



Same Song Different Verse



*Dale and Kathy Compton
Chapter G2 Educators*



This month I am going to be rehashing over some stuff that we have been over before, probably more than most wanted to. I am doing this because I feel that this is very important to us as far as our safety is concerned, and let's face it many of us need to be reminded.

The number one thing that will contribute to our continued safe riding is being prepared. This includes several things and all are of equal importance.

The condition of our equipment:

We should always have total confidence that our equipment is in good working condition and will perform as it was intended to be used. This includes not only the bikes, but our safety equipment also (helmets, gloves jackets, eye-wear etc.) Many times we worry more about the comfort items than we do about the things that are necessary to keep us safe.

Our personal condition:

This includes both mental and physical condition. We should never attempt to operate a motorcycle when we are not in a condition where we can adequately operate and control our machines. This is both physical and mental. We must always be mentally sharp and physically ready to respond in case we encounter an emergency situation. Of course we all know that we NEVER get on a bike after consuming alcohol (or drugs), regardless of how little.

Our skills:

We must keep our skills honed, there is only one way this is done. Practice! There is no substitute for good old fashioned practice. Whether it is an organized practice session such as our parking lot practices, or just practicing good riding habits with others on a ride, there is nothing better. MSF courses are great, but we don't take them often enough to depend on them entirely to keep you sharp. We should practice all riding situations, slow speed, city, highway, and back roads. Like the old story goes, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall? PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!"

Our confidence in ourselves and other members in the group:

We all must have confidence in ourselves, and our abilities. If you continually tell yourself that you can NOT do something, I guarantee you, that no matter how hard you try, you will not be able to do it. At the same time we must know our limitations and not exceed them.

More importantly than that, we must have confidence in other members in our riding group. Be observant; know their habits (good and bad), their strong points and their weaknesses, and make allowances for them. I have ridden with many people in the past that I simply did not trust, and I will sadly say that our group is no different. I have seen their riding habits enough to know that I do not want to put my well being in their hands.

So how do you handle this

situation? It is almost always certain that confronting them will not have a positive ending; the natural response will be defiance or justification. Though if done in right way they may take it as it was intended, I haven't seen that happen too many times.

We should encourage those that need some practice time, to join us on some good rides and practice sessions. There is a good chance that something will click and stick with them. (Again Practice is the key) If this fails as the next best thing, I will fall back on the old reliable and less desirable, and that is avoidance. I personally will not ride directly in front of or behind someone that I do not trust. More times than not there will be others that are less concerned or more trusting than you are.

Remember that group riding is just that and that it will take all of us to ensure that we all are safe and come home the way that we left. So watch out for each other!

I hope that you have not seen something here that you have forgotten, if so I hope that this will remind us to be more vigilant.

Till next time remember to,

**Ride Safe,
Have Fun,
and Take
Care of Each
Other.**

Dale

