

## **Safety Every Day Is Our Priority**

Recently, in one of the Rider Ed monthly reports, it was noted that a number of members of a particular chapter had complained that there were too many “rules” to follow on their group rides. The G.W.R.R.A. recommended procedure for safe group riding is most likely the safest taught anywhere. We can remember our first ride ever with our chapter as being an eye-opener in terms of safety procedures followed by the group leader and the tail gunner. Indicating obstacles ahead, keeping safe distances between bikes, reporting on position of bikes after making turns all went into convincing us that we had indeed “hooked up” with the right organization. The group riding mantra has been tried and tested over many years and has proven itself to be a very reliable way of ensuring a safe, fun day for all concerned.

We have to be careful, however, not to misuse our authority as educators and be overly zealous in “enforcing” our “rules of the road”. We know from personal experience that not everyone is willing to accept that Educators and Directors are trying to make the ride as safe as possible while still having a good time. As former teachers we tended to be a little over-organized at one point, by assigning individual slots in group rides and met with considerable resistance. That practice, by the way, we had learned from riding with another chapter. “Wow, what great organization.” Well, what works for one chapter may not with another. Sometimes, doing your job as an educator involves sounding out what safety ideas will be accepted and what won’t. Flexibility is a valuable asset for an Educator. As was demonstrated by the terrible, tragic death of our friend Sherry Reid, even when following G.W.R.R.A. suggested safety procedures for group riding, some accidents are unavoidable. All we can do is drive defensively; try our best to anticipate, and hope that that will keep us safe enough to see another day and another ride.

By the time you read this, we will have completed our Rider Ed Fair in St. Pete. Hopefully it will be as much of a success as it has been in the past. As of this writing, classes are filling up fast.

We’d like to remind you of the C.D. conference the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of January. We are planning on an informative and fun time there. Please encourage your staff to plan on that weekend. Also, ask all Chapter Educators to bring a chapter Rider ED list with them, as we plan to have a Greenbar update session. More on this at a later date.

Ride Defensively and Enjoy  
Joe and Gracie Mazza  
District Educators