

## WHY PRACTICE OR TAKE CLASSES?

On a recent news program the motorcycle news was that the average age of motorcycle riders had gone from 26 to 41 in the past 10 years or so. The older riders are buying powerful motorcycles and going straight out on the streets. The same goes for the young buck fresh out of high school and jumps right on a GSX-R1000. These are the two leading factors contributing to more accidents and fatalities.

We in Florida must pass a MSF certified motorcycle class to get the endorsement for the state license. Is this one-day motorcycle class enough? It is just enough information, not training, to get a motorcycle rider into trouble. I do not mean to say that the people giving the class do not do a good job, it's just that the rider is doing the bare minimum to get approval to ride legal. Most new riders think they are good because they have been driving cars for several years.

It takes years to build up experience of driving a car to know what to expect from other auto drivers and the animals we drive. Then a person gets an idea to buy a motorcycle and go riding. What could be easier? Most want to believe that it is just that simple. Big problem with that logic is that motorcycle riding is nothing like driving a car. Oh yes the road rules are the same, but the animal is much different.

There is nothing wrong with buying a motorcycle, taking the required MSF class, getting a license, and going riding. The danger is that most inexperienced riders know it is not enough, but will not admit it for fear of not looking cool or having someone think they do not know what they are doing. The ideal situation is that a person gets into motorcycling slowly. Go out into traffic a little at a time. Ride with more experienced riders to build up that experience base that could be life saving. Practice in a parking lot situation where the possible crash will be at slower speeds and without other vehicle involvement. Practicing in a parking lot allows the rider to try different skills and build experience. After obtaining some experience in easy traffic take another class and move into heavier traffic patterns. I know that this is unrealistic and will not happen in most cases. We in GWRRA can pass this information on to other riders we know to help keep our sport as safe as possible. A learned skill not practiced will not be as effective when needed. Of course there is the perfect rider that does not need any practice!

Ride, Practice, Ride, Take a class, and Practice some more. ARRIVE ALIVE!!

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