

Moderation and Modulation

We thought we'd briefly mention the subject of drinking and riding, even though it has never been a problem with Gold Wingers we've traveled with. This is just a reminder that one beer, one shot of whiskey, and one glass of wine all have about the same effect. It takes one hour for any of those to leave your body. Although people differ in their reaction to alcohol, it usually affects vision, judgement, and coordination. Even one nice cold beer can affect your riding and had best be saved for when you get home or to your motel. A good motto for all of us is, "Eight hours from the bottle to the throttle."

An article in the November Wing World got me to thinking about something I don't think I've discussed in print before. As you know, we in Rider Education encourage our members to do everything in their power to ride safely. One safety accessory we see more and more of on bikes and trikes is the modulating headlight. This device is intended to alert other drivers to our presence on the road. Modulating headlights have been legal for a few years now, but there are some officers of the law who are unaware of this fact. The section of the Florida Motor Vehicle statutes that refer specifically to modulating headlights is 316.405. In that statute it is mentioned the federal motor vehicle safety standard 571.108. That is the federal law which basically means, "Throughout the country". The well written article in Wing World on this subject was courtesy of our own Doug Roberts of Jacksonville. In it he mentioned that the officer who stopped him stated, after Doug showed him the federal statute, that it wasn't a federal road, "so that don't count." Doug then accepted the ticket rather than go to jail, which was the alternative offered him. However, he did go to court, where after his excellent presentation, the judge dismissed the charges.

I had a similar experience recently in the Daytona area. Gracie and I were visiting friends when I was pulled over and asked why I was flashing my high beams. I tried to explain the statute to him, but he kept repeating, "We don't allow flashing headlights in this town." Since I wasn't issued a summons, I said "Yes sir" and shut them down. Once out of his jurisdiction, they were turned back on. Modulating headlights are a very visible and highly recommended safety feature. If you don't have them, we suggest you get them. As we have said in the past, most drivers, after having hit one of us, use the same excuse. "I didn't see him." A modulating headlight during daylight hours, reflective clothing and legal LEDs at night make us more visible and therefore safer. Will they guarantee our safety? No, but they certainly will improve our chances. We also recommend the following websites for further explanation of the federal and state statutes: www.leg.state.fl.us/index.cfm and www.webbikeworld.com/motorcycle-technical-articles/modulator-regis.htm

Another pertinent safety topic is our ERCs. They have picked up again, thanks to the cooler, fall weather. Rodney Cullen, our southern coordinator, has run two ERCs on our Miami range recently. Peter Suckow, our northeast coordinator, had an ERC in Jacksonville, and Bobbie Roy, our Panhandle coordinator, did likewise at our Hurlburt field facility. By the time you read this, the Rider Ed Fair will have been completed in St. Petersburg, and I'm sure will have been a big success.

Moving on to the subject of first aid/CPR, Rex and Tina Prince have completed their Medic first Aid Instructor's course and are ready to teach FA/CPR courses for us. The Wednesday before the District rally, Buddy Shirley, the Mississippi District Educator and Medic FA instructor, will be in Kissimmee to certify Medic FA instructors. The class will be limited to twelve students who will then be able to teach Medic FA to their chapters and any other GWRRA members. We

hope that someday every chapter in our district will become self-sufficient with regard to FA/CPR. I am accepting volunteers for the class now, and as soon as we have twelve, the class will be closed.

Ride safe and enjoy
District Educators
Joe and Jan Mazza