

PROFILE

Biker sisters

► Life's a wild ride for this ageless motorcycling duo

BY DARIN FENGER
SUN STAFF WRITER

Barbara says they bought their Harley for innocent, fun riding around the Foothills, even if her sister swears they got it just to pick up guys.

"They love it!" chirped older sis Sheila, pointing to the blue bike standing proudly in their driveway. "Why do you think we bought it? I mean, we have to have something for a come-on!"

The sisters shook with laughter, just as Sheila made a dive for the reporter's tape recorder.

"Well, any takers?"

Barbara Kieffer and Sheila Schneider were stirring up quite a scene on a recent afternoon, showing off their motorcycle to the media. These new residents of the Foothills don't seem too bashful about raising an eyebrow or two.

"Oh, we've never been well behaved," Sheila said, grinning.

And Barbara, sort of the quieter one, just had this to say about making their neighbors wonder: "Very cool!"

The widowed sisters, who won't give

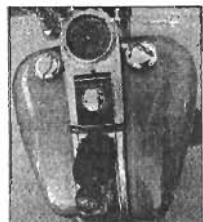
their ages, have owned their home here only since March. They have, however, already become a fixture on local streets and roads, rumbling their cares away on the bike they never would have imagined they'd some day own — and love.

"People are always saying 'Nice bike!' or 'Where did you get that bike?'"

Barbara said, sitting pretty and proud on her baby.

Barbara added that there haven't been any snickers, either.

"No, they always give me this," she said, giving a thumbs-up. "If anyone snickered, I would just assume that they were jealous!"



THE TRIKE'S TANKS and speedometer as the driver sees them.

The ladies' motorcycle is a 2005 model that a local man built from a kit. The front is Harley made, with a Volkswagen engine roaring in the rear. Barbara simply spotted the honey of a bike sitting for sale in a fellow's

yard one day.

"I hadn't thought at all about a bike until I saw it there and liked it. I just loved the color," Barbara said. "I thought 'This is crazy, but I think I'll buy it.'"

She dashed off to get a cashier's check for \$14,000 (she had talked the guy down



THE BEAUTIFUL DEEP BLUE trike requires concentration in the turns, but Barbara is pretty comfortable at the wheel — er, handlebars.

PHOTOS BY TERRY KETROW/THE SUN

by four grand) and the bike was hers. It turns out that honoring the wishes of that little voice in one's head is something at which both of these ladies are pretty darn good. They both stressed how that voice is often a heart's true desire speaking.

"I say 'Do it,'" Barbara said. "You're not here forever."

Sheila agreed, offering this advice: "People should go ahead and do it, whatever it is. Otherwise, they don't have fun, that's for sure. They miss out on an awful lot."

The seller of the bike gave Barbara lessons in a nearby field for about two days. She had never driven a motorcycle before, but caught on quickly.

"I hadn't even ridden a bicycle, well, since I was about 12," she said, adding that she wasn't scared. "No. It just seemed to fit right with me, just like a glove. Plus the feel of the breeze blowing through my hair, I love it."

Barbara's grin was a bit guilty when she admitted that she's had her bike up to 65 miles an hour.

"Not with me on it!" her sister retorted.

Barbara admitted that she's up to racin' someone, but Sheila quickly said that she wasn't.

"Absolutely not! I'm a coward," she said.

The ladies go out for a ride a couple times a week, with Barbara at the helm for one simple reason.

"I have arthritis in one of my legs," Sheila explained, "and with brakes being crucial ..."

The Sun found out about the ladies and their bike after Barbara dropped off a picture of them posing with their ride. Sheila laughed, though, when Barbara didn't mention the other pose that they had done.

"We didn't want to give you that one," Sheila said, putting up her middle finger. "We were going like this!"

Both ladies have sure taken to their new biker lifestyle with ease, but don't you dare call these gals mere biker babes — they prefer a stronger moniker, one that can't be printed in a family newspaper.

Those words even appear on a charm on Barbara's bracelet, right there among ones declaring her love for kitties and grandkids. "I'm just loving this," she says.

They are also loving their new lives in Yuma. They moved here for the warm weather, with Barbara arriving from the

Riverside, Calif., area and Sheila coming down from Seattle.

Barbara worked as a registered nurse in geriatrics for years, while Sheila was a longtime secretary for the well-known airplane maker, Boeing.

Barbara and Sheila have been widowed for two years and five years, respectively.

What's neat is that the two haven't lived under the same roof since about 1955.

"This is really good for both of us," Barbara said. "I wouldn't want to live alone and I wouldn't want to get married again."

Then she laughs. "Boyfriends are okay."

Neither one, however, would spill any dirt on just what the other one was like growing up. Sheila, being the ham she is, just smiled and jokingly bit her tongue, while Barbara simply said: "Sheila has always been a good sister."

The ladies were born in Charles City, Iowa, spending part of their childhoods on a farm.

Here in Yuma the sisters have been busy not just with the bike, but also working on their beautiful, sizable home. They turned one stall of their four-car garage into a hobby club, for example. They plan to get folks



THE SISTERS' motorcycle has enough chrome to satisfy any Harley lover.

together once in awhile to work on arts and crafts, and they already have five friends signed up.

"I have a kit and I'd like to take up painting," Barbara said.

"I do stained glass," Sheila added.

They're also considering membership in a biker club. They've already joined an off-reading club for folks with four-wheel-drive vehicles who enjoy going for rump out in the desert.

"We're always up for fun and games," Barbara said.

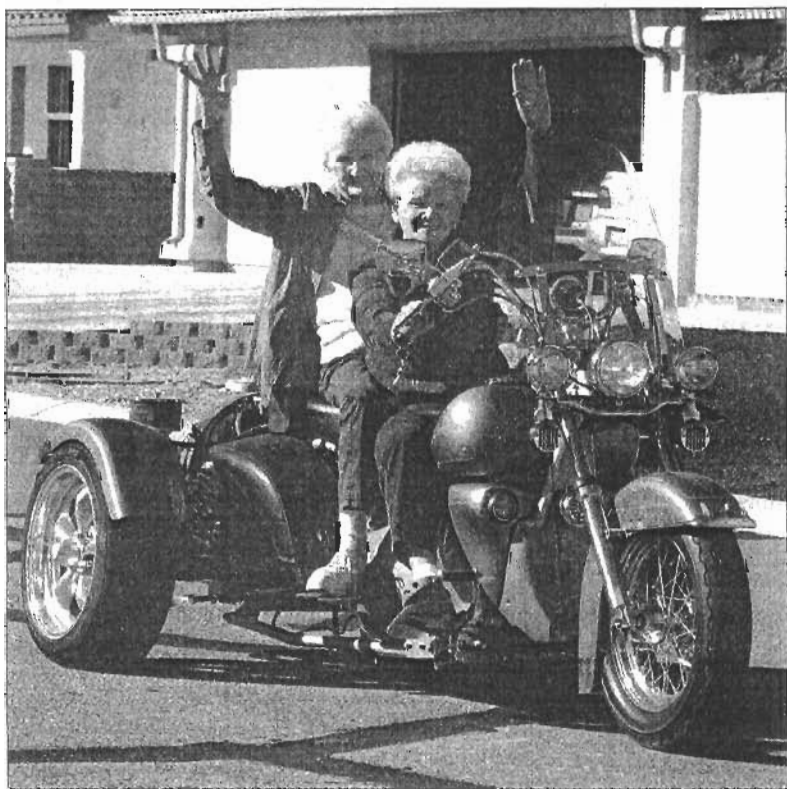
Which brings us back to that original argument — picking up guys.

Both ladies eagerly agreed that they would love to meet a nice fellow, for sure one that acts a bit younger than his real age. But so far they've had no luck. That's why they may soon get serious about a long-standing plan.

"We've got an observation deck up on the roof," Sheila said. "We've been talking about going up there in our negligees and waving 'Hi Bob! Hi Jim!'"

However, Barbara slyly explained, "it's just been a little too cold lately."

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SHEILA SCHNEIDER (left) and her sister, Barbara Kieffer, wave at the neighbors as they ride their Harley/Volkswagen trike through their Foothills neighborhood.

THEIR STATS & FACTS



SHEILA SCHNEIDER (left), BARBARA KIEFFER

Name: Sheila Schneider/Barbara Kieffer
Age: Sheila: "We're not saying!"
Birthplace: Charles City, Iowa
Nickname growing up: My father called me Shena, Queen of the Desert/Babs
Occupation: Retired/retired
Marital status: Widowed/widowed
Children: Two girls and a boy/Three boys
Pets: I have a Yorkshire terrier named Bucky/I have a dog named Abby.
Political affiliation: Republican/Republican
Favorite thing to eat: Spaghetti/hamburgers
Favorite midnight snack: Chips/chips
Favorite movie: I like "The Sound of Music" and "Fiddler on the Roof"/I love the James Bond series

Biggest pet peeve: I can't think of one — honestly, I don't know that I really have any.
Worst habit: Not controlling my temper/Sleeping in late
If the world was ending tomorrow, what I'd do today: Eating a spaghetti dinner/I would be riding my motorcycle, having fun.
If my life had a theme song it would be: "Forget Your Troubles, Come on Get Happy"/"Born to Be Wild"
If they make a movie about me I'll be played by: Barbara: "It would be Barbra Streisand." Sheila: "Oh! I was going to say that! She doesn't look like you. She looks like me!"
Favorite weekend getaway (other than San Diego): Laughlin or Las Vegas/Riverside, Calif.
Favorite vacation spot so far: I love the coast/I would like to take the motor home up the West Coast.