

October Article for the Wisconsin Wings

LOUSY LANES

This is an interesting article we found in the Motorcycle Consumer News.

Highways near big cities seem to be in a perpetual state of construction. You change lanes to get out from behind a truck that was blocking your view, and that also got you away from a ladder that wasn't secured very well. But the left lane is narrow, with a hefty concrete divider just inches away, and very uneven paving that bounces the bike around. To make matters worse, more than a few drivers in the right lane are wandering over the white line partially into your lane, and you notice the lane gets even narrower ahead.

You try to stay in the left side of the lane to avoid getting sideswiped by one of the wandering drivers, but where the concrete divider closes in, you ease over toward the center of the lane.

Suddenly, the bike seems to have a mind of its own. The front wheel darts left and then right. You fight the wobbles, barely managing to keep the bike balanced, and finally squeeze over more toward the right. You slow down to get farther away from the other vehicles. It's a scary situation.

You were smart to get out from behind a vision-blocking truck, and to separate yourself from other vehicles and hazards. But apparently you failed to notice the rutted "edge trap" in the center of your lane, created when the lanes were squeezed in for construction. Two-wheeled vehicles are especially susceptible to grooves or ruts, because they can snag the front tire and make it difficult to steer. When you can't steer accurately, it's hard to keep the bike balanced. Your tactic of moving to the right of center and dropping back was a good move.

In addition to watching the busy traffic, you should have maintained your awareness of surface hazards, including the uneven groove in the center of the left lane. When you must cross a pavement groove or raised edge, swerve across it aggressively, don't try to ease across.

This is something that everyone one of us has experienced especially with all the construction on the Marquette Interchange and in other construction zones around the state. We must all be aware of our surroundings when traveling the Interstates.