



ROAR

Official Publication
of Top Cats — Illinois

President's Corner...

Greetings Top Cats.

These are the tough months to get through. The weather of course keeps the machines in the garage (for most of us anyway). We do have a great winter event planned for March (Tommy Guns Dinner Theatre-see article in this edition of ROAR) April will be here before we know it, but February and March can be long and dreadful. Of course we have our annual banquet and the Motorcycle Show in Rosemont.

Behind the scenes a lot of planning has started for our 2008 season. Several of our Road Captains are already putting routes together. We also have a good start getting people on board to help with the Charity Ride.

We had many new ride destinations and even rode in places besides southern Wisconsin during 2008. But the most important accomplishment was that we did this with no one getting seriously injured. For a club that participated in over 30 rides,

in many far reaching places, that says a lot about how we ride together as a group.

It is appropriate to once again thank the 2007 board, the committees, and all of you who contributed to what turned out to be a fantastic year. This Board made several positive impacts on the club. The two biggest being the new web site and the electronic ROAR. They were fiscally responsible and took the use of your dues very seriously. Our Road Captains are world class and thanks to them. There was

Notice:

Items for ROAR need to be submitted by the 11th of the month to be included in the next ROAR issue.

John LaMonica

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THE BIKERS WHO MEAN BUSINESS

TOP CATS—Illinois is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts with similar interests. Members consist of responsible Leaders, Presidents, Chairmen, Owners, Proprietors, Partners, principals, CEO's, and other 'Top Cats' of large, medium and small organizations, institutions, and companies. The content and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Top Cats—Illinois.

ELECTED OFFICERS

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Founder	Carl 'Virgo' Bender 1941-2001

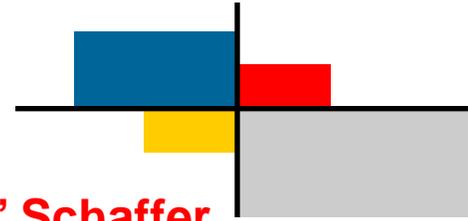
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SAFETY...

Kaution Korner by Don 'Numbers Man' Schaffer



As I was driving home from the annual Road Captain meeting, the actions of a car in front of me got me thinking about how much harder it is to maintain a proper following distance than we think it is. You are probably thinking, "What is he talking about". We learn in GRASS, MSF classes and through reminding each other regularly that there is a two second rule. And we know it should be more in adverse conditions. Yes, two seconds to the front and one second to the oblique has been and is a good rule of thumb. Let's talk about when it doesn't work and why we often don't understand it.

We think that the reason for the two second rule is that two seconds is enough time to bring our motorcycles to a stop, and since the faster we go, the further apart the two second rule places us, it must be OK. Here's the fallacy. I'll try to keep the math simple to illustrate the problem. I'll use 60 miles per hour as a cruising speed since that is a common speed used in braking tests. At 60mph a vehicle is traveling 88 feet per second. If you take a look at the motorcycle mags you see bikes stopping in 140 to 160 feet, perhaps a bit longer for bikes the size and weight of our cruisers. "No Problem", you think. Two seconds leaves us a 176 foot gap.

Your comparison puts you close, but no cigar. The test distances for stopping are, 1)

On a track where the rider knows in advance he will be making an emergency stop, 2) performed under ideal conditions, and 3) accomplished by an expert track rider whose full time job is testing the damned things. Do you ride with the brakes covered at all times? Are you warned in advance that you are approaching a spot at which you will have to give it all the brake you have? Are you on a road without bumps, curves, potholes and tar snakes? And frankly, could you really stop in 140 feet, even on a crotch rocket with huge brakes, even if we let you practice a couple of times?

If you answered "No" to most or all of the above, you are both honest and intelligent. When you add in the extra second it takes to react and cover the brakes, and the difference in conditions and skill levels, we are more likely to require 250 to 400 feet to complete a surprise emergency stop from 60 mph. So where do we get the extra hundred plus feet, since we are taught to follow only 176 feet behind. We count on the space vacated by the vehicle in front of us since it cannot stop on a dime either. In theory, that would double the available stopping distance.

This takes me back to my observation after the RC meeting. I was driving behind a full size SUV, maintaining a two second interval in my auto when I realized that the SUV was tailgating

less than one second behind another SUV. If the lead vehicle made a sudden stop or was, perhaps, hit by someone turning in front of them, the car ahead of me would stop by using his front bumper as a crash brake in a much shorter distance than expected. That would use up my cushion and I would likely join the party.

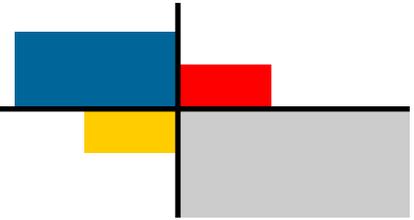
There are other situations in which you have to realize that you must look far further down the road or make far faster decisions than would be dictated by the two second rule. When approaching an intersection you need to decide four seconds in advance whether the car coming the other way is likely to turn in front of you. Cut that down to three seconds by covering your brake to cut down the reaction time. Is that pedestrian or those children beside the road likely to step out in front of you? Cover the brake and move to the opposite side of the road to give yourself more time to stop. Look for escape routes at all times in case that car beside you decides to join you in your lane.

Use common sense to maintain a proper cushion when following. Don't drop too far behind the other vehicles, since that carries its own dangers and if on a group ride makes the other riders uncomfortable, but leaving a little extra room for safety can be a life saver for you and your fellow riders.

Hoosier Run

May 30, 31 and June 1, 2008

May



The Top Cats are heading to Indiana!

South Central Indiana offers endless winding country roads, quaint small towns, and some of the countries best State Parks.

The December issue of American Iron magazine described a scenic route called the Hoosier Gem. This all day route starts in Perrysville (near the Hotel) and takes a big loop through Nashville in the Heart of Brown County. Along the way we will go through many small country towns and hopefully cross some covered bridges. Total miles for Saturday will be around 280. The entire weekend will be around 700 miles. While there remains much planning for the trip, now is the time to book not only your rooms but a vacation day for that Friday.

The Top Cats have a block of 20 rooms at a rate of \$69.99 per night. You need to book two nights, May 30th and 31st . Call 217-443-8004 to book. Its first come first serve so don't be left out. The rooms will be held until 4/20/08. Make sure you mention the Top Cats.





SAFETY GRAM 0108

Your Safety Committee has determined that it is safer, and in the best interest of all of our members, to refine and improve our riding procedures for the 2008 riding season. Please read and abide by the following group riding refinements.

1. New Procedure for Road Captains. While leading a group ride, avoid making right turns on red even though legal to do so. The reasoning is, with a large group, you create the opportunity to have your group split. At the Road Captain's discretion, maintaining your position at a right turn with a red light until it turns green, will preserve your group integrity.

2. New Procedure for Riders. Our procedure for closing the gap in a staggered formation when the rider in front of you drops out has changed. Riders will not move ahead in their track while underway, when a rider in front of them drops out. Maintain your position in the group until the group comes to the next stop which is typically a stop light or stop sign. At that stop, pull ahead in your track and resume normal group staggered – formation spacing.



For clarification on the above, please contact any member of your Safety Committee.

President's Corner Continued

From page 1

hardly a weekend during the season that if you wanted to ride there wasn't an opportunity.

This year we have many new faces on the board. Over the next two months they will be looking at how we function, where weaknesses may be, and then determining what to

address. Your inputs are vital to this activity. If you have suggestions that you would like considered, make certain you bring them up to a board member. After all, it is your club.

It would also be helpful to me if I could get some feedback on what other types of things we should be doing at our monthly

meetings. Perhaps you know someone with an interesting motorcycle topic that could be a guest speaker. In any case, we get through the basics pretty quick these days and until the ride season gets started there is not as much to cover.

Gary

Criteria for Leading a Ride and Earning a Road Captain Rocker



- R Be a member in good standing for one (1) year.
- R Attend a GRASS class
- R Attend the Road Captain Class on how to plan and execute a ride
- R Take the initiative to plan and execute a successful ride.
- R Select and engage the assistance of a Senior Road Captain.
- R During the planning process, where feasible, pre-ride the route with assistants and tail gunner until all are familiar with the route.
- R Successfully conduct the pre-ride safety meeting, including:
 - Route briefing
 - Safety
 - Special considerations and instructions
 - Hand signal review (as necessary)
 - Expected weather
 - Group riding reminders
 - Guest reminders
- R Successfully lead the ride.
- R Have a Senior Road Captain attend your ride to evaluate, critique the ride.
- R Be recommended as a Road Captain to the Safety Committee by a Senior Road Captain.

Annual Criteria for Retaining Road Captain Status

- R Remain an active member in good standing.
- R Attend a GRASS class and Road Captain class each year.

Criteria for Earning Senior Road Captain Status



- R Be a Road Captain in good standing.
- R Be formally nominated by an existing Senior Road Captain in time for the annual Senior Road Captain review meeting.
- R Superior riding knowledge (rules of the road, protocol and traditions)
- R Superior ability and willingness to mentor new riders.
- R Superior riding skills and experience
- R Superior leadership and judgment.
- R Superior road captain planning and execution abilities.
- R Exceptional top cat contributions, knowledge and experience that goes above and beyond normal expectations.
- R Additionally, other motorcycling commitments, motorcycling community recognition, activities, and contributions.
- R Attain a two-thirds majority of all voting members in attendance at the annual Seniors' review meeting.

Annual Criteria for Retaining Senior Road Captain Status

- R Remain an active member in good standing.
- R Teach a GRASS class or Road Captain Course each year.
- R Mentor a road captain or a road captain candidate each year or,
- R Lead a Top Cats ride.
- R Continuously set the example of a skilled, safe rider.
- R Present a Safety Tip at a general meeting each year.
- R Write a Kaution Korner for ROAR each year.
- R Attend one of the following every three years:
 - Experienced Riders' Course

General Meeting Minutes...

January 8, 2008

Gary Brandt called the meeting to order at 8:14 instead of 7:30 due to a small conflict with our meeting space. No new guests were introduced.

The December issue of ROAR was the first club newsletter issued electronically. Since last week, the Roar is downloadable from our club website. Only 6 member emails had issues receiving the ROAR but we're working on resolving that. Printed ROARs were available at the meeting. Much thanks to John LaMonica for his help and Mark Heller for the newsletter layout.

Gary introduced the new Top Cats board and directors. Each position has duties and assignments for their term in 2008. Gary Brandt, president and Bob Carmody, vice president chair the monthly general and board meetings. Mike Bradbury, secretary is responsible for the meeting minutes. Tom Malia, treasurer records and monitors the club finances. Chuck Prettyman, past presidents director.

Wayne Kirkpatrick was introduced as the new director for safety. He will be in charge of our G.R.A.S.S. and our safety program, Greg Smith as director in charge of activities including the club hotline and e-mails. Eileen Perry will serve as director for membership, and Andy Koneswicz as director for the Top Cats website. Ric Case is committee head of G.R.A.S.S. and Don Shaffer as committee head of Road Captains. Tom Nichols was announced as the charity committee head and John Lunde as the safety committee head along with Brian Rainey as the membership committee head and webmaster. New black with gold patches and rockers showing club positions were handed out where needed.

Bob Carmody introduced and welcomed our newest member, Carrie Baab who was presented with a flag,

patch and pin.

Greg Smith announced a winter activity planned for March 16th to have dinner and show at Tommy Guns Garage in Chicago. Tommy Guns is an interactive dinner theater experience. Tickets are \$55 each (\$50 each if we have 20 or more). You can meet to leave together in Palatine at 3:45 or later there. Details to follow by email. More information about Tommy Club's Garage is available on the website at <http://www.tommygunsgarage.com>.

The new rides list for 2008 is available at the meeting. A lot of dates for rides are still open. Approx. 8 rides are currently on the list. Now is the time to think of rides to do for 2008. If you have any ride ideas, see a road captain or director and put it together.

There are 2 overnight rides are already on the calendar. The Hoosier Run Ride is an overnight ride for May 30th – June 1st. Gary Brandt will lead a group to Danville, Illinois the first night. Saturday is an all day ride of about 280 miles through Brown County, Indiana with a mid-day stop in Nashville, IN. The ride home is on Sunday. Brochures with information showing the lodgings were handed out at the meeting. A block of rooms are available for reserving now. See the handouts or our web site for more information.

Little Sturgis on The River is another overnight ride for June 12th – 14th. This is a revisit of last year's ride to the motorcycle rally in Daventryport, Iowa. A block of rooms are available at the Radisson Hotel, located on the river, near the rally. Book your room now.

Top Cats t-shirts are available to buy for \$12. They are black with the Top Cats name and logo in white. 24 were purchased but if interest is there, we could get more.

All usual sizes were available at the meeting. It's good to show our club affiliation by displaying our club name and logo. The club flags, patches and clothing help people know who we are.

The Top Cats Awards Banquet will be on February 10th at the Seville, 700 North Barrington Road, in Streamwood. Dinner is \$25 per person with a cash bar. The cash bar is 5:00 – 6:00 with family style dinner to follow. Contact John Lunde if you have any awards ideas for the dinner.

Ric Case announced that February 24th is our first G.R.A.S.S. class.

The annual Road Captain Meeting is January 13th. The senior road captains meet at 8:30, the road captains at 9:30 to be followed by the Road Captain section of G.R.A.S.S. It's a good time for road captains to start thinking about creating new rides. It only takes a day to put together a plan, a day to do a pre-ride, and a day to lead the ride.

Wayne Kirkpatrick gave the Safety Tip. Now is the time of year to check your gear when you ride. Make sure to dress warmly. Dress like it is 20 degrees colder than it actually is. Focusing on the cold when riding can make you unsafe, so prepare accordingly.

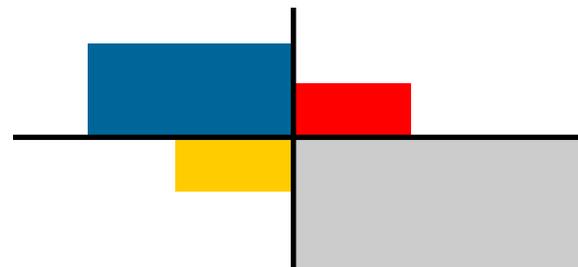
Bob Carmody advised on 2008 membership dues collections that 34 dues have been collected before the meeting, 12 during the meeting and 43 are left to go.

Gary opened the meeting for any member comments before closing. None were recorded.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10.

Submitted by Mike Bradbury.

2008 Road Captains



Your Safety Committee is pleased to announce, and congratulate, our riders who have met all of the requirements to qualify or re-qualified as Road Captains for the 2008 riding season. Please take the opportunity to congratulate the following Road Captains.

SENIOR ROAD CAPTAINS

Bard Boand
Gary Brandt
Ric Case
Jim Heniff
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Terry Kumro
John Lunde
Tom Malia
Chuck Prettyman
Don Schaffer
Sandy Vernon

ROAD CAPTAINS

Mike Bradbury
George Cumpata
Dennis Dougherty
Mark Heller
Andy Konsewicz
Stefan Levy
Carl Marcyan
Tom Nichols
Bill Ryan
Larry Scalzitti
Greg Smith

Contact any Senior Road Captain or Road Captain for ride assistance or for information on becoming a Road Captain.



Kick Off Ride, April 24, 2007

**Wisdom from the
Ole' Saddle Sage
As told to Chuck Prettyman**

“People are like Motorcycles:
each is customized a bit
differently”.

Top Cat's T Shirts Available

Identity is important to any organization, but in the Motorcycle world it's a major part of the culture. Aside from flying your Top Cat flag you can also have a shirt that proclaims your membership. These are being sold for \$12.00. If you are interested, please contact Greg Smith to place orders. You can email Greg at gregsmith@kw.com. We also have a few assorted sizes on hand. You can see them at our club meeting..



New Glarus, June 2007

The TopCats gang takes on Tommy Gun's Garage

(A Roaring 20's Audience Interactive Dinner Show)

Location: Chicago's south side

Date: March 16th, 2008

Da meeting times and locations for TopCats:

3:45pm @ 800 E. Northwest Hwy, (Harris Bank Build.) Palatine

If you's wants to carpool and caravan down wit da Gang.

5:00pm @ 2114 S. Wabash, Chicago - I

f you're meetin' da gang at Tommy Gun's Garage

(FREE PARKIN' NEXT DOOR TO TOMMY GUN'S GARAGE)

You's have a choice of one of five entrees.

1. Baked Lasagna
2. Boneless Breast of Chicken
(wit Marsala Wine Sauce)
3. Prime Rib
4. Broiled Pork Chop
5. Orange Roughy

Dinner choice must be made at da time of Ticket purchase, deadline is Feb 12, 08.

(All checks are to be made out to TOPCATS and delivered to you's Activities Committee—Muriel (Carmella) Brandt, aka Trixie / Greg (Guido) Smith)

Da Investment for da evening is \$55.00 per person - Ticket Deadline, Feb.12

Tommy Gun's will give a \$5.00 discount per person if our group is 20 or more, which will be credited back that night.

Oh, by da way ... we's strongly suggest you's don't refuse dis activity!!!

PS. Bring check (payable to Topcats) and Dinner selection to Feb general meeting or Mail to:

Muriel Brandt – Activities
327 Larkspur Lane
Round Lake, IL. 60073

Tanks for you's attention,
Da Activities Committee, Carmella / Guido



2007 Big Cat Ride above, 2007 Door County Ride below





2007 Wheels N' Water Ride above, 2007 Hogs N' Dogs Ride below



Top Cats ROAR Forum

By Bob Carmody

I've been playing with this article idea for awhile. Let me know what you think about it.

Top Cats members are about 100 strong. We currently own at least 120 bikes. We probably covered more than 200,000 miles last year. We collectively have spent more than a million dollars acquiring our bikes and I'll bet that we've spent no less than another half million on accessories, upgrades and replacement parts.

We've also collectively spent a huge sum on riding clothes and personal items that make our riding moments more comfortable, safer, dryer and belonging to our own unique selves.

I'll also bet that we've spent a great deal of time and money on flat out mistakes. We've bought the wax that dulled the chrome, the jacket that was a better sieve than the one you use to drain pasta. The new tires were too hard and slipped everywhere, the pipes never really fit and the exhaust system backfired more often than our favorite campfire scene in Blazing Saddles.

Nevertheless, I have no idea about what you did. What's a club for if not sharing good ideas and bad experiences? I'm planning a regular monthly article in ROAR that reports on that which we've purchased that made us happy and what made

us not so happy. I'll also use the article to ask you questions about the things that you'd like to know about from other club members.

Let's start this way. **Smartest and Dumbest.** What's the smartest/best acquisition that you've ever made as relates to your motorcycles? What's the dumbest thing that you've spent your hard earned money on that relates to us? And, what would you like to know about from other TOP CATS?

If you'll send me your thoughts and ideas, I'll save them, organize them, and report back on them every month. If you don't mind having our folks contact you about your experience, say so or say no. Just send me a note / email / phone message / smoke signal, and I'll get this underway. With the new internet ROAR, I suspect that being able to search our archives in the future will help all of us as we each think about the next best thing to strap on our bikes. Let's have some fun!

Contact me at bcarmody@email.com, or 312-498-1354, or give me a note at the next meeting.

Bob Carmody

Orange County Chopper's Fire Bike and Mikey's Blues Bike



ROARin With Laughter!



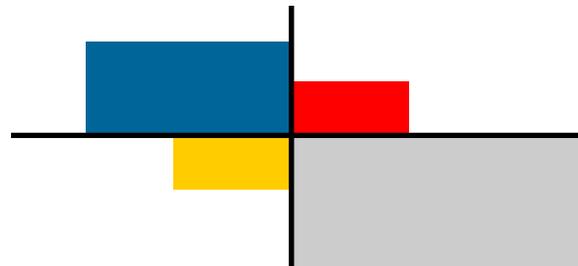
Actually, I really should have a first aid kit with me but because of space limitations I only have room for this blue tissue paper and this picture of Road Captain Mark Heller. Wow...he's hot!

Orange County Chopper's Black Widow Bike and Lucy's Bike



Activities

Calendar



Date	Ride/Event	Location	Destination	Time	Leader
Tuesday, February 05, 2008	General Meeting	Village Tavern and Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Friday, February 08, 2008	Motorcycle Show-3 days	Rosemont Convention Ctr	Rosemont	n/a	n/a
Sunday, February 10, 2008	Annual Banquet	Seville	Streamwood	5:00pm	J. Lunde
Tuesday, February 19, 2008	Board Meeting (note date)	Mexican Lindo	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Tuesday, March 04, 2008	General Meeting	Village Tavern and Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Tuesday, March 11, 2008	Board Meeting	Mexican Lindo	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Sunday, March 16, 2008	Tommy Guns Dinner Show	800 E. Northwest Hwy, Palatine	Chicago	3:45pm	G. Smith
Tuesday, April 01, 2008	General Meeting	Village Tavern and Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Tuesday, April 08, 2008	Board Meeting	Mexican Lindo	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Sunday, April 13, 2008	Kickoff Ride	TB D	TB D	TB D	A. Konsewicz
Tuesday, May 06, 2008	General Meeting	Village Tavern and Grill	Buffalo Grove	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Tuesday, May 13, 2008	Board Meeting	Mexican Lindo	Lake Zurich	7:30pm	G. Brandt
Sunday, May 25, 2008	K-3 River Ride	TB D	TB D	TB D	B. Rainey
Friday, May 30, 2008	Hoosier Run	Rt14 & Rt176, McDonalds	Indiana	8:30am	G. Brandt

2008 Rides you can book rooms for now

Date	Event	Hotel	# Nights	Number
Friday, May 30, 2008	Hoosier Run	Comfort Inn	2	217-443-8004
Friday, June 13, 2008	Little Sturgis	Radisson-Davenport	2	563-322-2200
Wednesday, July 30, 2008	Route to Sturgis	Holiday Inn-Makato Mn	1	507-345-1234
Thursday, July 31, 2008	Route to Sturgis	Kelly Inn-Pierre SD	1	605 224-4140
Friday, August 01, 2008	Sturgis	Alex Johnson	multiple	1-800-888-ALEX

Remember to mention that you are with the Top Cats