

# **Riding Within Your Ability and Limits**

**By Jim Roberson**

Not too long ago there was a segment on KOMO-TV news about a sport bike colliding with a skateboarder on Alki Avenue in West Seattle. It occurred at night and the newscast did not have a whole lot of available information at the time but it points out a few things we all need to think about when we are riding.

First at night you have to be more vigilant because you cannot see as far and the peripheral vision is significantly lowered because of the light situation. Secondly you have to be more aware of those things that can present harm to you when riding in traffic on city streets. The skateboarder is just one example. You have probably seen them doing their thing on the sidewalks and streets. They are concentrating on not falling down and probably not paying a whole lot of attention to the traffic situation. There are also car doors opening, cars pulling out of parking places and the myriad of other things that can pile up against you when driving at night in the city.

We all know that we should be constantly scanning to the right, left and front all while maintaining our place on the road. Here is where the abilities come in. Some of us are better scanners than others. Some of us have co-riders to help share the burden. Practice is what makes the ability improve and allows you to gain greater confidence when riding. This will have the effect of making you a better and safer rider. You should always err on the side of caution though, because no matter how big a Goldwing is, the smallest car is bigger and usually will win in a confrontation.

If you know that you have specific limitations on your abilities, recognize them and ride within them. Don't be embarrassed to ask other riders in your group to slow down if you are not comfortable with the speed or terrain. Don't be afraid to ask for a rest stop when you need it. Others probably want it as much as you do. Our motto is "Friends for Fun, Safety and Knowledge". One of the definitions of friend is "a favored companion". We like being with each other and while we are doing it we should be having fun safely!

Ride Safe!