



THE X FILES

Corner Office

by Gail Nuñez

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From the

It seems west was the way to travel this year. David and I just returned from a two-week bike trip through New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado. Utah was our primary destination, but getting there was just as nice. Jerry & Glenna Lindner and Drew & Lisa Gros took similar trips earlier this year—in July. I'll bet we had the better weather guys!



Since Drew shared such amazing pictures in last month's newsletter, we will refrain from sharing the same pictures. Rather, most of our pictures were from the co-riders view ... the back seat, that is. I spent a lot of time with my camera on David's right shoulder, snapping away and enjoying the roads from his point of view. I have to admit, it was pretty fun. Oftentimes I found myself mentally setting up for the curves, slightly shifting my weight from left to right as "we" maneuvered through them.

Now Kurt ... Drew, before you go there—no, I do not want my own bike.—at least not at this point in time. Who knows what the future holds.

Now of all the steep, curvy, poorly maintained, busy roads I've been on, nothing makes me more nervous than riding on a wet road. Such was the case on our very first day. We left home at 6:00 a.m. It was still dark out. By the time we reached Giddings, it was still dark from all the rain clouds and had started to sprinkle on us. We decided to wait it out a bit, so we stopped for breakfast. David was bummed to have to delay our journey so soon, but the excellent breakfast made up for it some.

Since it looked like the rain was going to hang around awhile and it wasn't too bad, we decided to push on. We went in and out of rain—David getting his first practical use of the weather feature on his new GPS.

Continued on Page 4

www.txx2.org

Upcoming Meetings

October 21—Chapter/Planning



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Unless otherwise noted, all X2 rides leave from the Shell station at the corner of Highway 290 and Hwy 6 North. Departure times vary, so please check the X2 calendar at www.TXX2.org for individual ride details.



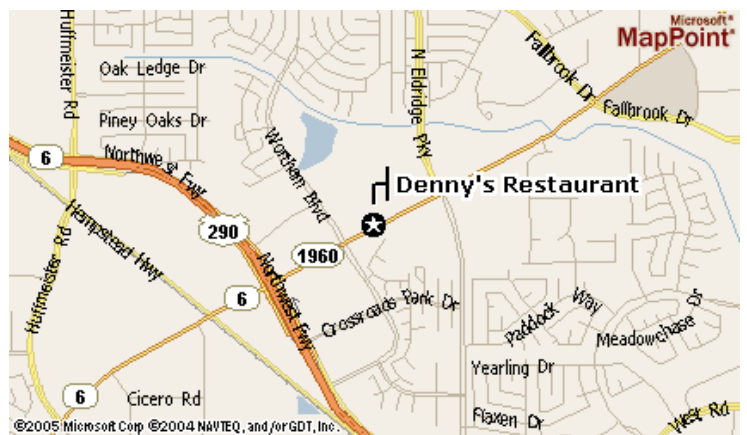
X2 MEETING DETAILS:

2nd Thursday - 7:30 PM
Chapter Mtg

4th Thursday - 7:00 PM
Staff & Planning Mtg
(Only if scheduled on calendar)

Location:

Denny's Restaurant
13031 FM 1960 West
(281) 897-8050





R.E.A.D.

Rest, Eat And Drive!



Countersteering

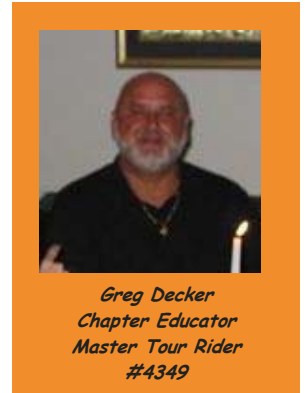
by Greg Decker

We realize this article has been run before, but we have so many new members in X2, we thought it would be beneficial to run it again. This article, originally by Mark Yager, an instructor at the Canada Safety Council is the best I've seen on this topic...

Steering a motorcycle is fairly straightforward, right? It may seem that way, but as you turn for a corner there are a lot more things happening than you probably realize. Being able to turn your bike aggressively and avoid running into that car that just pulled out in front of you largely depends on what you know about these mysterious forces. Read on...

Physics 101

Above a speed of about 15-20 mph, your motorcycle's wheels act like gyroscopes. These spinning masses of wheel and tire combine to create a gyroscopic force -- if you've ever held a spinning bicycle wheel in your hand and felt how difficult it is to "steer" it, you'll understand. So how do we overcome this force to get our bike to turn?



*Greg Decker
Chapter Educator
Master Tour Rider
#4349*

We don't Use the Force...

If you've ever played with a gyroscope, you'll remember that pushing forward on the left end of the axle didn't result in the wheel turning to the right. Instead, thanks to a force called gyroscopic precession which redirects the force 90 degrees in the direction of rotation, the wheel actually leaned to the left, rotating on an axis around the center of the wheel. Your motorcycle works the same way. By turning the handlebars to the right, you are effectively inputting the same force we used in our example. Trying to push the spinning wheel to the right causes the wheel, and the rest of the bike attached to it, to lean to the left. This is called counter-steering. Turn the bars right, and you lean left. It is the only way a motorcycle steers at any speed above walking speeds. Those of you saying "No way, dude, I never do it that way," are wrong. And this is why so many motorcyclists actually steer into an accident -- they try and turn right to avoid an incident by turning the front wheel to point to the right. This, in turn, steers them left, straight into the accident. So whether you realize it or not, you are doing "it," better known as counter-steering.

When the bike is at a desired lean angle, ease up on the bars, and the bike will remain there assuming the tire profiles aren't working against the bike and trying to stand it up. If you let up on the throttle, the bike will turn in, and conversely, adding throttle will make the bike run wider. To straighten the bike back up, add a smooth combination of throttle and reverse steering input. If you are in a left hand turn, turn the bars farther to the left, and the bike will stand up.

Some people ask how hard to push. Please understand that this is not a sharp jab at the bar. It is a smooth, steady pressure with the key word being smooth. The higher the speed at which the bike is traveling, the more gyroscopic effect there is, therefore you will need to push harder. This is why road racers work on upper body strength so much.

Why Counter-Steering?

Again, we cannot stress this point enough: Imagine yourself cruising down the highway on a beautiful spring day. Suddenly you see (insert your worst nightmare here) in the road, covering the right two-thirds of your lane. If you do not consciously understand and use counter-steering, you will probably push on the right bar in an attempt to steer left like you would on a slow moving bicycle or in a car where you steer left to go left. Pushing on the right will steer you directly into the object. The correct action here would be to push on the left bar and steer away from the obstacle. So remember: "Push left, turn left. Push right, turn right." Repeat this to yourself over and over while you ride. Once you get the hang of it, counter-steering will become instinctive -- your body probably knows how to do it, it's just your mind that is lagging. Understanding the principles behind counter-steering will make you smoother and give you a better feeling of control over your environment. It may also save your life. Like any safety technique, it only works if you practice it. Unless the action is second nature, you will return to your old habits during an emergency. So, practice, practice, practice.

While making our way through Austin—still in the rain—we must have hit a slick spot because the bike and trailer started to fishtail a bit. Needless to say, this freaked me out, but I sat stone still while David handled the bike. Then it happened again! Now we ridden in the rain quite a bit, but this is the first time I've ever had this happen when I'm on the bike. I'm thinking, "Great—we're going to have an accident on our first day!" But David rode through the fishtail again, seemingly with little effort. Seemingly.... turns out it affected him enough too that he decided to pull over and check his tires and the rest of the bike. We joke now that he needed a bathroom break....

Everything was okay with the bike, so we pressed on, David going even slower than before and choosing some less traveled roads as we picked our way around the threatening the clouds. He did a great job navigating us around the rain and the rest of the day was without incident. The rain did slow us down, of course, so we didn't make it as far the first day as we had hoped. We decided to stop in a little town called Lamesa. We stayed at a new Best Western there that was very nice. After a soak in the hot tub, we went next door to this shack of a restaurant (no kidding, it was a shack) and had some of the best pork ribs ever.

Day two and we're making our way through New Mexico. Stopped in Los Lunas for the night. On day three we're headed for Flagstaff, where we'll stay at one of David's favorite hotel chains—Little America. If you've not stayed at a Little America before, you should try one. There are not many and they are located at truck stops, but the rooms are huge and very nicely appointed. Rates are cheap and they have good restaurants, fuel and all the tools you might possibly need (and soft serve ice cream!). I tell you what though, that stretch of I-40 running from New Mexico to Arizona is a highway I hope to never be on again—at least not on a bike.

The winds were ferocious! We were both worn out by the time we reached Flagstaff. It always amazes me how quickly the earth changes from one mile to the next. One minute we're in the desert of New Mexico—and the next we're in a lush, wooded national park at Flagstaff. Whew! Much better.



The rain found us again outside of Cloudcroft, NM.



Day four we hit the south rim of the Grand Canyon. We got there Sunday night right at dark. Fortunately, it was still just light enough that David was able to see the elk waiting to cross the highway. The doe (is that what you call a female elk?) changed her mind at the last minute and turned away from the road. Thank goodness! It was pretty dark by the time we reached the hotel lobby and got checked in. We were pooped, but not too pooped to notice just how many stars we could see in the sky. Wow!

It's Monday morning, Labor Day, but the crowds are thinning substantially. We are both amazed at the canyon, just like everyone said we would be. But I'm also amazed at the south rim operations. You talk about well run and organized. They make it so easy for you to enjoy the canyon. On day five we checked out of our lodge then went to enjoy the canyon. We took the buses around from overlook to overlook (because it decided to drizzle all morning). By lunchtime we had taken probably a hundred pictures and stopped at many of the overlooks. We had lunch at one of the delis then mounted up and headed on down the road. We made a quick stop at an overlook at the east end of the canyon, but only got a couple of pictures as the storm came moving across the canyon at a very rapid pace. We don't want to get caught in that!

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Road to Sedona



Yet another beautiful stretch of road.



Lots of roundabouts in the Sedona area.

We have nice ride through Page and on into Kanab, Utah, which will be our hub for the next four days. While in Kanab, we toured Zion, Bryce and the North Rim. We also toured an amazing animal rescue facility called Best Friends Sanctuary. What an operation. They have helped rescue pets from all over the world. It's amazing what they've built in the short time they've been in operation. We were both very impressed.

We left Kanab on day nine of our trip and headed to Page, where we stopped and took a tour of the Hayden Dam. It is second in size only to the Hoover Dam—which is a mere 17' higher. Then we rode on to our next destination—Mesa Verde, where we stayed at the Far View Lodge for two nights.

First let me say that I was very disappointed in the Far View Lodge. At \$150/night, I expected more ... a LOT more. We would have had a far view if it weren't for the building in front of us. There is no TV or cell phone reception at the Lodge, but that was okay. We found things to do.... Our Kiva room (upgraded room), just meant it had upgraded furniture (too big for the room) and air conditioning. Good thing, because I couldn't get the windows open. The shower was so small I was banging my elbows on the walls. I can only imagine how David felt in it. But hey, there was Starbucks coffee in the room. That's worth \$150/night ... right? Ha!

But okay, enough complaining. It was wonderful to be right there where it all happens. The next morning we had breakfast, rode all the way back down the mountain to get gas, road all the way back up the mountain and then took the bus tour to the cliff dwellings. Whew! I tell you what ... I'll never complain again about the cable being out (well, maybe). We should be ashamed of ourselves for complaining about anything compared to the way the early Puebloans lived. That's another article in and of itself. Mesa Verde is one of those places everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime.

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Landmark entrance to Mesa Verde.



It's a *long* 15 miles in on a road like this!



Kiva room—used for rituals & gatherings. Would have had a roof on it with the only entrance via ladder through opening in the center of the roof.





Entrance road to North Rim.

So by now we are both a little road weary, but on day 11 we're headed into Colorado—David's favorite state. We stopped in Pagosa Springs, had breakfast and walked around a bit, but decided not to stay the night as we had originally planned. (Sorry, honey.) We keep riding on and decide to make our way to Taos for

the night. As we near the town square of Taos, the traffic gets heavier, but we work through it and make it to our hotel. Again, we're pooped, so we hit the hot tub, grab some dinner and hit the sack.



C'mon Lisa, let's go take a picture. (North Rim)



How about out here, Lisa? (North Rim)

The next morning we decide to ride the loop that takes us through Red River and Angel Fire. Now Red River is one of my favorite places. There is something about it that just draws me in. It's so beautiful and peaceful. I could live there. We took a nice long break and David humored me by walking up and down the streets, in and out of the little shops. I almost tried to talk him into staying there for a night. We're looking at going back there this year over the Christmas holidays.

But alas, it's time to move on again. We make our way back down the mountain and stop at the town square in Taos to have lunch and check out a few of the shops. It seems hotter today than any other day of our trip. We hit the road again, down the highway, through Santa

Fe and on to Santa Rosa for the night. We're on the home stretch.

We're up early the next day and on the road again. Next stop—Lubbock. It was a long but uneventful day. Up again early the next morning and on the road again, and then home again, home again jiggedy jig!

We got back home two days earlier than planned, and I think it was a good thing. We needed the time to rest before heading back to work.



Lodge at the North Rim. Very cool place—great views and outdoor viewing patios. Serene....

We traveled just under 4,000 in 14 days and would do it again in a heartbeat—but let's go east next time!

More photos on Pages 11-13.



All the North Rim paths are like this. Don't look down!

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The other day, a co-worker and I were reminiscing about how different things were when we were growing up compared to today. We both agreed that life was probably better and definitely simpler. So, it got me thinking about how things have changed for us who ride two wheelers.

The first bike I rode on a regular basis was my father's Honda 90 Trail Bike. It was easy to ride as it had no clutch and 4 speeds with a high/low ratio that really gave you 8 gears to play with. It was great! In first gear with the low ratio I swear you could almost climb a tree. I was not allowed to ride on the street (I was only 14 after all and did not have a license) but in Southeast Houston you could almost get anywhere back then by running along a bayou. I still remember bounding down primitive dirt paths along the mostly dry Sims Bayou with my best friend hanging on for dear life. What makes this scene amusing is the fact that the bike may have weighed 250 pound full of gas with me driving (about 140lbs, yeah I know, you can't believe I was every that skinny) and my friend who was probably around 6'-1" and close to 200 lbs hanging off of the back. My father always wondered why he had to straighten the back axle so many times. I didn't have the courage to tell him that the suspension just did not cut it when we went sailing over bumps at 40 mph. It's funny that I thought nothing of two guys on a little wimpy bike flying down the right-of-way. Today, two guys on any bike is considered unusual.



My first real motorcycle (one that was mine) was a 500cc Kawasaki Mach III. A small bike by today's standards but this was a full size bike for the day and a real powerhouse. Imagine, 60 hp on a bike that weighed around 400 lbs. In a straight line, the bike was unbeatable! Of course going into a curve was a much different story. The danged thing handled like it was hinged in the middle. But, I felt like I could go anywhere on this steed. I even took a trip to Colorado (alone) one summer and thought nothing of riding a bike of this size cross country. But, back then, folks in small towns just weren't as acclimated to bikes as they are now. Most people I met were indifferent at best but I did run across a few that were almost hostile. As a matter of fact, one place in New Mexico would not even sell me gas!

During the 70's when I did most of my early motorcycle traveling it was usually an adventure just to make it from point A to point B. It got so bad that if a car didn't run me off the road at least once during the trip, I felt like something was wrong. The non-motorcycling public just did not have the awareness that we have today. I had people look right at me and not see me. Also, the stigma of "bikers" was much different back then. Most people thought that anyone who rode a motorcycle must belong to a gang or was up to trouble. Heck, I even had one girl's parents refuse to let her go out with me because I rode a bike.

Another big difference was accessories, or I should say lack of accessories. Places like Texas Cycle Chrome were non-existent and big suppliers like Kuryakyn were not even dreamed of yet. There was one pioneer that started the whole touring accessory trend and that was Craig Vetter. Some of you may remember the Vetter fairing that pretty much started the whole frame mounted fairing saga. But, even Vetter was limited as to applications.

So, several times, we had to improvise. I remember making frame mounting brackets for at least 3 bikes as Vetter just did not supply them. Vetter's fairings would fit a Triumph or Norton or BMW but they just did not have any mounting brackets. Of course nowadays, if you need some type of mount, bracket or accessory for virtually any type of motorcycle, there are at least a half dozen manufacturers to choose from.

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Of course the most significant difference between back then and now has to be the size of the motorcycles. My second bike was one of the early model Honda 750 Fours. This bike was "huge"!! It was heavy, big and had this ungodly big 750cc engine with over "67 horsepower". Of course compared to today's goliath bikes, the Honda was merely a baby. While we once considered a 750cc bike the king of the road and thought nothing of traveling two up anywhere we wanted to go, today is a much different story.

Let's consider our current standard of touring bikes. The Gold Wing is 1800 cc with well over 100 hp and is almost 400 lbs heavier than the 750. Today we almost consider the GL1800 to be the minimum size bike that we would tour cross county. I have even seen comments on several forums that hope the replacement for the GL1800 has even a bigger engine. Heck, there are even some bikes out there that have a 2300 cc engine.

To pack stuff on my 750 for a weeklong trip I filled an old army duffel bag as full as I could get it and strap it somehow on the luggage rack. On the Gold Wing we have three weatherproof fiberglass locking enclosures to maybe get us by for a long weekend. For a week we have trailers or special racks that mount to the trailer hitch and even then it is sometimes a tight fit for all our luggage.



My protective gear in the 70's was a $\frac{3}{4}$ face helmet that probably gave a little more protective than today's bicycle helmets. For the body, it was jeans, tennis shoes and, if we felt like it, some sun tan lotion that would not even register on the SPF scale of today. Gloves and long sleeves were for when it was cold.

For entertainment in the 70's we either hummed, day dreamed or yelled at our passenger hoping every third word would be understood. Now, we have onboard stereo, XM radio, CD's and MP3s. If you want to communicate you just speak and miraculously the passenger hears you without shouting. Heck, you can even talk to other bikes without using sign language.

To find our way to the next destination in the 70's you had a map (if you were lucky). For those of you who may not know what these are, they are colorful pieces of paper that show roads and towns of a given area. They originally come to you folded in a nice small size but were never to be folded that way again. If you were really organized, you would jot down notes on 3 X 5 cards and keep them handy for reference. Today we have GPS! This modern miracle of devices can pinpoint our location to within 15 ft and guide you across our great nation without so much a looking at a map (when used properly of course). There are even some of these devices that have weather radar and the ability to warn of traffic problems. How did we ever find our way before the GPS??

In a way, I miss the simpler times of the 70's. Life was not as fast paced, we seemed to have more time to enjoy the great outdoors and we tended to make do with what we had and thought nothing of it. But, that does not mean I want to go back. While life today is more stress and time is more valuable, if I was still in the 70's I would be missing the friends I have made, the lovely wife I have married and the adventures yet to experience. Sometimes the 70's are referred to as the "good old days" but I tend to think the real good old days are yet to come.

GOLD WING MAINTENANCE/ACCESSORIES INSTALLED

1. Accessories Installed - examples:
 - a. Tires mounted/balanced
 - b. Wheels chromed
 - c. GPS mounted/wired
 - d. Digital voltmeters installed
 - e. Extra lighting
 - f. Satellite Radio installed
 - g. Switches installed
 - h. **Install Taper Bearings/Steering Stem/GL 1800**
(Front end wobble cured)

2. Maintenance performed - including but not limited to:
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Here are some other pictures I thought you'd enjoy. We took over 1,300 photos, so it was really hard to narrow it down to these few! I am working on getting most of our photos out on the Internet somewhere. I'll let you know when they're out there!



Look at me with my little bitty camera trying to capture all this!



At the highest elevation of our trip—10,500 ft. Brrr! It got chilly! Then it started to drizzle.



Hiking through Zion National Park.



Riding in to Zion National Park.



Bryce Canyon National Park.

Not near as deep as the Grand Canyon, but it seems just as vast.

At both Bryce and Zion, we felt like we'd been dropped into an old west movie set. We were told the bottom of Zion is the top of the Grand Canyon.



Talk about spreading yourself thin ... you try being in four places at one time!

Four Corners



An amazing place. Also the largest employer in Kanab. They employ over 400 people. That's probably about 25% of the population!



This scene just cracked me up. During our tour, it was explained to us that the color of the dog's collar had a specific meaning:

- Green—You were friendly and ready for adoption.
- Blue—You were approachable but still needed work before adoption.
- Red—You had anger management issues and couldn't be adopted.

Yep—that's a Chihuahua!



South Rim



North Rim



Baby dinosaur in Zion.

Looks like he's breathing fire, doesn't it?

Also saw a huge tarantula.

Hayden Dam at Lake Powell.

We took a tour down to the inside of the dam. Very interesting.

Boating on Lake Powell would be an interesting vacation as well.





Bryce Canyon. Of course, pictures don't do it justice.



Yucca blooming everywhere! Near Texas/New Mexico border.



The natural hot springs in Pagosa Springs, Colorado



Somewhere in eastern New Mexico.



Good road! On highway between South Rim and Kanab.



Zion National Park road.



OCTOBER

«	October 2010						»
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
September 26	27	28	29	30	October 01	02	
03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
9:00 A Bastrop Park picnic ride				11:21 A Oklahoma District Rally	11:21 A Oklahoma District Rally	11:21 A Oklahoma District Rally	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
9:00 A Chappel Hill Scarecrow festival!				11:00 A AR Ride	11:00 A AR Ride	8:08 A Education Weekend	
				7:30 P Chapter Meeting RESCHEDULED	7:00 P Girls dinner night out at Mia Bella	11:00 A AR Ride	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
8:08 A Education Weekend				7:30 P Monthly Chapter Meeting		7:00 A Cushing Ride	
11:00 A AR Ride							
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
					7:00 P Last Concert Cafe		
31	November 01	02	03	04	05	06	

BIRTHDAYS

10/01—Jeannette Jackson
 10/06—Ann Perrin
 10/06—Mark Livingston
 10/07—Don White
 10/13—Fran Rigell
 10/27—Tory Rhoden
 10/28—Drew Gros
 10/29—Steve Mueller



ANNIVERSARIES

10/01—Gerard & Marian Doyle
 10/12—Mark & Toi Livingston
 10/14—Don & DJ White





NOVEMBER

«	November 2010						»
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
October 31	November 01	02	03	04	05	06	
07	08	09	10	11 7:30 P Monthly Chapter Meeting	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29	30	December 01	02	03	04	

BIRTHDAYS

11/19—Catherine Danna
 11/22—Ken Jackson
 11/29—Bill Elliott



ANNIVERSARIES

11/10—Jim & Fran Rigell
 11/24—Buck & Camille Huddle



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