

The Safety Corner

My Brother's Keeper

by Dan McCormack

Recently GWRRA endorsed the ROAD CAPTAIN'S COURSE. The Road Captain's Course is designed to teach riders how to ride safely with the Chapter as a group.

Unlike the Road Captain's Course, MSF Courses focus on slow speed maneuvering techniques that can be applied to everyday conditions and situations.

Both courses stress that safety for the rider is the responsibility of the individual rider. Each rider has to develop their own riding skills. No one else can do it for them. Each rider must recognize their own limitations. No one can do it for them. Each rider must recognize when they are exceeding their limitations. No one can do it for them. True? **Maybe not!**

The human ego is a very fragile thing. Each of us has our level of good natured kidding that we will accept. Each of us has a level of criticism that we will accept. None of us wants to appear stupid to our peers. Levels of acceptance will vary from individual to individual. Usually these levels are recognized by a group as the group becomes more familiar with the individual. So, if a member of the group observes another long time member doing something unsafe, the observing member may make the offending rider aware of the unsafe action. However, even with this familiarity, making someone aware of an unsafe condition is not always done.

What about the new member? Generally the group will watch the new rider to determine his individual riding skills and his experience with group riding. But, most of the time, very little is said to the new rider about following too close or leaving too much gap or failing to switch from staggered to single file formation or vice versa. Why is this? Afraid to offend? Not my responsibility? Don't want to make the rider angry? If not the observer, whose responsibility is it? So what if the rider gets angry!! Would it not be better to bend an ego instead of breaking a leg or worse?

As individual riders we have the responsibility to maintain safe equipment, recognize our limits, and ride in a safe manner. We also have a responsibility to ourselves, other individuals, and to the motoring public to advise other riders when we observe them committing unsafe acts or maneuvers. It doesn't take much of an imagination to realize what the possible consequences are if the offending rider is not advised. Think about it.

If you as an individual just don't feel comfortable about advising another rider about an unsafe act, at least tell someone else in the group, preferably the Road Captain. But, don't keep it to yourself. *Tell somebody.* Don't wait until it is too late. Don't wait until you're at the hospital thinking you could have prevented an accident if you had only said something earlier.

Don't remain silent! Your silence could be fatal. **Be your brother's keeper.**

Dan

