

C.D. CONFERENCE/RAMADA INN.....PERFECT TOGETHER

Having attended many conferences over the years, Jan and I agree that the facilities at the Ramada Inn in Plant City top them all. The rooms, food, and conference areas were unbeatable. Hopefully we can arrange for more of the same next year.

We were very pleased to see 36 of our 44 active chapters represented at the Rider Ed portion of the conference. Veterans like Walt Overlander of FL 1-B and Bob and Donna Sinex of FL 1-F and many newcomers were welcomed. Please call or e-mail us with any questions about your duties or paperwork. Our approach this year was to provide Chapter Educators with enough information to help with chapter presentations and to work with the Rider Ed Greenbar. Topics such as monthly reports (form # 6), articles for the chapter newsletter, keeping current in the levels (no more yearly renewals), motorcycle statutes, and form #9 for Masters Level IV, as well as working with the Greenbar were covered in detail. Also, Ron Jackson gave two presentations. The first was on the all-important levels form #7. The second covered the newly named Motorist Awareness Program ("MA"). "MA" falls under Rider Education and in time will hopefully help motorists be more understanding about sharing the road with us.

Joey Everhart spoke to us about "safe riding gear," a subject with which we are all familiar but which meets with resistance from many members. No doubt we all have a story about someone who was saved by wearing the proper gear in an accident. We Mazzas have our own story from when we went down in Dallas, Joe's helmet saved his head and perhaps his life. Jan smashed her ankle and was told if she weren't wearing boots, she probably would have lost her foot. Talk to Thomas Treadwell and the role proper gear played in his surviving his recent accident. Welcome back, Thomas.

With all this excellent information available, we still have only 46 % of our membership enrolled in the Rider Ed program. To be honest, we were shocked by this figure. So a priority for us in 2007 is to get at least 50% of the membership enrolled in the levels program. We hope for more, but change does come slowly. We will be visiting as many chapters as we can to help. We encourage as many chapters who are financially able to pick up the \$6 fee for Level I. With this in place, we feel sure most members will be willing to make a verbal commitment to safe riding.

The Greenbar, a record of levels attained, was previously generated and maintained by National. It has only been the last year that it has been sent to District Educators on a monthly basis. Needless to say, we have uncovered many errors and missing updates on it. At the conference, every CE received a copy of their chapter's Greenbar statistics to work with. Changes can be listed on the versatile #10 form and sent to us. National has ceased maintaining this database, and we will probably be taking it over. Please continue to send all forms to us.

Recognizing the newcomers, rewarding the fine CE's who turned all their reports on time, and honoring the Educator of the Year were all pleasurable activities at the conference. This year's Educator of the Year is Don Danbury of the Lakeland Fireballs. Don has been an outstanding CE, plus a valuable presenter at the Rider Ed Fair. He also submits thought provoking articles to his newsletter and keeps up to date with reports. Thanks again Don, for your dedication to all things G.W.R.R.A. Please note that picking out one outstanding Educator wasn't easy, as so many did an excellent job in 2006. We also recognized Joe and Donna Calhoun for their outstanding service to G.W.R.R.A. since 1977.

Sign-up for helping us at the District Rally went well. We still need help at 4:00 on Friday and noon on Saturday. In addition, if you see that the Rider Ed table is really busy, feel free to stop by and help. Finally, we would like to say a big "Thank You" to all who attended and are working so hard. It is a privilege to work with you. As we have stated many times, "If it wasn't for the hard work of our CE's, Florida would have the best Rider Ed program in the country that wasn't working."

Preparations for the Florida District Rally in Kissimmee, March 15-17, 2007, are in full swing. The theme is St. Paddy's day, so get registered and we'll see you there for a great time.