



# GWRRA NY Chapter "T" August 2010 Newsletter



Chapter T meets at the Vienna Hotel on the corner of Rt. 13 and Rt. 49 on the fourth Thursday of the month.

Join us for a bite to eat @ 6PM with the meeting to follow at 7PM



Monthly Gathering  
50/50 Winner

Bill & Julie Spenser  
of Chapter D



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*August*  
***Birthdays & Anniversaries***

Birthdays:  
Aug.-14-82 Erin Pitoniak

Anniversaries:  
Aug. 8-1959 Lester & Mary Ann Bennett  
Aug.-15-88 Ken & Kathy Sweatman

***Congratulations to All!***



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## Chapter T's Director's Corner

Chapter T Director: Alvin and Linda Yerdon

Hi Folks!

We had our Chapter Gathering July 22, 2010 at Vienna Hotel, 21 people were present and we were also visited by 11 friends from Chapter D so they could have dinner and get a point for Dash For Cash.

We have 3 couples leaving Wednesday Aug. 4<sup>th</sup> heading to Bridgewater New Jersey for the NY & NJ Bi-State Convention. Bill & Julie Spencer from Chapter D won the 50-50.

We had our dinner Ride to the Reservoir Inn in Redfield on July 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. 16 members and 2 guest were there. A very nice meal that everyone enjoyed. After dinner we went for a ride, and stopped for Ice Cream in Camden.

The dinner ride to Cozy Cabin in Rome, NY on July 29<sup>th</sup> was a good turn out. We even had the Directors from Chapter D, Rick & Pam, join us. Check out pictures on later pages.

The Saturday evening bonfire at Bill and Laina Sweatman's house on July 31<sup>st</sup> also had a good turnout with lots of food, drink friends to talk to. Many thanks to Bill & Laina for opening their house for the evening. Check out pictures on later pages.

Chapter T will have a First Aid Course at Vienna Hotel Aug. 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

Chapter T took 3<sup>rd</sup> place with donations for the Ride for Kids with \$8526.00. Total for the Ride for Kids that day was \$109,826.00.

Kathy and Ken Sweatman are thinking of stepping down from Task Leader for Ride for Kids. They need a change after doing the job for 11 years.

**A Big Thank You** for your hard work, Kathy and Ken.

The 2011 Convention maybe in Liverpool NY.

More details later.

## The Ride for Kids

As Al mentioned earlier the Ride for Kids was a good turnout again this year. Even though we had fewer bikes, over all donations were up from last year.

A special Thanks to Jim & Sharon Learned for all their work at collecting donations for this worthy cause. Without their input third place would not have been possible.



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*The Kids*



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Proficient Motorcycling

# Aging

by Ken Condon

HAVING JUST TURNED the corner on a second half-century, I began thinking about the realities of aging and how getting older has affected—and will continue to affect—my ability to ride a motorcycle safely.

I'm sure many of you share similar thoughts. MCN readers tend to be on the mature side of the motorcycling population age range and, as such, many of you already know that such things as attention, eyesight, hearing, flexibility, reaction time, strength and endurance become a bit dulled as we get older. Eventually, there will come a time when all of us will have to hang up our helmet for the last time. But, until then, it is smart for us to acknowledge, accept, understand and work with what Mother Nature has in store for us, so we can ride safely for as long as possible.

## Face It

The topic of aging is not a popular one. Few people want to focus on the fact that their minds and bodies are not as sharp as they once were and that further decline will surely occur. But, as with many distasteful topics, it is often better to face the facts than to deny their existence. Acknowledging that our physical and mental state is changing is the first step in understanding the limits we face as we get older.

Many people see themselves as they were in their youth, even though significant changes have occurred over time. We often assume that we are capable of performing at the same level as we did when we were younger. We hang onto the idea that we can ride for hours without fatigue or traverse difficult off-road obstacles with relative ease. We may also assume that we will be able to identify and react to threatening traffic situations as quickly and confidently as before.

While many people are able to keep their mental and physical faculties sharp over the span of many years, the fact remains that a certain level of mental and physical deterioration must be expected. It is important to understand this reality so that you can act to minimize the negative effects of aging as best you can.

You must also acknowledge that your limits are changing, which means that you need to adjust your expectations and fine-tune your riding strategies so that you don't get in over your head.

## All Downhill?

It's guaranteed that changes will happen to both the mind and body as we age. But not all people age the same. Some people experience more health issues and diminished capabilities than others. Also, psychological aging can be quite different than physical aging. A person with a positive attitude and an active lifestyle will experience aging very differently than one who dreads the aging process and succumbs to the idea that it's all downhill from here.

While many people slow down as they accept the inevitable decline, others make the effort to continue to enjoy their favorite activities as long as they possibly can. A few examples include a husband and wife I met recently who continue to put many miles on their sport bikes and the gentleman I rode with at a track day earlier this season who was ripping up the racetrack—in the fast group—aboard a vintage sportbike. Another example is a man named Don Adley, who continues to race alongside the 20-year-

## Rider Education Page:



Understanding and respecting how our minds and bodies change as we age can help prolong our enjoyment of motorcycling for a much longer period of time.

olds in the Loudon Road Racing Series. What's notable is that all of these folks are well into their 70s.

## Stages

In our teens and twenties, we experiment with our limits and the limits of the environment. Many young adults assume that they have a firm understanding of how the world works, which can lead to overconfidence and risky behavior. This high level of risk tolerance can cause some younger men and women to ride beyond the limits of what many consider reasonable.

Entering the 30s, most people settle down a bit. Many have a greater sense of their mortality and think twice about acting in a way that increases risk. Family and work responsibilities may also fuel this newfound respect for risk. Sportbike riders in their 30s may choose to abandon fast street riding for track days or trade their supersport bike for a sport tourer with milder manners. They may also avoid riding with groups of individuals who behave aggressively or recklessly.

Riders in their 40s tend to be much more aware of risk and carefully consider the balance of risk and reward. Family responsibilities further encourage a more mature approach toward motorcycling as children grow to become teenagers who need parents that model mature behavior.

The 50s bring the possibility of fulfilling dreams that were put off while work and family obligations took precedence. Money may finally be available to buy that dream motorcycle or go on that once-in-a-lifetime trip. However, some 50-year-olds report a noticeable decrease in endurance and depending on the individual, health issues may begin to become an issue.

Most people in their 60s are healthy and agile enough to continue riding as they did in their 50s, but health issues and lack of energy are more likely to get in the way of taking long trips. Also, slowed reactions and sluggish decision-making skills can make challenging situations more stressful.

The 70s are when many begin to feel significant effects of aging. Rides that used to be effortless become strenuous. Those who continue to take longer trips find that two or more days are needed to travel the same distance that used to take a single day. Also, recovery after a long ride might take much longer than in the past.

There are examples of 80 year olds who continue to ride, but most octogenarians are rarely seen on two wheels. Many even find it difficult to manage driving a four-wheeler as aging dulls the senses and inhibits reaction time. It's sad when we must finally admit that our riding days are over, but at least we will have fond memories of past rides to look back upon.

**Changes**

Brain function is an area where the effects of aging vary depending on the life-style and health of the individual. In most people brain cells decrease as we age, partly because of decreased blood flow. But, those who exercise slow this degradation. It's important to note that blood flow decreases more rapidly for people who are long-term smokers. Physical abilities, such as balance, flexibility and strength also diminish as we age and part of the reason for this is due to the slowing of nerve response and reflexes. Nerves are responsible for delivering information to our brain I or directly to the muscles via the spinal cord) to keep us in balance or to allow us to react to a hazard\_

Tissues in older adults contain less water and joints become less elastic, which leads to stiffness, less mobility and possibly arthritis. The discs between vertebrae in the spinal cord become less flexible and compressed, which can pinch nerves.

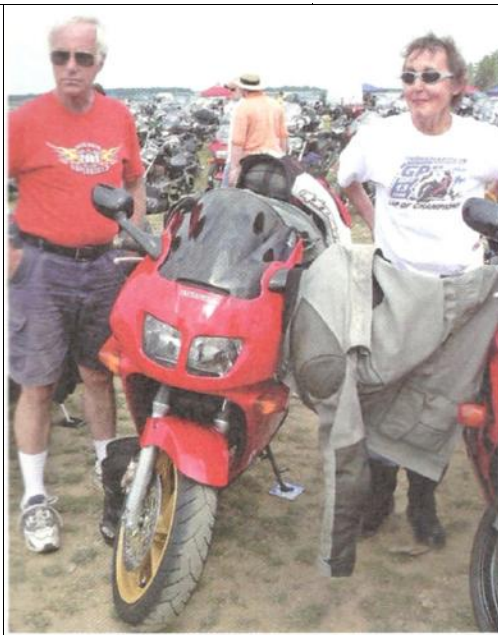
It's no secret that our senses also diminish over time including eyesight and hearing. While hearing is an important sense for identifying possible hazards, diminishing eyesight is of particular concern, because our eyes are the primary tool used for gathering information about how to manage challenging traffic situations and roadway features. Focusing between close and far away takes more time and nighttime vision becomes difficult, especially when adjusting to oncoming headlights and glare. As eyesight diminishes we need to adjust our expectations by slowing down, especially when visual information gathering becomes complex.

Emotional effects also occur as we age. Enthusiasm for riding may wane because of an increase in physical discomfort and anxiety about our well-being. Also, over time our relationship and attitude toward motorcycling changes. Adventures that once stimulated excitement now incite ambivalence or stress.

Some people reinvigorate their passion by finding new ways to experience motorcycling, such as being active in a local club or by attending rallies. If physical condition allows, some light duty off-road riding may be a solution to stimulate new excitement. Whatever activities you choose, be sure to take your health and abilities into account and get training when possible to avoid getting into situations that can lead to discouragement or injury.

**Roadwise Review™**

To help older people recognize areas where aging affects driving health, the American Automobile Association (AAA) offers an interactive computer program called Roadwise Review™.



This couple continues to enjoy riding to road racing events aboard their sporting machinery. Taking extra time, stopping more frequently to reduce fatigue and avoiding night riding allows them to ride long distances more safely.

This half-hour program is available as a purchased CD or for free online at [www.seniordrivers.org](http://www.seniordrivers.org). The program asks the participant to complete several drills that measure working memory, leg strength, head and neck flexibility, high and low contrast visual acuity, visual information processing speed, visual search abilities and the ability to visualize missing information.

My own results revealed no deficiencies. However, it did show that I wasn't exactly at the top of my class either. While my visual search time and ability to visualize missing information was very good, my visual information processing speed was only slightly above average.

The benefit of such a program is to learn what areas you may be deficient. This is the first step in improving your riding safety and confidence. How? By identifying weak areas, you can adjust your riding habits and risk management strategies so that you don't rely as heavily on your weak points to stay out of trouble. For instance, if endurance is an issue, plan to take shorter trips and include frequent rest breaks. If eyesight is a problem, see your optometrist and update your prescription and/or avoid nighttime riding. If reflexes and reaction time are your weaknesses, then allow more following distance. If information processing is slowed, then

avoid riding when traffic is heaviest and in areas with complex traffic patterns.

**Getting Hurt**

Older motorcycle riders tend to ride slower than when they were younger. A slower pace is a good thing for reducing stress and risk. In many cases our senses require a slower pace, otherwise we risk riding beyond our ability or skill level.

Reducing speed increases our safety margin, but unfortunately riding slower is not a guarantee that we won't become involved in a crash. Crashing can lead to significant injury no matter what our age, but a relatively minor incident can be catastrophic for an older person. Injuries that result in minimal damage to a youngster can become fatal to an aged body and it takes a fewer number of cumulative injuries to cause significant problems. A recent article in Science Daily reports that riders older than 40 have a one and a half to two times greater risk of dying from injuries than someone in their 20s or 30s. Even if injuries are not fatal, older people experience much longer hospital stays compared to a youngster suffering the same injuries. Even normal aging conditions can increase the risk of a severe injury: bones break and soft tissue tears more easily. Things get even more risky for older people who have preexisting medical conditions. Diabetes, heart conditions and other ailments complicate treatment.

The message is that we must be aware that we aren't able to tolerate

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injury the way we used to. and that the consequences of a seemingly simple misstep can add up to significant problems.

#### What to Do?

Earlier I mentioned Don who continues to roadrace into his seventies. What is his secret? A love of motorcycling, an active lifestyle and a high priority for staying fit allow Don to remain agile and strong. Surely he is blessed with a healthy constitution and a sturdy physique. but it is the effort he puts into keeping his faculties sharp that allow him to remain as active as he is.

Only about 10% of Americans exercise regularly and those over 50 are most likely to be sedentary. You don't need to sign up for a health club membership to get the exercise you need. Even simple activities, such as stretching, brisk walking, swimming, playing catch or riding a bicycle can help maintain muscle and nerve health and avoid issues with high blood pressure and heart disease. Exercise also preserves muscle mass and maintains response time. Yoga is excellent to improve balance. Refer to LT Snyder's article in the April 2010 issue of MCN for some ideas on fitness for motorcyclists.

Other actions that slow the effects of aging include getting 7 or 8 hours of sleep each night and keeping a close eye on weight gain. It may not seem like a big deal that you gain one or two pounds each year, but that really adds up over time so that in 10 or 20 years, you could find yourself 20 or 30 pounds heavier than you currently are. The problem is that extra weight puts a lot of strain on your heart and musculoskeletal system.

Smoking is a significant factor in both physical and mental decline as blood flow to the brain and extremities becomes more and more restricted. If you want to ride for a long time, quit smoking now! You should also avoid drinking more than two alcoholic drinks per day, which is shown to increase the rate of brain decline.

#### Mechanical Help

Our once agile bodies may find the cramped ergonomics of sport bikes or the reclined posture of a cruiser no longer acceptable. Bad backs, poor circulation and other weaknesses begin to dictate which motorcycle makes most sense.

Bar risers, lower footpegs and taller windscreens can improve the comfort of an existing machine. Some older riders choose to purchase a motorcycle that features creature comforts and a more neutral riding position. Others choose to trade their two wheeled machines for three-wheelers, such as a Can-Am Spy-der, a sidecar outfit or a three-wheeled conversion to minimize the risk associated with balancing a motorcycle. Whatever bike you end up with it is important that the motorcycle you ride is appropriate for your needs and abilities. While you may lust over the newest repli-racer, it may make more sense to opt for a less extreme machine, at least for your everyday riding.



When the physical demands of two wheelers eventually become too great, many older riders have extended their riding careers even further by switching to three-wheeled motorcycles.

#### The Good News



Fortunately, there are good aspects of aging. Over time we gain valuable wisdom, knowledge and expertise. Some things that seemed challenging become easier as we draw upon years of experience. Personally, I feel more in synch" with my riding than I ever have, which makes me appreciate the 40 years of riding experience that has gotten me where I am today.

My intent is not to scare you away from riding into old age. Rather, my intent is to spread awareness about the changing limits we all encounter as we age. Nobody wants to get old, but what's the alternative? Fortunately, through awareness and acceptance aging and motorcycling can co-exist. But, it is important that you monitor mental and physical changes that occur over time. We know that information processing and reaction time are two key skills that directly affect motorcycle safety. If you find yourself unable to stay sharp during a ride, then you must change your habits and expectations to match your abilities'

#### THE AUTHOR

Ken Condon is a current MSF RiderCoach, chief instructor for Tony's Track Days and author of *Riding in The Zone: Advanced Techniques for Skillful Motorcycling*, available through Whitehorse Press and from: [www.ridinginthezone.com](http://www.ridinginthezone.com)

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8	9	10	11	12 Ice Cream Run?	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Ice Cream Run?	20	21 Gordon Miner : Ride to White Face Mt. or Lake Placid
22	23	24	25	26 Chapter T Gathering at Vienna Hotel Dinner—6:00 pm Gathering - 7:00	27	28
29	30	31		<b>August 2010</b>		

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>September 2010</b>			1	2 Ice Cream Run?	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Ice Cream Run?	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 Ice Cream Run?	17	18 Corning Glass Works
19	20	21	22	23 Chapter T Gathering at Vienna Hotel Dinner—6:00 pm Gathering - 7:00	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Ice Cream Run?		



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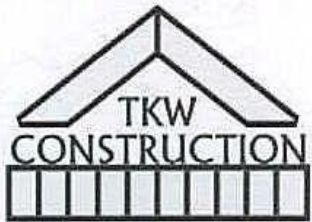
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