

March 2011

## TEXAS CHAPTER Z2



### GWRRA Region H MCKINNEY, TEXAS

Meeting the fourth Thursday at Fuddruckers,  
2045 S. Central Expy. McKinney, Texas  
Dinner at 6:30 PM Meeting at 7:00 PM



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From the Director's Chair.....

Spring has finally sprung!!! It has been great to be able to get out on the bike for our dinner rides and Saturday Chapter rides, and we are looking forward to the next couple of months (before it gets really HOT) to get some miles in with the Chapter.

As we roll into warmer weather, it becomes increasingly easier to make the decision to avoid putting on all of our riding gear. Don't let the weather dictate your safety!

Warm weather brings out more than motorcycles.....it seems to produce an even larger number of "crazies" that are just out to get where they are going – as fast as possible, and without regard for anyone else on the road.

These "crazies" are certainly not paying attention to the fact that they are sharing the road with us – the motorcycling community. Their obvious lack of concern for our safety makes it even more important that we increase our safety awareness – and that includes wearing "the gear".

We have a lot of GWRRA related events coming up – and we need to maximize our participation in these events as much as everyone's busy schedules will allow. I would like to see us visit a lot more of our sister chapters, and to participate in their rides and events, as well as getting everyone out to the Region and District events. Wing Ding 33 is right around the corner, and I know that we have quite a few of our Chapter participants that plan on attending.

We are trying to get some first aid and CPR training scheduled, so that we can keep everyone current on his/her level's program, and more importantly – keep everyone fresh in his/her first aid and CPR skills.

We still need to finish up our "Hero" and our "Hero Hat" for the Region H rally in May – and we have a lot of really great rides planned – so keep the calendar on your refrigerator, and don't miss a single event. We look forward to seeing you!

Ride Safe!

Rick & Dorinda

## Chapter Talk

The Thursday, February 24, 2011 meeting of Lonestar Z2 Chapter of GWRRA was called to order by Chapter Director, Rick Maier at 7:04PM. The Pledge and a Moment of Silence were recited and observed, respectively. Rick announced anniversaries for March (no birthdays). Calendar highlights were read and accepted. Ed Neal presented the Rider Education lesson for tonight... "When to Swerve, When Not to Swerve." Use the "panic stop." If there is time, slow down and give "it" plenty of room (cow, buffalo, etc.). If there isn't time, something sudden, "DON'T SWERVE!" Since you don't know which way animal will go, this would be the time to use the "panic stop." First control the bike, then stop. In a curve, be sure to straighten the bike first, then use "panic stop." Most important... BE MENTALLY ALERT... at all times! The Region H Rally, March 24-26, 2011 at Plano Centre, needs volunteers for the sign-up table for the Fun Run on both Friday and Saturday. Rick showed off the Pine Derby Race Car for the Rally! Looks great! Good job, Rick! Treasa Costello has volunteered to decorate The Hat for the Rally. Vicki and Richard Boslow were able to supply the children's cowboy boots to use as the pedestal for the hat! The District Rally, May 12-14, 2011 in Killeen will have a "Hero" competition. Ed Neal offered the suggestion for our hero to be The Lone Ranger. The chapter accepted that suggestion. Prizes and 50/50 were awarded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16PM.

## Officer Certification Program Training

In the late afternoon of Friday, February 25, Rick and I left for Stroud, Oklahoma to attend the Officer's Certification Program training. We arrived in Stroud after dark so we didn't get the opportunity to see much of the town that evening. After checking into the hotel, we went to find something to eat before closing in for the night. Mazzio's Pizza was wonderful and the employees there very friendly. All the restaurants of Stroud are all located within a block of each other. One could park in a lot of a restaurant and walk to all the others! Once back in our hotel room, the challenge for the night was getting the room temperature regulated. The temperature was 34° at arrival so we knew that it was going to get colder as the night went on. We either would turn the temperature in the room too high or too low. So needless to say, we were up and down a lot trying to find the right temperature.

Up bright and early Saturday morning, we met Charles and Helen Dunn in the hotel cafeteria for breakfast. It is always a pleasure to see them. They are a fun couple to be with. After breakfast it was time to check in for the training. Our instructors were Jack Wagner, Oklahoma District Trainer, and Steve Cotton, Region H Trainer. There were outstanding instructors for this course. They kept the classes very interesting, even through some of the subjects were very boring. Some of what was covered was: Leading with a positive attitude, Rider Education, Membership Enhancement, Finances, Leadership Training, and why GWRRA is a non-profit organization. It was a long day of sitting so it was sure nice to see the day end.

When class was dismissed, we rode with Charles and Helen to a BBQ restaurant. Again the employees were very friendly and the food was good. This place was sure busy, so it was very obvious that it was a popular place to eat. Back at the hotel room, we must have finally figured out the right place for the temperature on the heater. We slept very well. Finishing up the training on Sunday morning, a test had to be taken. I do not like a test! I have a problem with this older brain remembering things. Fortunately all passed and received a certificate of completion... that is all that matters! We were released about 1:00 p.m. and headed back to McKinney. We learned a lot and confirmed a lot of what we thought we knew!

I am very glad that we attended the class.

Dorinda Maier & Helen Dunn

# Rider's Education

## Truck Related Tips For Highway Riding Overtaking and Trucker-Tailgating

By: Cash Anthony

On our recent trip to North Carolina and back to Houston, first for reasons of getting to a wedding on time, and then for coming home unexpectedly fast for a funeral, Jim and I rode the interstates almost exclusively. We did a little under 3,000 miles in eight 'riding days,' with two of them averaging only a hundred miles while we visited in the area.

Here are some thoughts I had while riding those miles and miles of highway.

First, the American highway network is a work of art, no question. By and large the road surfaces are smooth, with decent shoulders, clear signage, and fast speed limits. Not that the speed limits matter much to most of the traffic.. Some areas are scenic by happenstance, but the routing is designed purely to be efficient. Across the South especially, the major roads tend to run straight for a long, long way, without landmark or feature. There are very few curves, although from West to East by the inland route, the road rises steadily.

The US interstate highway system is geared to the transportation of goods to accommodate interstate commerce, and that means trucks 'rule.' Advertising, lodgings, restaurants and now gambling facilities are all geared toward serving the trucking population, with the individual or family tourist who is passing through coming in a distant second. Gasoline is available at marked exits only, even when there may be lodgings or fast food places (for truckers) at other exits in-between. (If the exit sign doesn't say 'gas,' there IS no gas. Don't ask how I know.) And, no surprise, you can expect to see huge numbers of trucks on these roads.

All this is not news to motorcyclists who tour regularly, but if you are contemplating a trip cross-country you may want to take note that 'huge numbers' means 'MOST of the other vehicles on the road.' Passenger cars are out there, too, but as a rider your orientation to riding the interstates will inevitably focus on dealing with trucks and truckers.

Big rigs present particular hazards that can be deadly to motorcyclists. A blowout on a car will sometimes throw a piece of tire tread into the road, endangering any rider who is following it at the moment; but by observation of the roads in your area, you know it's mostly truck tires that come apart. The tread off an 18-wheeler is enormous, certainly big enough to knock a Gold Wing off its wheels, and the force with which it comes apart is horrific.

Another feature of trucks is their design. Because they are made for fast switching of their cargo - nowadays trucks haul boxcars on wheels - the cab and trailer are often separate: separately owned and maintained. The driver is supposed to safety-check his trailer regularly, but he will not know its history.

Note that with this articulated cab and trailer system, the driver loses sight of the rear of his rig when he makes a turn, assuming he's looking where he's going and not in his mirrors. Some drivers are good at tight turns, some not so good.

This can be important at truck stops and in little towns, if you have to go into one. I had one 18-wheeler

cut back to within a foot of my elbow as I sat in the left turn lane in Ferriday, LA, Thursday morning. I had seen him there when we pulled up at the light, getting ready to make a right turn my way, so I stopped farther back in the turn lane than normal, to give him a few extra feet for clearance. He took every bit of it, and still the back tires on his rig went over the curb! Like a motorcyclist, the trucker drove forward into the turn, slowed, looked right, and then 'rolled on' the juice. This means he was accelerating as he made the last part of the turn and started to straighten out, when he was closest to me. 'Grrrrind, swoosh!' We know it can be hard for a rider to safely brake just as you start to accelerate through a turn. With a similar dynamic working on that big rig (in this case, for reasons of momentum), it would have been impossible for him to stop without hitting me if he had misjudged that foot of space.

It may surprise the riders who don't hang out around big rigs that there are rows upon rows of instruments in the cab of today's trucks, at least in the ones that haul for a major line. Jim asked for permission from a fellow fueling up outside Columbia, SC, for me to crawl up into the cab and look around. It looked like an airplane control panel! There were gauges and buttons and switches covering the dash. It also seems like you're on top of the world when you look down at the road. Point: if you were driving one of these, aiming it down a thin, straight lane for hours, the opportunity to be distracted from watching the road is great.

On a long day of riding, overtaking trucks is the only game out there for a motorcyclist on the interstates. In order to try to ride at a constant speed to maximize gas mileage and make steady time, there are some tricks that I learned for passing, and being passed.

As for being passed, it's simple: get out of their way. Move to the far side of the road from the passing lane to diminish the wind blast that will come your way. It starts before the truck is next to you, from all the air being pushed to the side and forward as it rolls at speed. Be prepared to be moved involuntarily as much as half a lane to the side of your path of travel, and that's if you're maintaining a strong grip, good forward focus and firm control. Choose your path so that you allow for this sideways movement and don't run off the road.

After about half of the truck's trailer has passed, you may experience the opposite tendency, to be pulled toward the truck's back wheels. A slipstream shaped like a teardrop is formed in the air turbulence created behind the truck, and some (but not all) truck rigs will try to suck you into it. So do not move back toward the truck to reestablish a left (i.e., lead bike) lane position until it is well away from you.

Try to create as much of a gap as you can between yourself and trucks that are behind you in the same lane. They will use the terrain to maximize their gas mileage, too, which means they really get rolling on the downhills if they can. Speed limits do not matter during these maneuvers, and being tailgated by a big rig going 95 mph will certainly wake you up! (Remember the MSF lesson on planning escape routes?)

A word about relative speeds: Jim and I were commonly running between 75 mph and 80 mph on the interstates. We were constantly passed by huge trucks doing 100. This was especially true in Alabama and Georgia, where the roads are beautifully maintained. The state troopers were out in fair numbers, but they only seem to catch a few of the most egregious speeders, and many big rig drivers go extremely fast with impunity.

On passing: When you decide to pass an 18-wheeler, try to choose an uphill stretch to do it in. [\[Unless, of course, you are on a single-lane road. This article is about multiple-lane freeway travel.\]](#) The truck will slow for an incline more than you will on your bike, and this will give you a chance to put some major distance between your vehicles so that it will not catch up to you and tailgate, or pass you again, on the next downhill run. Plan your maneuver. Ideally, you want to pull out into the fast lane just before you reach the bottom of the incline, as you are starting up, and then use all your acceleration for straight-line,

uphill driving as you pass.

You will have to burn more gas to pass on an incline, but you will get by the truck faster, minimizing other risks, like having a tire on the rig blowout when you're next to it, or having the driver lose sight of you and try to pull into your lane to pass a slower truck.

Remember to listen to truck tires! We started into one passing maneuver outside Villa Rico, GA on Tuesday, just after we'd made a fairly long rest stop at a big truck fueling center. We came to a hill behind a large red truck we'd been following for a couple of miles, and I signaled to pass. I got up to within five feet of the truck's back wheels, and suddenly I heard a loud, rhythmic 'whomp, whomp' from the truck's right side. I couldn't see anything strange, but I couldn't tell where that was coming from or what was making it, so I shook my head and backed off. We tucked in behind the rig a few moments later, giving it a good clearance, and I just let it go. We slowed from 80 to 60 mph for a few minutes to be sure it was gone, then resumed our cruising speed.

I don't know whether the noise was a tire that would soon come apart, or whether the truck's right wheels were striking the Bott's dots on the shoulder for a few turns. There was no turn signal from the truck that he was intending to pull off, and the truck was too wide for me gauge where it was on the other side. I didn't like it, though, so we dropped back. We may have passed him later, or he may have stayed way ahead of us, or we may have leapfrogged with him at one of our breaks, but I only heard that noise once on this trip.

While most truck drivers are very decent people with a hard job to do and a timetable to meet, you may occasionally run into a rogue. We did, when I pulled out to pass a big rig in Mississippi on Interstate 20. It was a regional carrier, with a reddish-orange cab and trailer, being followed by an old, dull-coated orange Supersport. The guy in the car was riding along with his arm out the window, sipping a soft drink and showing off his tattoo while he played the radio. The two vehicles were obviously traveling together, and probably connected via CB as well.

Jim speculates that the truck driver said something along these lines to his buddy: 'Let's mess with these bikers' minds.' I pulled out into the fast lane from a cruising speed of about 70 mph. For the reasons stated, I'd waited for an inclined stretch to pass. About the time I hit 75, the truck began to accelerate. Before I could fight the wind blast and the rising elevation enough to get past him, we were both doing 95! I came up to the window of the cab but could only see out of the corner of my eye, not enough to make out the driver's face. When I glanced at my speedometer and saw that I'd break 100 before I could pass him, I thought, 'Screw this,' and backed off. This meant backing off behind the Supersport, too, of course, and losing a lot of speed on that hill. And I expect those two rednecks were choking on their Co-Cola for laughing. Yeah, real funny, that kind of thing.

Jim said he was glad to see I kept all my fingers on the grips as I dropped back. [grin]

This is not the kind of trucker you want behind you anyway.

We saw a few others that fit that description on our trip, like truckers who are drunk or half-asleep. A big rig weaving from side to side in the lane, crossing the stripe on the roadside and then coming close to the dotted line is a hairy sight. We dropped back and watched one for a while, talking it over. Jim got on the CB to try to wake the driver up, but he couldn't raise him on any channel. We finally passed him, fast, and hauled it away from him at once.

For some reason, the drivers on the interstate and by-passes in Atlanta, GA are the most aggressive people I've ever seen on the road. They made the Houston traffic look like a ride in the park! This included the

solo drivers in passenger cars and the truckers in big rigs. There are lots of regional and local trucking lines in that city, too, and many slow-moving rigs are mixed in with the speed demons. If you can find a way to skip riding a motorcycle on the interstates through Atlanta, spend some time with your maps and give yourself a break.

Be especially careful about your footing at truck stops, too.. some of these rigs really drop oil.

After this trip, I'd say that while motorcycles and 18-wheelers can co-exist on the superslabs, it really isn't much fun for a biker out there. It's a serious test of your nerve, and it can be very fatiguing to do it for hour after hour. If you have to make time to your destination, you can certainly do it with our excellent system of roads. But for me, the next time I go on two wheels across half the country, I plan to seek out the back roads and regional highways, so I can enjoy the ride.

Once we left Interstate 20 and took Highway 61 south from Vicksburg to Natchez, for a while Jim and I were the only two moving objects on the road. It was misty, and so quiet! In places, the road was a tunnel of green leaves, weaving back and forth across the Natchez Trace. There were little hills and dales, there were curves, there were small towns to see. It was so beautiful, and after the freeways, what a relief! If you're going to see America on two wheels, to me that's the way it's supposed to be.

If you have to do it, stay alert, and ride safe on the interstates!

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(James R. Davis is a recognized [expert witness](#) in the fields of Motorcycle Safety/Dynamics.)

## **Murder or Divorce**

*A nice, calm and respectable lady went into the pharmacy, walked up to the pharmacist, looked straight into his eyes, and said, "I'd like to buy some cyanide."*

*The pharmacist asked,  
"Why in the world do you need cyanide?"*

*The lady replied, "I need it to poison my husband."*

*The pharmacist's eyes got big and he explained, "Lord have mercy! I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband, that's against the law?"*

*I'll lose my license! They'll throw both of us in jail! All kinds of bad things will happen. Absolutely not! You CANNOT have any cyanide!"*

*The lady reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband in bed with the pharmacist's wife.*

*The pharmacist looked at the picture and said, "You didn't tell me you had a prescription!"*