

GOLD WING ROAD RIDERS ASSOCIATION

**Virginia Educator News
Region N
“Communications & Cooperation”**

SAFETY IS FOR LIFE



May 2003



Cundiff & Ellen Simmons – District Educators

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Jim Sharkey – Assistant District Educator

VA Outstanding Educator of the Year

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***Virginia is the proud home of five
Region “N” Educators of the Year***

***Marty and Leslie Cash, VA-U, 1996-1997
Cundiff and Ellen Simmons, VA-C, 1998-1999
Kathy and Chris Hooper, VA-D, 1999-2000
Pat and Shelia McMahon, VA-C, 2001-2002
Doug & Ann Hardy, VA-M, 2002-2003***

THE DISTRICT EDUCATOR'S NEWS

- Cundiff Simmons, District Educator

Region N Rally

Plan to attend the **Region N Rally in Cherokee, NC on May 8-10, 2003**. Virginia Rider Education has responsibility for the Road Captain Course and helping Doug Hardy, Assistant Region N Educator with the Field Events. We could use your help.

Trike Course A GWRRA trike course is being offered at the Region Rally. The cost is \$30.00 and it's open to the first 24 registrants. Contact Gene Davis, SRE ASAP to register.

I assigned Region N "Big Bucks" tickets to each of you at the Fall District Officer's Meeting and asked that you return them to me as quickly as you could get them sold. I've received SOME ticket stubs and money back. Some of you have indicated that your tickets are sold but have not returned the stubs and money. Others of you have requested more tickets to sell. If you have not sold your assigned tickets, please return them to me ASAP for redistribution. All tickets, stubs and monies must be returned so that they may be accounted for and available for sale at the Region N Rally.

Those of you who attended Wingless Weekend no doubt saw me riding all over the hotel on that pretty, red, electric scooter. An identical scooter will be given away by Region N Rider Education at the Rally. Tickets are \$ 5.00 each or 3 for \$ 10.00 and are available through me or Gene Davis, Region N Educator.

"Share The Road" License Plates

The Virginia General Assembly authorized the issuance of a Motorcycle Awareness License Plate. The plate has the VRTP (Virginia Rider Training Program) logo on one side with the caption "**Share the Road**".



of

Unlike plates previously available, the new plate is available for motorcycles too! They can also be ordered "vanity style" with your choice 5 characters for the car/truck plate or 4 characters for the motorcycle size. 350 plates must be reserved before the order can be placed. To date, nearly 300 have been reserved. You may obtain an application from any DMV office or download from the DMV website www.dmvnow.com or directly from VCOM's website www.vcomonline.org. Fill out your application and mail it along with a check (reservation fee) for \$10 to the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists:

**Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists
P.O. Box 4851
Richmond, Virginia 23220**

VCOM is collecting the forms and fees and will forward them to the DMV once 350 have been submitted. The plate will be available for trailers (permanent type) but you'll have to pay full price for a new plate. A total of approximately \$72.

While you're at it, save .37 cents on the price of a stamp by including a VCOM Membership Application in the same envelope. The \$15 annual membership to VCOM is one of the best investments you can make in motorcycling. VCOM is our watchdog and lobbyist with the Virginia General Assembly. They have done much to guarantee and protect your rights as a motorcyclist.

WHOAH NELLIE – A NEW BIKE!

Jim Sharkey, Assistant Virginia District Educator

Yup, I just got myself a new ride. I sold my 1989 and got a 1999 SE. You would think that going from one 1500 to another 1500 would be an easy transition. Well, Whoa Nellie!! That ain't so. In the old MRC course we used to teach that most accidents happened in the first 6 months of riding. This applies to new riders and experienced riders with new unfamiliar motorcycles as well.

Why am I having problems you ask? Well let me tell ya. I have to deal with a new custom seat that has repositioned me, a heel/toe shifter and floorboards. It's amazing that these little changes have caused me to feel so uncomfortable. I tell you, I feel so dang clumsy that I even considered training wheels. So I'm thinking what in the heck can I do to get comfortable? Well, the seat pushes me too far forward to reach the foot controls comfortable so it's got to go. I have put the original seat back on and the change helped. Now I just need to get used to the new foot controls. I actually have to pick my foot up to brake and to shift gears in comparison to just moving my toes around on the old bike. I did some parking lot practice with shifting and braking until I felt that I could handle most emergencies. As I get more miles on the bike I am feeling more and more comfortable. My next concern is as a MSF instructor I have to ride my own bike when coaching an Experienced Riders Course and I want to insure that I can do all of the required maneuvers. I am still working on these and if I find that I can't perfect them I will remove the floorboards and heel/toe shifter and go back to the original pegs and foot controls. I am riding safely and continually striving to perfect my riding skills. I am hopeful that since I am aware of the 6-month jinx and that I am taking prudent steps to become familiar with my new bike I will be able to avoid any problems.

We all know that becoming familiar with your motorcycle is a great idea.



Well maybe not this familiar!

So, remember that practice makes perfect and *"the more you know the better it gets"*. The more comfortable you become, the safer you will ride! So as not to leave anything to chance, after you practice, rabbits feet, bells on your bike, deer whistles and four leaf clovers probably wouldn't hurt either ☺.

Ride Safe!

Jim "The Shark" Sharkey
Assistant District Educator

RIDER EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA IS ALIVE AND WELL!

I would like to thank all you Educators and Chapter Directors that helped me with the monthly educator reports. Your efforts allowed Virginia to turn in reports from 100% of our chapters.

For your information for the first 3 months of this year we had 244 people attend 48 training events. We reached over 2200 folks with our monthly chapter meeting educator talks. We also produced 43 newsletter articles that were circulated to almost 4000 people. I know that I am a new comer at this level of rider education but I think these numbers are pretty impressive. Please continue to talk to our folks at our meetings, provide them good information in our newsletter articles and schedule assorted training events. I don't care so much about the numbers here but the law of averages would dictate that we are actually getting through to our riders and co-riders.

REGION "N" HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 2003 NEWSLETTER

- Gene & Martha Davis

Region "N" Rally Assignments

We would appreciate your support in making this Rally the best ever. The Rally is, of course, May 8, 9, 10, 2003 in Cherokee, NC.

Seminars

Team/Group Riding – Bud Plymale, VA
Co-Rider – Neil Brown, KY
Be Prepared – Jim Hall, TN
Parking Lot Practice – Keith Lindgren, VA



Field Events

Gary Wall, VA

Road Captain

Cundiff Simmons, VA

Rider Education Table

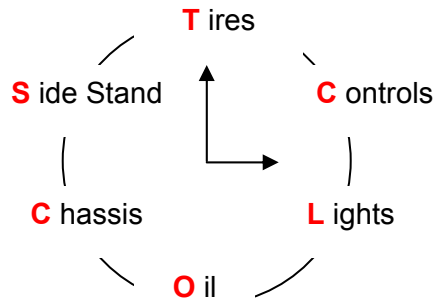
Educators, we need YOUR help at the Rider Education table. Come and help, we'd appreciate it! If you have any door prizes you would like to contribute to the Rider Ed table, please bring them with you. It would greatly be appreciated!!!

Trike Class

The Trike class is limited to 24 trikes. The first 24 who send their \$30 to Gene Davis at 98 Colson Road, Benton, KY 42025, will be enrolled. Any additional applicants will be placed on a stand-by list. If there is an opening, they will be included. If not, their \$30 will be returned to them. NOTE: at this time, we still have some openings.

New T-CLOCS

It should be noted that there have been a couple of changes in regard to what we are presenting in regard to Rider Education. The old T-CLOCK method of checking our bikes is now **T-CLOCS**:



Region N Rider Education Wing Ding Assignments

Region N has the responsibility for the Wing Ding Bike Show Judging – Operations

John Koty has assigned Rider Education the responsibility for the Safety Inspections. The time frame for this responsibility is Tuesday and Wednesday 10am – 2pm. We have been asked to take a whole day at Rider Education table FRIDYA. We need lots of help all three days, please.

LANE POSITION FOR SAFETY

- Wade and Olivia Jensen

Positioning yourself in the right part of the lane is a subject that comes up in many motorcycle discussions, can be debated endlessly, and each person in the debate is perfectly correct. In judging lane position from a strictly risk minimization perspective, there are three main considerations: maximum visibility or being seen by others, maximum sight distance, and maneuvering space. There are other considerations, such as speed, that are not considered here, but which you will also have to take into account. For purposes of this discussion, I have in mind a solo rider. Team riding presents other considerations. This sort of positioning should be well thought out, and practiced so it becomes instinctive. Naturally, I advocate here my selection of lane position, based on my own analysis of the risks, and my own style of riding. You are free to disagree, and as I said before, your analysis is equally valid. The main reason I bring this up is to get you thinking about different situations, and having a plan. As always in our sport, situations will arise when it is necessary to compromise lane position. But, if you have a plan, and need to vary it for some reason, you will have more confidence in that decision, which may make it easier to execute quickly.

Any traffic lane can be divided into three imaginary tracks, which we refer to as the left track (closest to the opposing lane) the right track (closest to the outside of the road), and the center track. Naturally, a motorcyclist is entitled to take up any of these positions, rather than confining himself to only one spot on the road. At the same time, an evaluation of risks suggests that you maintain maximum sight distances, maximum visibility, and maintain your maneuvering room, such that if something unexpected happens, you have an escape plan. Some of these may be mutually exclusive, in which case you must compromise, and this is where your own judgment of the risks comes into play.

So, with these considerations, let's see how applying such a strategy might play out in some real world situations. First let's assume a straight two-lane highway, such as you might find in the Midwest. But, as we shall see later, the strategy is equally valid on many sections of interstate as well. In general, I tend to maintain a center track position most of the time. I am trying to achieve maximum visibility by being square in the center of the lane. At the same time, I do not wish to "share" my lane with a car. The same thing could be achieved by riding in the left track, but then I would have little maneuvering room should something happen in the road in front of me. In that case, I might have no choice but to hit the object, or face on coming traffic. At the same time, as long as the road is straight, there is no advantage to riding in either the right or left track for sight distance.



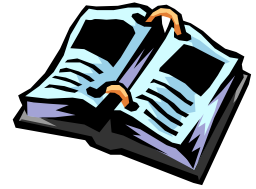
If my two lane highway should curve to one side or the other, making long sweeping curves, such as sections of Telegraph Road from Fanconia Road to Federal Highway 1, I try to position myself to the outside of the curve. If the road curves right, I will try to be on the left track, and if left, I will be on the right track. This gives me maximum sight distance in looking through the curve. If an obstacle appears ahead, I will see it as soon as possible, and be able to come to a slower, thus safer stop. But, this brings up the fact that on the outside edge of the road, I have little maneuvering space, should I need it. If I have to stand the bike up, apply brakes, then lean again, there may not be enough room with this strategy. Clearly, if there is no shoulder, you should probably vary the strategy, and stick to the middle, or a little right of the middle, on a left hand curve. In tight curves, or where I can not see the end of the curve, such as many interstate on and off ramps, I generally employ a similar strategy, taking up a position to the outside of the lane for maximum sight distance. There are usually shoulders on interstate highway on and off ramps, so maneuvering space is not a problem.

"So, ok," you say to yourself "all that's fine when you are riding down a country road, but what about a multilane highway, with a left turn lane, and lots of traffic. What then?" In such situations, of course, I usually have to compromise some of these rules. In general, I find it is safer to maintain visibility and maneuvering space over sight distance. Therefore I tend to stay in the center of the lane. If I have a choice, I will usually pick the center lane (not track) on a six-lane highway, and the right lane on a four-lane road. If I am going through an intersection where there are cars waiting to turn left across my lane of traffic, I try to time it where a car will be in the lane to the left at the same time as I cross the intersection. Car drivers tend to see other cars better than the see motorcycles. There is a saying that there are bold motorcyclists, and there are old motorcyclists, but there are no old bold motorcyclists. Motorcycling is of course more risky than some other means of transportation, but it is also more fun and exhilarating as well. Sometimes there are no good choices, only less bad ones. The point is to think about your situation at all times, constantly re-evaluating, and have a plan for what you will do next.

Ride safe, and keep the shiny side up!!

MAY IS NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE AWARENESS

- Steve Mead, Chapter Educator, VA-I



Over two-thirds of car-motorcycle crashes are caused by drivers, not by motorcyclists. The driver either does not see the oncoming motorcyclist at all or does not see the motorcyclist in time to avoid a crash.

Advice to Drivers

Why didn't I see that motorcycle? Drivers tend to look for other cars, not motorcycles.

Because of its small profile, a motorcycle is harder to see and you may find it more difficult to estimate the motorcycle's speed.

The motorcyclist's riding pattern is different from your driving pattern. Different actions may be needed for the same driving or highway situation. For example, you may ignore a piece of road debris as a driver, however, the same piece of road debris may be deadly for a motorcyclist.

Traffic, weather, and road conditions require a motorcyclist to react differently than a driver, thus it is more difficult for you to judge and to predict cues that may require the motorcyclist to take an evasive action.

What are some situations when crashes are most likely to occur?

- *Car making a left turn:* You are attempting a left turn in front of a motorcycle operator.
- *Riding in your blind spot:* A motorcyclist is riding in your blind spot and you may not see the motorcycle. Additionally, you may fail to adequately check blind spots before changing lanes or making a turn.
- *Hazardous road conditions:* Potholes, wet leaves, railroad tracks and other road obstructions may dictate that a motorcyclist take an action that you may or may not.
- *Obstructed line of sight:* Large vehicles, such as sport utility vehicles, delivery vans, and large trucks may block a motorcycle from your view and the motorcyclist may seem to suddenly appear.

How can I become more aware of motorcyclists?

- *Respect the motorcyclist:* Remember the motorcycle is a vehicle with all the privileges of any vehicle on the roadway. Give the motorcyclist a full lane of travel.
- *Look out:* Look for the motorcyclist at intersections, when a motorcyclist may be making a left turn, and on the highway, when a motorcyclist may be changing lanes. Clearly signal your intentions.
- *Anticipate a motorcyclist's maneuver:* Obstructions that you do not notice may be deadly for a motorcyclist. Predict evasive actions.

Allow plenty of space: Don't follow a motorcycle too closely. Allow enough room for the motorcyclist to take evasive actions.

Advice to Riders

Why didn't that driver see me? Don't assume that you are visible to a driver. As a motorcyclist, it is your responsibility to make your presence known to the driver. Select and wear an appropriate helmet with retroreflective materials. Wear bright, contrasting protective clothing. If you choose darker clothes, wear a fluorescent vest.

23 states require that the headlight be on while the motorcycle is on the highway. Use high beams rather than low beams and consider using a modulating headlight if your state allows it.

Proper lane position is important to being seen and for protecting your riding space. If you can see the driver in the side-view mirror, the driver can see you. Don't "hide" in the driver's blind spot.

Clearly, communicate your intentions by signaling appropriately. Let the driver know what you intend to do.

What are some situations when crashes are most likely to occur?

- *Car making a left turn:* A driver is attempting a left turn in front of you.
- *Riding in a driver's blind spot:* You are riding in the driver's blind spot and the driver may not see the motorcycle. Additionally, the driver may fail to adequately check blind spots before changing lanes or making a turn.
- *Hazardous road conditions:* Potholes, wet leaves, railroad tracks and other road obstructions may dictate that you take an action that a driver may not or does not anticipate.
- *Obstructed line of sight:* Large vehicles, such as sport utility vehicles, delivery vans, and large trucks may block a motorcycle from a driver's view and you may seem to suddenly appear.

How can I increase the driver's awareness of my presence?

- *Make yourself visible:* Choose protective gear that will increase your visibility in addition to providing protection in the event of a crash. A motorcycle helmet is your most valuable piece of protective gear and should most visible to the driver
- *Ride where you can be seen:* Remember that there is no safe place to ride. Use lane positioning to your advantage to be seen and to provide extra space for emergency braking situations or avoidance maneuvers. Avoid the driver's blind spots. Make your lane moves gradually, and always use appropriate signaling.
- *Never share a lane with a car:* A driver may not expect you to be there and may not be aware of your presence. Remember most drivers are looking for other, bigger vehicles.
- *Clearly signal your intentions to the driver:* Signal before changing lanes and never weave between lanes.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

- Taken from the April 2003 Region "N" Newsletter – Gene & Martha Davis

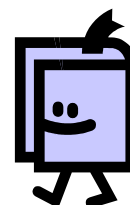
It is interesting when you sit down and think about it, what impact a word or a couple of words can carry.

For example, in the Navy a simple "Aye Aye" indicates that, "I understand and I will comply." Again, in the Navy, the word "Wilco" means, "I will comply," that being the case only a person having the authority to execute the order may authorize the reply of "Wilco." What about the impact of the two little words "I do"? Doesn't that, in some cases, commit you for life?

Well, where is all this going? If you, or in some cases, where you have the authority says, "Aye Aye," "Wilco" or "I do" then you have made a commitment and to fail to carry out that responsibility certainly damages your credibility or what which you represent.

We would encourage all of us to understand and consider the implication of your actions. It has often been said, "A man is only as good as his word." When we sign an application or Memorandum of Understanding, or signed a Master's form, we have certainly given our word.

As a result, one reason that **GWRRRA** is so successful is that our Motto, "*Friends for Fun, Safety and Knowledge*" is our guiding principle and we, as members, strive to be as good as our word.





Rider Application & Renewal Forms - REMINDERS

EDUCATORS!!! Please be sure to include the "years at current level" when completing your Rider Application & Renewal Forms. Also, make sure the checks that are sent in with the forms are made out to **Virginia Rider Education.**

Level IV will need to still be a separate check and should be mailed directly to National.

Thanks!

Medic First Program

Interested in putting on a Medic First / CPR Program? The class is \$20 per person. Contact Pat & Shelia McMahon (757-867-9323) for more information.

Monthly Activity Reports

Don't forget that Monthly Activity Reports are due **BEFORE** the end of each month to Jim Sharkey. Make your life and the life of the Assistant District Educator easier and take a blank report to your chapter meetings. Just fill it out there and then send it in!

Email Address

If you have any questions, comments or input for the newsletter, please contact me at gdw-jlw@juno.com.

Stay connected!!!



Take a look at some of the other GWRRA newsletters that are available.

- ➔ **National** Rider Ed newsletter: www.GWRRA.org - find Rider Education links, then go to Newsletter link.
- ➔ **Region N** Rider Ed newsletter: www.region-n.org – click on Rider Education
- ➔ **District** newsletter: www2.firstsaga.com/goldwing – click on Rider Education