

Off to a Great Start

By Mark Caldwell

In the area of Rider Education, we really kicked off 2005 with a great start. Before we even had our first breakfast-business meeting, we held a Road Captain course on January 8. As I wrote in last month's newsletter this course is about safe riding in groups as well as specific issues for leaders of those groups to consider. We had 9 participants who had a great time together and enjoyed some wonderful food that our hosts Bob & Thess Thurgood set out for us. Each participant already had experience being the lead bike in a group ride and so we were able to share many bits of wisdom gained from putting the course training into real-life practice. Thankfully everyone made the wise choice to come in their 4-wheel vehicles since the roads were covered in snow and ice.

At our breakfast meeting in January, we awarded new Level 1 Rider patches to John and Barb Smith. Barb rides her own motorcycle as well as being a co-rider behind John at times, so she insisted that she wanted to do the Level qualifications on her own as a rider. Congratulations to you both! We also renewed five people at Level 3 who are well on their way toward attaining Level 4: Master Tour Rider. Congratulations go out to Jim & Karen Roberson and Bob & Patty Spencer for their continued commitment to safe riding and the Rider Education levels program. (For those of you counting, I was number five.) On top of that, we have several members who are already at Level 4 or above who continue to participate and be excellent examples for us all.

Also at the meeting, John Holter joined the Rider Education levels program at Level 1 and has already qualified for Level 2. Congratulations John! Several other members expressed their interest in starting their journey through the program, and I look forward to receiving their application forms at the next meeting. I will have extra forms for anyone who needs one.

Then after our normal business meeting, we had the treat of listening to our special guest speaker, David L. Hough (pronounced "huff"). David is the author of several articles and books on riding skills including *Proficient Motorcycling*, *More Proficient Motorcycling*, and *Street Strategies*. David did primarily a Q&A session for 90 minutes for our group, allowing everyone to get their questions answered. We had 37 members and visitors in attendance for this event and I received several comments and thanks from those present. David was kind enough to donate his time to talk with us and we asked him to bring some of his books for sale. I saw many members take advantage of the opportunity to purchase one or more of his books and get them autographed as well. The chapter purchased copies of *Proficient Motorcycling* and *Street Strategies* for the chapter Library. These can be borrowed by members of Chapter E by contacting the Educator.

Overall, I'd say that was a great start on our road of *Fun, Safety and Knowledge*. And remember that on Saturday, February 26, the Washington District Rider Safety Education Workshop will be held in Buckley. The pre-registration deadline is the day of our meeting, Saturday the 19th. We will have registration forms available. For those who attend, the chapter will reimburse you for the cost of the pre-registration fee. But you

must attend to receive reimbursement. David L. Hough will be speaking at the workshop along with several other speakers on a variety of subjects. Let's all attend, and make it a fun day. And let's make this our safest and most enjoyable year of riding!