AMERICAN MOTORCYCLIST

OCTOBER 2011

The Best Of AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days

OLD BIKES, NEW TRICKS
MEMBER LETTERS

SEND YOUR LETTERS (AND A HIGH-RESOLUTION PHOTO) TO SUBMISSIONS@AMA-CYCLE.ORG; OR MAIL TO 13515 YARMOUTH DRIVE, PICKERINGTON, OH 43147.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHAT, NO WEATHER MAGIC?

As I sat down to read the September issue of American Motorcyclist, I was particularly taken by Bill Sterner’s “Escape From Normalcy.” His story of friendship and twice-a-year escapes brought a happy smile to my face.

Then I continued through the state listings of events and found the ads on page 47. After going over the ad twice on the “Magic Weather Manipulator,” I decided I had to have one. Here in south central Texas, we haven’t had any rain to speak of since last November! Temperatures have held over 100 degrees for over a month, and we’re drying up quick.

Unfortunately, I finally read the fine print at the bottom of the page. I don’t know whether to congratulate Victory Motorcycles on the funny page of ads, or condemn them to our Texas heat for raising our hopes!

Jim Heap
College Station, Texas

THANKS FOR THE ROADSIDE

Thank you so much for what you do for the motorcycling community and especially for providing your free towing service. On a recent trip out west, I had a problem starting my 2010 Gold Wing. This occurred the day after returning from a 350-mile ride in monsoon-like rain. The starter would spin but there wasn’t the slightest indication of the motor turning over. I promptly went through some of the steps outlined in the Honda manual, but to no avail, so a tow was in order.

Thank goodness for the AMA towing service that got me and my bike to a nearby Honda dealership.

Vince Provenzano
Wake Forest, N.C.

NO MOTORCYCLES ALLOWED

On Aug. 11-14, my family and I pulled our camper into Myrtle Beach, S.C., for the first time. We stayed in a very nice campground right on the beach. It’s a beautiful place with nice, friendly people. However, I was surprised to find out that motorcycles are not allowed on the premises.

When I asked the lady at the front desk about the no-motorcycles rule, she said it was because of the noise. They have a lot of elderly people who camp there, or even live there full time, who don’t like the noise.

“But, my bike is quiet,” I said.

That’s when she said the thing that really irritated me.

“Well, we can’t discriminate, so we just don’t allow any motorcycles,” she said. I asked her if it would be OK if I brought in a ‘67 Chevelle with straight pipes. She said that would be fine.

So, they are willing to make a rule against motorcycles, but not against loud pipes. Which is the real problem? On numerous occasions during our stay at the campground, I had to put a conversation on hold to wait for diesel pickup trucks to roar past. Take any one of my three bikes and let it idle beside one of those trucks and you would never know the bike was running. Yet, it’s my motorcycle that is banned from the campground.

In the end, her final response was all that needed to be said: “It’s private property. We don’t have to allow motorcycles.”

To give them credit, they do try to strike a balance. The majority of residents don’t want bikes at all. However, the management has set aside a motorcycle parking area where you can leave your bike and walk in, or catch a ride in a friend’s car or truck. They also told me that they allow bikes during Bike Week, and they are one of the only places on the beach that does.

While I don’t attend Bike Week, I appreciate the gesture. I would appreciate it even more if they would put SAE J2825 into practice and have the guy at check-in use a meter to verify my bike’s sound output and then send me on into the campground with a smile and a wave.

Now, to the heart of the matter. The loud bike gets the attention. It’s the kind of attention we don’t want. It’s the kind of attention that makes the majority of people in this country subscribe to a stereotype that all motorcycles are loud, all motorcyclists are ignorant, all motorcyclists are self-centered and all motorcyclists don’t care about the rights of others.

Martin Turner
Mineral Springs, N.C.

THREE WHEELS ROCK

I recently joined the AMA, as one of my scooter buddies recommended. I checked the organization out and joined a few days later. Last year, I bought a 650 Burgman scooter trike from a guy up in northern Ohio. Technically, though, my trike is four wheels as I sport a Danson trike set on the rear.

Matter of fact, I’m only minutes away from getting on my bike this afternoon. So now I’m in the AMA and just received my magazine yesterday. Many good articles in there, but you should have a feature on trikes as many are on the roads of late. I just got back from a ride in Indiana a few days ago, and I saw many trikes on the road. Anyway I’m looking forward to many rides and being part of the AMA, I recently posted my trike on your Facebook page.

Les Hemingway
Cincinnati

RACING IN JAPAN

I’m from a small town of 895 people in Shelton, Neb. I am also an active duty petty officer in the U.S. Navy now
MAINE ADOPTS PRACTICAL TEST FOR MEASURING STREETBIKE SOUND

But New Hampshire Lawmaker Wants To Adopt California’s Unfair Law

A simple and reliable testing procedure endorsed by the AMA has been adopted by Maine that allows motorcyclists to prove their bikes don’t violate the state’s motor vehicle sound law.

At the same time, a New Hampshire lawmaker has vowed to introduce legislation in her state modeled after an unfair California law that requires new bikes built on or after Jan. 1, 2013 to display federal Environmental Protection Agency sound-compliant exhaust labels whenever they are operated.

The New Hampshire lawmaker, Rep. Michele Peckham (R-Rockingham), says her bill would go further than the California law by requiring any motorcycle brought into a dealership for service to leave the dealership with EPA-compliant pipes.

“These are two drastically different approaches to dealing with the same problem—citizen complaints about excessively loud motorcycles,” says Irme Szauter, AMA government affairs manager.

Szauter adds that Peckham’s bill confirms fears that other states would follow California’s lead regarding motorcycle sound.

“Instead, we hope that states and other jurisdictions will now look for guidance from Maine, which has adopted an objective way to prove that a motorcycle doesn’t violate the state’s sound law, rather than relying on subjective judgments and the presence of a label,” Szauter says.

Under Maine’s new law, motorcyclists ticketed for excessive sound from their motorcycle exhausts can go to a certified inspection station for sound testing.

There, the exhaust system would be tested using the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) J2825 stationary sound testing procedure—“Measurement of Exhaust Sound Pressure Levels of Stationary On-Highway Motorcycles”—which the SAE developed and adopted with support from the Motorcycle Industry Council in May 2009. The AMA has endorsed the standard.

Under the SAE J2825 standard, decibel limits—which are measured from a prescribed angle of 45 degrees and a distance of 20 inches—range from 92 dBA at idle for all motorcycles to 100 dBA at certain RPMs for various motorcycles, depending on the type of engine. If a motorcycle meets these limits during the certified testing, then it is evidence that the motorcycle doesn’t violate the state’s sound law.

“We applaud the state of Maine—the first in the nation—for adopting the SAE J2825 standard,” Szauter says.