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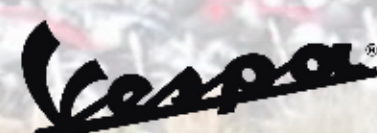
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Volume XXXIV, Issue 10
Publication Date: September 18, 2017

On The Cover:

Sam Devine on the Rebel 500 and Kerri Dougherty on the Versys-X 300, headed into the fight of the century! Photos: Surj Gish (Rebel), Angelica Rubalcaba (Versys-X).

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CityBike is published on or about the third Monday of each month. Editorial deadline is the 1st of each month. Advertising information is available on request. Unsolicited articles and photographs are always welcome. Please include a full name, address and phone number with all submissions. We reserve the right to edit manuscripts or use them to wipe our large, fragrant bottoms.

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News, Clues & Rumors

Ride To The Fall CMSP Meeting With CityBike

There's nothing we love more than The Sac, and we'll be heading up that way for the fall CMSP Advisory Committee meeting in October, which weather-wise means it'll either still be ten thousand degrees, what with The Sac being situated just north of Satan's taint (at least it's a dry heat!), or it'll be raining, because if there's a surefire way to make sure it rains, it's planning a CityBike "organized" ride.

We think it's important to have some "regular rider" presence at these meetings for two reasons. First, it reminds the CHP / CMSP and the various members of the Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of the AMA, DMV, BARF, ABATE, and other organizations with an interest in keeping motorcyclists from clogging up the roads with their broken bodies, that we're interested, that we're paying attention, that we care. Given the often-pathetic participation levels from motorcyclists on many issues, it'd be understandable if policymakers (and their advisors) perceived riders at large as not giving a single rat's ass (East Bay, of course) about being informed and having a collective say, but showing up means we're less likely to be forgotten when it comes to legislation and general governmental interference, AKA "assistance." Second, it's educational, like a freakin' rainbow of reading. We think all riders should attend a CMSP or other similar meeting at least once, to better understand how The System works, and where motorcycling fits into the overall scheme of things. Better-educated riders means less ignorant-ass posting online by supposedly informed "motorcyclists," which means less for us here at CityBike to be pissed off about.

Also, you can join us in person to see: "What's up with those lane splitting guidelines you guys have been working on?"

So here's the skinny: in keeping with putting "organized" in quotes to indicate a near-total lack of actual organization, we haven't really planned the plan yet. The fall meeting of the advisory committee for the CMSP, which stands for the California Motorcyclist Safety Program in case you're that one guy who's gonna email to bitch about us not defining every acronym every time even though you know damn well what we're talking about, happens on Wednesday, October 25th from 1 to 3 PM (post meridiem) at CHP (California Highway Patrol) HQ (headquarters), which is located at 601 North 7th Street, Sacramento, CA (California) 95811.

Since it's a midday meeting, we won't have to battle traffic and split all the way up into The Sac, but it does mean that those of you with jobs who want to join us will have to

take the day off, or "work from home." Oh, shoot. Such a bummer.

We'll gather pre-ride at Middle Harbor Shoreline Park at 2777 Middle Harbor Road in Oakland starting at 10:30 AM, and kickstands will git on up at 11 AM. Stay tuned to the events section of our Facebook page at [facebook.com/CityBikeMag](https://www.facebook.com/CityBikeMag) for more details as we figure 'em out.

Imagine A New Model Teaser Headline With Disingenuous "You'll Never Believe..." Bit Here

We generally ignore, or at least don't waste ink 'n' paper on so-called leaked "spy shots" and cryptic, maybe-coded, maybe just substance-free videos teasing new models, which is why you haven't seen anything from us about the new Ducati V4 that Italophiles have been breathlessly beatin' it to like so much barely visible sideboob since... who knows? Those guys are easy to get worked up with slight hints of re-badged existing models that we stopped paying attention to their masturbations some time ago.

But our usual Bologna-bashing aside, Honda released a video in early September entitled "Discover What Lies Beyond," which sounds a bit like a tagline to a horror movie. The video asks questions



like, "Why do we spend the night in a cold cabin and drink instant coffee when we have a warm bed and espresso machine right at home?" It caught our wandering eye for two reasons: the prominence of the NC700X in the video, and the presence of an old Gold Wing as well as an F6B (and a New Rebel!).

Actually, three reasons, but we're gonna let that bit about instant coffee (are you fucking serious, Honda!?) slide without further comment.

The emphasis on the NC, a motorcycle often condemned by under-pensive pundits as one of the most recent signs of Honda's modern mediocrity, clear proof that the company that brought us the CB750, the VFR, the NR750, the NT650, and many others in a long list of amazing, groundbreaking motorcycles (Gold Wing?), has lost the plot, is interesting to us partly because having actually ridden

NCs extensively in the wild, and being in possession of sound minds, we know that the NC is actually an underappreciated joy, and partly because it's an odd choice for Honda to emphasize because of the aforementioned half-wit Haterade it's so often anointed with. Maybe it means something.

Read that last sentence out loud in a hushed whisper for maximum effect.

More importantly, though, in material terms is the hypothesis that the video is intended to somewhat obviously foreshadow the coming of a new Gold Wing, Honda's segment-defining and aging-but-still-awesome touring bike ("Wang Dang Sweet Gold Wing" - September 2017). In our review of the OG uber-tourer last month, Editor Surj closed with, "If the 2018 Gold Wing has an electronically adjustable windscreen and a modern, integrated GPS, you guys are gonna see a GS, a 900SS, and a bunch of dirtbikes and guitars in the CityBike classifieds." He meant that, but also didn't expect that the Wing's typically very lengthy product cycle was gonna come up so soon. The reality is that even if he gets good prices for his pile of barely-functional dirtbikes, he's probably not gonna score enough scratch for a new Wing—that Gold don't come cheap!

Surj's one saving grace may be the prominence of the NC700X in the video—an alternative analysis of which may point to some other touring bike, perhaps a replacement for the other aging tourer in Honda's hangar, the ST1300, with laid-down cylinders like the NC? In that line of thinking, the Wing is only there to cement Honda's position as the company that defined and redefined motorcycle touring.

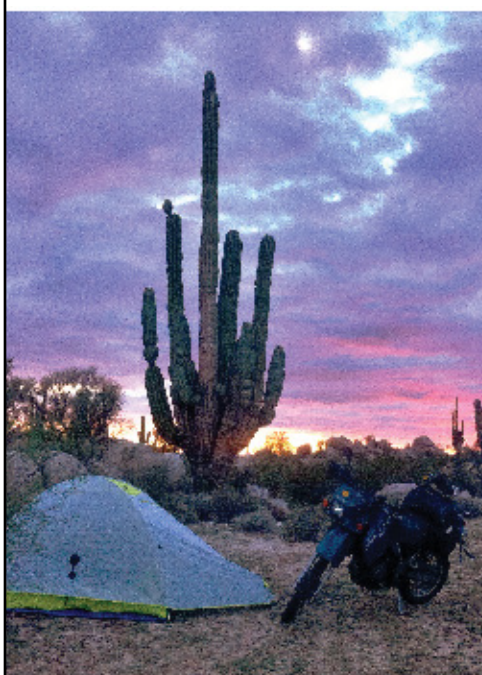
That's a long shot, though, and none of the other Wreckers are betting on that, meaning you may soon see a GoFundMe being shared amongst your moto-friends on Facebook, begging for assistance with the important matter of getting Editor Foot-In-Mouth a new Gold Wing, because crowd-funding is the new personal responsibility.

OHV OK? Almost!

SB 249, the California Senate bill that would create a replacement for the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Act of 2003, which sunsets in 2018 and had been the source of much concern early on, due to language not especially favorable to people who want to use the dirt for more than a place to be conspicuously self-righteous about finding their bliss, while simultaneously completely forgetting their diehard commitment to Mother Earth in other areas of their lives not affording such an easy mount of their high horse,

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has passed both the California Assembly and Senate in a rewritten form that is much more favorable and acceptable overall to those whose bliss may be found to include a bit of knobby action now and then.

SB 159, the bill that would extend the Green Sticker registration program to fund Off-Highway Vehicle Programs in California, passed both Senate and Assembly with similarly flying colors, meaning there was almost no opposition to either bill in either house.

If both bills are signed by Governor Brown, who's presumably sympathetic to dirt people because dirt is brown too, we'll have a permanent program, permanently funded, and permanently authorized by statute.

By the way, this looks-like-a-win's-coming moment isn't a signal to shrug and say, "Cool... guess I can stop paying attention." This win happened in large part due to intense involvement from organizations

like CORVA and the AMA watching out for us when we can't watch for ourselves, and tirelessly advocating for our interests. We don't always agree with everything these organizations do, but we give money to both specifically so that we have a bigger voice in situations like this, and you should to.

Yeah, We Had A Lady Gaga T-Shirt Contest

No, we didn't give away Gaga t-shirts, but we did offer a sweet *CityBike* shirt to the first person who emailed in with at least two of the Gaga references in our September issue. Didn't see that coming, did you? Probably still don't believe it, do you?

There seems to be a surprisingly large crossover in the Venn diagram mapping *CityBike* readers and Lady Gaga fans. We got a lot of emails from readers that wanted to score a shirt, some even employing Bill's method (from this month's *Tankslapper*)

method of trying to batter us into giving up a shirt, with messages like "Send me a t-shirt for fuck's sake!" You might say our readers went *gaga* for *Gaga*.

Groooan. You had to see *that one* coming, right?

The winner was the appropriately-named Kelly Angel of Oakland, who correctly identified all the Gaga-isms in our September issue and managed to do it without cursing our mothers or insulting our riding abilities. Thanks Kelly, and better luck next time to all you other Government Hookers.

Oops! We Did It Again

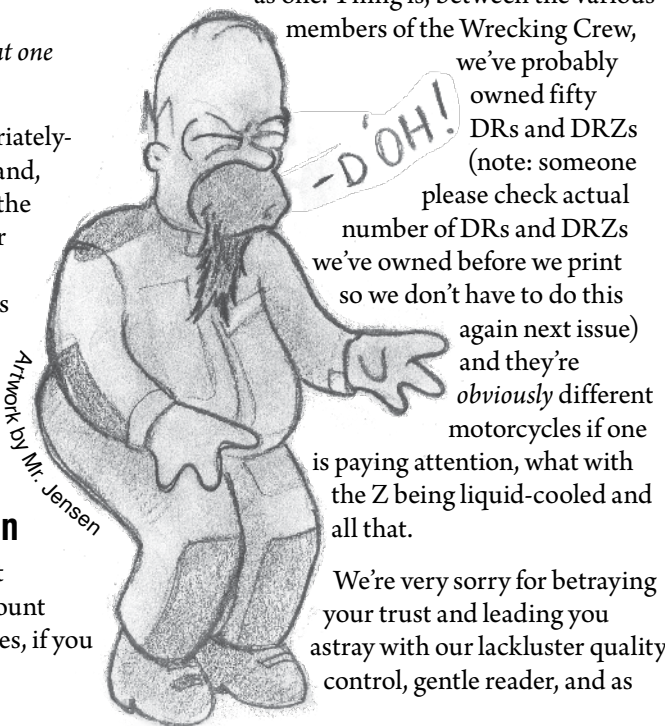
Not just once, not twice, but *three times!* Imagine The Count laughing all crazy like he does, if you will.

Fortunately, we can blame one of the components of this troublesome trifecta on someone else. Sort of—obviously, we should be fact-checking shit a little better. But here's the thing, we figure *engineers know math*, and so didn't check Julian Farnam's math for his Dirtbag prep piece last month, "How I Got Four Donor Bikes For \$650." The dude builds truly amazing motorcycles, so certainly he gets his numbers right, *right?*

Nope. Shortly after we went to print, Julian noticed he'd screwed up his math and pointed out that his piece should have been titled, "How I Got Four Donor Bikes For \$850." Surprisingly, none of our readers, who *love* to tell us when get things wrong, have pointed out this \$200 error. Seems they trusted the engineer to get his math right too.

Not wanting to get fooled again, we double-checked Julian's latest math ourselves. \$850 is correct, although it is admittedly a little tricky to keep track of the numbers with all the negotiations and price drops.

Unfortunately, though, we have no other such "the engineer did it!" excuses. On page 6, in Risa Strobel's tale of traveling to Colorado, "Risa Rides The ADV Woman Rally," we incorrectly identified her DR650 as a DRZ, not once, but *twice* in captions. We're counting this as two (for three errors in total) because it's particularly embarrassing, even though we could probably get away with counting it as one. Thing is, between the various members of the Wrecking Crew,



We're very sorry for betraying your trust and leading you astray with our lackluster quality control, gentle reader, and as

penance, we promise no more f-bombs from Editor Surj until 2018.

And by the way, the Britney Spears reference in the title of this erratum isn't part of a Britney Spears-themed t-shirt contest, so there's no need to go crazy and shave your head.

Shop Rag

Johnson Leathers: Moved 'Round The Corner (Temporarily)

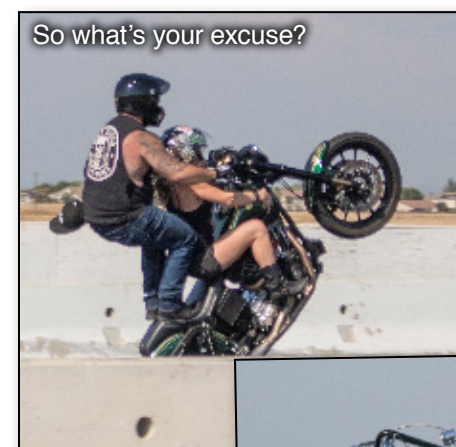
We reported last month here in *Shop Rag* that San Francisco's long-running custom leather shop, Johnson Leathers, had sustained extensive smoke and water damage thanks to a fire in the apartments above the shop, damaging or destroying customer garments being worked on, inventory and equipment.

The shop had moved to a limited-hours schedule while cleaning up and rebuilding, and have now moved operations—temporarily—around the corner, to 1629 Jackson Street, San Francisco (duh), CA (double-duh), 94109, between Polk Street and Van Ness Avenue. Hours are 11 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Saturday for now.

We'll keep you posted on the developments as the Johnson Leathers team works to rebuild their shop, and you can also check JohnsonLeather.com for updates.

San Jose BMW: Making The RNineT Friendlier

BMW's R NineT Racer is a gorgeous machine ("CityBike First Ride: BMW's R NineT Racer" – June 2017) but the ergos are perhaps a touch aggressive for most motorcyclist's idea of street riding. San Jose BMW's high-performance CC Products division has created what they hope will



be a solution for the sore backs induced by the Racer's crouch: their new Superbike Handlebar Conversion, a custom top clamp that replaces the stock low-mounted clip-ons with BMW tapered alloy handlebars, repositioning the grips 3" higher, 3" back, and slightly wider, for a Seventies Superbike-style riding position that retains stock BMW fit and finish.

The top clamp is available separately or as a complete kit including the BMW

tapered alloy handlebar, longer stainless steel braided brake and clutch lines, bar ends and all and all the other bits and bobs required for the conversion. Get more info at SJBmw.com

Spirit Motorcycles: Pants In The CityBike Rack

Someone left a pair of women's jeans wadded up in the *CityBike* rack outside Spirit Motorcycles in San Jose, the kind with the bejeweled pockets that the *classy ladies* wear.

We don't know if this is some strange message from a fan ("Want to get in my pants? Here you go!"), a kindhearted but misguided act of charity, or a warning of some sort, the denim equivalent of a horse's head in a bed, but folks, we don't want your pants, unless they're good riding pants, with the armor intact. And make 'em clean, please.

Also, leaving one's pants behind at the motorcycle shop is a clear violation of the hallowed maxim, *All The Gear, All The Time*. You're gonna be in bad shape if you go down while Donald Ducking 'round town, at least your lower half.

Cycle West: Gas Gas

Cycle West up in Petaluma, has become a Gas Gas dealer, making the shop the San Francisco Bay Area's sole dealer for machines built by the Spanish trials and dirtbike manufacturer. We'll refrain from trying to force a "Jumpin' Jack Flash" lyric in here, even if it is all right—in fact, it's a Gas Gas (gas).

Oops. Anyway, check out CycleWest.net for more info and inventory.

Hey! If you're a local shop and have news to share with the Bay Area riding community, shoot us a note at editor@citybike.com. And don't forget, we offer free help wanted ads for all local moto-businesses!

PITSTOPS

FXRs of California

By Fish

It's no secret that I love Harley-Davidson's venerated FXR motorcycles. That love may stem from my affection of all things Erik Buell, or perhaps my need to ride a bike that can corner and still be a Harley. Whatever



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the case may be, I'm not the only one. There are enough fans of this beloved platform that it warrants its own event. FXRs of California began as a Facebook page for owners of—you guessed it—FXRs, but the momentum grew enough to facilitate real world gatherings.

This year's event was the fifth annual event, held at Sacramento Raceway. The facility is most famous for its dragstrip, but there happens to be a 1/8th mile flat track on premises as well. That track has been unused for a while, but FXRs of California decided to host flat track racing this year as well, including pro, hooligan, and run what you bring classes.

The dragstrip was not ignored, seeing action ranging from timed trophy classes, heads-up grudge racing, nitro bike exhibition runs, and a wheelie contest. The paddock area was home to a diverse group of vendors and incredible stunt performances by Jason Pullen and his crew, as well as Bassani's Stunt team, and the Out Here Crew.

The event celebrated all things FXR, but also showed the passion for Harley's no-longer-produced mid-size platform. I'd be remiss not to mention the way the Dyna has carried the torch, opening people's eyes to using Harleys for more than waking up the neighbors and *celebrating freedom*. The bikes at the event ranged from pristine

limited edition FXRs to wild baggers, running the range from stunt machine to low rider show bikes. The Dynas represented the modern trend of amazing panel paint, fairings and bags on bikes that are capable of hoisting the front wheel,



liquefying the rear tire, or handling a canyon with ease.

More of my bias showing here, but Hardcase Performance's Hooligan Sportster stole my heart with incredible details that still looked understated at a glance. Starting with a Sportster 1200S, Hardcase modified a 19" front wheel into rear service, added their 14" rotor big brake kit, and adorned the bike with their risers, a custom exhaust, and endless small details that make for a really cool take on Harley's "entry level" machine.

The stunt shows were nothing short of incredible with riders doing unbelievable maneuvers on both full-size Harleys and

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Sportsters. A world that used to be owned by the modified 600 sportbike has been usurped by Harleys, dancing with wheelies, stoppies, and burnouts, all to the soundtrack of big bore V-Twins at full song.

The action on the drag strip was almost nonstop. I happened to need a break from other parts of the fun just as the wheelie contest started, so I got to see some of the finest Harley wheelies west of the Pecos, probably east as well. Unknown Industries' Wheelie Pig was on hand with Swamp Juice (his Dyna) to steal the show with a two-up wheelie up and down the drag strip.



The night closed with flat track racing featuring the Speed Merchant's 1200 Sportster Hooligan racer, and even sidecar rigs.

The crowd at the 2017 incarnation of FXRs of California was friendly, and I



had a fantastic time, making it one of the most enjoyable motorcycle events I've been to. Entry was \$20, or \$45 if you want to drag or flat track whatever you showed up on. While the bikes were all H-D, the ranges of applications were endless. Count me in for next year, and I will be flat tracking my FXR.

Amerivespa 2017

By Penni Gladstone

This year's Amerivespa, the 25th event that Vespa Club of America has hosted for people who are rawkin' crazy about scootering, was held in the spectacularly scenic state of Washington, in the city of Seattle.

Amerivespa is by far the largest scooter rally in the US; the parking lot was filled with vintage and modern scooters. This year's event drew about 600 people on approximately 400 scoots.

Three local clubs, Vespa Club Seattle, Los Gatos Gordos, and the Firkins, worked countless hours over the year leading up to the event to make Amerivespa 2017 happen.

While the event planners worked, my own head was

more wrapped around the anticipation of riding over 900 miles to Seattle and again back home to San Francisco. It turned out to be less of an ordeal than I'd anticipated, though towards the end of each day it did begin to feel like an endurance ride. Many of us had ample time, so the group I rode

with took three days to reach Seattle, allowing time for scenic detours along the Pacific Coast and through the redwoods. We admired a massive Paul Bunyan statue,



and stopped at the obligatory drive-through redwood tree.

One of the highlights was scooting alongside a freight train at 70 mph. The engineer blew his horn several times, waving at us. There is truly a feeling of exhilaration riding side-by-side with such a beast.

The disappointing part was having to utilize the interstate to make up time after getting lost a couple of times. Anyone who has taken the road less traveled knows the multi-lane highways are not the preferred way to see the country.

Tyson Fonder, better known as "Wandering Tyson," rode the furthest—

he's attempting a Guinness world record, hoping to break the mark for longest journey on a 50cc scooter. He arrived in Seattle with 8,300 miles on his odometer toward the 8,969 needed to break the existing record. The person that traveled the furthest was from Australia, followed by the reps from SIP

Scootershop in Germany.

Having ridden 900 miles to get to Seattle, I still gladly saddled up and spent the next three days riding hundreds more to explore the Seattle area. Organized rides wound through Seattle's metro area, past lakes, grand architecture, the mystery Coke machine, the Gum Wall, and the slightly less famous Wall of Death. Many riders took in the scenic Snoqualmie Falls, Snohomish, Lake Washington, Georgetown, and Bainbridge Island. One afternoon a local club steered us to "Bikinis and Buds" where you could find bikini-clad baristas and legal marijuana. We even rode by Kurt Cobain's house, and Jimi Hendrix' grave site.

There were parties, shenanigans, rides led by the locals, a vendor show, skill events, plus a scooter concours. There was even a raffle, in which local San Francisco Bay Area rider Christopher HornBeck won a new Kymco Like 200i. The last evening was—of course—topped off with an obligatory viewing of *Quadruphenia*.

Next June, Amerivespa 2018 will be held in Richmond, Virginia, more than three times as far from San Francisco as Seattle. Get more info at amerivespa.net. Meanwhile, I'm contemplating meeting up with 7,000 scooters next year at World Vespa Days in Europe.

NEW STUFF

Glove You Long Time: Racer Sprint Short Cuff Gloves

By Surj Gish

I've been wearing super-light motocross gloves for off-road riding for a long time. You know the ones. Heavy on branding, light on protection, wear out in less than a year but are cheap enough that it doesn't matter. While planning for the Big Dog Adventure Ride (which you can read about on page 22), I decided it was time to stop switching between my real street gloves and those dumb dirt gloves every time I crossed the line from tarmac to soil and rocks. After all, adventure riding is all about the gear, right? Gotta git geared up right!

I reached out to Lee Block, who owns and runs Morgan Hill-based Racer Gloves USA, the American importer of Austrian Racer Gloves: "Lee, I'm going adventuring. What do you recommend?"

After some discussion of options, Lee sent me a pair of Racer Sprint short cuff gloves.

The Sprints are available in one color scheme: mostly black with some white and a bit of red, a neutral-enough mix to match most bikes and "outfits," even if you ride in white sneakers, which you shouldn't, Jax.

My first impressions were good.

Construction is mostly goatskin, with a bit of breathable stretch fabric in between the fingers and an almost neoprene-feeling fabric at the wrist. Pittards leather is used on the palms as well, for grip and durability, and there's an extra layer of leather at the tip of each pointy finger.

In addition to the fabric vents between the fingers, the Sprints are perforated on the tops and at the wrists. The hard TPU (thermoplastic urethane) knuckle protector is vented, and the undersides of the fingers have a few tiny holes too.

Protective bits are all over—in addition to the TPU knuckle protector, there are TPR (thermoplastic rubber) finger protectors strategically positioned on all the digits, and what feels to me like elastomer padding at the heels of the hand and the knobby part of the wrists. The Sprints easily rank as one of the more protective gloves in my current collection, even with the short cuff.

The goatskin isn't the thickest glove leather I've worn, and if you're used to deerskin gloves you're probably used to wearing thicker leather—but it's supple and feels as sturdy as any other gloves in this price range, if not more so, and probably in the "just right" zone between feel and protection.

Speaking of protection, I hate to disappoint, but—surprisingly—I didn't crash test the Sprints. I know that quite a few racers have been happy with the crash performance of their Racers, for what that's worth. I'll say this: though the Sprints disappear from my mind while riding, which is to say they're comfortable enough to be unnoticeable once underway, I have no worries about the level of protection provided. That's not always the case with short cuff vented gloves, but these are *real gloves*.

The Sprints are a nice compromise between textile-back summer gloves and unvented gloves. They do breathe, but are solid enough to be wearable in a variety of temperatures. I've worn them in temps down to about 50 degrees on the GS—behind its handguards, I simply switched on the heated grips and all was good. I've also ridden in Sacramento heat with the Sprints, and while those temps can't be mitigated that well by gloves, I give the Sprints credit for letting some air in without compromising protection.

Racer USA offers helpful sizing guidance on their website, with pictures and directions for measuring your fingers and palms. They claim that Racer gloves "are the best fitting gloves you can buy," and their return policy (and materials included in your shipment) emphasize getting the fit right, even if that means exchanging them: "If your



Photo: Surj Gish

product does not fit, function, or you just don't like it in any way, you can return it for a refund or exchange within 30 days of your purchase."

Racers are not cheap, but the Sprint's "low hundred dollars" price range seems about right to me as a minimum for good short cuff paw protectors, and they earn an 8 on the Gish Glove Index, a fuzzy, made-up system for measuring combined values for comfort, protection, value and coolness. If you're not familiar with the GGI, an 8 rating is solidly in the "good stuff!" range.

\$112.99. Learn more and find out where to buy at RacerGlovesUSA.com.

Risa Reads: Journey To The End Of The World

By Risa Strobel

Here in the Oakland outpost of the *CityBike* World Adventure Affairs Desk, where I serve as Undersecretary to the long-suffering Chief, Dr. Frazier, we prefer being out riding to just about anything else.

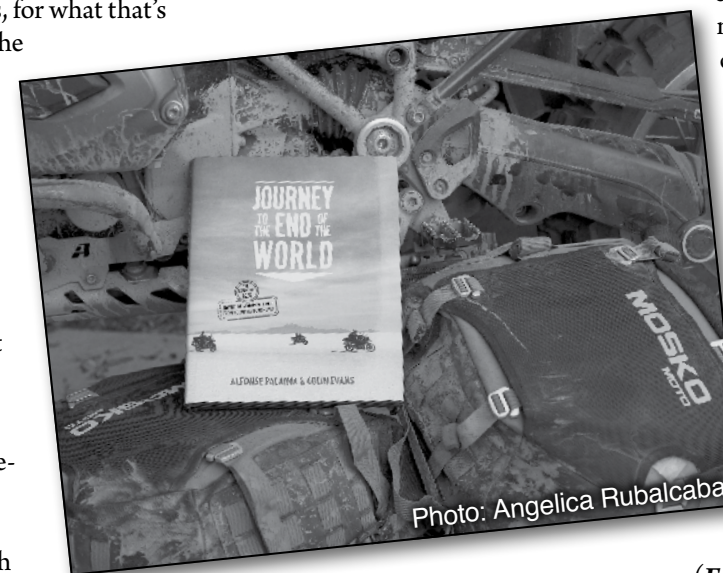


Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

Sadly, real life often gets in the way, and we're stuck with daydreams and armchair adventuring.

That's where books like *Journey To The End Of The World* by Alfonso Palaima and Colin Evans come in.

The book follows Expedition 65: the travels of 15 men (disappointingly, the group was a total sausage fest) on an 11,000

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mile trip through six countries. Riding R1200GSes and followed by a shockingly overloaded and over-equipped support van and trailer full of camp, kitchen and maintenance gear (seriously, the 70 USB ports for charging "the multitude of electronic devices we'd be juicing up daily" are mentioned more than once), these guys made their way from Cartagena, Colombia to Ushuaia, Argentina over the course of two months.

By no means an exhaustive trip diary, the book is instead a series of vignettes: brief lessons into the culture or history of the places they were traveling through, and funny / poignant / scary stories from the road. A bit too much of the former and not enough of the latter for my taste, but some may find the tour-guide-like segments enjoyable. I'd much rather hear more about the riding and the folks doing it. I want to hear about how they found a place to stay, how they picked their routes, what troubles they ran into along the way, and this book doesn't deliver as much of that as I'd hoped. We never find out who most of the guys on this trip even are.

But *Journey* is more of a photo book, anyway. I can see it living on coffee tables and in motorcycle shop waiting areas. It's chock full of gorgeous photos—sketchy mountain "roads," riding on salt flats, camping on the beach, pulling apart an engine trailside. Every page turn brings a new wave of "I want to go there! And there!" Looking past a front tire out across a Patagonian lake and through the forest off to distant Andean mountains, staring down winding Peruvian mountain passes, camping at the edge of miles and miles of salt flats—my sweetest dreams are made of this.

Overall, *Journey To The End Of The World* is a big, beautiful, glossy overview of a big, beautiful, glossy trip. While their website (Expedition65.com) and promotional materials for the film they're making about this trip talk of inspiring others to undertake their own big trips, this level of support and spending is unrealistic for the average aspiring adventurer. It feels less like, "Hey, you can totally do this!" and more like, "Hey, with a bunch of money and industry connections, you can do this."

GREAT BEER!

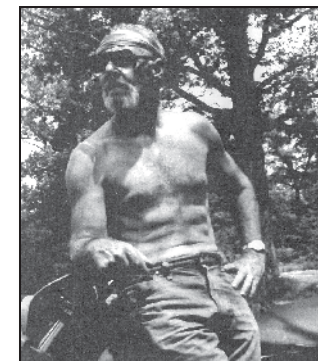
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UNEASY RIDER

WITH SURJ GISH

Disingenuity And The Fallacy Of Branded Experiences

We take a bit of good-natured shit now and again for what sometimes looks like a uniform: Aerostich, usually Helimots, often with shorts, long socks and of course boots underneath. It's a unique "style" that has nothing to do with trying to achieve a certain look, born completely of function. I don't know anyone who started wearing a 'Stich because they thought it looked cool, and I'm certain that we—*CityBike* Wrecking Crew and Bay Area riders who share our sensibilities—authentically arrived at this utilitarian mo-drobe because it works, and though I've been referred to as a member of the 'Stich 'n' Helimot Mafia, there's no organization, no counterfeit community, no joining. Which also means I don't worry about being "profiled" for wearing my "colors."

The word *authentic* is thrown around a lot, rather *inauthentically*, to the point that—like when "alt" and "indy" stopped meaning *alternative* bands and artists that were doing things their own way, on *independent* labels in the case of music, and instead simply referring to every Tom, Dick and Suzy-Q emulating

those post-punk pioneers—it's become meaningless and even insulting.

This lack of creativity is one area where our industry fails us. Adventure bikes became popular because they're all-round good bikes whether ridden to Fairfield or Fairbanks, and because BMW and its devotees were particularly successful at convincing the every-rider that he or she too could ride to Alaska, or Africa, or wherever they dreamed. Other companies, from manufacturers to accessory makers, wanted some of that ADV cheddar and started indiscriminately tacking "adventure" to their products, as if we moto-consumers are so stupid that we won't recognize a golden shower as such if the one who's pissing on us calls it lemonade.

If everything is adventure-ready, how can we tell what's really ready

for adventure? We, "the market," still brought it, but not without a scoffing smirk and a bad taste in our mouths.

The rush to round headlight, pseudo-retro *authenticity* was similar—just like adventure, *authentic* was slapped on



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

every motorcycle and product with even a hint of greaser or biker or rocker or vintage or whatever-the-fuck; an entire industry ignoring the literal meaning of the word, which so ironically is "real" or "genuine," something that almost none of the machines it's now applied to are—at least with regard for history and roots.

Unless of course *authentic* means it's a real motorcycle, and though we may argue what constitutes a "real motorcycle," in a technical sense, *all* motorcycles are authentic motorcycles.

Recent years have seen once-organic events identified by cool hunters as good opportunities for *engagement with in-market prospects* reworked to accommodate a circle jerk of sponsor "support" and co-branding, often over-commercializing and cheapening the original concept to the point it becomes a laughingstock that people attend because they heard it was cool back when... but they don't return. "I dunno, man. Wasn't really that cool. Buncha the same bikes..."

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Like adventure and authenticity, events are foisted on us with the keyword of *community* attached, never mind that the most egregious recent example was a carefully choreographed dance of product placement and co-branded synergy, run by the moto-centric subsidiary of a "multichannel media conglomerate" whose mission statement and values are so riddled with jargon and buzzwords as to be nearly meaningless.

I get that every player in the industry needs revenue to keep on truckin' and it's harder and harder every day to find that revenue. As someone who's paid the bills as a marketer for nigh on twenty years now, doing marketing that is held to trackable results like "did this spend drive revenue?" I question the value of such these events for sponsors, if their goals are anything like "sell motorcycles," and to go further into the realm of potential blacklisting, like the aforementioned lack of creativity I think name-drop sponsorships that basically amount to brand repetition are exemplary of what's wrong with how "the industry" thinks of attracting potential new customers, the worn-out, blunted, wrong-sized screwdriver in a marketer's toolbox. But that's a discussion for another time, like maybe the last issue of *CityBike* ever. Blaze of glory and all that.

There's nothing unique to motorcycling about gathering a bunch of escapist experiential tourists to play dress-up in grimy denim while they listen to derivative bands, consume craft brews and attend workshops on working with their hands, just like there's nothing empowering about "controlling the conversation" so that all the women that show up on the Instagram feed for an event are skinny "indy" girls with the "right look," and nothing reasonable or cool about requiring people to dress fancy and ride a certain kind of motorcycle to help raise money in an otherwise admirable and effective fundraising event.

"A hairstyle's not a lifestyle," sang Jello Biafra in the Dead Kennedys' straight talk manifesto, "Chickenshit Conformist," from DK's '86 masterpiece *Bedtime For Democracy*. It's probably a naive dream to think American riders will ever adopt utilitarian motorcycling like so much of the rest of the world, but what our industry needs, what American motorcycling needs, isn't more pretending, more segmentation by style, but better, concrete examples of why motorcycling is vital, exciting, and fearsomely fucking awesome. Examples that lead to the *joy of riding*, not the seen/be seen socializing and always-on, live video feed bullshit that too often consumes and detracts from actual motorcycling. Otherwise, to paraphrase Jello, "Motorcycling's not dead, it just deserves to die when it becomes another stale cartoon."



It's a beautiful book that I'll keep on my bookshelf for daydreams, but when it's time for me to head down to South America, I'll look to other sources for help planning and more realistic inspiration.

\$50. Hardcover, 192 pages, 9.5" x 12". Learn more and get your own at OctanePress.com.

PSR BTC: A-OK

By Surj Gish

We move a lot of motorcycles: test bikes in one-day rush runs back and forth to and from SoCal; dirtbikes and dual-sports back and forth to Carnegie, Knoxville, and beyond; and occasionally broken-down or busted-up bikes too messed up to limp to whatever shop they need to get to for repairs and remediation.

Each of us has our own tie-down methodology, slight variations on similar concepts. We use Baxley chocks, both LAs and Sports, which are unbeatable in how well they grab the front tire and secure the motorcycle, almost removing the need for straps; a couple varieties of tough,



reliable tie-down straps, and often Canyon Dancers. The Canyon Dancer, like the Baxley chock, is a singular device, particularly effective securing motorcycles without accessible tie-down points: bars, triples, whatever. But the Canyon Dancer doesn't work on bikes with handguards or lever guards.

That's where PSR's BTC Tie-Down Clamps come in. They're ingeniously simple—basically a bigger, wider, more-shapely clothespin, machined from forged aluminum, with stainless steel bolts and beefy springs that gives the clamp enough gripping force for a nice solid clicking sound when closed.

They're subtly attractive, too—smooth, anodized gun metal gray, and elegantly contoured. If you look close, there are some minor irregularities on the edges, but they're smooth and unnoticeable, meaningless unless you're looking for iPhone-level sheen on your moto hardware.

PSR says the BTCs are universal, and will work on any standard handlebar, as well as crash bars and other tubes between 1.25"

EVENTS

October 2017

September 24, 2017: Monterey Peninsula Vintage Motorcycle Show (Moose Lodge, 555 Canyon Del Rey, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940)

The Old Capitol Lions Club hosts their second annual Monterey Peninsula Vintage Motorcycle Show, benefitting the Blind & Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County. Admission is \$10, advanced registration to show a bike is \$10 too. OCLions.club/vintage-motorcycle-show.html.

October 1, 2017: Curve Unit Ride For Kids (Solana College, 4000 Suisun Valley Rd, Fairfield, California 94534)

Curve Unit's yearlong fundraising efforts for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation culminate with their annual Ride For Kids, a fun ride through the Berryessa area, followed by food & entertainment. Enjoy a fun ride through the Berryessa area, followed by food & entertainment, and a chance to win a new Honda Motorcycle and other great prizes. Facebook.com/CurveUnit.

October 7-8, 2017: Lost Lakes Dual-sport Adventure (start and finish at Factory Pipe, 1307 Masonite Road, Ukiah, CA 95482)

In spite of the word "adventure" in the name, the North Bay MC's Lost Lakes ride is designed for dual-sport bikes only. They even say "no adventure bikes!" That sounds like a challenge to us.

Anyway, explore some of the least-traveled roads around Clear Lake and witness breathtaking views along the way. There will be two routes: an easy loop and a hard loop. GPS only. \$95 per rider. NorthBayMC.org.

October 7-8, 2017: The 2nd Annual Carnegie Classic (18600 Corral Hollow Rd, Tracy, CA 95376)

So you think you're a good rider, maybe you jump your bike now and then, do some burnouts? We urge you to head out to Carnegie SVRA for the 2nd Annual Classic to reset your idea of what impressive riding is. In addition to hillclimb insanity, there'll be a CORVA (California Off Road Vehicle Association) BBQ Fundraiser on Saturday night, with a Q&A session concerning the park expansion status. \$20 for the whole weekend. ElevatedAction.com/2nd-annual-irc-carnegie-classic



October 8, 2017: All Italian Day Car & Motorcycle Show (Lincoln Middle School, 1250 Fernside Blvd, Alameda, CA 94501)

This thing is apparently put on by car people (groan...) but our pal Pierre told us it's gonna be cool, and we trust him. Plus, it's in Alameda, which while just across those little bridges from Oakland, feels refreshingly like Mayberry, only fancier. The fiesta (or however you say that in Italian) starts at 10 AM and goes till 3 PM, Alameda Time—but if people start tossing affected Italian words into their speech, *Ducati*-style (another groan), we're out, bitchin' Guzzis notwithstanding. Five bux donation gets you in. AlfaRomeoAssociation.org.

October 13-15-ish, 2017: Dirtbag Challenge (1070 Quesada St, San Francisco, California, CA 94124)

We're tempted to pull some kind of, "Look man, if you don't know, we can't tell you" schtick, but the reality is that information on this year's Dirtbag is a little scant. Last

year, the rules were changed up to allow up to two grand in dirt-bux spent on your build, in one month, with a two-day overnight ride at the end. This year, it looks to be two months and two grand, presumably with a camping trip at the end again. According to the Dirtbag Facebook page, "The 2017 Dirtbag Challenge will begin Friday 13th of October. More details as we get it together." And that's all we've got folks, so far anyway. Facebook.com/DirtbagChallenge.

October 29, 2017: Jackhammer Enduro (Fouts Springs, CA, approximately nine miles west of Stonyford)

The Oakland Motorcycle Club brings us the 47th annual Jackhammer, an AMA District 36-sanctioned timekeeping enduro, part of the IRC D36 Northern California Championship Enduro Series. \$55 pre-entry, \$56 day of the event. 96 db sound limit will be enforced. OaklandMotorcycleClub.camp9.org/event-2463982.

October 29, 2017: Dames Don't Care Sadie Hawkins Ride (San Francisco, CA... you gotta know someone)

For those of you who are more into street riding but still want to mix it up gnarly-style the last weekend of October, the notorious Dames Don't Care Motorcycle Collective will uh... host the sixth running of their annual Sadie Hawkins ride. Wear a costume for extra points. We made that part up, but you should wear a costume anyway. Location to be disclosed soon at Facebook.com/groups/DAMESDONTCARE.

October 29, 2017: Ride Friday Give Back (The East Bay)

Also known as the "Fuck Black Friday Ride," our third annual, post-Turkey Day ride will benefit Alameda County CASA. Last year, we raised over \$2,000 for this wonderful organization.

This year, since pieces of the roads on last year's route are still missing thanks to the

and 1.5". I tried them on several bikes, from dual-sports to standards to a variety of faired bikes. Use is simple: open the clamp, clip it on a grip, close it; hook a tie-down strap into the loop; repeat on the other side; tighten it down. The rubber inserts in the clamps grip your grips well—in fact, that was my only area of initial concern, whether they'd grip the throttle side *too much*. That doesn't seem to happen; instead, the BTCs clip on and do their thing: no muss, no fuss.

As is always the case when tying down motorcycles, angles and available tie-down points matter. The BTCs work better when they're pointed more downward than forward. Too close to horizontal, and you'll get interference between your levers and the clamps. Other than that, the experience is simple, reliable, good: clip on, tie down, get a cup of coffee and get on the road.

\$49.95. Learn more and grab a pair of your own at psr-usa.com.

return of actual rain, we're still working on our route. But the ride will hopefully still involve coffee at the beginning and pizza at the end. Save the date and stay tuned for details at Facebook.com/CityBikeMag/events.

AFM 2017 Season Schedule



If you like racing, put these dates on your calendar! Get more details at afmracing.org/schedule.

Round 6: September 23-24, 2017
Thunderhill

Round 7: October 21-22, 2017
Buttonwillow

Lodi Cycle Bowl 2017 Schedule

Flat track racing at the home of the blue groove, where the Lodi Motorcycle Club has been running races continuously since 1953. LodiCycleBowl.com.

September 16: TT

September 23: 100 Nationals & Toby Jorgensen Memorial TT (Final High Points Race)

October 7: ST

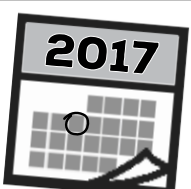
October 14: ST

October 21: TT - High Points Award

October 22: ST - BBQ

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SonoMotoAmerican Federation of Motorcyclists



Jason Lauritzen powers out of turn eight.

By Max Klein
Photos by Max Klein

I touched on the MotoAmerica series returning to Sears Point—Sonoma Raceway if you're a stickler for current naming conventions—in our last issue. But I don't think I really expressed how stoked I was about the pros returning or about the AFM getting to play motorcycles on the same day. The event was a long time coming, and was a huge step in unfucking the dipshittery that I blame on the Daytona Motorsports Group.

Some of you might remember the DMG-run years of AMA Pro Road Racing as being a bit chaotic, and some of those memories might seem like DMG was actively trying to make American motorcycle racing go the way of the dodo. Pace cars, confusing race classes, diminishing schedule, no television package... They did everything but walk into the homes of racing fans and fart on their breakfasts. If one didn't know better, one might safely assume that the people in charge assumed that NASCAR fans and normal people like exactly the same things.

DMG stopped bringing their dog and pony show to Sonoma Raceway in 2012. That was the first year of a series of shortened schedules, with the 2014 (and final) season of DMG AMA Pro consisting of just six rounds—fewer than most amateur racing clubs. There was only race on the West Coast—where we have year-round riding and where *all* of the motorcycle manufacturers have chosen to set up shop—and that race at Laguna Seca AMA Pro was not the featured series but rather a support class for World Superbike.

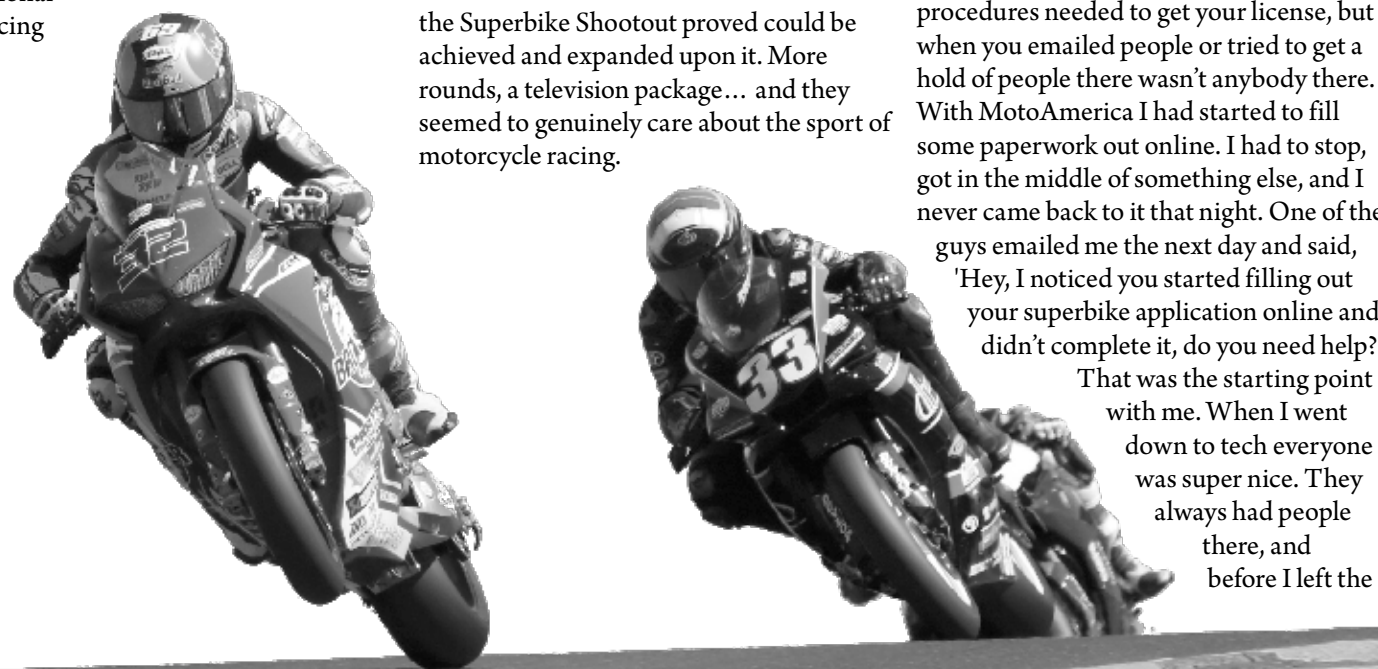
Plenty of people were proper pissed about the lack of races west of Ole Miss, but none more than racer-turned-

Roadracing World editor John Ulrich. With a few short months of planning, John and the rest of the Ulrich clan organized a three-round series and did what DMG couldn't: he got road racing on television.

The three-round Superbike Shootout series brought professional road racing back to Sonoma Raceway in 2014, but after the limited number of factory semi-trucks rolled out, wine country was once again a forgotten land for professional road racing.

That is, until this year. But to talk about this year, we need to revisit 2015, the year DMG got the boot and in stepped the KRAVE group.

Run by Wayne Rainey, Chuck Aksland, Terry Karges, and Richard Varner, the KRAVE group is responsible for the US professional road racing



Hot wheelie action from the lone Honda Superbike, piloted by Jake Gagne.

From the media side of things I noticed MotoAmerica's improvements right away. Everyone involved, from registration to tech, to the racers themselves, smiled more. They had answers to questions. They were helpful. It was almost as if people were enjoying what they were doing.

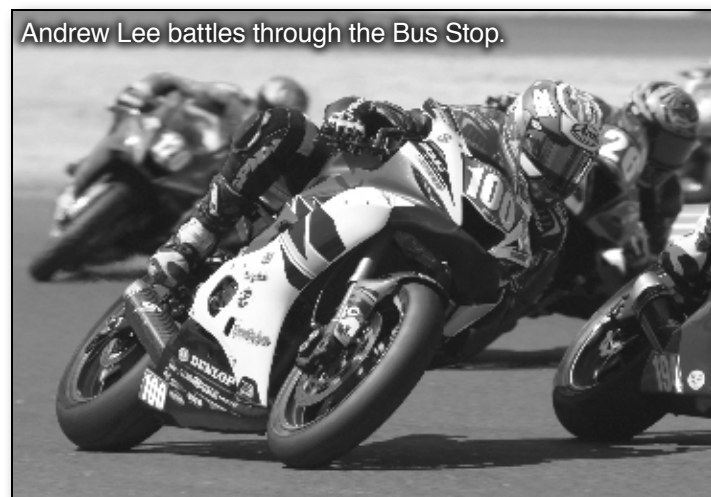
To test this theory I chatted with Tom Dorsey, a technical inspector with both the American Federation of Motorcyclists and MotoAmerica, at round five of the 2017 AFM season at Sonoma Raceway. Tom started doing tech back in 2002 with AMA Pro and stuck with it when DMG did their worst. After weathering that storm, he saw MotoAmerica as a huge step forward and upward for American road racing. "The attitudes changed," said Dorsey, "It wasn't as stressful. There weren't people in each other's faces like the DMG days."

The steps that MotoAmerica has taken to better the sport have been influential outside of MotoAmerica. Regional clubs like the AFM have taken notice of the positive direction that the pro series has taken, and understand the role that they play in rider development. Finally, after years of not having a positive role model, club racing had something to look up to.

Since MotoAmerica grabbed hold of the grips, the AFM has chosen to model their rulebook after the national series. Keeping the rules, and to a certain extent the classes, in line with the National level was done to aid in the transition for riders like Jason Lauritzen, who jumped between the club and pro levels.

Jason has raced West Coast rounds with DMG and MotoAmerica as well as running full seasons with the AFM since 2007. He, too, sang the praises of MotoAmerica.

"The biggest difference between the DMG days and MotoAmerica is how helpful they are to first timers, or people that run a partial season," began Lauritzen. "With DMG there were all these rules to follow, which were fine, I understand that those were the procedures needed to get your license, but when you emailed people or tried to get a hold of people there wasn't anybody there. With MotoAmerica I had started to fill some paperwork out online. I had to stop, got in the middle of something else, and I never came back to it that night. One of the guys emailed me the next day and said, 'Hey, I noticed you started filling out your superbike application online and didn't complete it, do you need help?' That was the starting point with me. When I went down to tech everyone was super nice. They always had people there, and before I left the



Andrew Lee battles through the Bus Stop.

series: MotoAmerica. With a multi-time World Champion, a former Team Roberts manager, a motorsports marketing whiz,

and, to keep them all on the straight and narrow, a businessman running the MotoAmerica show, America's premier series was finally in good hands.

MotoAmerica ran with the success that the Superbike Shootout proved could be achieved and expanded upon it. More rounds, a television package... and they seemed to genuinely care about the sport of motorcycle racing.



Garrett Gerloff all alone through the Bus Stop.

riders meeting they said that anyone in a MotoAmerica shirt, and that included Wayne Rainey, these guys are all available to you."

Jason was one of a handful of AFM racers that brought their A game to the big show for the weekend, and if you include the support class that got to participate I am pretty sure AFM members were close to outnumbering the MotoAmerica crew.

What does this mean for my seemingly never-ending rant about the future of American road racing?

Well, in less time than it took DMG to say, "hold my beer," MotoAmerica has made serious strides in bringing the sport back to the level of greatness that it once had. More rounds, new tracks, and inviting local clubs to participate

are all huge, and doing it all with a TV package? Even better.

There is still plenty of room for growth, but they're on the right track. Having a National series that cares about developing riders and the entire sport of road racing is something to be proud of. Finally, after years of living in fear, I can eat my breakfast in peace, without fear of

unwanted, gaseous flavors.

Max is the SF chapter Director of the AFM. He has a dream that one day American road racing will rise up again and show the world how it's done. 🍷



Cameron Beaubier celebrates his Superbike win.

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2017 Kawasaki "ADV Executioner" Versys-X 300

By Surj Gish, with special guest Kerri Dougherty
Photos by Angelica Rubalcaba

If your first question going into this review of Kawasaki's Versys-X 300 is "can it replace the KLR?" I've got bad news for you. The answer is no. Or yes. Or maybe, "Can anything really replace the KLR?" Or for some, "Anything can replace the KLR," with a grimace. Really, you're gonna have to decide for yourself, based on your feelings for Kawasaki's long-running big single.

If your second question is, "What's with the 'X' in the name?" I don't have an answer for that, either. It's extreme. Or it's a crossover. Exclusive? Whatever. It's a Versys, ok?

Just two questions so far, and already two non-answer strikes. We're gonna have to do a little better than that.

Here's what I can tell you: if you're thinking of the Versys-X (treme!) solely in the context of adventure bikes, you're thinking about it the wrong way. Sure, as Fish says, any motorcycle can be a dirtbike if you believe in yourself, but the interesting thing about the Versys isn't whether or not it can function as a bona fide lightweight adventure bike, but rather how Kawasaki, who long dominated the beginner bike segment with their Ninja 250s and 300s, have offered up a legitimately new and different option for new riders.

Time was when youngsters flipped their "you'll shoot your eye out with that murdercycle" parents the bird, they wanted a sportbike with a name like *Ninja* or *Hurricane*. You can blame Ewan and Charley, but down, round or whatever, adventure bikes are hot shit, and not just for aging curmudgeons in high-viz onesies.

Until now, the idea of a lightweight, low-cc bike with full-size, proper-upright ergos and a bit of wind protection was unheard of, although you'd occasionally hear of weirdos attempting to make such a bike from a CRF250L or even an XT250 and riding it 'round the world—or at least well beyond the local coffee shop.

Time was when the options for "small and light," beginner or no, were these little sporty-bikes, or maybe tiny cruisers. But it's no coincidence that Honda has recently, radically revamped their Rebel—more about that on page 15—and also offers a standard 300F alongside their sportier CBR300R. Options, baby.

So in that context, consider the Versys-X's status as a smaller, lighter, tall-rounder, minus the tall. Consider that adventure bikes, whether actually dirt-capable or the more road-oriented "adventure sporties," remain supremely capable, rideable machines, equally proficient at mundane or magical tasks, from hauling groceries to hauling ass. A smaller, lighter version of such motorcycles makes an awful lot of sense for new riders, smaller riders,

and riders who just don't get why "real" motorcycles have to weigh 600 pounds.

Our perspectives on the Versys-X are many: mine is tainted by bigger bikes, the Goliaths to the V-X's David, so it feels refreshingly compact and maneuverable, while still offering full-size ergos. Others are similarly affected by their different daily rides, but it's important to remember that most potential Versys-X buyers won't have the background that colors our perception of the 300, won't be shrugging off their dusty hydration pack as they climb down from a gargantuan GS before mounting the V-X, for example.

This is a given, of course—as (cough) real moto-journalists, we're supposed to be able to set aside our preconceived notions and biases and judge a bike for *what it is first*, and then for whether it is *what we want it to be*.

Here's the problem, and why I mention our perspective issues: although Kawasaki has been careful to not use words like dirt, trail, or anything suggesting off-road readiness, almost all of us bit firmly on the "adventure styled" marketing, hook, line and sinker, and in our heads made the leap to it being some kind of lightweight ADV warrior, if not an actual dual-sport. Thus the question of whether the Versys-X can replace the KLR.

This want for a capable lightweight adventurer is reflected in the general

This jump to "spoked wheels=dirt woohoo!" speaks to a nascent desire for such motorcycles: light enough to be ridden off-road without fearing that one poorly-timed drop will mean walking out, the bike left behind for the buzzards because it was too heavy to get upright again; but big enough, *real* enough, to function like a proper tall-round-adventurer. We've seen this before—a common refrain from complaint-prone American motorcyclists, that "Europe gets all the good bikes." Never mind that *all the good bikes* don't sell when we get them here, and mostly become cult bikes later on. We love talk, but often don't back up that talk by walking into dealerships with our wallets.

Anyway, this seeming pent-up need for a small-to-middlin'-weight motorcycle that is good on the street and reasonable on the dirt is what led us to look at Honda's CB500X with an eye toward turning it into a dirty-capable bike ("Too X-y For My Adventure - 2016 Honda CB500X" – October 2016) around this time last year. The truly dirt-viable options (think KTM) are *too* dirt-oriented; the go-to options like Kawasaki's own KLR and Suzuki's DR650 are more than a little long in the tooth, and the KLR in particular is a bit porky; the CRF250L isn't powerful enough and lacks wind protection... the list of potential options and reasons *why not* is frustratingly long.

To help with our perspective problem,

populace as well. Everyone knows that Kawasaki's Versys motorcycles are more street-oriented tall-rounders, but the presence of spoked wheels had people saying, "Finally, a lightweight adventure bike with a proper dirt setup!"

Well played, Kawasaki...

Until someone does some serious dirt riding on a Versys-X and leaves an engine's worth of oil dripping down a pointy rock, that is. The bike's pipe, and more importantly, the oil filter are *very* exposed. But that's where personal responsibility and intelligent choices come into play, something we motorcyclists love to yammer on about, *ad nauseam*.

I asked Kerri Dougherty of Motobird Adventures, who rode Bungee Brent's Backroad Bash with the Wrecking Crew this year, to put some miles on our Versys-X. She rides a BMW F650GS Dakar, and much like Wreckers Gwynne and Risa, has enough real-deal adventure cred to make your average retired dentist go back to quietly sipping his latte, lest he be outed as an imposter. You can read her take on the bike a little further along, but now that I've thoroughly inundated you with the blah blah blahs, I should tell you a bit more about the bike itself.

It's easy to say that the Versys-X 300 is basically a Ninja 300 with upright ergos and longer suspension. That's true... sort



of. But not really. It does use the Ninja's 296cc, 8-valve, liquid-cooled parallel twin engine, retuned for more midrange power. The six-speed tranny includes Kawasaki's Assist & Slipper Clutch and Positive Neutral, which are more than just words capitalized to make them sound important—both aid in ease of shifting and thus lower the bar for folks who might be learning the very concept of shifting at the same time they're learning to balance on two wheels.

Kawasaki's docs claim that the Versys-X's "Short final gearing enhances low- to mid-range power feel and response," and while none of us would call the V-X a mid-range monster, first gear seems especially low and makes for easy balancing acts and 'round-towning. But like the littlest Ninja, the Versys-X feels best when you're twisting the throttle like its dancin' time with Chubby Checker.

We don't totally agree with the old adage, "It's more fun to ride slow bikes fast..." because after all, fast bikes are really fun, but it's truly a blast to wring the Versys-X out. If you're not into that—or not ready for that—the little twin is easy to manage.

That's really where the similarities to the Ninja 300 end, and anyone who isn't familiar with Kawasaki's long-running little guy might not think the two bikes were connected at all.

The chassis offers "real bike" ergos, unless your idea of a "real bike" is a GS or a Road King. It's not as big as either of those beasts or other similarly oversized machines, but it is what many will consider to be more normal-sized than other beginner bikes. The new frame uses the engine as a stressed member for stiffness, and hangs reasonable suspension components from either end: 41mm fork tubes with 5.1" of travel up front, non-adjustable of course, and a single shock out back with 5.8" of travel, adjustable for preload of course. I say "of course" because this is standard stuff for bikes in this price range, and the bouncy bits work acceptably. Smaller riders did

feel that the bike was over-sprung, bigger riders wanted beefier springs—the usual. If we were to add a Versys-X to the *CityBike* long term test fleet, we'd surely do some unspeakable things to the springs, but the suspension is workable as delivered.

Brakes are a teensy bit less likeable. I never got into real trouble, and even with stock tires rarely got the Bosch ABS to join the party. The single front 290mm and rear 220mm rotors are both squeeze by 2-piston calipers, and they get the job done. There's nothing to complain about... but I'm a little spoiled by steel braided lines and would like a little more feel at the front lever.

Note that "needs more feel" is exactly the kind of complaint most potential Versys-X owners won't know to make. The brakes are fine, and when some numbnuts on an FJR thought it was ok to enter the split at a 45-degree angle without looking for motorcycles already in the split, the Versys-X stopped in a very composed, drama-free way, leaving me to worry only about the important task of swearing at this dangerously perfect example of how we motorcyclists are sometimes our own worst enemies.

It wasn't just the brakes that helped keep that encounter manageable, though. The Versys-X is easy to manage—the low seat helps, but the overall package is just so friendly, whether you're in the city or wicking it up on the backroads.

Even at freeway speeds, the bike works well, although you may start wishing for a bit more of a windscreen. Vibes are tolerable, even if spinning such high revs takes some getting used to. The tach gets into the red at 12k, and you're gonna be turning 10k at freeway speeds. My freeway speeds, anyway.

That so little of the 300's jingly-jangling makes it to the rider is certainly due to vibration control efforts all over the bike: the weird rubber ring wedged between the spokes and brake rotor in the front wheel, that we first thought was a shipping leftover; the bits of metal on the bottom of the pegs, clearly there to dampen the vibes; the uh... *plug-shaped* weights on the end of the grips.



Guest tester Kerri Dougherty.

It's a testament to the impressive rideability of the \$5,399 (add \$300 for ABS) Versys-X that I found myself choosing it over other bikes in the garage for my daily commute—even without a topcase! The 19" front wheel is helpful for the near-fire road condition of many Bay Area roads, and coupled with the longer travel, makes the bike an enjoyable round-towner. There's even a small but functional rack, and Kawasaki also offers what can only be described as "cute" hard luggage: side and top cases. There are optional crash bars, hand guards and auxiliary lights too, if you want to make your V-X look more adventurous. But the killer accessory? Center stand, of course.

Editor Dirty-Stich, having previously committed some of *CityBike's* project resources to the ultimate CRF250L build, is now wondering whether he ought to do the same with a Versys-X. First order of business, after the center stand? Skid plate.

Kerri: The Real Adventurer's Take

As a smaller adventurer, I've been throwing around 650s with the stubborn enthusiasm of Napoleon, and so have been eager to see what recent chatter about smaller adventure bikes would bring. Daily my BMW F650 Dakar and I ramble through the hills of San Francisco, delicately balancing at those uphill stop signs and barreling down the hills, doing our best to avoid suddenly stopped Ubers and tourists who think it's perfectly fine to stand in the middle of the road looking at everything around them except the other humans and moving vehicles.

When I'm lucky enough to steal away for some traveling, the Dakar is fantastic, most definitely an upgrade from its predecessor, that rattle box of a KLR650 I managed to not kill myself on. I refuse to adjust the height of my bikes, lowering links be damned, because if Gaston Rahier can do it, so can I!

That all being said, when I take these bigger bikes off road and through Baja, I sometimes think to myself that it could be nice to be able to get both feet down at the same time. So when Editor Surj offered me the opportunity to test out the Versys-X 300, shortly after one of those off-road moments, I jumped (see: played it cool) at the opportunity to try out the rumor that had materialized into a real machine.

On a totally indulgent level, the bike's digital dash shows what gear you're in, how much gas is left in your tank, when you are riding as eco-efficiently as possible and how many miles you're getting per gallon of gas. While not new, these bits of live data are big steps up from the analog gauges I'm used to.

I was able to get a range of about 225 miles out of the 4.5 gallon tank, which is a decent distance. In the city I averaged around 50 MPG, but out on the highways and backroads I was able to push that to 54 MPG. I hope this doesn't turn me into one of those hypermiling Prius drivers, always competing to be as efficient as possible while sacrificing the pleasures of driving.





The 300 is zippy and responsive, with a lightness that allows it to be nimble without the usual battles of pushing around the weight of a larger adventure bike. But I was also pleased to find that I wasn't pushed around by the wind on Bay Area bridges as much as I expected.

The Versys-X is also skinnier than most adventure bikes, which along with its deftness makes it a good lane splitter. That said, I'd love something slightly louder, as the Ninja engine really only makes much noise when revving over 7,000 RPM. To hear it, you might think I was one of those young, daredevil heathens, speeding down the highway with t-shirts billowing out behind them, when really I was just doing 20mph and trying to engage the eco-mode.

Even with the requisite roaring RPM, the bike holds its own on the highway, remaining comfortable, with barely any noticeable vibration while riding over 75mph. I personally suggest holding about 66mph in 6th gear to pay proper respects to the little beast, but to each their own.

Ergonomics are mostly good for smaller riders. Levers are close enough to the handlebars that I could keep my hands on both throttle and front brake at the same time. They're also light, responsive and easy on the hands. Between that and the smooth shifting, the Versys-X made what could have been an extended adjustment period, a very quick and easy one.

The seat is *hard*. I initially imagined a future with a very sore bum. But in top

motorcycle travel shape, I usually don't like to go more than 3 hours without a break, even with a cushy seat. So while I imagined that the hard seat would be an issue, it was surprisingly fine.

The seat's bump stop was nice, and was especially valuable when going up the city hills. The riding position is *supposed* to be upright but I found that I was leaning forward just a bit—not the most comfortable position for longer rides. There's space on the seat for me to move forward and get into a more upright, dirt-style position, but moving that far forward in the saddle felt awkward and I found that I was much more comfortable rearward, against the bump stop.

And I was able to get both of my feet on the ground at the same time! This was a new and exhilarating feeling, almost as if I had full control over the motorcycle. In comparison, my F650 felt heavy and slow when I returned to it and I immediately found myself missing the quick power and nimble handling of the Versys 300.

The Versys 300 is a great intro motorcycle, easy to manage and very fun to ride. I wouldn't take it over the same unpaved roads that I've stubbornly wrestled other bikes on; the spoked wheels and seating position seem to be more of a nod to dual-sporting than an actual invitation to go anywhere off-road. And like the men in Point Reyes who came up to me in the parking lot said (after feeling the need to rest their hand on

my shoulder), "Well, you don't really take those other bikes off-road, do you?"

Actually, I do.

But Kawasaki's slogan for the Versys-X 300, "Any road. Any time." is accurate, and the 300 can still offer adventures on well-groomed forest service roads, which can take you to truly stunning locations.

Kerri is something of a dynamo on her Dakar, and the founder of Motobird Adventures, a motorcycle tour company for women riders, run by a woman rider. Find out more at MotobirdAdventures.com. @



In The Red Corner



Photo: Surj Gish

2017 Honda "Bobber Without A Cause" Rebel 500

By Surj Gish, with Max Klein, Fish & Sam Devine
Photos by Max Klein & Surj Gish

Honda's Rebel 500 is a seriously good bike. I'm not going to get all breathless and spout adjectives like *stellar* or *fantastic* the way people seem to feel they need to these days, characterizing everything with ever-increasing levels of over-inflated awesomeness, and anyway, the Rebel ain't about such nonsense. It's just a very good bike.

Full stop.

It's also a better bobber than Indian's Scout, a better Sportster than Harley-Davidson's Forty-Eight, in fact better than any Sportster with the exception of the Roadster, which we all love because it kicks ass.

I know, I've clearly lost a good number of my marbles. But while the Rebel deviates from the "steeped in tradition" styling and details of the American low-riders, the defining outline is there. Check out Sam's notes from his first ride of the new Rebels at the press launch earlier this year ("Rebuilt, Rebooted, Reborn... Sam Rides The New Rebel At Honda's Release Party" – May 2017) at CityBike.com/back for more on how that silhouette came to be. In the here and right now, check out that low-slung, muscular look. Yes, it's a slightly smaller bike, and yes it lacks the big balls out that accompanies its American brethren's bigger small-blocks.

The attitude is there, though, wrapped up in post-modern shapes that bend

the rules of cruiser styling without making us turn away in disgust, like the perfectly-sculpted peanut tank perched on a perimeter-esque frame, but also employing classical elements like that fat front tire and a Harley-Davidson-esque rear fender with no passenger seat.

But even better, even with all that *get to the choppah* styling, the Rebel is more than just another 'round town, short-hauler with punishing, painful ergos. It's a proper, rideable motorcycle, and that's why I can say without irony or sarcasm that it's a better motorcycle than similar, more expensive bikes like the Scout and the Forty-Eight.

There are only two cases in which this isn't true. First, if you're wedded to the Harley-Davidson or Indian brands, or similarly to the notion of *buying American*, the Rebel won't be your bag. Second, if you have displacement hang-ups and just can't fathom the idea that a real motorcycle can have a "little" 500cc engine, or if you just can't wrap your head around pistons less than 4" across, the Rebel can't help you.

I get it. Both the Scout and Sportster engines are engaging, fun motors. Bigger motors are better.

But consider the actual use of most Sportsters (minus the Roadster) and

Scouts: they're bar-hoppers. The gist of that use case, beyond riding intoxicated with either alcohol or douchey-ness, is short "hops" around town, unencumbered by mundanities like picking up groceries and dry cleaning.

Never mind that "bar-hopper" is the stupidest fucking description *ever* applied to a motorcycle, and that such limited-use machines are representative of what's wrong with motorcycling in America. We don't have to talk about that now, because the Rebel doesn't suffer those limitations.

While other *middleweight* cruisers, emphasis on "middleweight" for the laughs that descriptor brings, suffer from handling roughly comparable to that of a skateboard, say an Eighties-era Christian Hosoi Hammerhead, with a V8 bungee-corded on, and forward controls that curse the rider to suffering an inability to move around on the bike and insta-numb genitals, the Rebel offers a reasonably neutral riding position and surprisingly good handling for a \$5,999 cruiser (add \$300 for ABS). Actually, scratch that: surprisingly good handling for a \$5,999 motorcycle.

It may surprise you that I'm talking about the Rebel as if it's a *real motorcycle*, not just

a beginner bike, not just a "girl's bike," not just an entry-level cruiser.

What makes it so good? It's hard to pin down exactly—and we're not gonna fall back on talking about *soul* the way the Italophiles do, although the Rebel does have a lot of character. Sure, the ergos are neutral and work well for a broad array of differently-sized folks, but it's not just



Photo: Surj Gish

that it's comfortable. Yes, the grunty, eager engine is surprisingly good—we unanimously agreed that it feels much better than in the other Honda 500s, thanks to some "retuned for torque" wizardry—and the six-speed tranny is practically the definition of slick. Despite the utilitarian, necessarily low-cost nature of the suspenders, the wide-set non-adjustable 41mm fork (4.77" of travel) and preload-adjustable dual shocks (3.77" of travel) work together well to deliver a reasonable ride. The single discs (290mm

front, 246mm rear) are perfectly decent too.

But in typical Honda fashion, the package is more than the sum of its parts. Maybe it's just that we had low expectations for the Rebel given its roots, but every time we'd hand the bike back and forth amongst the Wreckers of the Crew, we'd exclaim, "You know, that's just a *good motorcycle!*"

To make sure we're speaking the same language, "great bike" doesn't mean it can pace a well-ridden supermoto on your favorite string of curves and tar snakes, nor does it mean it's ready for a trip to Alaska without significant modifications. What it does mean is that the Rebel is just a damn good motorcycle, akin to the UJM's of yore.

The whole thing looks rather sassy and fine, too, in its blacked-out, stripped-down way—though I'll admit I had to warm to its unique styling. My first response to the photos Max messaged to me from the Rebel launch party last year was a groan and some swearing—admittedly my response to many things, good and bad.

Before the resurgence in beginner bike options in recent years, Honda had built quite a legacy with the original Rebel,

but it was mostly about the 250, the ubiquitous "other option" if you didn't want a little Ninja. The Rebel 450 was only produced from '86 to '87. The Rebel 300—essentially the same bike as the 500, but with Honda's 300 single in place of its bigger brother's twin—will almost certainly continue that legacy.

But the Rebel 500 creates something of a class of its own: a cost-conscious / beginner bike that isn't budget-spec'ed into lameness, a lightweight cruiser that rides its own ride with enough style and swagger to transcend the usual "this'll do till I get a real bike" misgivings, a motorcycle that does most things well enough to keep us saying, "You know, that's just a *good motorcycle!*" over and over.

Editor Surj's current story, that's he's sticking to: the mysteriously smaller engine that our red Rebel had in its frame upon arriving back at the mothership is definitely not a CRF250L engine, and our 250L project bike definitely doesn't have a 500 twin in it now.

Max: Needs More Ride Red, Bro

Many moons ago I was an MSF instructor. The two range Rebel 250s we had were arguably the most problematic machines since the original Terminator. (Or the liquid metal T1000, whichever one was actually the greater threat to mankind, which is of course the start of a long conversation.) If the peacock was not

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AFM Round Six | September 23 - 24 | Thunderhill Raceway Park



8:00	Riders Meeting
8:25	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 1
9:45	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 2
10:55	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 3
12:00	Lunch Break
1:00	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 4
2:10	Practice Groups 1-5 RD 5
3:15	National Anthem / Mark Grids
3:30	Race 1: Formula III <i>Sponsored by Spears Racing</i>
	Race 1: Clubman Light
	Race 1: Vintage
3:50	Race 2: Formula 40 Heavy <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspension</i>
	Race 2: Formula 40 Mid <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspension</i>
4:20	Race 3: AFemme <i>Sponsored by MCTechnologies</i>
	Race 3: Formula 40 Light <i>Sponsored by JPH Suspensio</i>
	Race 3: 350 Superstock <i>Sponsored by Feel Like A Pro</i>
4:40	Race 4: Formula 50
	Race 4: Clubman Heavy
	Race 4: Clubman Middle



8:00	Practice Groups 1-5
9:15	Riders Meeting
9:45	Race 1: Legacy Light Race 1: 250 Superbike <i>Sponsored by Catalyst Reaction</i>
10:05	Race 2: 750 Superbike
10:30	Race 3: 700 Superstock Race 3: Lightweight Twins Race 3: Formula Singles
10:50	Race 4: 600 Superbike
11:15	Race 5: Open GP <i>Sponsored by Fast Line Cycles</i>
	Race 5: Super Dino
11:40	Race 6: Formula I <i>Sponsored by AV Spaces</i>
12:00	Lunch Break
1:05	Race 7: Open Superbike <i>Sponsored by Pacific Track Time</i>
1:30	Race 8: Formula IV Race 8: Legacy Middle
1:55	Race 9: Formula Pacific <i>Sponsored by Dunlop Race Tire Service</i>
	Winner's Circle Presentation
2:40	Race 10: 450 Superbike Race 10: 300 Super Sport Race 10: Legacy 250 Race 10: 250 Superstock
3:00	Race 11: Open Twins Race 11: Open Superstock <i>Sponsored by San Jose BMW</i>
3:25	Race 12: 600 Superstock <i>Sponsored by Keigwins@theTrack</i>
3:55	Race 13: 450 Superstock Race 13: 650 Twins Race 13: Formula II
4:20	Race 14: 750 Superstock Race 14: Legacy Heavy



Round Five Race Results

250 Super Stock Novice - 947-Soua Yang (KAW), 968-Dan Nguyenphuc (KAW)
300 World Super Sport - 265-Marc Edwards (YAM), 43-Jay Kinberger (YAM), 8-Patryk Buchcik (KAW)
300 World Super Sport Novice - 954-Alan Fortin (KAW), 720-Derek Powel (KAW), 907-James Dills (KAW)
450 Superbike - 230-Paul Johnson (YAM), 223-Dave Moss (YAM), 995-Charles Coyston (YAM)
450 Superbike Novice - 888-Brandon Souza (YAM), 988-Miguel Correa (SUZ), 981-Xiao Xiao (YAM)
Open Twins - 98-Brendan Walsh (DUC), 834-Joseph Akrop (BUE), 847-John Akrop (BUE)
Open Twins Novice - 916-Jade Oliver (DUC), 769-Matthew Houston (DUC), 937-Derek Yuill (DUC)
Open Super Stock - 192-Tyler Ohara (KAW), 2-Wyatt Farris (KAW), 91-Jason Lauritzen (KAW)
Open Super Stock Novice - 986-Daniel Velazco (BMW), 761-John Doerheit (YAM), 982-Kenneth DeAlba (BMW)

Formula III - 265-Marc Edwards (YAM), 412-Brett Voorhees (YAM), 43-Jay Kinberger (YAM)
Formula III Novice - 954-Alan Fortin (KAW), 907-James Dills (KAW), 197-Haim Beressi
Vintage - 79-Paul Kieffer (SUZ), 132-Terry Cheney (HON), 893-Mark McKinney (YAM)
Clubman LT - 776-Nick Gomez (SUZ), 888-Brandon Souza (YAM), 988-Miguel Correa (SUZ)
F-40 HVY - 91-Jason Lauritzen (KAW), 3-Cory Call (BMW), 18-Gavin Botha (KAW)
F-40 MID - 57-Thomas Montano (YAM), 14-Stephen Rue (HON), 688-Kevin Winter (YAM)
F-40 LT Novice - 745-Greg Stone (YAM), 456R-Harm Hansen (YAM), 946-James Roy (YAM)
F-40 LT - 223-Dave Moss (HON), 134-Greg Clouse (YAM), 423-Owen Flatley (YAM)
F-40 LT Novice - 804-Greg Douglas II (SUZ), 808-Brian Hunnicutt (KAW)
AFemme - 302-AJ Jacobsen (KAW), 619-Jennifer Lauritzen (YAM), 92-Valentine Welch (SUZ), 103-Daniela Fredrick (YAM)
AFemme Novice - 772-Shiree Cano (TRI), 991-Caroline Looney (KAW)
300 Super Stock - 412-Brett Voorhees (YAM), 265-Marc Edwards (YAM), 43-Jay Kinberger (YAM)
300 Super Stock Novice - 954-Alan Fortin (KAW), 990-Andrew Park (KAW), 197-Haim Beressi (KAW)
F-50 - 18-Gavin Botha (KAW), 708-Maarten Bon (YAM), 23R-Keith DiBri (SUZ)
F-50 Novice - 745-Greg Stone (YAM)
Clubman HVY - 761-John Doerheit (YAM), 986-Daniel Velazco (BMW), 774-Dallas Alison (BMW)
Clubman MID - 827-Hani Bisharat (YAM), 946 James Roy (KAW), 434-Salvatore Rizzo (YAM)
450 Super Stock - 230-Paul Johnson (YAM), 995-Charles Coyston (YAM), 210-Chris Reed (HON)
450 Super Stock Novice - 888-Brandon Souza (YAM), 988-Miguel Correa (SUZ), 804-Greg Douglas II (SUZ)
650 Twins - 444-Martin Sullivan (SUZ), 438 Joshua Davies (SUZ), 622-Peter Hively (SUZ)
650 Twins Novice - 776 Nick Gomez (SUZ)
Formula II - 146-Roger Baker (YAM), 797-Norbert Katona (KTM)
Legacy HVY - 721-Benjamin Hodges (SUZ), 829-Jesse Carter (SUZ), 28-Jose Flores (SUZ)
Legacy HVY Novice - 712-Nick Allison (?), 996-Jeremy King (KAW), 832-Jesse Wawrzyczek (SUZ)
750 Super Stock - 747-Steve Habura (KAW), 823-Robert Brittain (YAM), 188-Luke Luciano (YAM)
750 Super Stock Novice - 768-Nick Lundquist (YAM), 827-Hani Bisharat (YAM), 608-Cyrl Brun (SUZ)
250 Super Stock - 389-Pao Vang (KAW), 311-Paul Sturges (KAW), 667-Steve Driscoll (KAW)

Legacy MID Novice - 892-Jesse Quinonez (KAW), 772-Shiree Cano (TRI), 430-Marcos Brito (HON)
Formula IV - 444-Martin Sullivan (SUZ), 438-Joshua Davies (SUZ), 622-Peter Hively (SUZ)
Formula IV Novice - 888-Brandon Souza (YAM), 988-Miguel Correa (SUZ)
FORMULA PACIFIC - 192-Tyler Ohara (KAW), 3-Cory Call (BMW), 2-Wyatt Farris (KAW), 4-Chris Siglin (BMW), 173-Sebastiao Ferreira (YAM), 91-Jason Lauritzen (KAW), 99-Chad Swain (KAW), 143-Jordan Edginton (YAM), 765-George Myshlyayev (KAW), 25-Greg McCullough (KAW)
Formula Singles - 797-Norbert Katona
Lightweight Twins - 265-Marc Edwards (YAM), 412-Brett Voorhees (YAM), 230-Paul Johnson (KAW)
Lightweight Twins Novice - 954-Alan Fortin (KAW), 720-Derek Powell (KAW), 939-Nihladhar Lucky Odisetti
700 Super Stock - 787-Sam Romick (SUZ), 444-Martin Sullivan (SUZ), 438-Joshua Davies (SUZ)
600 SBK - 297X-Ezra Beaubier (YAM), 7-Brandon Crawford (YAM), 108-Kevin Murphy (YAM)
600 SBK Novice - 434-Salvatore Rizzo (YAM), 827-Hani Bisharat (YAM), 608-Cyrl Brun (SUZ)
Open SBK - 192-Tyler Ohara (KAW), 2-Wyatt Farris (KAW), 99-Chad Swain (KAW)
Open SBK Novice - 712-Nick Allison (SUZ), 761-John Doerheit (YAM), 986-Daniel Velazco (BMW)
750 SBK - 108-Kevin Murphy (YAM), 823-Robert Brittain (YAM), 747-Steve Habura (KAW)
750 SBK Novice - 608-Cyrl Brun (SUZ), 838-Robert McCoy (SUZ), 404-Tomas Covinha (YAM)
Legacy LT - 622-Peter Hively (SUZ), 995-Charles Coyston (YAM), 36-Thomas Dorsey (SUZ)
Legacy LT Novice - 776-Nick Gomez (SUZ), 704-Greg Jessee (HON)
250 SBK - 412-Brett Voorhees (YAM), 265-Marc Edwards (YAM), 230-Paul Johnson (KAW)
250 SBK Novice - 954-Alan Fortin (KAW), 720-Derek Powell (KAW), 939-Nihladhar Lucky Odisetti (YAM)

600 Super Stock - 297X-Ezra Beaubier (YAM), 7-Brandon Crawford (YAM), 108-Kevin Murphy (YAM)
600 Super Stock Novice - 827-Hani Bisharat (YAM), 768-Nick Lundquist (YAM), 434-Salvatore Rizzo (YAM)
Super Dino - 721-Benjamin Hodges (SUZ), 146-Roger Baker (YAM), 622-Peter Hively (SUZ)
Super Dino Novice - 776-Nick Gomez (SUZ), 704-Greg Jessee (HON)
Open GP - 3-Cory Call (BMW), 173-Sebastiao Ferreira (YAM), 4-Chris Siglin (BMW)
Open GP Novice - 986-Daniel Velazco (BMW), 712-Nick Allison (?), 761-John Doerheit (YAM)
Formula 1 - 823-Robert Brittain (YAM), 928-Trevor Nogueira (KAW), 188-Luke Luciano (YAM)
Formula 1 Novice - 768-Nick Lundquist (YAM), 434-Salvatore Rizzo (YAM), 555-Oluwadare Dare Kolawole (YAM)
Legacy MID - 747-Steve Habura (SUZ), 28-Jose Flores (SUZ), 829-Jesse Carter (SUZ)

Top Overall Expert Points as of Round 5
1 - 260 - 297X Ezra Beaubier
2 - 246 - 7 Brandon Crawford
3 - 246 - 2 Wyatt Farris
4 - 245 - 3 Cory Call
5 - 244 - 265 Marc Edwards
6 - 242 - 4 Chris Siglin
7 - 239 - 412 Brett Voorhees
8 - 231 - 444 Martin Sullivan
9 - 230 - 192 Tyler Ohara
10 - 223 - 14 Stephen Rue

Top Overall Novice Points as of Round 5
1 - 261 - 827 Hani Bisharat
2 - 235 - 768 Nick Lundquist
3 - 209 - 434 Salvatore Rizzo
4 - 196 - Tomas Covinha
5 - 195 - 986 Daniel Velazco

Rules For The Pits

Speed limit in the pits is a walking pace (5mph).

Alcohol abuse and drug use is prohibited.

No intentional wheelies, stoppies, or other exhibitions of speed.

Only entered riders and race officials may enter the racing surface

Kids under the age of 16 may not ride or be a passenger on any pitbike.

Be a good neighbor. Keep the noise down and consider turning off your generators after 10pm

Pets must be leashed at all times.

Do not leave fuel cans, tires, or any other trash behind. This is a fineable offense.

Please be aware of traffic in the pits at all times.

Remember to have fun!

Riders are responsible for their pit crew and guests.

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| Pacific Track Time | Racer Gloves |
| Texas Tea Oil | Zoom Zoom Trackdays |





Photos: Surj Gish



moved to the off position immediately after hitting the kill switch, fuel would start pouring out—stuck float! There were always little puddles of “strike match here for big fun” under them when we pulled ‘em out for weekend classes, and they leaked other fluids out of every possible orifice.

Still, after continual attempts by seemingly everyone that threw a leg over one to kill them, the 205s soldiered on. Hours of beginners hammering on the clutches, countless zero-MPH drops—hell, even the kid that managed to slide one under a chain link fence couldn't extinguish the Rebel's life force. As much as I hated those range Rebels, I had a lot of respect for their ability to carry on in the face of adversity and constant abuse.

I guess that's why I was so excited to see what the new and improved descendants of those unstoppable 250s could do.

Going into my first ride with entry-level expectations probably worked in favor of the 500. I've ridden other Hondas with

the same powerplant, so I thought I knew what to expect: not quite enough torque, adequate horsepower.

I was *positively disappointed*. As oxymoronic (that's me!) as that sounds, the 500's motor behaved exactly how I wished it would have in the X and F models we've ridden previously. While the CB series bikes have enough power to get out of their own way, they lack the excitement that the Rebel rewarded me with when I ripped the go-stick. That more than made up for the lack of substantial top end power and encouraged some stoplight drag racing... not that I engaged in any such malarkey.

The suspension was also the opposite of what I expected it to be. Sure, it's budget-y, but not the bottom-out-early spine-compressing shocks that many base-model cruisers come with, and the fork offered a bit more like real suspension than I'd anticipated.

My biggest complaint? It felt like the rebound was much quicker than the

compression, causing me to wonder if I was riding on a trampoline on some of the bumper twisties that I visited. But sling that thing down a clean bit of pavement—and if you can find any 'round here—and for a minute you might forget you are on a budget cruiser.

The minimalist pseudo-chopper styling that kids these days love is present. There's only one *Rebel* marking on the bike: a sticker on the rear fender. It isn't die cut and it's not color-matched to the bike. While I applaud Honda for not slapping Rebel logos everywhere all Harley-nilly, they could have at least made that sticker match the rest of the fairly clean, well thought-out motorcycle.

I also think they could have carried the red theme (present only on the tank) of our bike to the fender, or otherwise added a bit more color elsewhere. Red springs maybe? It's not that the bike is bland, but it might be a little too low key.

That being said, the fact that I'm complaining about sticker quality and lack of color, instead of the motor, transmission, fueling, ergonomics, or even the suspension (much) means that Honda has produced a damn fine entry level cruiser.

Max is the SF chapter Director of the AFM. We always crack wise about how he's angling for new class for whatever bike we're reviewing, or maybe about milk crates and KLRs. But Max doesn't have a KLR anymore, and Rebels, if they were gonna be raced, would be raced on a West Oakland hooligan track, and the AFM ain't gonna sanction that shit.

Fish: The Rebel Is The Real Deal

While the Rebel nameplate seems to inspire thoughts of new rider training courses for Max and damn near every other person I talked to, I have a different association.

I'd always seen the Rebel as Honda's chopper. The distinctly raked forks and forward controls actually had a pleasing visual line, to my eye. Later in life I heard rumors that the styling was done by Arlen Ness, which is believable given the bike's proportions and stylized battery cover and fuse panel. The new Rebel abandons that classical styling and has taken the bike into what I would call “modern standard” territory. While it's rather tame compared to some of the bikes Honda has given us (cough... CTX1300...cough), it's a somewhat radical, thoroughly modern-looking bike, the kind of package that looks

good stock, but also offers a starting canvas for customization. Not catalog customization—I mean actual cutting and welding.

Using terms like entry-level, learner, or budget undermines the fact that this is a genuinely great motorcycle. I haven't ridden the various 500s that this powerplant debuted in and so can't make the comparison that Editor Surj and Max are, but I can say that it's the motor is a very good match for this chassis in this state of tune. It's a Honda, so it's no surprise that the fueling is butter smooth with no noticeable flaws, but there's more to it than that—the power curve really highlights the strengths of the rest of the package.

There's no excess, but the power is adequate for sure. It's also right where it needs to be. Mid-range punch is spirited, but in my opinion the top end doesn't disappoint either. When it's time to show off your DMV lollipop test skills, there's ample torque to keep you from stalling out in the box turn. I'm probably about to anger the cultier Hondaphiles by saying that it reminds me a lot of the NT650 Hawk engine.

The goodness doesn't stop with the engine, though. Honda went non-stereotypical cruiser with the seat and ergos, and we are all better for it. My 6-foot tall frame easily found comfort, with my feet almost directly below my hips and my arms falling comfortably onto the slightly-above-my-waist bars. The one friend I have who will still ride with me commented that



Photo: Max Klein

the bike looked proportionate under me, an impressive feat, considering a 5ft tall person can easily find similar function and comfort on the same bike.

The somehow-universal riding position gives you good command over the bike, and the upright posture provides you with an easy view of your surroundings.

So you're perched comfortably atop this sweet powerplant, what now?

Max and Surj touched on the suspension, and they're correct, it's much better than you'd think it'd be. What really plays in the Rebel's favor is the actual geometry. The visual fatness of the front tire is a lie—the Rebel has light steering feel and can attain good lean angles.

Even as *CityBike's* resident authority on misusing motorcycles (TKCs for all the bikes!) I'll admit the Rebel isn't a race bike. It's very confident in the twisties, but I'll echo Max again and say that the rougher California roads don't treat it well at urgent paces. Other than that, the Rebel is a suitable accomplice for backroad antics.

Things like overly-intrusive ABS or poorly-valved linked systems can really spoil the fun for me. None of these issues are present here. The lack of ABS on our non-ABS equipped Rebel didn't get in my way (yuk yuk) but the brakes are adequate for the pace that this bike is capable of. I never found the threshold of fade, nor did I want for more bite.

Rear brake power was up to hooligan tasks and DMV test pattern antics, with

linear, smooth feel. I'm a rear brake abuser at times, using it to tighten my lines and manage low speed maneuvers, so I've boiled more than a few rear brakes, including the systems on my beloved Hawk GTs. Surprisingly, the Rebel is really up to the task here.

So, yeah, this new generation of Rebel is a great beginner bike. It's also more than that. It's a bike that I wouldn't mind having in my stable. It's not quite ready for a cross-country ride, but it's a superb combination of fun power and a nimble chassis. You may not always meet the nicest people on a Honda, but I can't imagine anyone having a bad time while riding this one.

“Rebel” is Fish's middle name; last name, TKC.

Sam: Rebel One

The sun is setting at the far end of Lincoln Way. A cruiser splits to the front of a stop. That old game pops up: what bike? What make? What model? It's a Harley of course. There are generally two types of bikes on Lincoln Way: sportbikes and Harleys. Sure, other styles come along, but they're instantly recognizable: adventure bikes; Kawasaki cruisers with their jagged lines and narrow front tires; scooters.

Backlit and silhouetted, this bike is obviously a big American cruiser. The fat front tire, tall gas tank, drag bars, beardo in a ¾ helmet. Yep. Obviously Milwaukee steel.

But as the signal changes and the engine winds up, there's no *potato-potato*, and



Photo: Max Klein

Days later I'm drilling with our Rebel 500 in a parking lot, running fundamental exercises, riding in a straight line using smooth throttle, trying not to compress the suspension. The Rebel offers up steady, forgiving power-delivery, not jolting but not gutless either. It sits in the sweet spot between oversized and underpowered—at least for riders under 200 lbs.

Weaving between the cones, it's a light, responsive bike, an all-day rider. Put into a tight, locked-out, counter-leaned circle, it chugs steadily around, refusing to stall. It's the type of cycle that's a pleasure to cruise up to North Beach for coffee, down to Half Moon Bay for lunch, then out to the Beach Chalet for a sunset beer. Powerful enough to get out of its own way, light enough to take little effort to ride.

The cones get rearranged for faster cornering exercises. Getting off the seat, the bike behaves well, offering a decent amount of lean without scraping hard parts. Whipping around and around, getting roasted in the sun, the Rebel is nothing if not fun.

Sam is our SF-based columnist and in-house Honda Rebel expert / enthusiast / devotee / zealot. He rode his Rebel 450 to New Orleans before drag racing it, like on an actual track.



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BATTLE OF THE BEGINNERS



HONDA
"BOBBER WITHOUT A
CAUSE" REBEL 500



KAWASAKI
"ADV EXECUTIONER"
VERSYS-X 300

AND THE WINNER IS...

By Surj Gish
Photos by Surj Gish
& Angelica Rubalcaba

You can't go wrong with either of the bikes in our made-up Battle of the Beginners. That's actually pretty amazing in and of itself. These are glory days for beginner bikes: after literally decades with a tiny number of tiny options, the last few years have seen nearly every manufacturer joining the fray.

The Versys-X and the Rebel 500 (the 300 too, of course) are shining examples of what manufacturers can cook up when they start from near-scratch with the goal of building a compelling, useful motorcycle that can serve new riders and experienced riders well. Both are welcome alternatives to the usual semi-sporty-bike options for new riders, and both ignore expectations that a beginner bike has to be a watered-down, half-pint version of something cool, that only looks like the real business from very far away.

That's not to say that the previous options—the 250s and 300s—are bad motorcycles. What they have been, though, is fraught with compromise, meaning many new riders' first ongoing experience with motorcycles is cramped, uncomfortable, and underpowered.

That last one—the lack of power—isn't as big a deal as it's often made out to be. Most of the 300s do freeway speeds in an acceptable fashion, although they don't have much headroom above that. The

Versys-X 300 too—it's spinning big revs to keep up with freeway traffic, but the difference between it and a Ninja 300 is that ergonomically speaking, the Versys arguably puts the rider in a better position for riding beyond the city limits.

Sure, people do big miles on li'l Ninjas—I know someone who's done multiple Saddle Sore 1000s on a 300, for example, and Courtney Olive wrote about his sport-touring experience aboard his Ninja 300



Photo: Surj Gish

("The Perfect Small-Rounder" – July 2016) here in these pages last year. But if I say to you, "Hey, we're riding 300 miles tomorrow, and another 300 miles the next day. You want a Ninja 300 or a Versys-X?" you're likely to choose the Versys-X. Pretty much everyone here at World Headquarters would do the same.

Even better, the Versys-X is so... well, versatile, that we've debated whether we ought to replace our long-running all-purpose beater CRF250L project with a Versys-X, partly because it'd be fun to see if we could make it properly dirty-capable. I think we could get it there, but it'll never match the L for off-road-worthiness, so we're sticking with the RaceTech-equipped

Honda for now. That thing can be taken damn near anywhere, spanked like it's been really, really bad, and not even bat its cute li'l eyelashes. And the Versys-X likely wouldn't crash as well—a salient point in this discussion.

Which brings us to the Rebel, which we loved more unanimously than the Versys-X. Although the cruiser format is arguably cursed with more inherent limitations than the tall-roundin' goodness



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

of the Kawasaki, the Rebel really only looks like a cruiser. It rides a lot more like a standard, and it does it well.

Give it the Sam Devine treatment: throw a couple ammo cans and some stickers on there and then... well, ride the piss out of it, and you've got yourself a pretty compelling machine. Hell, maybe we'd even put some TKCs on it, to make Sam and Fish happy.

The Rebel 500 is so compelling, in fact, that while we've given up on the idea of a Versys-X project, a Rebel project is still on the table—though I'll admit it's partly because I have a ploy to throw up my hands and say, "Well guys, this ain't gonna work," and then put the 500 motor in the aforementioned CRF250L. The "logic"

behind this is that the 250 is basically the 300 motor, and if both the 300 and 500 fit in the Rebel, it oughtta be pretty straightforward to reverse-engineer that shit into the L—using "straightforward" and "engineer" pretty loosely, of course.

But sticking with the two bikes in their roughly stock forms, original engines intact, we have to—grudgingly—give the belt to the Rebel. It's not a knockout, by any means, and we'd be pretty Jimmy-Jazzed about having either of these machines in the garage here at World Headquarters for an extended period.

Believe me, I'm as surprised as you that the win went to the cruiser, given out propensity for these utilitarian adventure-y motorcycles. A big part of the Rebel's win factor is that it's more than a cruiser, but also, it's a good enough motorcycle that we shouldn't even bother to keep talking about how it's more than a cruiser.

So Rebel it is. Because, "You know, it's just a good motorcycle!" And at \$6,299 with ABS—just \$600 more than a Versys-X with ABS, it's a hell of a deal for that much goodness.

We're curious animals and we'd love to hear your thoughts on these bikes. If tomorrow, there were just two motorcycles to choose from, the Versys-X 300 and the Rebel 500, which one would you commit to, to have and to hold, to love and cherish, forsaking all others? Tell us which one and why at rfte@citybike.com. We'll send a t-shirt to the best email, based solely on made-up criteria that we haven't even begun to cook up yet. 🍷

Another Option:

Harley-Davidson Street Rod 750



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

By Surj Gish
Photos by Surj Gish
& Angelica Rubalcaba

We don't really accept some folks' conventional wisdom that first bikes have to be small singles or tiny twins—what they do need to be is easily manageable, in both power and physical mass. With that in mind, we looked at Harley-Davidson's \$8,699 Street Rod, the latest entry in H-D's slightly-smaller-than-a-Sportster Street line, and one of 50 models planned for the next five years.

The Rod looks like a café-up Street 750, but changes abound—longer swingarm, shorter subframe, sleek tail section that hints at the shape of the XR1200X's rear end, dual brake rotors up front, drag bars where clip-ons ought to be, and quite a bit more. The engine is updated for more power too. The two bikes are from the same neighborhood, but the Street Rod is cast as something of a Dallas to the Street's Ponyboy.

It's a decent-looking package overall, although the shape of the tank rubs me the wrong way—it looks vaguely like the tank from an Eighties' Yamaha Radian from the side, a shape that didn't look quite right to my eyes back in the Eighties, and still doesn't today. But other than that, it's an attractive assemblage of aspiring tough guy styling cues that doesn't rely on Harley's usual strict adherence to traditional looks.

Which gets it into trouble with some. The Rod doesn't suffer from the "sure looks awful metric, son" blandness of the original

prodding and a whole bunch of swearing, it started starting again, and we got to ride it.

I'll give you the good news first. The MoCo says the high-output iteration of the Revolution X 750 engine in the Rod puts out 18% more horsepower and 8% more torque than the run-o-the-mill mill, and it's a likeable engine, as mid-sized V-Twins often are. It pulls nicely out of corners, fueling is decent, sounds ok. Braking from the dual rotors up front (300mm, just like the back one) is fine. At 516 pounds wet (claimed), it's a bit porky, but everything from the non-adjustable 43mm inverted fork to the dual piggyback preload-

seems unworkable for any normal human. I'm not particularly tall at 5'10", and my knees were slightly above my hips, with my feet too far forward, too far apart.

Max earned a bit of infamy for describing the riding position of the Sportster Forty-Eight as "aggressive pooping" ("Peanut Envy – Harley-Davidson Sportster Forty-Eight" – September 2016) when we rode that "urban brawler" last year. The Rod puts you in a similarly uncomfortable squat that I've started calling "cat-holing." If you don't smell what I'm cooking (well, not cooking...) you're gonna need to Google that shit. The cat-holing position is ok for hauling ass in the twisties, and the bike

is capable enough for such antics. But everywhere else, that compressed squat is genuinely problematic, and exactly the wrong place to compromise on this bike.

Uncomfortable motorcycles are one thing—some of our favorites definitely are. But the Johnny's-first-Harley nature of the Street Rod means that in spite of marketing that would have the potential Street Rodder believing that he or she too can be Ghost Rider, many of those mounting the Rod are going to be new riders. The position of the pegs makes it downright awkward to get on and off 'em, and we predict that when Street Rods start showing up on Craigslist as their owners graduate to Fat Bobs or whatever, the ads aren't going to have the usual "never dropped" claims. Not truthful ones, anyway.



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

adjustable shocks (and in between) works well.

Everything except the ergos, which immediately turned off every single person that sat on the bike. The bars are fine, if a little wide and straight, but the relationship between the seat and pegs

It's a damn shame that the Rod got the shaft in the rider accommodations department, because otherwise it makes a real nice ¾-scale Sportster Roadster, and we think there's a real need for such a bike in the market.

Editor Surj carries a small trowel in his travelin' bag. Meow. 🍷



Photo: Surj Gish

Big Dogs, Bigger Skies

Triple Black Beauty Goes To Colorado For Some Proper Adventuring

By Surj Gish / Photos by Surj Gish and Angelica Rubalcaba

Earlier this year, Fish and I rode the wrongest bikes possible to Bungee Brent's 10th annual Backroad Bash. I rode our long-termer 2016 R1200GS, AKA Triple Black Beauty, and he rode his Buell Ulysses, shod with—you guessed it—TKCs. Yes, seriously. In our story on that ("Big Bikes At Bungee Brent's 10th Annual Backroad Bash" – August 2017) I mentioned that the Bungee ride, which I usually do on our other long-termer, the best-set-up CRF250L in the world, was a blazing hot dry run in the early-summer Sierras, intended to validate the GS's readiness for real adventure in Colorado in ways that riding it in and out of SF every day could not.

It was a successful smoke test. I broke some things, fixed most of 'em in time for Colorado, and loaded the GS in Big Vancy for the slog to the Big Dog Adventure Ride.

That's right. I put the *adventure bike* in a Transit 250 and drove 1,200+ miles before taking it out again. Call me a poser, but we were gonna be on the road for nearly two

weeks and between camera gear, stacks of *CityBikes* for the other riders, and a whole bunch of other totally necessary crap, it made more sense to drive. Plus, the GS has real knobbies on it, that woulda been rounded into uselessness before we passed Bonneville. Plus, plus, I needed to work on my laptop in the passenger seat when it was Angelica's turn to drive.

I heard some good-natured ribbing from a couple of the Big Dogs directed at those who trucked their bikes instead of riding there like real adventurers, but also distinctly remember that those guys didn't follow me to the top of the gnarlier shit on day two to repeat that criticism. And anyway, we got to take Big Vancy out for an unsanctioned run on the salt flats at Bonneville just before Speed Week started.

Boastful trash-talk aside, I should introduce the concept of the Big Dog Adventure Ride. You can get the full download at HorizonsUnlimited.com/bigdog but here's the skinny: the Big Dog is



Photo: Surj Gish

a sorta-annual, multi-day invitational ride in the Rocky Mountains for big adventure bikes, minimum 650cc. I say "sorta annual" because there wasn't one last year, and who knows if there's gonna be one next year. This year's event was sponsored by Aerostich, Grace Moto Adventures, Twilight Zone Motorcycles, Car Wash John (AKA Quarter Dog), Globe Rider Productions, and Avon Tyres. Riders came from all over the US: Florida, Minnesota, Texas, and of course California.

The trip offered a good excuse to get out on the road for a while, but the big reason I wanted to go was that the Chief of our burgeoning World Adventure Affairs Desk, Doc Frazier, has a big hand in making

the Big Dogs run. Despite what I'd call a flourishing email pen-pal relationship, I'd never met the good doctor in person, and relished the chance to hang and ride with him. Even better, longtime (*really* longtime) columnist Maynard Hershon lives in Denver, and by the time we vanned out toward the middle of America, I was pretty confident I'd convinced him to come down to Buena Vista as well.

I could write pages about the beautiful countryside on we encountered on the way to base camp in Buena Vista, Colorado. California riders talk a lot about our unique and wonderful geography and scenery, but the breathtaking, often brutal and otherworldly beauty of Utah and Colorado

are good reminders that we all need to get on the road more.

We arrive in Buena Vista on a rainy Monday afternoon. BV is a small town of about 2,600 people, roughly 120 miles southwest of Denver, about 8,000 feet



Photo: Surj Gish

above sea level. It seems to exist mostly as a seasonal base camp for outdoorsy folks, with lots of options for wheelin', rafting, hiking, and other character-building pursuits nearby. The quaint downtown area offers restaurants, coffee shops, and several gear shops hocking expensive backpacks, Life Straws and other such gear. It feels a little like I haven't escaped The Bay after all those miles—a lot of obviously wealthy white people congregate in the downtown area, where I hunker down to catch up on work each evening because the wireless at the hotel offers about as much connection as worn-out knobbies on wet pavement.

But like everywhere we stop in the 3,000+ miles of this trip, everyone is trusting, smiling, friendly. It's confusing, but refreshing.

Not quite everyone, actually. The woman at the front desk of the hotel doesn't seem happy to see us, and even less happy to let us check into the room we'd reserved months in advance, since it hasn't been cleaned yet. I'm worried about that room, because the front office of the hotel smells like cat litter mixed with worse-smelling cat litter, matched only by the stink in her eye, but the rest of the hotel seems unaffected by her grumpy cat lady tendencies. Eventually we check in, and when Doc Frazier arrives on his trusty KLR, he gives me a warm hug.

It rains like a motherfucker Monday night, but lets up for our riders' meeting in the morning. Post-meeting, I head south with Doc Frazier, a wonderful gentleman on an F650 by the name of Ron, infamous for some seriously Evel-Knievel-gone-wrong antics on an original Africa Twin; Art, also infamous for pulling a similar stunt on a KLR, and a handful of other guys. We do a lot of pavement miles early in the day, and I'm worried that the rain will come back—my knobbies offer about as much connection to the pavement as the hotel wireless does to the outside world. We ride through occasional showers, but nothing major. I stop worrying, and enjoy the glorious views, even though I'm itching for some dirt.

We stop off in Saugache, which if I remember correctly, is pronounced *saw-gash*, for gas and food and also to stand around outside Gillette's Trading Post, which is something of a military museum / gunsmith / hoarder's paradise. There are numerous military jeeps, a couple small tank-type things, and myriad mechanical contraptions arranged around the shop, and inside is the most tightly-packed gun shop I've ever been in. Rifles *everywhere*, and they're just out. You can actually touch them—surreal, given the locked-down nature of such shops here in California. I shake the proprietor's

hand, introducing myself as "Surj, from California." He chuckles and draws, "I'm Terry Gillette, and we won't hold that against you." We talk about near-completely restored Simplex Servi-Cycle



Photo: Surj Gish

he has in one of the rooms, arranged with mannequins in fatigues and an assortment of other paraphernalia, and then I boot-scoot my squeaky Sidis out the door.

After lunch, we start getting into some dirt. It's dirt roads at first, smooth, hard-pack tracks that extend a long way to the horizon. I'm wishing for more mud, but we start winding our way upward, and eventually cross over Old Monarch Pass at over 11,375 feet. It's a good first day.

The next morning we cross the Continental Divide via Independence Pass, at 12,095 feet. It's brisk but bearable, and the roads are glorious. Smooth, undulating back and forth for miles on end. Doc Frazier stops for a photo op with a sign for Lost Man Campground—the book he's working on is called *The Lost Man - Motorcycle Traveling The World With A 21st Century Ugly American*—and he and I end up riding this leg together, just the two of us. We ride as if hardwired together for miles—I'm just a bit back and tracking him precisely. Later, he tells me it was just right, perfect, and I feel honored.

We ride into Aspen—yes, that Aspen—planning to dine at what is presumably the classiest McDonalds in the US, but

Ronald and friends have apparently been run out of town so we continue on to Basalt for lunch. It's just me, Ron, Art and Doc. Frazier by now; two KLRs, two Beemers; three 650s and me on my 1200. Leaving Basalt, Hagerman Pass our plan, we swoop back and forth on endless sweepers, tracing streams full of fly fishermen and circumnavigating a glassy Ruedi Reservoir. It's motorcycling bliss, really and truly.

At the beginning of the old railroad roads that ascend towards Hagerman Pass, we stop to drop our tire pressures and chat with a couple guys that have just come that way doing a section of the Colorado Backcountry Discovery Route on much smaller bikes than mine.

"How was it?" I ask one of them.

"Pretty rough from the storms. Lots of rocks, boulders like this." He holds his hands apart, first at about 12", then at 18", moves them back and forth to indicate different-sized rocks.

Shit. I'm gonna break myself.

I take solace in the fact that the 650s my companions are riding, while smaller, aren't really that much more capable than the GS in the nasty stuff. But then I remember the tales I've heard, and fire off a quick location beacon to Angelica via the Garmin InReach I'm carrying for just such occasions, so that she'll at least know where to start looking.



Photo: Surj Gish

After a surprisingly deep and wide water crossing at the beginning of what looks to be significantly more difficult terrain, Doc Frazier motions to me: "Hey, you've been following all day. Why don't you lead a while?"

What can I do but nod and gas it?

So I do, and miles later I'm putting the GS on the kickstand at the top of Hagerman Pass, 11,925 feet up, wondering where everyone is—did I outrun them by that

much?—after some of the best dirt riding I can remember. Whoops, big rocks, crags, ditches, critically challenging lines—all under an endless, impossibly-blue sky with pure white cotton candy clouds hanging silently. I'm breathless, from working the fat bastard GS through the terrain at this



Photo: Surj Gish

high altitude, and from the stunning mix of snow, green and rock.

Of everything I've done to this bike, the Woody's Superlaced Excel wheelset, the 21" front in particular, was the most valuable modification, allowing the bike to be pushed well beyond its initial limits off-road. The Alt Rider skidplate definitely saw some action this tour, staunchly defending the nether regions of the Boxer motor, and the Fastway Adventure (of course) pegs offer an almost comically large platform for standing on the pegs with a *lot* of traction. All these things made getting the husky GS up here a lot more doable, make pushing it off-road a joy instead of a very long song with a chorus that just repeats "Oh shit! Oh shit!" over and over.

But I'm not thinking about hardware as Art, Ron and the Doc roll up. I'm just thinking, "Man, this is awesome."

Later, back at the hotel, Maynard has arrived, having ridden his beloved ZRX1200 in from Denver in some not-so-favorable weather. There are festivities, huge slabs of barbecued meat are consumed, and tales are told. But at the end of the night, I'm sitting under an E-Z Up in dim light, with Angelica, Doc Frazier, and Maynard, quietly discussing the history and future of *CityBike* and whether I swear too fuckin' much. It's an almost reverent moment, a long time coming, and well worth 1,200 miles in the van.

Editor Surj still can't decide whether the GS is just right, or just too goddamn much, but he'll keep trying. ☺



Photo: Angelica Rubalcaba

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maynard **HERSHON**

In June I rode a Christian Motorcyclists Association poker run. I was treated like family there, like a special guest, you could say. There was zero proselytizing. No one even suggested I join a CMA chapter or asked what church I attend. I was amazed by the hospitality.

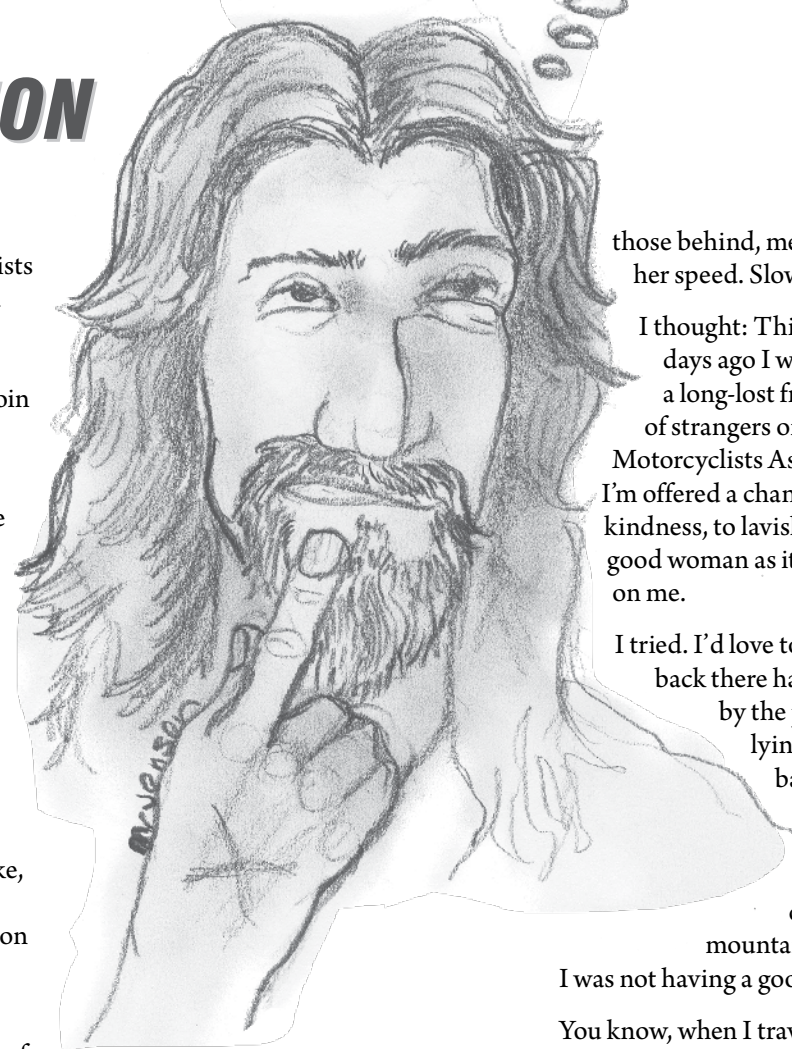
Ten days later, I arrived at the start of the Tuesday ride I often write about here. Moments later, a woman rode up on a black Sportster. She wore a glossy black half helmet and a black leather vest with CMA colors on the back.

Sewn onto the vest were various Christian-themed patches, some naming late, lamented riders and noting their years of birth and death. There were Christian-themed decals on her bike, maybe "Riding with the Son." She was 60-ish and perhaps the youngest person on our ride.

I figured one of the regulars had invited her. As I watched, she chatted with a few of the guys in the half-hour before we rolled out. Smiled, laughed a lot, seemed nice.

I fell into line directly behind her. I should tell you that we do not pass one another on our rides. The order we're in when we depart is the order in which we'll roll into the casino parking garage in Black Hawk, Colorado, maybe 90 minutes and hundreds of bends later.

The pace is brisk, not sportbike fast, but brisk for old guys on supersized motorcycles. Well, supersized except for a



few: my Kawasaki, an expertly ridden F650 BMW and the woman's Sportster.

I saw that she rode well and smoothly. She placed herself properly, diagonally behind the rider in front of her. I felt that she must be confident, a lone female riding with a bunch of guys who are out here every week on these mountain roads.

I could find no fault with her riding except that it was so... slow. She rode at three-quarters of our normal pace. Maybe two-thirds. And as I said, we don't pass. So

With The Son On The Tuesday Ride

Artwork by Mr. Jensen

those behind, me included, traveled at her speed. Slow.

I thought: This is a test. Just ten days ago I was welcomed like a long-lost friend by a bunch of strangers on that Christian Motorcyclists Association ride. Now, I'm offered a chance to return that kindness, to lavish courtesy on this good woman as it had been lavished on me.

I tried. I'd love to tell you that I sat back there happily, not bothered by the poky pace. I'd be lying to you. I felt off-balance, always in the wrong gear, clumsy on my bike. On a lovely sunny day in the Colorado mountains on my motorcycle, I was not having a good time.

You know, when I travel there are days that are not much fun, days when I just have to cover the distance. I accept that, and I think I sometimes enjoy those days. Gotta do 'em in any case.

But I do not like to do day rides, recreational rides, and not enjoy them.

I have to ride out of Denver on six-lane highways carrying impatient drivers who are simply not paying attention or are emotionally addled. Drivers who would knock you off your bike at 70 MPH and worry only about being late to work.

If I could, I wouldn't ride those highways. I have to ride them to reach the good roads. I have to ride them to join with the guys on Tuesdays.

So there I am behind the nice Christian lady. I think: This is supposed to be fun and it is not. Why am I here? Why make myself vulnerable to the crazed motorized masses if the result is not fun?

It isn't her fault that it isn't fun for me. She may not realize that the pace today is any different from the pace on other Tuesdays. Probably she thinks that this is how groups ride on these mountain roads.

She doesn't know me, I thought. If I leave the ride, she may not even notice that I'm gone.

I wondered what a truly good person would do, a Christian or a non-Christian practicing New Testament values. Would he (or she) continue on the ride just as if he enjoyed it?

My friend Dale had told us he intended to leave the ride early, before we reached our casino-town destination. I decided that rather than crawl there frowning in my helmet, I'd head for home when Dale did.

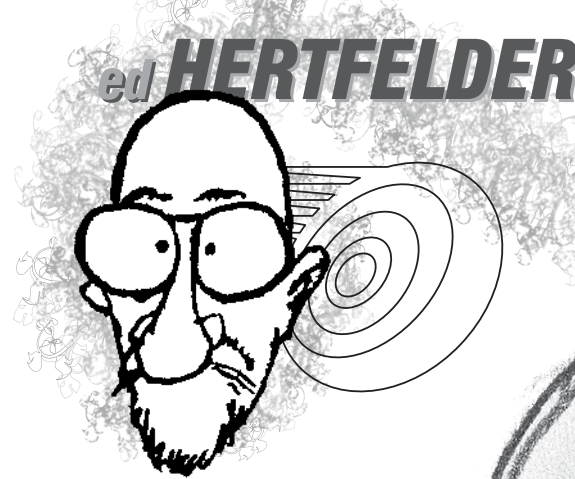
I felt I'd be more gracious in my absence than faking a fellowship with the nice lady, a fellowship I did not genuinely feel. I hoped, I'm confessing here, that she wouldn't become a ride regular, wouldn't change the nature of an established ride merely by her presence.

I certainly didn't want her coming on our rides and riding outside her comfort zone. And no way would I tell her she'd been an anchor we'd had to drag.

I will say in my defense that while I rode with the CMA I did not change the character of their ride. I rode at the back of the group... at the group's speed. No one had to ride faster or slower than he or she felt comfortable to stay with me.

If that Tuesday ride was a test, did I fail? Would you have been a better person? Would you have stuck it out? What was the right thing to do? What, indeed, Would Jesus Do?

Maynard started a Facebook page for motorcyclists and road cyclists that use blood thinners, but have continued to ride despite the added danger. If you ride despite it all, please go to [facebook.com/WarfarinRangers](https://www.facebook.com/WarfarinRangers) and post something: a story or a photo. And be careful out there.

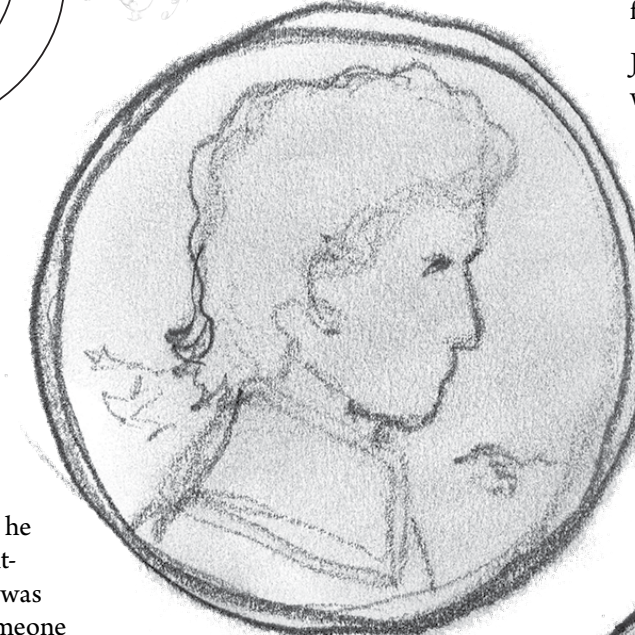


IMPROPER MAINTENANCE

Artwork by Mr. Jensen

shook the handlebar the bike felt like a foam-rubber imitation of a motorcycle.

Just out of curiosity, I hung around to watch him adjust his rear wheel and tighten the axle nut. He had just one tool, a 19" pair of Vise Grips with an unusual modification: he'd once used them to clamp something on to a three-rail trailer he was arc welding together and some stray amperage had gotten to the Vise Grips, welding them solid. So he slid the immovable jaws onto that axle nut, slid a nickel and a dime under one jaw to take up the slack and cranked the nut until it *scrunched* tight,



hose fitting that looked like it had been chewed by a large, angry carnivore.

I told him to lift one fork leg as I lifted the other. As we set the thing down on level ground I noticed the fork on my side was bent like a hockey stick for a tall center.

Someone *must* have suggested he turn the legs around and hit the same tree at the same speed to straighten the tubes again, so I didn't bother.

As I pushed his bike backwards off the trail, he duck-walked along digging the chain from between the sprocket bolts and swingarm. The handlebar felt sloppy, and I noticed a distinct wobble in the steering head bearings, a missing allen head bolt on a clamp and maybe four missing spokes in the front wheel. It felt like there were between two and two-and-a-quarter pounds of air in the front tire. When I



then he stomped it tighter with his boot. "To give it foot-pounds," he explained.

He had to back off the rear brake adjustment because the wheel's new position had pulled the brake full *on* and the wheel wouldn't turn. He adjusted the wing nut, which only had one wing remaining, with two pennies, a quarter and a flat washer jammed in the Vise Grips.

It's not often that I come up behind a rider who is slower than I am. Usually their engine is sputtering, and the rider is pointing to his tank or fuel petcock on its reserve setting as I squeeze past.

Last weekend I came up behind a rider who was so out of shape that he looked like he was planning a do-it-yourself appendectomy. The trail was lined with "punji sticks" left by someone who had cleared the face slappers with a machete.

If he fell off, he wouldn't slide far, but he would certainly get some new ventilating holes in his magenta and orchid enduro jacket, the kind designed by a dry-cleaning franchise.

Just as I looked down and saw his rear axle nut was backed off, hanging on the last thread, the chain came off the rear sprocket, jammed the wheel to a stop and he went into a lovely all-crossed-up slide as he hung out over the front fender, all the time wondering if he was going to die in the punjis, get tenderized by the thumper that had been tailgating him for the last mile, or get tenderized by the thumper as he died on the punjis.

I got off to help him because he'd stopped with his front wheel up on a ridge of dirt, had his left toe on the ground and the bike balanced under his right knee which was stretched two feet higher than humanly possible and slowly losing its grip on the motorcycle seat.

In these situations I would normally pull out my little Olympus camera, but I didn't do it this time because the bike could very well fall over and break the guy's ankle.

Plus I was out of film.

I got between him and his motorcycle and he sort of shinnied up my back as I held the machine. First thing he did was rearrange his twisted pants and shorts. Second thing he did was rearrange his pants and shorts again because the *splits* had pulled his inner thigh muscles really bad.

After I let him rest for 20 or 30 seconds, I got him to steady his bike and hold the front brake on while I grabbed under the front tire to lift it off the ridge. This didn't work too well, however, because the wheel spun. He was holding the front brake lever but the only effect it had was squeezing bubbles of brake fluid from a crack in a

When I asked how the rear brake shoes were holding up he said they were just fine, just fine, he only had to shim out the cam twice, once with a strip cut from a Pennsylvania license plate, and once with two strips cut from a Pennsylvania license plate.

One glance at the original paint on the oil filter screws convinced me that this motorcycle should be laid to rest ASAP. So I stuck my foot so far into my mouth I deep throated the whole boot by saying, "Guess you'll be trading this old baby in soon, huh?"

"Are you crazy, baldy?!?" he screamed back. "I've still got three more payments to make on *this* one."

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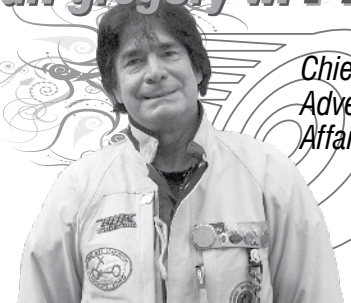
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Chief, World Adventure Affairs Desk

Adventure Mojo Eclipse

Artwork by Mr. Jensen

He said it was a cosmic experience, and then opined, "You're a Woodstock survivor, two-time naked Burning Man, and six times around the world on motorcycles, and you're not doing the eclipse?"

I reflected on the mentioned adventures, two legged and two wheeled, and did feel I came away from them with a changed cosmic outlook of my inner adventurous self. Maybe there was something to this eclipse that could re-charge my mojo?

My last year had been a tough one. After surviving six weeks on a BMW F700GS rolling around southern Africa on the Soft Butt leg of a world tour, I had been abandoned by my riding pal in Cape Town who had bunny-hopped back to his womb in the USA. Faced with throwing in the towel and admitting failure as he did, I soldiered on alone across Europe and Asia. Doing so had been a significant hit to my "Take Care of Friends" savings set aside for certain individuals in my Last Will and Testament, but since they don't know about the savings I figured they would understand receiving what was left, which was better than nothing.

Instead of taking the easy way across Asia from Europe, through Russia, I opted to do the needed miles through the country that topped a list as one of the 20 most dangerous in the world, and the world's deadliest country for two wheel motorcycles, Thailand. A month in Thailand scored me the final miles needed for my global loop but pushed my adventure riding envelope to extremes as I opted not to take a guided tour or the easiest way.

Upon landing in Los Angeles, rather than aim quickly back to the security of my home base, I vectored south towards

Mexico, then across to Arizona, and finally tripped slowly north with the pit stop in Colorado for the Big Dog Adventure Ride. Part of the meandering route to my home base was to bag a few extra miles, part was to visit with a few friends no longer riding motorcycles due to age and physical impairments, and part to put off admitting, "This surely is the end of my global

Did I make the cosmic connection and get my adventure riding mojo back?

Two days after having been eclipsed, #6 and I decided that rather than stick to pavement riding for the next day, we would attempt an off-road ride to the top of the Pryor Mountains, where we might see some of the herd of wild horses. The last miles were ugly, with plenty of chances for a get-off through bowling ball sized and loose sex stones (fucking rocks!) and trenches from rain and ATVs, but we reached the top with our off-pavement adventure riding egos intact. A few weeks earlier I had ridden over Hagerman Pass in Colorado, banging the skid plate and stopping to rest, my ego bruised as others passed me panting on my gas tank. Not so to the top of the Pryor Mountains Wild Horse Range.

As a sidebar to having been eclipsed, #6's ultimate driving machine had an engine bolt pull out of the case, causing his ultimate riding machine to be a silver bird winging its way back to Seattle. It also suffered from total darkness when the low beam on its headlight went dark. My Kawasaki KLR650 suffered a less ride-ending fate, a loosened windscreen bolt, which was an easy roadside fix.

As for #6, he had not noticed his jimmies jingling, but had become forgetful, leaving his needed laptop in the transport car as he was let off at the airport and his sunglasses in his tank bag resting in a BMW repair shop.

I also noticed an increased degree of forgetfulness in myself, having left my riding back protector at the same BMW repair shop and not noticing it missing for 100 miles.

On the up side, my cranial hard drive had seemingly been scraped of some of the clutter from the last year. Instead of thinking about the near-death experiences I'd had, my reflections while driving the Beartooth Highway and my last miles home on the Interstate were of some of the pretty two legged dears I had seen in Cali, Colombia and Thailand.

The winds howled, "Dr. G has his adventure motorcycle mojo back!"

Reflections of Dr. G's current adventures while circling the globe on a motorcycle can be found at RTWMotorcycleAdventureRally.blogspot.com. You may also find a free taste of his next literary adventure, titled "The Lost Man - Motorcycle Traveling The World With A 21st Century Ugly American." Or, just get a copy of his all-color coffee table book, "Down And Out In Patagonia, Kamchatka And Timbuktu," available at MotorBooks.com.

"My jimmies are jingling!" I yelled at my adventure riding buddy as we were enveloped by a 100% eclipse of the sun.

The road rumor was if a weary adventure motorcyclist managed to get himself into the 100% zone of the eclipse, stood naked, except for his boots, the two and a half minutes of totality would connect him with the cosmos. While connected his adventure motorcycle mojo would be recharged.

Road-hammered, economically and psychologically beat up, I was finishing my sixth ride around the world. A pit stop for a few days of ground-pounding on the Big Dog Adventure Ride (see page 22 of this issue or at HorizonsUnlimited.com/bigdog for more) trickle charged my batteries about 5%, that being from the camaraderie of the entrants.

One Big Dog, a multi-year veteran, broke his leg on this year's Big Dog Adventure Ride. He lamented that he'd likely miss the solar eclipse in Wyoming two weeks later. I asked, "What's with this eclipse?"

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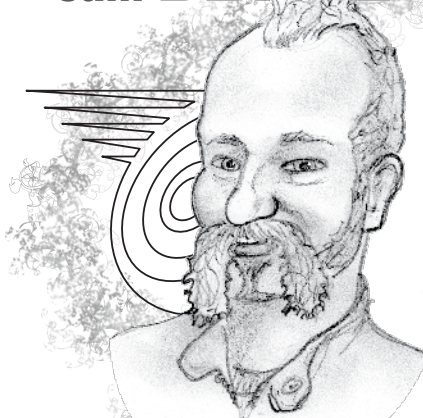
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Threading The Needle

Artwork by Sam Devine

Riding down the road without a care in the world or a cloud in the sky. The bike is finally ship-shape with nothing wrong—at least nothing that can't wait a few hundred, maybe a thousand miles. The tires certainly aren't new, but there's plenty of life left in 'em. There's a weepy fork seal but that's not the world's biggest concern—as long as the fork oil isn't running down the leg. Keep an eye on it for now.

So the bike gets rallied over bumps and slammed around corners. It gets jumped off a rise and blasted away from stop signs. Surely this is what hitting full stride is. Surely this is great riding. No one's keeping up right now. Fluid. Everything is slow. Isn't it great to ride a bike?

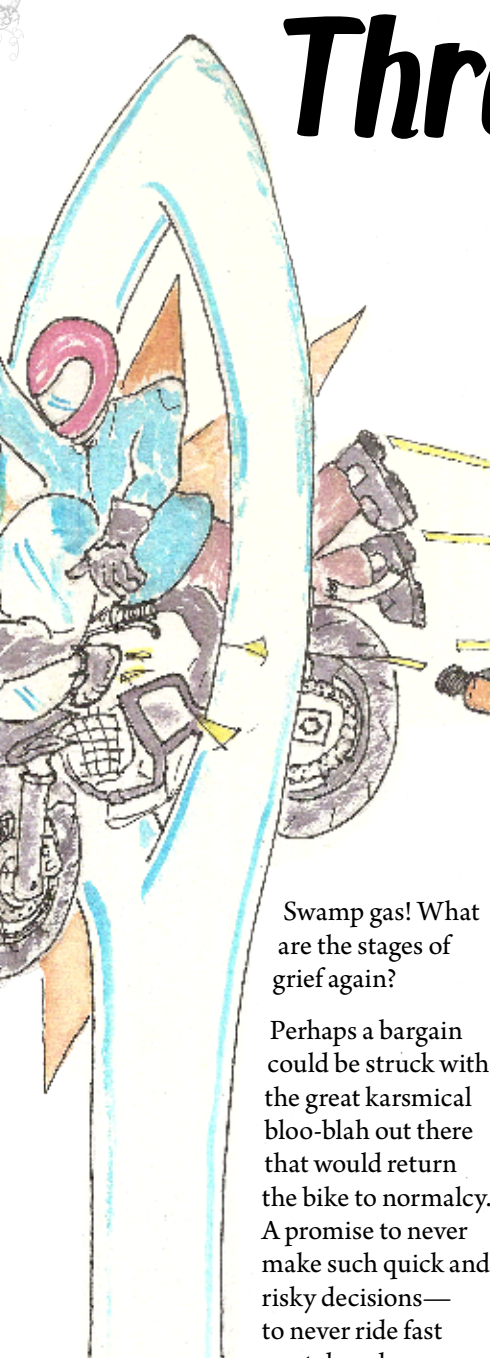
At a stop light, though, there's a rattle. Revving the engine, there's a loud obnoxious buzz at 5,000 rpm. It sounds like it's coming from the clutch. Dang. It really got bonked around there. Screws are tightened on plastic pieces and wires are taped down, but the annoying hum refuses to go away.

The worst is assumed. Hours are then spent googling until the worst is confirmed. Brand new bike is DOA, kaput, fakakta, crap. Should've just stuck with another old beater, but no, money was forked over.

Depression sets in. There's always bankruptcy... What hope is left? Best now to shed all personal identity, burn the garage to the ground, and take a dishwashing job at a cafe in a small desert town. Or go by the name "Danny Dollars," work the carnival scene, leaning ever so slightly on the basketball hoop when the kids shoot, making them miss. "Sorry pal, better luck next time."

The eminent and catastrophic clutch failure made evident by the jingling is clearly the result of taking such joy in the ride. It's payment for over-exuberance. Reveling so heartily, flying with abandon through the streets—that kind of action comes at a cost and the taxman has come to collect. Sigh. When tragedy like this strikes, one's folly is all so obvious. Missed that left turn at Albuquerque...

But no! Surely this isn't happening! It must be a trick on perception! Oversensitivity!



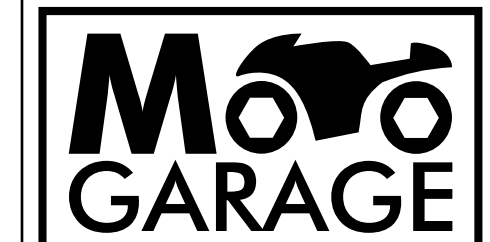
Swamp gas! What are the stages of grief again?

Perhaps a bargain could be struck with the great karmical bloo-blah out there that would return the bike to normalcy. A promise to never make such quick and risky decisions—to never ride fast nor takes chances again—surely that would be good enough

trade to magically transform the colossal repair into a minor bug, a temporary glitch in the system. Nothing to worry about.

"I'll never ride fast again."

Days later—still preparing for a shameful retreat from society—at a gas station, the engine vibration causes the rattle again, this time with earplugs out, this time obviously coming from the front of the bike! More revving and sleuthing reveals the noise originates in a coupling on the engine guards. It's simply a spacer chattering between two pieces. Tightening the bolt clamps it down easily (and this time it gets some Loctite, little bugger).



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Just a temporary glitch. Nothing to worry about.

Getting back on the bike, recalling the initial panic, it seems comical. It was just a loose bolt after all. Surely the unrelenting flogging of the engine and impetuous pace were not to blame. Not out of control

here. Look, here comes a good corner. The throttle twists the bike up to double the advised speed for the turn and holds it. Surely this is what it's like to hit full stride. Not a care in the world.

When things go wrong, we freak out and treat it as a learning opportunity. "When you lose, don't lose the lesson." Hours are spent asking, "Where did I go wrong?" It seems a strange negative fixation. Are we practicing failure? Taking notes on messing up?

When things go well later, though, of course confidence comes rushing back to conquer our countenance. It sweeps in like a summer storm, washing away trepidation and watering the seeds of cockiness. There's no time for reminiscing. Nothing to lose sleep over now. Just keep it up, champ. You're the greatest.

Perhaps a different tack might be more fruitful? What if we chose to take heed

when things are going well? Those are the times we want to repeat, aren't they? Conversely, after things have gone south in a hurry, shouldn't we sometimes just pat ourselves on the back and say, "Well, I sure fucked that up. Wow." Fail again. Fail better.

And despite how we attempt to avoid peril, life tends to side-bust us anyway. We thread the eye of the needle all the time, barely aware of the great many things that could've taken us out at any moment. We pat ourselves on the back when things are going well and admonish our failures. But there's more evidence of glory in a limp than in a perfect dental record. When we're just floating through space, we act the most accomplished, but it's the scrapes we've survived, the holes we've climbed back out of that are often the greater achievements.

This doesn't mean we should start messing up on purpose. Just perhaps appreciating it more when it does. After all, it's coming down the road...

Sam is our SF-based columnist. He motorbikes, kitesurfs, picks guitars and is currently destroying his hands by way of stand-up bass. See what else he's up to at SamDevine.com.

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2016 Harley Davidson XL883N Iron - \$8,795
2016 Harley Davidson XL1200X Forty-Eight - \$9,495
2014 Harley Davidson FXDB Street Bob - \$12,495
2015 Harley Davidson FXDB Street Bob - \$13,495
2015 Harley Davidson FXDB Street Bob - \$12,995
2015 Harley Davidson FXDB Street Bob - \$13,495 SOLD
2014 Harley Davidson FXSB Breakout - \$16,495
2013 Harley Davidson FXDF Fat Bob - \$10,495
2014 Harley Davidson VRSCF V-Rod Muscle - \$11,995
2013 Harley Davidson VRSCDX Night Rod Special - \$11,495
2002 Harley Davidson VRSCA V-Rod - \$5,995 REDUCED

Honda

2007 Honda Shadow VLX600 - \$3,495
2014 Honda CRF250L - \$4,495
2007 Honda CRF250R - \$3,495
2015 Honda CRF450R - \$5,295
2016 Honda CB300F - \$3,695
2015 Honda CBR300R - \$3,795
2012 Honda CBR600RR - \$8,495
2015 Honda CBR600RR - \$8,295
2014 Honda CBR650F - \$6,495 REDUCED

Kawasaki

1999 Kawasaki KX250 - \$1,995
2012 Kawasaki KX450F - \$4,695
2015 Kawasaki KX450F - \$5,495 REDUCED
2016 Kawasaki Ninja 300 KRT ABS - \$4,995
2012 Kawasaki Ninja 650 - \$4,695
2015 Kawasaki Ninja 650 - \$5,495
2015 Kawasaki Ninja 650 - \$5,995
2014 Kawasaki Ninja EX650 ABS - \$5,995 New Listing
2011 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R - \$7,495
2012 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R - \$7,495
2013 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R - \$7,995
2014 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R 636 - \$8,495
2014 Kawasaki Ninja ZX-6R 636 - \$7,495 REDUCED
2016 Kawasaki Z1000 - \$8,695 REDUCED
2009 Kawasaki Vulcan VN900 - \$4,495
2008 Kawasaki Concours 14 - \$6,995

KTM

2015 KTM 690 Duke - \$7,495 New Listing
2016 KTM RC 390 - \$4,995
2016 KTM 1290 Super Duke R - \$12,995 REDUCED
2011 KTM 350 SX-F - \$4,495
2012 KTM 350 SX-F - \$5,495
2012 KTM 450 SX-F - \$5,495

Suzuki

2015 Suzuki RM-Z450 - \$4,995 REDUCED
2007 Suzuki Boulevard S83 - \$3,995 New Listing
2006 Suzuki GSX-R600 - \$5,995
2014 Suzuki GSX-R600 - \$8,995 REDUCED
2011 Suzuki GSX-R750 - \$7,995 REDUCED
2013 Suzuki GSX-R750 - \$8,695 REDUCED
2016 Suzuki GSX-R750 - \$10,495
2013 Suzuki GSX-R1000 - \$8,995 REDUCED
2014 Suzuki GSX-R1000 - \$7,995
2011 Suzuki GSX1250FA ABS - \$6,995

Triumph

2014 Triumph Thunderbird ABS - \$8,995 New Listing
2012 Triumph Rocket III - \$10,495

Yamaha

2016 Yamaha FZ-07 - \$5,995 New Listing
2010 Yamaha YZF R6 - \$6,995 New Listing
2012 Yamaha YZF R6 - \$6,995 REDUCED
2012 Yamaha YZF R6 - \$7,495 REDUCED
2013 Yamaha YZF R6 - \$7,995
2016 Yamaha YZF R6 - \$8,695 REDUCED
2013 Yamaha YZF R1 - \$9,495
2015 Yamaha VMAX - \$11,995 New Listing
2015 Yamaha FJR1300A - \$11,495 REDUCED

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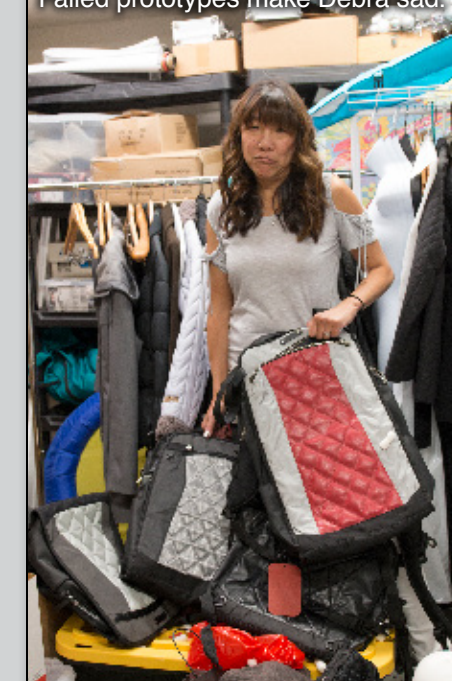


By Surj Gish Photos by Surj Gish

Debra Chin hasn't followed the usual paths to motorcycle entrepreneurship. After the company she worked for was acquired by Dell, she opened a bridesmaid boutique, thinking she'd enjoy doing "consultative selling." She did that for four years, and laughs as she tells me, "brides are very demanding people. I tell people I went from bridesmaids to biker bags. How'd that happen?!"

She started MotoChic about three years ago, in response to the "sea of manly, ballistic nylon on the market, the 'pink it and shrink it' approach taken by gear manufacturers towards designing women's gear." She says she "naively jumped into it," with no background in design or production: "If this all goes bad, at least I'll have one bag I really like." She has some help with PR and marketing, and of course manufacturing, but beyond that Debra is MotoChic.

Failed prototypes make Debra sad



She even does fulfillment herself, stocking bags and shipping them from her Los Gatos garage. A lot of products created here in The Bay are software, requiring no physical work, but Debra actually enjoys this aspect of her business: "I know how people found me, and I put a little note in the box. I'm sure if you scale it's not feasible, but now it's kind of fun because I feel like I have a



New Lauren Sport bags stacked amongst the bikes at MotoChic HQ.

personal connection. This one guy, he ordered three pairs of socks last weekend, and I looked back and he ordered one pair two weeks ago. So I'm like, 'Ok, he's digging it!'"

As both a woman rider and a person doing business in the wonderful world of motorcycling, she has a unique perspective on that business. She recounts her experience shopping for gloves in the local outpost of a national moto-retailer: "I walk in and I ask for gloves, and the guy is like, 'over there.' First of all, there are three racks of men's gloves and one rack of women's gloves. I get the economics. But they're all pink and shit, and I'm like 'oh my god, here we go.'

"So I go, 'Can you help me, make a recommendation?' He goes, 'Well, just try some on.' So then I saw this gal, and I asked, 'What do you like, what fits, what do you look for?' But that guy, he couldn't have cared less."

The lack of consultation is one of the differences Debra has observed between selling wedding gowns and motorcycle gear, and it's a problem for retailers whose staff often essentially redirect potential customers to go spend their money online instead of in-store, by turning up their noses at opportunity as if every person that comes into the store isn't critical to the survival of the business.

"It's almost the reverse of the industry I was in... in this case, I went in person because I wanted the consultative sale and I ended up buying online because I was able to watch videos, read the product reviews... and that's a shame. I know a lot of local businesses are struggling to maintain with competition from ecommerce, but it's almost like, 'Ok, you leave me no choice.' I'd finally decided on a pair, and they go, 'We don't have them in your size, come back tomorrow. We might be unpacking stuff.'"

Debra's latest bag, the more casual Lauren Sport is an evolution of the original Lauren that converts from a backpack to a tote bag, with "pop" color options for the YKK water-repellent zippers and a magnetic closure at the top of the bag. "It's about half a pound lighter. We took all the leather off, which is good for weight and appeals to vegans. And we put a light in the interior... helps you see what's in there in the dark. That idea came from

a customer who rigged it up herself and shared it with me, and I was like, 'What a great idea!'"

MotoChic bags and accessories are available in SF at Scuderia and SF Moto. You can also get more info and a bag of your own at MotoChicGear.com.



As she prepares for her own wedding, Debra has gone from bridesmaids to biker bags and back again!



Tankslapper

Socked It To Us, He Did

Aspiring abusive reader Bill wrote in, aghast at the notion of washing the expensive, sweet CEP socks we reviewed last month ("The Joy Of Socks - CEP Progressive+ Outdoor Light Compression Socks" - New Stuff, September 2017).

Don't KILL those EXPNSIVE socks..

HEY Fools: Don't put those \$60.00 Socks in the washing machine and DEFINITELY NOT!! in the Dryer.

-Or anything "Clothy" You value like that Commemorative T-Shirt. (See that stuff on the Lint Screen? Guess where it came from...) Hand wash in a cheap plastic bowl with a tablespoon of detergent. Air Dry. Leave the Machine to destroy Your Draws, Cheap Socks, Towels, et cetera. (Was this letter abusive enough to get printed?)

Well, Bill, aside from the fact that we don't cotton to this namby-pamby notion of hand-washing t-shirts from rock shows and motorbike rides as if they were fragile

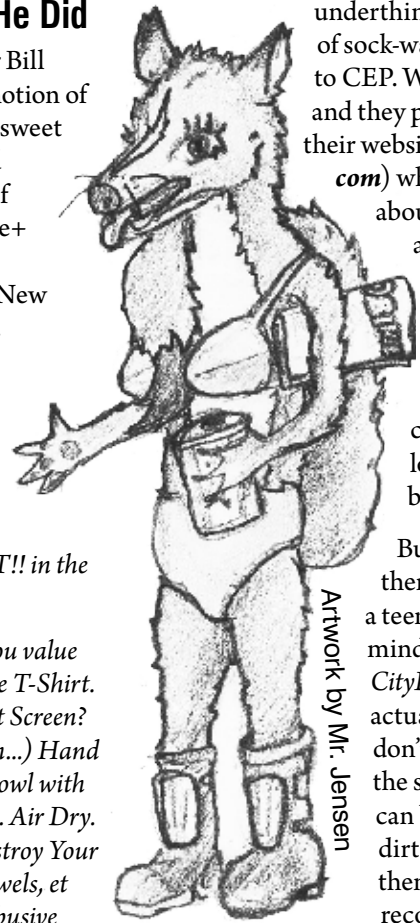


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Artwork by Mr. Jensen

underthings, we're on the right side of sock-washing history, according to CEP. We checked with them, and they pointed to the FAQ on their website (CEPCompression.com) where the questions about washing the socks are addressed.

First, the recommended method of washing CEP's compression socks is: "Machine wash cold or warm, tumble dry low heat (No Wool-Lite or bleach)."

But... but... won't that wear them out? Prematurely, like a teenager's first... oh, never mind. The answer, paraphrased CityBike-style, is *no, silly*. CEP's actual answer, in case you don't believe us, is "No, in fact the socks compression profile can be negatively affected by dirt and body oils. Washing them after every wear is highly recommended."

As to the level of abusiveness in your email, Bill... we published it, but that was because we thought others might have the same question, not because your email was satisfactorily abrasive. Sure, the way you're riding your own ride with regard to spelling and punctuation gives your prose a certain *je ne sais psycho* and a slightly disturbing, confusingly menacing *eau de Unabomber*. But we find that stuff charming, and your email didn't even approach the obviously deranged and dangerous stylings of the guy that sent us the cut-and-paste ransom note-looking thing a couple years back.

Keep trying, though—we love that shit.

Flattery Will Get You Nowhere

Kim emailed in response to a photo we ran in NCR a few months back ("T-Shirt Contest: Who's That CityBiker?" - News, Clues & Rumors, July 2017) of Dr. Gregory Frazier, Chief of our ever-expanding World Adventure Affairs Desk, deep in the jungles of Southeast Asia with a "fake baby



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tiger" astride a Kawasaki KLX150. Her email? Two words:

Charley Boorman?

Kim, you're late to the party, but we'll say this: the good doctor is flattered that you mistook him for that dashing English adventurer, of long ways down, round and back. Even if he was wearing a mask.

Too Distracted To... What?

Heidi emailed in response to Editor GS Dirty-Stich's August ("Distracted Ain't Drivin'" - Uneasy Rider, August 2017) column, in which he asked readers to send in ideas for fighting distracted driving.

Hi Surj,

You asked for ideas in your Uneasy Rider column about distracted driving in the August 2017 issue. A few suggestions:

- Better enforcement and steep fines (but we probably won't see this happening);
- Better driver's education;
- Really graphic ads like they show on TV in the U.K.;
- An obligatory "watch for motorcycles" sticker on each car's dashboard;
- An obligatory "look over your shoulder before changing lanes" sticker on each car's dashboard;
- An obligatory "look in your mirrors before making turns" on each car's dashboard (ok, the alternative to stickers is better driver's ed, see above);
- Require to ride a bicycle in traffic and take a motorcycle course (or be a passenger on a bike) as part of driver's ed to put yourself in others' shoes (wouldn't that be fun?);
- Equip all cars with a blind spot warning system that detects if another vehicle/ cyclist/ pedestrian is in the blindspot);
- Change legislation that would make any phone use illegal while driving (except GPS for maps and directions) and/or a device that would block cell phone use in the car;

Too drastic? Well, research suggests that cell phones are like heroin and people cannot resist it and switch it off, as we all see every day. People cannot even switch it off on the plane during take-off. At the same time, research also showed that humans are really bad at multitasking. Like any addiction, you can't come by it with reason.

Keep up the great work that you are doing. I am always looking forward to the next CityBike issue.

We have a hard time responding to emails here in Tankslapper without smart-assin' it, using the editorial equivalent of our inside voices, if you will. But thanks for sending this stuff in, Heidi. You were—surprisingly—the only one with serious comments on this important matter.

We don't think drivers will look up from their phones long enough to notice stickers on their dashboards, and there's the whole "keep yer laws offa my car's body!" *freedom* thing to contend with. But we think you're on to something with "more enforcement." We've written about this before, for example Max Klein's groundbreaking



"Nuts To Butts In The Name Of Safer Roads" manifesto back in February of 2015.

To this day, we still don't understand why the po-po isn't employing a version of Max's suggestion, with a perhaps less-testicular name. For all the bitching and moaning about the "revenue generation" aspect of speeding tickets, The Man doesn't seem too interested in earning a big pile of honest bucks from sighting and citing distracted drivers. It's confusing, because this behavior is so obvious, so blatant, that it'd be like shooting really dumb, slow-moving fish in a really small barrel. Fish who were using their phones and therefore swimming poorly in that really small barrel.

We do like your idea of riding a bicycle in traffic or riding bitch, oops, we mean pillion. Slipped into Biker-ese there for a sec. Anyway, this falls under "shared experiences," which we think would go a long way towards fixing societies fucked-up-ness. Whether it's drivers doing time on a bicycle in traffic, or gentrifying MBAs riding BART through Oakland, we could all use a little more time outside the comfort of our respective boxes. ☺



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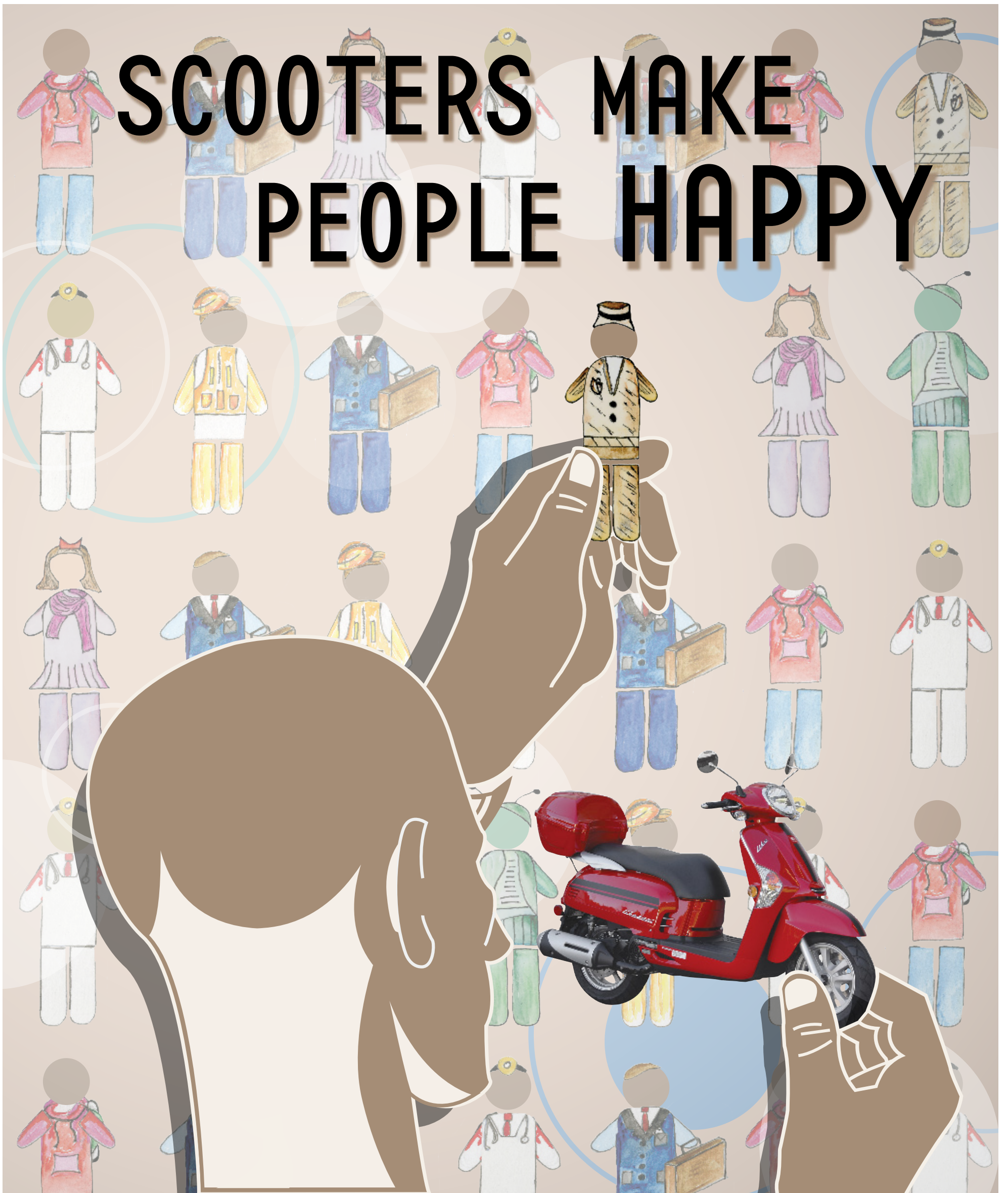


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- PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S INAUGURATION SPEECH, JANUARY 20TH 2009

Photo: Surj Gish

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