DRUID DRIBBLE

INTRODUCTION: As discussed at the SociaFl on 11Apr26, I am going to start a column called “Druid Dribble”. It will appear as a MS Word document attached to the Calientegram and will probably come out every other week. So, what is driving this? I am one of the older riders here and the spouse and I are definitely the only original Chapter Members who have stayed true to Caliente from day 1 for the entire 19 years our Chapter has been in existence. Call this my way of giving back to the Chapter as we have made a number of lifelong friends here and enjoy the camaraderie this Chapter provides. My experience here is that if one gives a little to the Chapter, they get a whole heck of a lot more out of it. Giving credit where it is due though, we wouldn’t be as effective as a Chapter without the support of Caliente’s owner, Fred Bosshardt and our Chapter Liaison, Rick Hudson. Most other Chapters out there don’t have anywhere near this level of support.

My riding experience started off with a 3.5 hp chain driven minibike with a centrifugal clutch that I bought with my paper route money back in the late 1960s. Been riding ever since. So, I have “been around” and have ridden in (eastern) Canada and all the “Lower 48” states plus Hawaii. Am I an expert, no. However, over time, I have seen and have experienced a lot on 2 wheels and as of 2019, sometimes 3 wheels. It is from this school of hard knocks (the good, the bad, the ugly) that I offer up my lessons learned. The content will be factual, always opinionated, and at times humorous.

So, what is this column? Bottom line, this column is an open forum. I will hit on safety, best riding practices, loading a bike, passenger responsibilities, hair loss, (well perhaps not hair loss) and whatever MC related topic that is pertinent to our Chapter members. Having been in a few Leadership positions in this Chapter and other MC clubs I have ridden with, I have been asked questions from other riders be they new to motorcycling or perhaps new to a group riding scenario. There are no dumb questions and what others may take for granted, others may not understand what is going on and may feel hesitant to ask. I have always provided an honest, and when asked, a confidential answer. In this vein, if you have a question, shoot it to me and I will gladly answer it or as a courtesy to you, I will find the right individual to cross that “T” or dot that “i". Regards and safe riding to all – F2

Edition 1 Volume 1 – Topic: SRC

I will start this inaugural column with the topic being about our Sweep Road Captain position. A question that folks have asked me a number of times and most recently only a few months back went something like this. “Why does the Lead Road Captain (LRC) brief

for everyone to stay close yet looking back, here is the Sweep Road Captain (SRC) lollygagging behind the group and seemingly willy nilly moving around"?

Well, it may appear that they are being inattentive but there are several reasons for why they ride in this manner. So, in no particular order…

1st , other than hand and arm signals and ESP, there are no formal (verbal) communications between the LRC and the SRC. We have discussed over the years procuring some sort of electronic communication means but it is expensive and most of us (like you) ride our bikes to get away from computers, cell phones, nagging bosses, and other life distractors. Plus, there is no "one size fits all" system that meets everyone's expectations. So, we do it the tried and old-fashioned way.

2nd , hanging back…, this allows the SRC to see potential issues that might impact the ride. The LRC may be too close to the traffic in front of themselves and thus may not be aware of what (potential issues) lies right in front of the group. For example, the LRC may be behind an 18-wheeler and can't see around it. The SWC may recognize a potential issue up ahead and move over one lane to capture it so when the LRC realizes that they have a problem, an escape has already been set in place.

3rd. , the SRC will periodically move one lane to the left (traffic depending – of note: everyone else needs to stay where they are in the "stack"). This will allow the LRC to see the SRC in their left mirror and it tells the LRC that the group still has all its members. You will normally notice this after coming out of a town, a series of traffic lights and/or stop signs, or after a turn or even after a long period of normal riding. Additionally, on a multi lane road, this also tells the LRC that they have a safe option to move over one lane if they see fit as the SRC has effectively "captured the lane" as alluded to above. Of note: The LRC may or may not move the group over one lane. Totally their call.

4th , during the safety brief, you will be asked to turn off your driving lights leaving on only your headlight. Most of our RCs ride trikes or baggers. These have driving lights and the RC team will keep these on to help mitigate risk for the group. Additionally, the LRC will have an easier time picking out the SRC from all others in a group if they see the multiple light set up in their mirror. Help us help you by turning off your extra lights.

5th , despite everything one tries to do, a bike can break down. The SRC needs to be able to have time and room to block traffic so the broken bike can safely maneuver off of the road. The SRC will then stop and render whatever assistance is needed to the stranded rider. Sometimes, if nothing more than to have someone to share a water bottle with and talk to as one awaits a tow. Safety in numbers is also a key point here. One person by themselves

on a lonely stretch of road with a $20,000+ motorcycle can become a target… Two folks there, “trouble” will tend to cower back into the darkness.

6th , if you have severe allergies such as more than swearing and saying “ouch” to a bee sting, you will probably be carrying an EPI pen type of device. I have seen a rider get stung by a bee and by the time they were able to safely pull off the road, they barely got the bike on the side stand before collapsing to the ground. Thankfully their spouse was behind them and was able to administer the shot. Scary stuff seeing someone convulsing on the ground. If you are one of those who carry an EPI pen, let the SRC know, show them where you store it and instruct them on how to administer it to you. Don’t be vain (no one will think any less of you) as time comes into play here. For some, this is a life saving measure. Don’t gamble.

7th , unfortunately, some MC accidents take down more than one rider. A bike and a car meets, a rider loses their situational awareness and a guard rail comes into play, a vehicle suddenly pulls out or suddenly changes lanes or an animal or child runs into the street and an emergency maneuver is called for but the rider loses control…whatever - and the bike may have a mind of its own spinning all over the lane(s) taking down other riders. Bikes can also come to a sudden stop and bounce / get pushed into other lanes. Spacing and riding staggered are mitigation of risk measures we use to help address these issues but sometimes that is not enough. A chain reaction occurs and … well, you can imagine. The SRC, by staying a tad further back, can safely avoid this type of accident as they have more time and space to maneuver and come to a safe stop. So instead of becoming part of the accident and thus part of the problem, they are now in a position to take control of the situation to block follow on traffic, render F/A, call 911, secure the accident scene, and a host of other things we as RCs are prepared to do in case of an emergency.

Epilog / Closing thoughts…as you can see, a SRC is more than just someone riding in the back. Above, I tried to cover some (but not all) the major muscle movements of what the SRC is responsible for. We strive to get experienced riders to become RCs as when things really go “south”, having an experienced, levelheaded individual will hopefully make you more comfortable on the ride knowing you have someone covering your “6”.