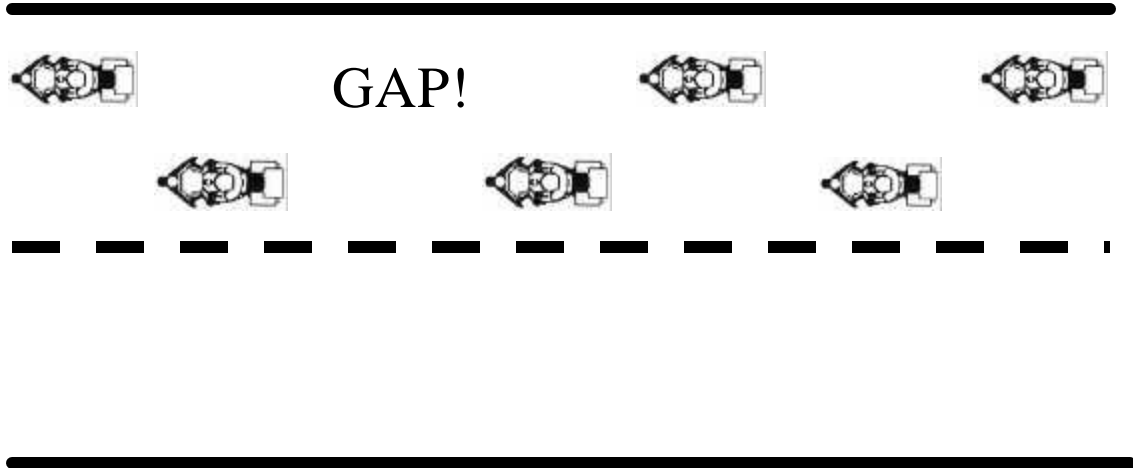


## The Crossover ...it's not about talkin' to the spirit world!

Mike "Spanky" Sanford

If you've been riding with us these past two months, you've heard a lot more about something called the "crossover", but you still may not quite understand what it's all about. So to help clear things up, I'm going to spend the next several hundred words trying to explain this whole crossover deal and get everyone up to speed.

As you may recall from last month's safety article, our chapter rides in a stagger formation, which places each motorcycle two seconds behind the bike directly ahead and one second behind the bike diagonally across our lane of travel. Sometimes gaps develop in our formation and we use something called the "crossover" to safely realign the formation and remove these gaps. Just so we're all on the same page, a "gap" is that zone of the formation where only two bikes are on one side of the lane, as seen in this diagram.

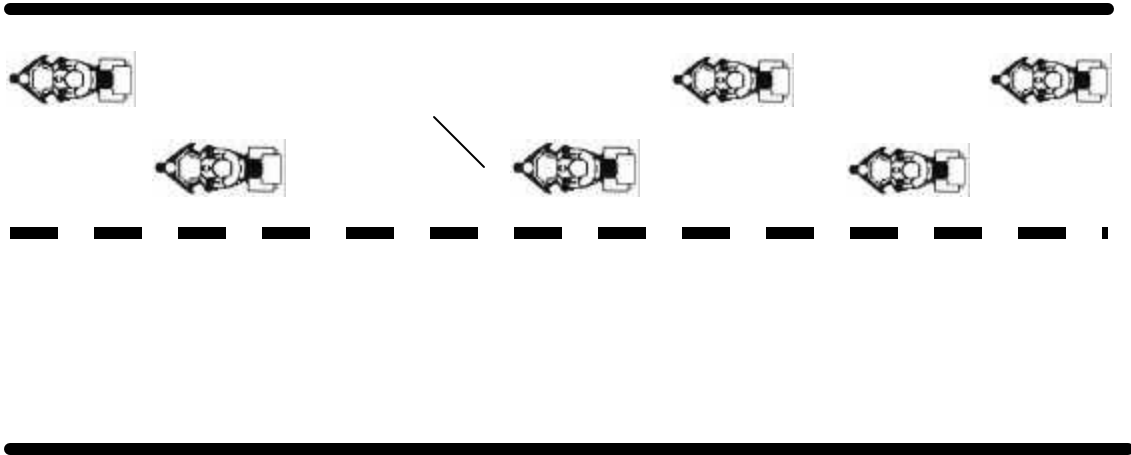


During our chapter rides, a formation gap usually develops in one of two ways. In the first scenario, when we leave Jim's H-D or a gas/rest stop, not everyone departs in left/right sequence and a gap appears as the bikes close up the formation. In the second scenario, a gap occurs when a bike has to leave the formation while we're rolling down the road. In either case, the crossover maneuver is the method we use to realign the formation and eliminate the gap. So let's discuss why we use the crossover and why it's important for you to clearly understand how it works.

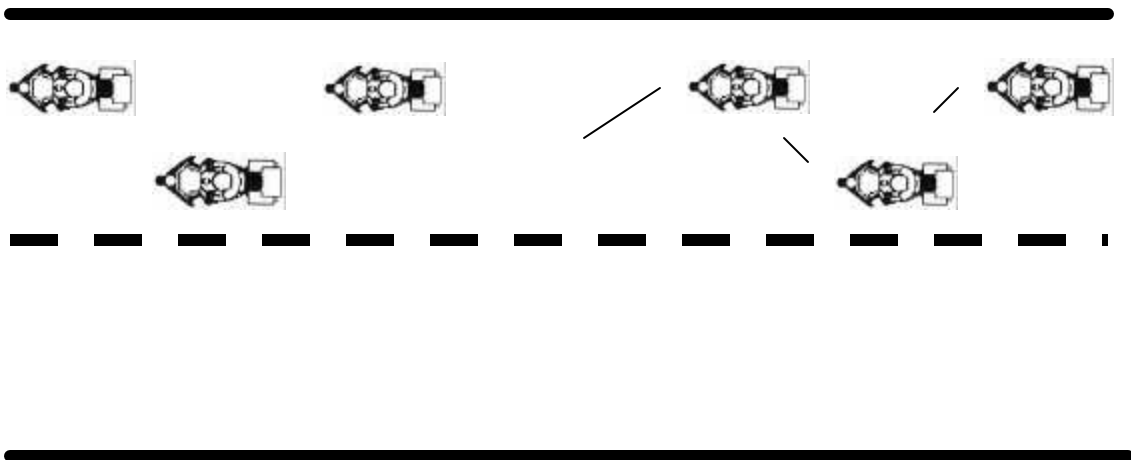
First, our chapter follows the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and Harley's Rider's Edge group riding guidelines, which both recommend the use of the crossover maneuver as the proper way to realign a formation. Second, in the state of Florida, it is illegal to pass another vehicle in the same lane, therefore we cannot use the pass-through technique many of you may have used in the past. Finally, understanding how the crossover procedure really works eliminates much of the apprehension felt by experienced and novice riders alike, and helps insure everyone in the formation knows what to do and how

to do it! So without further ado, let's get to the meat and describe how to use the crossover technique.

Basically, the crossover is a three-step process. First, insure there is ample safety distance between you and the bikes ahead. Second, do a mirror/head check to insure there is enough safety distance between you and the bikes immediately behind you. Third, slowly crossover to the opposite side of the lane, insuring you maintain proper safety distances between the bikes ahead and behind your machine. There! You've just performed a crossover maneuver!



Each bike behind you, in turn, will do the same three-step process until the gap is safely removed from the formation.



Whenever a formation gap develops, the riders behind that gap should anticipate the use of the crossover and maintain proper safety distances to allow a successful crossover maneuver. As with any maneuver executed while riding your bike, never perform a crossover if you feel it would increase the risk to yourself or your fellow riders and

always do a head check before initiating any maneuver. Please remember that, first and foremost, YOU are responsible for your own safety.

Hopefully my article has cleared up any questions or misconceptions you may have about the crossover maneuver and why we use it. But if not, please don't hesitate to contact me, your chapter staff, or another Road Captain for more information. Thanks for your attention and, until next time, ride safe!