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# GWRRA Rider Education



## INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

### SENIOR INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR RIDER EDUCATION

**Bob & Sue Lorenz**

Voice: (517) 548-9028

E-mail: [blorenz@ameritech.net](mailto:blorenz@ameritech.net)

### ASST. NATIONAL DIRECTOR RIDERS COURSE PROGRAMS

**Bob & Althea Berry**

Voice: (908) 730-8842

E-mail: [bobberry1@earthlink.net](mailto:bobberry1@earthlink.net)

### ASST. NATIONAL DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER / LEVEL DATA

**Bill & Linda English**

Voice: (330) 799-8603

E-mail: [gwdatadoc@aol.com](mailto:gwdatadoc@aol.com)

### ASST. NATIONAL DIRECTOR MEDIC FIRST AID@ PROGRAM

**Larry Stiles**

Voice: (508) 567-1307

E-mail: [LarryStiles@msn.com](mailto:LarryStiles@msn.com)

### ASST. NATIONAL DIRECTOR Administrative Functions

**Mark & Mary Zingery**

Voice: (989) 386-3391

E-mail: [mzingery@chartermi.net](mailto:mzingery@chartermi.net)

## CANADIAN OPERATIONS

### NATIONAL DIRECTOR CANADA RIDER EDUCATION

**Gordon & Elsie Murphy**

Voice: (709) 753-2318

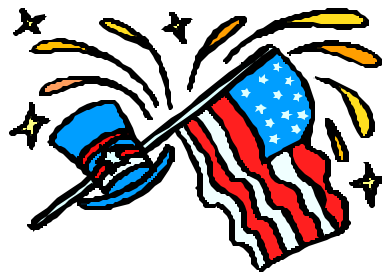
E-mail: [gmwing@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:gmwing@nf.sympatico.ca)

### ASST. NATIONAL DIRECTOR RIDERS EDUCATION CANADA

**Dave Hay**

Voice: (250) 923-8664

E-mail: [dhay@telus.net](mailto:dhay@telus.net)



We would like to wish Happy Birthday to the United States of America. Independence Day 2004 has arrived. We all enjoy this as a day to reflect on our freedom. Remember those who have fought to keep this freedom and those who still are.

I sometimes think to myself that it was good being part of the 50's. "Those were the years my friend", as the song goes. Rock and Roll, Elvis, Street Rods (from scratch not bought parts), and the creation of Cruise In's with the real motorcycle tough guys. All the gals wanted to talk to them but were scared. We prayed in School and prior to every important event. It is sad we lost some of those freedoms as we knew them. All in all it has to be one of the best decades in my lifetime so far. Just ask some one who watched the fireworks July 4, 1957. Now the same tough guys are at the Dairy Queen and the gals are riding their own motorcycle. These are some of the great freedoms we now experience today.

As we enjoy the Independence Day 2004, let us help to make it memorable for those who may be in the best decade of their life. Be safe, do not rush, and slow down the young who are in a hurry to go where? We have a lot more folks on this planet and the same "chemistry class" rule I had in the 50's, "No two objects can occupy

the same space at the same time" still applies.

## GWRRA MESSAGE BOARD



As I read the GWRRA Message Board it intrigues me the answers given about Rider Education. It is like an opinion page. You can enter yours or just read and agree or disagree. I am especially interested when a member asks where to find a "safety article" to use in their newsletter. The National Rider Education Newsletter is not mentioned. I guess I will have to start answering and not just read the board.

## INSIDE

1. Independence Day Memories, Message Board Article
2. Interesting Articles cont., Traveling/Camping
3. Traveling / Camping cont., Riding the Dragon, Health Matters
4. Health Matters cont., Passing / Lane Changing, Construction Areas, Cracks in the Road, Driving Through Puddles

# INTERESTING ARTICLES

## What the heck am I doing wrong?

The question was asking about entering intersections and people in a hurry cutting you off many different ways.

Answer:

I do have a new problem that I have encountered. This morning I had a DOT worker crew throw a tree at me. I was driving down the highway at speeds around 65 or so. Speedometer said 70 but we know that is off. I had a Harley in front of me and a SUV was in the right lane sort of between us. The DOT folks had trucks out to move everything to the left lane quick, so the SUV fills the space between the bikes real fast. At first it made me slightly unhappy, than from my angle of view I see the tree they are cutting on start to fall "TOWARDS THE ROAD" I know very quickly that the tree is tall enough to cross both lanes and all the way to the other guard rail. I of course, am going for brakes, but I can't pull down too hard or else the car behind me would be driving through my Wing. Anyway the tree hit the ground and the Harley at about the same time. He catches the thin branches from the top of the tree. The SUV goes next and blasts a big hole in the branches. In the SUVs wake I ride through the mess before the tree branches snap back. Made it without a scratch on my baby or me! Anyway all three of us pull to the side of the road. The Harley guy is scratched up pretty bad as well as his bike but he did not go down and the car is full of branch scratches and a cracked windshield. I pull out my first aid kit from the bike and helped the Harley guy get fixed up as well as used my cell phone to call the law to the accident. No one behind us attempted to go through the hole the SUV made. The traffic stopped

until the tree was cleared at least from the fast lane. I always thought it was a joke when folks would say they where driving down the road and the tree jumped out at them..... No longer funny. Be careful out there things can be revolting!

This answer may not seem to pertain to intersections, but what happed here is the same as what can happen at any intersection. Something can enter you path at anytime. The rider who wrote the article definitely had to be white knuckled.

This rider is to be applauded for his actions. Not only for scanning and preventing having an accident but also taking care of the Harley rider and checking out the SUV driver.

## Let use "what if"

1. It was you, what would you do?
2. You had more following distance.
3. You would have applied full braking on leaves and branches.
4. The Harley Riders tried to stop before the tree.
5. The SUV would have done maximum braking?

The "what if" questions can go on and on. The reason there are so many, we all react to the same situation differently. This rider did what he felt correct and came thru without a scratch. He scanned, evaluated and executed his plan. It should always be in a riders mind to have a plan for any situation.

The only problem with a plan and this is from my experience, old habits will click in unless you really practice, practice and practice some more the right techniques. We all need to change our riding habits whether it is to improve or loose some bad habits. Highways have increasing number of vehicles and faster traffic. As the average age of all motorcycle riders is on the rise, we need to re-access our training and habits.

Some riders may feel drivers are out to get them. You are right, sometimes it seems they are. With the miles we ride per year, 2 wheels and 4 wheels, I see many who drive with blinders and have a mission "do not get in their way."

This situation pertains to intersections. The rider stated, at an intersection the first vehicle coming toward him stopped, as vehicle #1 was making a left turn in front of him. Behind vehicle #1, vehicle #2 could not wait and made a left turn in front of the Wing. In a hurry, impatience, didn't care or just knew the bike would stop.

I know that this rider didn't have an accident due to his training and applying that training when needed.

There are many stories and some answers are very interesting to the problems riders encounter. These are found in newsletters, on the internet and sometimes just kicking tires.

## CAMPING trailering



As we head out to the wonderful world of rallies and camping, I would like to talk about where you will be staying. It is a good idea to call a head for a reservation.

If it is a camp ground, ask if the roadways in the camp ground are easy for a motorcycle to maneuver on. Will you be in an overflow area? How close is the site to the bath area? If you have tent, you do not want low ground. It seems to rain every day. As a camper I know camaraderie and camping go together. You get to meet people from all over. We also get to set a good image for all. Sometimes the image is just from riding in a on a Gold Wing.

(Camping/Trailering continued)

I have been trying to compile information on trailers. The following information I came across in my travels but do not remember where.

Perform a safety inspection before each trip. Make sure that:

1. The pin securing the ball mount to the receiver is intact.
2. The hitch coupler is secured.
3. Spring bar hinges are tight with the safety clips in place (load equalizer or weight distributing hitches).
4. Safety chains are properly attached.
5. The electrical plug is properly installed.

People who tow trailers share the same safety concerns as other RV owners. However, a tow vehicle and a trailer form an articulated (hinged) vehicle which presents an additional set of concerns. The weight considerations are very important to safe towing. The tow vehicle must be a proper match for the trailer. If the trailer is properly equipped, it can perform safely under a variety of driving conditions. The tow vehicle should also have enough performance to climb mountain grades without excessive loss of speed. Here are three basic types of trailers:

1. Conventional travel trailers which include folding camping trailers.
2. Fifth-wheel trailers.
3. Motorcycle trailers which include tent and cargo trailers

The major difference between the three types of trailers is the way they are hitched.

### Motorcycle Trailers

There are several types of couplings between the motorcycle and the trailer.

There are:

- ball and socket
- ball type with a swivel
- universal-joint type with a detachable pin
- pin and swivel type

The coupling you choose should be:

- non-slip, non-loosening, and non-binding
- easy to hook and unhook
- free moving

While towing your trailer, you must remember to ride closer to the center of the road. You have the width of your trailer to worry about. Be careful of the "oil strip" in the center of the road and at intersections. Also, watch for uneven road surfaces and road edges which can unbalance the trailer.



## RIDE THE DRAGON

Deals Gap can be found in North Carolina riding Route 129 into Tennessee. The "Deals Gap" ride can be a challenge and is "taken on" by many.

To prepare for this ride you need to do some preparation in your mind and in your body. MSF training says we use 90% mental and 10% physical to operate a motorcycle. True as this is, there are exceptions to every rule. This road is one that requires physical strength to do the 318 curves in 11 miles.

You want to ride the curves as you have been taught, knees against the tank, head & eyes up, counter steer if your speed allows. Remember the technique for all turns slow, look, press and roll. While riding the dragon you will be using these techniques again and again.

Be prepared for oncoming traffic, they may be on your side of the road. Believe it or not Semi-Trucks use this road. You can't look at the scenery; your eyes have to focus where you want to go. You can stop at the designated places to view the scenery.

I used "Deals Gap" as an example. The road is well known for the attraction of riding curves. There are many roads out there that have curves like Route 129, Deals Gap. Remember to use the same riding skills. Ride at your own pace, do not try to keep up other riders or worry about holding up vehicles behind you. The more comfortable the ride is for you and your passenger, the better the rest of the trip will be.

## HEALTH MATTERS

By

Linda English

No truer words can be spoken. Health really does matter. Especially when driving a motorcycle. We need to be at our best when riding. As Bill spoke before riding is 90% mental and 10% physical. Your health can affect your mental thinking as well as your physical ability.

Just this morning I was watching a program on TV about diabetics. The program reported the medical field has recently diagnosed adults with Type I Diabetes. In the past Type I Diabetes was usually diagnosed with children. These adults are having serious effects before know they are Diabetics.

(Health Matters continued)

I am a Type II Diabetic which is normally diagnosed in Adults. The effects are slow showing.

I don't count on they way I feel; I check my sugar level everyday. What I eat and whether I exercise can affect my levels. If you are a Type I or brittle diabetic, your sugar level may have highs and lows more frequent. The level can change very quickly.

Diabetes can affect your concentration and coordination. You can also pass out from your shift in sugar levels. You need to tell the people you are riding with that you are a diabetic and take care as needed. If riding alone you need to check your sugar levels often take your medication & eat as needed. Change can happen when you least expect.

Diabetics are not the only riders that have to think about their health. There are many health problems that can affect your abilities to handle a motorcycle. We need to address all the needs and be cautious when riding. You need to communicate with the people you are riding with. Do not overlook your needs when they don't seem to fit what everyone else is doing.



## Passing/ lane changing

Many travel in teams or groups when they ride. As I travel this great USA, I can spot Gold Wing Road Riders as soon as my eyes quickly scan the team. The rider training shows and is noticed by more than just myself. I hear on the

CB radio comments from truckers. They talk about the rider's proper dress and proper changing of lanes. Although we use proper technique I would like to give a word of caution when changing lanes. I am sure I have written about this before, but being repetitive is the same as practice, practice and practice. Traveling to Wing Ding we have just witnessed what can happen while changing lanes.

As you approach a vehicle from the rear you have a blind area in front of the vehicle you are passing. The larger the vehicle in front of you, the larger the blind area. When the team starts to pass you must be alert to the lane you are changing from and the lane you are changing to.

The debris is laying there awaiting you. The most common road dirt is tire parts and pieces. The tire parts are rubber and steel wire cording. The steel wire can damage your tire, Gold Wing and even cause you to loose control. Some of these pieces can be large. Running into a chunk at 65 mph while in a lane change, is a serious problem. To avoid this, start your pass sooner to allow maybe a 5 second following distance of the vehicle you are going to overtake. If you have limited site in the lane you are changing to, allow a space cushion so your visibility will allow you to have time and space to adjust and react to objects in the lane.

You ability to see ahead may be better than the rider behind you. If you have radio contact with the team let them know of any debris that may be ahead.



## Construction areas

Sooner or later you will find yourself in a construction area while riding. The caution word this month is about the "sweeping lane changes". Sometimes it can be 2 or

3 lanes sweep left or right. I have found the worst these types of lane sweeps at bridge replacement areas. The sweep will take you to a temporary roadway which will be rough and bumpy. I do not recall a smooth one yet. Scan, go slower and look for construction & accident debris on the roadway

## Cracks in the road

A problem becoming more present is where old meets new in the center of the lane. When roadways are repaved the first pavement meets the second pavement. The bond between the two can be perfect and smooth. Then time and weather takes its toll. The bond starts to crumble and a crack appears, then road crews put in the famous plastic patch to fill the crack so water will not get in. Water is what starts the destruction. Heat and cold expand and contract the pavement and cause it to crumble.

If the patching material is good and we do not slip on it in hot weather, great! Haven't found this to be true. The crack usually enlarges and now we have a crack that a front tire will fit into. Scanning will help to eliminate the problem. If you see a large crack between lanes cross it as you would a speed bump or an obstacle in the road. Move across your lane to cross the crack. You won't be able to cross at a 90% angle but your angle will be enough to prevent your tire falling into the crack.

## DRIVING THROUGH PUDDLES



With all the wet weather this year and all who think they own an amphibious vehicle, don't drive through large puddles of water. They may be deeper than they look.

"Don't Drown, Turn Around