

We Know Why We Moved to Florida

Hopefully, as you read this article, you will have had a happy and safe holiday season. Many are visiting with family and friends in the frozen North this time off year. This has become a holiday tradition for us, and we look forward to it every year. Telling our northern friends about our riding experiences in November and December and the rally season beginning in January usually elicits a response of disbelief. Motorcycle riding in the winter in New Jersey is practically unheard of. It's just another reminder that our decision to retire to the sunshine state was indeed, a wise one.

We participated in early December in the Region A annual business meeting at Bagby State Park in Ft. Gaines, Georgia. We always enjoy ourselves there and this year was no different. When I gave the rider Education report for Florida, you could tell how impressed everyone was with how extensive our program is. As I've indicated before, we could have the greatest program on earth, but without the support of our membership, it would be the greatest program that wasn't working. I was very proud to be representing all of you and the hard work and dedication you have shown throughout the year. Thank you!

At the Rider Education breakout portion of the Region meeting Ron Lantz, Region Educator, presided over an interesting discussion. One of the outcomes of the discussion was the introduction of a new edict pertaining to membership eligibility for participation in Rider Ed safety courses and seminars. As of January 1, 2009, only members participating in the levels program will be allowed to take those courses and seminars. They include ERC's, TRC's, FirstAid/CPR, and every other class taught by our instructors and presenters. It is felt by Region and National that since district is paying all the expenses for the classes (with money obtained through sale of the Florida District raffle tickets) that members in the courses should at least be committed to safe riding (Level I). Also, remember that a person can enroll in Level I and commit to safe riding without requesting patches or pins. This way there is no cost attached to obtaining level I. I personally have no idea how anyone could ride or co-ride a motorcycle and not want to do so safely. We see people driving recklessly and the dangerous and often fatal results of such behavior.

There have been many accomplishments in Florida Rider Education this year. I will go into more detail at the District rally in March, but I can highlight a few now. We were able to distribute DVDs to all the chapters. These DVD's show many of the maneuvers involved in an ERC class. It was filmed at our St. Petersburg range during one of our ERC classes. The class was administered by the Motorcycle Rider Education of Clearwater School (Curtis Palmore as proprietor) We added two trike ranges this year. One is in Miami and one in Hawthorne. We also added an ERC range at the Hurlburt field in the Panhandle. That now gives us eight ERC ranges, with six of them also being TRC ranges.

We are adding a new dimension to FA/CPR program. Rex and Tina Prince (T-Rex) have become Medic First Aid instructors and will be coordinating the program for us. We will be having an MFA instructors' course on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, in Kissimmee. Twelve more instructors will be trained with the long range goal of having enough instructors to make each chapter self-sufficient. The instructor in Kissimmee will be Buddy Shirley, Region A Medic FA/ CPR coordinator.

We hope to see many of you at the CD conference, and until then
Please ride safe and stay happy.

Joe and Jan (Gracie) Mazza
Rider Educators