

Purpose of GWRRA's Rider Education

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The GWRRA Rider Education Program is intended to make the motorcycle environment safer by reducing injuries and fatalities and increasing motorcyclist skills and awareness. The REP does not propose to have all the answers. However, our close-working relationship with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF), as well as additional GWRRA programs and studies, has provided a wealth of information for use in establishing a comprehensive Rider Education Program. Through Commitment, Education and Application we can reduce our accident rate significantly. Listed below are several benefits of a fully implemented GWRRA Rider Education Program at the Chapter level:

1. •Increased rider knowledge
- 2.
3. •Increased rider safety skills
- 4.
5. •Prevention of accidents
- 6.
7. •Reduced injuries
- 8.
9. •Reduced fatalities
- 10.
11. •Improved general public image of motorcyclists
- 12.
13. •Enhanced enjoyment of motorcycle riding
- 14.

The motorcycle community is already realizing many positive benefits from the GWRRA Rider Education Program. Through the efforts of the Rider Education Officers and participation of the membership and others, we will reach our goal of establishing the safest motorcycle environment possible.

History of GWRRA's Rider Education Program

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association has been teaching and promoting motorcycle safety from its founding on June 4, 1977. The earliest newsletters of the small group that met monthly at a local restaurant and coffee shop in Phoenix Arizona featured guest speakers on safety topics including a motorcycle policeman. When the original charter for GWRRA was established, the only motorcycle organization endorsed by GWRRA was the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) for its efforts in making family motorcycling a safer, more enjoyable pastime. The first "Safety Director" for that first group

saler, more enjoyable pastime. The first Safety Director for that first group of GWRRA members (as listed in the April 1978 issue of "Wing News"), was Gary Gardner. By December, Dave Van de Water had taken over as "Safety Information Officer." (Dave's contributions to GWRRA's earliest history were many, including the development of the first GWRRA logo by one of his company's graphic artists.)

In the July 1979 issue of "Wing News" the name of another Phoenix native, Avery Poling, was listed as "Safety Information Officer." Poling held the position on or close to a year. As the scope and growth of GWRRA grew to national, and then international, proportions, new visions of the potential for GWRRA's Rider Education Program came from Frank Germo (then of Virginia Beach, VA), appointed GWRRA's first "National Safety Officer" in 1981. Germo had visions of placing at least one MSF Chief Instructor in each GWRRA Region and at least one MSF Certified Instructor in each state having GWRRA membership. He also set out to "keep the Membership safety-aware and evaluate motorcycle items with regards to safety," tasks he did through his regular article contributions to "Wing News." Germo went on to become the Virginia District Director and Region A Director while continuing to promote Rider Education at every turn in his GWRRA career. Germo's most lasting legacy is the vision of a wide-spread network of Rider Educators throughout GWRRA, a vision which has become reality today.

In September 1982, Jim Cole was listed in "Wing News" as "Safety Editor." Cole, who also was Region C Director, was named National Safety Director in January 1983. Cole instituted GWRRA's first Safe Miles Program, whereby Gold Wings would update their files for each consecutive 5000 miles of accident-free riding, earning a pin. A month later, Cole added "Pilot" and "Copilot" rockers to the program, giving the first visible recognition to the safety role played by the Co-Rider. Jim Cole continued to promote Rider Education through October 1986, with regular article contributions through "Wing News" and its successor, Wing World Magazine. GWRRA can thank Jim Cole for the earliest concept of its Rider Education Program, one in which a Rider and a Co-Rider can proudly wear pins and patches signifying their safe motorcycle mileage.

A new National Safety Director, Bill Kitchin, took over in January 1987, with plans for an extensive series of videotaped training modules. Kitchin also proposed formation of a non-profit charitable foundation to fund these modules. A series of events delayed these plans, however. The longest lasting legacy Bill Kitchin left for GWRRA Rider Education was separation of the Safe

Rider Program from the High Miles Program (still in force today), and the concept of video-taped seminars for use at the chapter level and by individual Members.

In July 1987, Robert "Pete" Woodruff began doing motorcycle safety seminars at GWRRA rallies and Wing Ding. By September, Woodruff had been named National Rider Education Director, a post he held until January 31, 1996. Woodruff, a safety professional with Lockheed Aeronautical Systems Company in Marietta, Georgia, swiftly put his professional and organizational skills to work, transforming shoe boxes of "Safe Miles" forms into a computerized data base capable of handling what was about to become explosive growth in Rider Education participation. Taking many of the concepts of his predecessors and putting them into action, he also added whole new programs and involvement opportunities for Members eager to participate. Woodruff released a flood of energy previously unseen on the safety side of the GWRRA organization. In March 1988, GWRRA announced its new Rider Education Program, listing Levels I, II, and III with both Rider and Co-Rider involvement. In addition, the Rider Education Division instituted on-site MSF-certified Rider Courses at Wing Ding and many GWRRA Region and District rallies. Woodruff also went into the studio to produce his highly entertaining and informative series of video-taped seminars on "Co-Rider", "Touring & Braking" and "Trailerling".

In 1989, the enthusiastic demand of the GWRRA membership for another level of Rider Education was fulfilled with the addition of Level IV-Master Tour Rider, the program's highest level of accomplishment.

In late 1995, the GWRRA Rider Education leadership recognized the need for enhanced Rider training above and beyond that which was then being offered. Plans were instituted for the founding of a completely new organization to be known as the Academy of Rider Training, or ART. In February 1996, Pete Woodruff was named Executive Director of the Academy of Rider Training. He was charged with the responsibility for the planning and the implementation of advanced rider training courses. i.e. Two-up, Trikes, Trailerling, Sidecars, Trip and Tour Planning and Group Riding. Those courses, and others, will be released as soon as they are researched and their curriculums developed and instructors trained.

Taking over as National Director of the Rider Education Division in February 1996 was Charlie Davenport, a long time GWRRA Operations Officer who served as Region Director for Regions A and N and most recently, as the

who served as Region Director for Regions A and N and most recently, as the Senior Regional Director. Charlie is a veteran MSF Instructor, a Master Tour Rider (#10) and is dedicated to motorcycle safety.

In 1997 Bill Noss, a long time Assistant National Director of Rider Education from Ohio, assumed the role as Director. Due to work commitments, Bill stepped down in 1998 and was replaced by Ed Brennan who was Bill's assistant from Tennessee. Ed had been involved for many years with the program as far back as his helping Pete Woodruff with the National Newsletter as the Editor.

The Rider Education Division of GWRRA, working with MSF and other motorcycle safety programs, will continue its commitment to excellence in motorcycle safety.

The acceptance of the new Rider Education Program has been dramatic. Participation jumped from 700 enrolled in 1987 to nearly 40,000 by 1996 with growth continuing. Virtually every GWRRA Region has Rider Education staff in place with Educators in every District and nearly every Chapter. To support these volunteers in their efforts, this revised Rider Education Manual is now ready for distribution and use, as just one more step toward achieving the safety goals of GWRRA. Having acquired national recognition from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation as "Outstanding Motorcycle Organization" almost every year since 1990, the men, women and children who have given so freely of their time to the GWRRA Rider Education Program can truly be proud of their part in building GWRRA's unparalleled heritage in the world of motorcycle safety education.