



# Wing Words

*the rest of Colorado follows COL*



**FRIENDS FOR FUN, SAFETY, AND KNOWLEDGE**

**April 2012**

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**Member Contributors this Issue**

Fred & Linda Fisher, Directors  
 Bob King, Rider Educator  
 Mike Ackerman, Ride Leader Extraordinaire!

**Next Chapter Gathering**

**Monday, Apr 2, 2012 @ 7:00 p.m.**

**Folks start showing up at 6:45 p.m.**

Columbine Room, Clements Community Ctr  
 1580 Yarrow Street, Lakewood, Colorado

**Gathering Refreshments & Coffee**

Refreshments: **Steve & Tami Bender**  
 Coffee: Steve & Tami Bender

**Words for Gold Wings!**

*by Fred & Linda Fisher, Directors*

Greetings from your Directors!

It's been awhile since I've seen some of you. That could be because of a couple of things. One, Linda and I were missing from the last meeting due to a scheduled vacation in Arizona. Second, maybe *YOU* haven't been to a meeting in a while.



I can correct the first because we will be at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> gathering. Will You? If you attend on a regular basis, **THANK YOU!!!** We like seeing everyone there. If you are one we haven't seen in a while, please stop in and see us again. We miss you.

We hope that we make everyone feel welcome at our Chapter gatherings. If for some reason you do not feel welcome, or if there is anything else we can help you with, please let us know somehow. Our e-mail and phone number is listed in this newsletter so you can contact us.

This past weekend, Linda and I attended the Horizon Program. WOW! What an interesting class! Very informative and enjoyable. I learned a lot about GWRRA ideas and dealing with people, both inside and outside of the GWRRA family. I would highly recommend this program to everyone.

We have many events scheduled for the coming months. Two events coming soon are the Chapter A Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser and the Chapter L progressive brunch. More information on these events is on our web page and will be covered at the next gathering on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please support them if you can.

The Colorado chapters have been asked to handle the door prize area for the Region F Convention in St. George, Utah in May. If you are going to the Convention and would be available to work for an hour or two, please let me know so I can get you on the list. We would appreciate the help.

So, as the temperatures warm and the sun shines deeper into the evening, hang on to your helmet, we have riding to do. Chapter L has always been the "riding" chapter and I would expect nothing less this year.

Hope to see everyone at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> gathering, if not before.

*Until later.....Ride Safe.....Always.*

## Ideas About Pulling a Trailer

by Bob King, Rider Educator

Motorcycles by design are unable to carry copious amounts of luggage or cargo. Sidecars increase loading capacity and distribution of weight, but there is nothing better than a well manufactured trailer to alternatively load a motorcycle. The main problem with loading the back-seat of a motorcycle is improper weight distribution, wear and tear, and handling problems. With proper technique, design, and loading a trailer can be added to most motorcycles.



A quick perusal through most owner's manuals will provide the famous words "Vehicle not manufactured for use with a sidecar or trailer" and "use of a sidecar or trailer can or will void warranty". Obviously the addition of any accessory to a motorcycle must use caution; the manufacturers place these warnings for reasons. The selection of a trailer would be an entire article by itself, what we will deal with here is the operation and techniques of trailering.

The hitch on the motorcycle should be sturdy (connected at least to four points on the bike). Hitches should not be connected to moving suspension components, swing-arms, shock-absorbers, or drive shafts for the obvious reasons. There should be no movement in the hitch. Hitch height should be at hub-level of the rear wheel. The distance between the rear wheel and the hitch should allow the rear wheel to move up and down unimpeded, but it should not be an excessive distance from the hub. The best designs of trailers use the largest tire height possible and high speed bearings in the wheels.

Trailers come in all shapes and sizes. A trailer should contain the following design features: A hitch assembly rated at a significant value higher than the gross vehicle weight of the trailer (total weight of the trailer). The trailer should have an axle width to tongue length of about 1 to 3. A significantly shorter trailer tongue will not track behind the motorcycle correctly, and a significantly longer trailer tongue will create cornering problems. There should be enough overhang to the rear of the trailer of the cargo area to allow proper loading. However, it should not be so great of an overhang as to possibly drag the curb when leaving your favorite gas-stop.

A trailer is an alternative method of loading gear. A motorcycle has particular design characteristics that are being modified to allow the operator to carry more gear. As the operator you will have to decide how much is enough? A trailer is not a "blank check" to bring everything.

Some simple rules for loading trailers is to take everything you would put on or in the bike and put it in the trailer instead. This is true alternative loading. Of course, if you look down at the wide open maw of the emptiness of the trailer and start filling, remember, the trailer total weight should be distributed over the axles so that the tongue weight is about 10 to 20 percent of the total weight of the trailer. Figure the total allowance of weight for the bike by looking in your owner's manual. Add all the gear weight on the bike including passengers and riders. Don't forget to add the tongue weight of the trailer. If you are in the positive and not overweight you're doing good. If the amounts are over, start shedding gear. Motorcycles are very finicky on how much weight they are moving.



Remember, all of the weight (trailer, motorcycle, and rider) is still going to be stopped by those same brakes, and accelerated by the same drive train. Depending on the weight of the trailer you choose to tow, all of the components on the motorcycle are going to wear a lot faster. Brakes and tires may be the most effected component on the motorcycle. Proper loading is going to be the

most important part of trailering because it's going to affect every other part of the handling of the motorcycle.

When starting out and stopping a trailer you want to be as straight as possible. The degree of difference at the hitch between the trailer and motorcycle is going to create side forces on the motorcycle as it begins to move. The resistance to moving of the trailer will pull the bike over in the direction the trailer is. For example, if the motorcyclist stops with the trailer "kicked out" to the right the motorcycle will be pulled to the right as it begins to move forward. With the motorcycle and trailer in line the resistance will not affect balance. If the hitch is too high, and is mounted significantly over the level of the hub a lever of force will be created when starting out, lightening the front wheel of the motorcycle. The resistance of the trailer creates this effect and steering wobble is usually the result. The effect of the trailer on the bike can be very slight or so severe a hazardous riding condition will result. No matter how well the trailer or bike is setup and designed the trailer will have some of these effects.

When stopping a motorcycle-trailer combination allow increased room to stop. Only experience will show how much, but the increased weight of the bike and trailer being stopped will require more brake effort over longer distances. When stopping, the bike should be kept as upright and straight

as possible. The surge of the trailer forward as the bike stops should be directed as straight as possible through the bike. If the bike is leaned over and turning during braking, the surge will have a tendency to push the bike over in the opposite direction or push the rear wheel to the side. This effect can be minimal or severe depending on the amount of braking and the weight of the trailer.

If the hitch is set up wrong another problem can occur. On hitches that are above the rear hub of the motorcycle when braking, the weight shift normal to stopping lightens the rear wheel. This effect will be exaggerated even more by a high hitch. Some trailer manufacturers attempt to engineer methods that lessen or do away with this effect by the way their trailers are made.

Another frightening effect can be the front wheel lightening on braking. Excessively heavy trailers on low slung hitches can lighten the front wheel and create a wobble when slowing. A simplification of the problem would be a five hundred pound trailer with fifty to sixty pounds of tongue weight. Most of the weight of the trailer during braking is being transmitted to the hitch. Depending on the degree of difference between the hitch and hub, that weight can transmit in a downward direction on the hitch and increase tongue weight significantly. The effect would be similar to a five hundred pound giant standing on your hitch while you try to balance and stop.



Depending on the weight and design of a trailer in slow speed turns, it will tend to pull the bike aside in the direction of the turn. This effect will be dependent on the weight of the trailer and the resistance to rolling. In high-speed highway turns the trailer can track on the outside of the turn pulling the bike upright. This effect is usually minimal but can drastically effect the operation of the motorcycle if the trailer is overloaded.

As part of your pre-ride inspection of your bike include the trailer and inspect every item just like you do on your bike. Include the hitch assembly. Depending on the type of hitch, check for obvious problems and wear. Try and insure proper lubrication of the hitch and the fit to the bike.



Safety chains should be included on all trailers. We all have heard the excuses for improper safety chains. Some riders state they would rather have the trailer "break away" in case of accident or massive failure. Some riders think that safety chains are not required on motorcycles. Most states require safety chains or cables. If the trailer "breaks away," where is it going to go and who is it going to hurt? Ultimately, the rider is responsible for any damage his vehicle or trailer causes.

Safety chains should come in pairs and be attached to the frame of the trailer and motorcycle. Some states allow appropriate cables to substitute for chains, but check with your local police for verification. Chains or cables should not drag the ground and should cradle the tongue if the hitch fails. Insure that the chains or cables are long enough to allow the bike to turn.

### **Vintage Moto Motorcycle Museum Tour!**

*by Mike Ackerman*

At the March Chapter L gathering we discussed taking a tour of the Vintage Moto Motorcycle Museum in Denver. The date for this exciting tour has been changed to **Saturday, May 12, 2012**. **Please mark your calendars accordingly!**

If we have at least 10 visitors, the cost will be just \$5.00 each. Signup sheets will be at the April and May Chapter L gatherings.

**Birthdays and Anniversaries****Happy April Birthday to:**

Steve Randolph (Apr 4)  
 Ralph Spencer (Apr 14)  
 Dan Kirk (Apr 19)  
 Judy Williams (Apr 25)

**Happy April Anniversary to:**

Rick & Joyce Elmore (Apr 2)

**Thanks for Your Support!**

*by The Colorado District Staff*



The Colorado District Spaghetti Dinner held on Saturday, March 10, was a great success! We had almost 100 guests from Colorado Chapters, and Wyoming. Dinner included spaghetti, salad, bread, drinks, and dessert. Everyone filled up on food and we had a great time visiting. We held a special 50/50 for which all money was given out to the members present. All proceeds will go to support the District's Couple of the Year and Individual of the Year Program. A special thanks to ALL those who came out and supported this very worthwhile cause!

**March's Mystery Dinner Ride**

*by Ralph and Debbi Strauss*

The Strauss' organized March's mystery ride and we ended up at Bova's Italian Restaurant. We had 14 people attend and fun was had by all, of course food was involved. Everyone (that was not present) will be glad to learn that Tammy Bender did not pull the "red" chip out of the bag. Thanks to those who attended....

**2012 District Convention in Grand Junction!**

Don't forget! The 2012 Colorado District Convention will be in Grand Junction on Aug 16-18, at the Clarion Hotel, 755 Horizon Dr. Call 970-243-6790 for hotel reservations. Be sure to ask for the GWRRA rate of \$89.

Our theme this year is the "Two Rivers Rendezvous." Grand Junction gets its name because it sets at the confluence of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers. In the 1800s, trappers, frontiersmen, and Indians would "rendezvous" in this area to trade their furs and goods.

Outside Grand Junction is the beautiful Grand Mesa area. At 10,000', Grand Mesa, the largest flat-top mountain in the world, rises more than a mile above the valley floor. On a day ride, you can discover aspen and spruce groves, flowered meadows and over 200 cool clear lakes. We plan to have a guided ride to this mesa during our convention.

Those who register for the Convention AND reserve a room at the Clarion BEFORE Memorial Day 2012 will be put into a drawing and you could win one night's lodging! Submit your registration to Mike Ackerman and make your hotel reservation soon!



**Future Events****April 2011**Mon, 2<sup>nd</sup>

Chapter L Gathering, 7:00 p.m., Clements Community Center

**Refreshments – Steve & Tami Bender**Wed, 18<sup>th</sup>Chapter L Dinner Ride, 6:30 p.m. – **Al & Jeanine Plumhoff**

Various

Other GWRRA Gatherings. Please refer to your 2011 Ride Guide

**May 2012**Mon, 7<sup>th</sup>

Chapter L Gathering, 7:00 p.m., Clements Community Center

**Refreshments – Randall & Janet Drake**Wed, 16<sup>th</sup>Chapter L Dinner Ride, 6:30 p.m. – **UP FOR GRABS!**

Various

Other GWRRA Gatherings. Please refer to your 2011 Ride Guide



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