

I should have said something...

Have you ever had the feeling you should have said something? And maybe, if you had, maybe things would have been different? Happened to me recently, doing the Half-Fast 500 part of the Cascade Classic.

Man, was I excited. I had been looking forward to this ride for quite some time. Didn't seem terribly challenging; I'd done 500 miles in one day many times before. But never 'for time'. I had thought it had to be done in 12 hours, but it was really 15 hours. No problem, I thought. Still, being diabetic, I knew I would want to check my blood glucose level frequently, and I didn't want to slow others down.

Ron Matthews, Russ McPeak and Bill Landon were all signed up to do it. Jeff Darr heard about it, and thought it would be cool. But, like me, he didn't want to slow anyone else down. We discussed it at the July Ice Cream Social, and decided to do it together.

Day of the ride (August 2nd), we all gathered at Everett. Turns out Roy McTaggard, and Doug Duree (& Terry) were also doing it. Then Jim & Carol show up. And we found another new friend, Forrest, at the starting line. Chapter E has a huge contingent. And it sounds like we're all interested in the same route, so why not ride together? (That might have been one of our first mistakes, trying to do 500 miles with 10+ bikes.)

Some of us had not had breakfast, so we discussed stopping in Sultan at a Burger King for fast food. Oops. Not very fast. Took much longer than anyone would have wanted. And it wasn't very good food, either!

Coming out of Sultan, going to Leavenworth, the leader turned it up a little. We had agreed via CB that 5-10 over was OK. But, through the curves on Hwy 2, we might have been doing 15-20 over. I was 'Charlie', and the tail end needs to catch up like a centipede or a slinky sometimes, going faster than the lead in catching up. Man, we were *flying* through that area! Passing cars in corners, hugging both the yellow and white lines, leap-frogging when we got split up, I mean to tell you we were pretty close to racing.

And that's when I should have said something.

As a chapter, and an overall organization, we want to promote safe and sane riding, riding well within the safety margins of every rider, working together so that we all have a good time. Somehow, we had gotten into a 'group think' mode that it was ok to be zooming through the area like that. I remember many, many times where we adjusted our pace to fit a new rider, or one uncomfortable with whatever pace we were doing. All they ever had to do was say something. And, during that ride, right then, I should have said something.

But I waited until gas stop in Leavenworth. There, Jeff Darr told me he was going on by himself, that he was disappointed in the experience, thinking we as a group promoted different values.

And he was right. We as a chapter DO promote different values. It was proved by how we handled the rest of the day.

The leader was very open to suggestions. He brought the pace down several notches. It was almost too sedate at times. (Oh well!) Our new guest rider, Forrest, took off on his own pace a time or two, with us catching up at gas stops. I don't think anyone was disappointed in the pace the rest of the day! And we made it within 12 hours, too, despite numerous long stops.

Please, if we're out on a group ride, and things get too hot for you, remember my mistake, and say something at the time. I'm 100% positive that everyone in the group (even the hottest hot rods among us) will respect the thoughts of anyone else, and back-off to whatever pace works for everyone.

We're a close group of friends in the Lake Washington Gold. Please learn from my lesson, and remember to say what you think. We'll all benefit.

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