

New Years Resolutions

As we start the new year, many of us will be trying to maintain New Years resolutions, or promises, that we made to ourselves to be better in some certain area of our lives. Whether to exercise more, smoke less, eat better, or whatever; you may be trying to break Old habits with the onset of the New year. Here's a suggestion for a different type resolution: How about resolving to be a better motorcyclist?

Maybe you've been riding for many years and you think, "who, me? I don't have any 'bad habits' to break. I'm a good rider." Well, perhaps you are a good rider. But that doesn't mean you have no room for improvement, does it?

Whether you're a newer rider or a seasoned veteran, I am fairly confident that there are areas in each of our riding skills which could be improved on. As I mentioned in last month's Safety Article, a great many accidents occur during cornering and maneuvers involving curves. And to that point; our Chapter witnessed at least two of our more "experienced" riders 'lose it' on curves last year. So, there is one obvious example of an area that many of us (or at least two of us) could stand a little improvement!

How about maneuvering in tight spaces? Are you skilled enough to raise both feet and pull off a successful U-turn with your handlebars in the left or right locked position? OK, so you are perfectly comfortable with your three-point turnarounds. But with a little practice, you could gain that same comfort level with locked-position U-turns, and add that skill to your bag of tricks.

Another likely area that many of us could improve, is our Pre-ride Safety Checks. Taking the time to make certain that your bike is ready to ride, is probably one of the smartest things you can do. Personally, I could check the air pressure in my tires more frequently. My excuse is: it's just such a darn hassle! Having to remove a saddle bag; then make certain that both valves are accessible; off and on the bike; getting your hands dirty; etc. Ugh! I will be one of the first in line to buy a new bike when air pressure sensing technology finds its place on Harleys - and I sincerely wondered why it wasn't included in the Rushmore project!

So again, whether you're a new rider or a seasoned veteran, now may be a good time to promise yourself (and those who ride with you as your passenger) that you will become a better motorcyclist. And the best way to do that in a controlled atmosphere, is to take a Motorcycle Safety Course. If you have never taken a safety course, or if it has been three years or more since your last one, then you should definitely resolve to take one this Spring. There are classes to fit every skill level from the Beginners Riding Course to the Ultimate Bike Bonding Course, and simply stated, these classes are designed to make you a better motorcyclist.

The cost of these classes varies, but the benefits and rewards could be life saving! And when you consider that Harley Davidson will send you \$50.00 in Chrome Cash (after you submit the appropriate proof of course completion), and the money you'll save annually on your motorcycle insurance premiums, the cost of the course is practically negligible!

So, your Safety Tip this month, is simply to resolve to be a better motorcyclist and to promise yourself to take a Motorcycle Safety Course. I hope the New Year brings you many miles of safe riding, and I hope that at the end of this year's riding season, we can each say that we are better motorcyclists!