving, I have come to a realization that I no longer need to own the fastest, baddest bike on the block. At this point in my life, it's more practical to be comfortable than cool.

I do however still have my fat baggers, Harley full dress bike that I use during the days I feel like mean mugging people and setting off a few Volvo car alarms downtown.

Motorcycling is simple: Keep the rubber side down and the painted side up. Not riding — or writing — for me, is not an option.

Al Carlos Hernandez writes from Hollywood.

## Sweets and Treats Galore: Tips to Not Overeat this Holiday Season

By: Ana Goins-Ramirez-Diaz

The holidays are a time where we get together with our family and friends to celebrate the season with great food. Many delicious foods are available during the holidays. It is so easy to gain weight during this season because these tasty foods are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Media reports have suggested that the average American gains between 5 to 7 pounds during the holidays. Don't worry too much about these reports, though. The good news is, that in recent research published in the New England Journal of Medicine researchers found that the average American only gains about 1 pound during this time of the year. The bad news is that this extra weight is not lost

during the following months. If this happens year after year, those pounds can add up and lead to weight gain.

For this holiday season, follow these easy tips to stay healthy without packing on the pounds.

**1. Enjoy some holiday foods, beverages and sweets in MODERATION!**

It's okay to eat some of your favorite holiday foods, but don't over do it! You should eat slowly and listen to your body. It takes approximately 20–30 minutes for your mind to process that your stomach is full. Be sure to eat slowly to give your mind enough time to realize you are full before you end up eating too much.

**2. Eat before having the main holiday meal**

Try to have a quick bite to eat before going to your holiday party. If you fill up on a

healthy snack like lightly buttered microwave popcorn or a small apple before you eat your holiday meal, you will eat less.

**3. Focus on vegetables and fruits**

Serve yourself larger portions of the healthier options on the buffet table. Try appetizers made with vegetables or fruits. Choose to eat desserts that are mostly made with fruit. Limit your portions of stuffing, dressing, bread rolls, eggnog, alcoholic beverages, and high-fat desserts. You also want to be careful with the high calorie vegetable side dishes such as sweet potatoes with marshmallows.

**4. Start new holiday traditions that get your body moving**

This is a great way to have your friends and family exercise together. You could set up a trip to the skating rink, stroll

around your town to see the holiday decorations, have a snowball fight, etc. These activities are not only fun, but will also make you burn some calories.

**5. Enjoy the company of your friends and family**

If you focus on the food at the celebration, you may eat more. Spend time with your loved ones, not the foods on the buffet table!

*Have a happy and healthy holiday!*

Ana Goins-Ramirez-Diaz is a Health Educator with UCSD Nutrition Link, an elementary school nutrition education program. Nutrition Link is funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through the California Department of Public Health. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers.

## El regalo de la salud en estas fiestas

Un frasco de perfume, un nuevo pijama o un juego de videos son regalos fáciles de comprar y de envolver para la próxima temporada de fiestas. Pero este año ¿por qué no obsequia algo más saludable y beneficioso para un ser querido? ¿Por qué no le da un regalo de salud?

Mantenerse saludable durante las fiestas puede ser, ya en sí, un desafío y este año muchas personas en Estados Unidos encaran dificultades adicionales debido a la situación económica. Carolina R. Richardson, profesora asistente en el Departamento de Medicina Familiar de la Escuela de Medicina, en la Universidad de Michigan, ofrece algunas ideas para la compra de obsequios saludables que sean más magros para el cuerpo tanto como para la billetera.

“Ésta es la temporada del año que la gente más teme: la comida está por todas partes y casi toda no es buena para su salud”, dijo Richardson. Muchas personas también encuentran dificultades para mantenerse físicamente activas durante los meses más fríos del invierno. Además, señala, puede ser una temporada estresante para mucha gente, y la perspectiva de tener que comprar obsequios para muchas personas se suma al estrés.

### Comidas saludables

Richardson dice que su obsequio saludable favorito es aceite de oliva y vinagre. Estos artículos ayudan a que la gente tome su porción diaria de verduras frescas porque un buen aceite de oliva y un buen

aderezo con vinagre hacen que las ensaladas y otras comidas sean mucho más sabrosas, añadió. El aceite y el vinagre pueden combinarse con pan casero. Otra opción que no es muy cara y que ayuda a que la gente se atenga a una dieta saludable es una mezcla para sopas, con las cuales es fácil crear una receta hogareña que use arroz, frijoles (habichuelas) y una variedad de especias.

### Obsequios para actividad física

Según Richardson “la forma de actividad física más barata, que está disponible para todos, desde niños a adultos y mayores, es la caminata. No se requiere mucho equipo y puede hacerse casi en cualquier parte”.

Richardson sugiere algunos obsequios que pueden ayudar a que las personas continúen en un programa de caminatas como calzado cómodo y medias que absorban la transpiración. Estos artículos son importantes para el mantenimiento de un programa de caminatas pero pueden ser un poco caros, de modo que un certificado de regalo puede ayudar a que la persona que lo reciba vaya y compre el obsequio.

Los podómetros —artefactos que cuentan el número de pasos que da una persona— son una buena opción porque permiten que las personas lleven la cuenta de su actividad física, y además son relativamente baratos.

Otra idea es una suscripción para que la persona obsequiada reciba mensajes electrónicos de *walking.about.com* con sugerencias semanales gra-

tuitas sobre el ejercicio de caminata. *Walking.about.com* es un buen sitio donde se encuentran comentarios sobre todo tipo de productos incluido el buen calzado para caminar, medias y podómetros, dice Richardson.

Por un poquito más de dinero, usted puede regalar una afiliación por un año a un programa de caminatas apoyado en Internet, como *Walkingspree.com* o *Sport brain.com*, servicios en Internet que ofrecen un podómetro que lleva la cuenta de los pasos, herramientas para llevar registro de la dieta, gráficas y sugerencias sobre su progreso; y una instrucción individualizada, por correo electrónico, para un estilo de vida saludable.

A fin de que los niños se mantengan sanos, deben mantenerse activos, apuntó Richardson. Es relativamente fácil mantenerlos activos sin vaciar la cuenta bancaria. Artículos simples como guantes impermeables o un par de botas de invierno permiten que los niños y las niñas salgan de la casa y se mantengan activos mientras se divierten aun con el clima invernal.

También hay juegos de video que se han apartado de la naturaleza sedentaria de sus antecesores. Si usted comprará un regalo para alguien a quien le gusten los videojuegos, considere la posibilidad de ayudarles a que conviertan su adicción en una actividad saludable. Los videojuegos que estimulan la actividad física con un seguimiento de la actividad, instrucción y comentarios están disponibles para muchos sistemas de

juego. El nuevo programa *Apple Wii Fit* y el *Dance Dance Revolution* son dos ejemplos de juegos que levantan a los chicos del sofá, señaló Richardson.

### Regalos que reducen el estrés

Debido a la mala situación económica y los altos niveles de estrés las ideas de obsequios para las fiestas que contribuyan a que las personas bajen su nivel de estrés son muy buenas y pueden concretarse en forma relativamente barata, señaló Richardson. Cosas simples que pueden ayudar a reducir los niveles de estrés incluyen un obsequio de té, o una música suave y relajante.

Richardson también sugirió que “una de las mejores formas de reducir el estrés es ayudar a otros, y habrá este invierno muchísima gente que necesite ayuda. Es algo muy bueno que puede hacerse solo, o se puede involucrar a la familia, en un trabajo voluntario de beneficencia en esta próxima temporada de fiestas”.

En lugar de donar un juguete infantil, busque una oportunidad de labor voluntaria a favor de los niños en su comunidad y realícela con un niño, trabaje con un niño para encontrar una obra de caridad que él desee apoyar, y envíe una donación a nombre del niño, o done regalos a un albergue para niños desamparados. “Puede que al principio escuche algunas quejas, pero los niños recuerdan estos tipos de actividades mucho después que se hayan roto todos los juguetes de plástico”, anotó Richardson.

## Christmas Events:

Grossmont College's Cooperative Agencies Resources for Education (CARE) program, which serves several hundred Grossmont College students who are single parents receiving public assistance, is hosting a holiday party at 5:30

p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5 at the college's Student Center, and is seeking donations of unwrapped toys and gift cards for distribution at the party to school-age children below age 17. College officials said more than 100 children are expected

to attend along with their single parents who are part of the CARE program. CARE participants are full-time students (enrolled in at least 12 units) who are single and the head of the household with at least one child under age 14. To donate items, contact Grossmont College employees Brenda Flores at 644-7698, Sonia Smith-Ramsey at 644-7552, or Mahalia Sortillon at 644-7617.

### Esmeralda Welcomes New Home Shoppers at a Breakfast with Santa

Pardee Homes invites new home shoppers to tour family-friendly Esmeralda and enjoy breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m. “This Saturday is the ideal time to bring the entire family to tour the four beautiful model homes, meet with an experienced home loan representative and let the kids share their Christmas wishes with Santa,” said Rachel Collins, director of sales for Pardee Homes.

“Complimentary refreshments and free Santa photos will be available until noon.”

For more information, call

(619) 661-6433 or visit [www.pardeehomes.com](http://www.pardeehomes.com). To visit the Esmeralda sales office and model homes from I-805, go east on I-905, turn right at Caliente Avenue, then right at Airway Road. Turn left onto Otay Mesa Road then right on Crescent Bay Drive and follow the signs to the Sales Gallery.

### 'Holiday of Lights' Coming to Southwestern College

Festivities at the South Bay Botanic Garden to be held on December 12 & 13

WHAT: The Landscape and Nursery Technology Department at Southwestern College (SWC) is proudly hosting its Holiday of Lights in the South Bay Botanic Garden. The Holiday of Lights will include a grand display of holiday lights, seasonal music and refreshments will be available. Additionally, the event will include musical performances from the SWC Jazz Group on Friday and the Chula Vista Presbyterian Youth Group on Saturday.

The South Bay Botanic Gar-

(see Holiday, page 13)

## Youth art brings two countries together through the exchange of ideas

(con't from page 1)

and stencil artist from LA, put it this way: “We’re trying to throw the biggest rocks in this pond... we’re trying to throw boulders in hopes that the ripples will become waves.”

Flores Magón is a community on the edge of Ecatepec that just celebrated their 14-year anniversary. The community started as a group of about 500 people who were dis-

placed. They fought with the government for homes and claimed their land by squatting on it. The people are now fighting to get utilities and city services. Though living in poverty, the people are active and committed to their community.

Sarah Mendoza works with children at one of Ecatepec's cultural hub, Centro Ricardo Flores Magón.

“It means a lot to us to know what goes on in other parts of the world. The experience (international artists) bring feeds us,” Mendoza said. “So that our young people, our children and our adults know that people in other countries are fighting for the same things.”

In a climate of indifference

and hostility towards our neighbors to the South, it's awesome to be part of such a beautiful exchange. I've always seen the U.S. as the world's largest island —always radiating noise, but rarely listening—locked-in by a sea of self-importance. In light of that I'm glad this is happening. I'm glad to be a part of a group of young creators who are overtly looking to the rest of the continent, specifically Mexico, to seek inspiration, style and content —as did the American Avant Garde of days past. I feel like a spearhead, breaking through something. If the drive were to continue along this path, perhaps collectively we may find the flavor and the identity of the Americas.

Winds kick up dust and bring

change, and in the arts it's no different. Covered in spray paint and construction dust, in the middle of courtyard/dump turned to a theatre—with my feet on the ground—I look up at the clouds and see them move on above me. I realize they don't halt at man-made lines. This is what I learned in the city of youth, and I'm utterly inspired.

To see the entire photo essay visit the web site: <http://flickr.com/photos/31164253@N03/sets/72157608421006431/show>

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