

**SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITORS OF MCN**

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**Moral Of The Story: Don't Wear Half Helmets**

I recently had an encounter with a moth. While navigating the busy streets of Lafayette, LA late one spring evening, a bug found its way into my right ear hole. It hit like a torpedo and lodged deeply next to my ear drum.

The live bug then decided to do a jig or two in an effort to find deeper refuge, much to my discomfort. While still on my H-D Ultra Classic in heavy traffic, I had to maneuver across traffic to a parking lot. That in itself was a mighty chore since the bug was going crazy in its new abode.

After securing my bike, I tried to dislodge the bug by tilting my head and banging on it like I did as a kid getting water out of my ear after swimming. It made the bug buzz more.

Finally I tried inserting a key into my ear in hopes of prying the bug loose. No luck, as the bug had gone up into the ear canal and was firmly lodged. The action

must have panicked the bug as he, she or it began clawing at my eardrum. When blood began oozing out of my ear, I knew I had a problem.

Getting back on my bike, I made my way home which was about three miles away, through traffic. With that bug buzzing around and clawing at my eardrum, I was now in pain. Upon reaching home, I summoned my wife to take me to the emergency room.

After an hour of various treatments by the emergency room staff, an inch-long moth was removed from my ear. Sometime during that hour the moth had either committed suicide or was deliberately killed by the hospital staff. At least he, she or it had stopped buzzing around and clawing at my eardrum.

The moral of the story is that I was wearing a half helmet that offered no ear protection.

Had I been out on the open road at speed, I don't know how I would have

endured such an incident without causing a crash. Since then, I have discarded the half helmet and replaced it with a conventional HJC open-face helmet with hard ear protection. Live and learn.

Gerald Bertinot  
Lafayette, LA

**Rattled By Ducati Vibration**

After 45 years and lots of bikes (eight currently), I have proven once again that love is truly blind when it comes to motorcycles by ignoring MCN's observations (October 2006) and purchasing a new Ducati GT1000! I believe I currently own the test bike you described, with "inconsistent, but often terrible vibration." After 2400 abusive miles I'm about to throw in the towel.

Ducati North America's position is "they vibrate" and it's a dealer problem. To be fair, my dealer has tried and is still trying to rectify the problem. Has anyone come up with a solution? I still am smitten every time I open the garage door but it goes away after an hour of riding!

Randy Smith  
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*The DS1000's fuel injection is set very lean from the factory to pass Euro 3 emissions standards. Carbon monoxide readings of 1% at the tailpipe are normal.*

*Because the GT1000 incorporates an O2 sensor, there is no way of richening up the*

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mixture. As a result, in stock form, the GT1000 suffers from poor idle and off-idle running conditions. Additionally, the engine vibrates. I'm not sure why it vibrates, but I do know that by richening up the mixture to approximately 3% CO at the tailpipe, the engine smooths out significantly. I've experienced this both on my own and on customer DS1000 motors with O<sub>2</sub> sensors.

The fix thus far has been to purchase a Termignoni full exhaust, which includes a replacement ECU that eliminates the O<sub>2</sub> sensor. Essentially, the Termi ECU converts the engine back to open-loop fuel injection, at which time a trim setting on the ECU can be changed via a software link to richen up the mixture.

The aftermarket doesn't have a solution as yet. Neither Dynojet nor Dobeck have aftermarket fuel map modifiers that will work with the stock ECU, because whatever additional fuel their boxes put into the injectors (by changing the pulse width) the O<sub>2</sub> sensor takes right back out after reading a richer condition.

Ducati does sell the Termi ECU separately from the full exhaust system, but it's cost prohibitive. Expect to pay \$1300 just for the Termi ECU. For a few hundred more, you can get the full exhaust system as well.

Some aftermarket exhaust manufacturers tout that their exhausts are plug and play on the DS1000 motor with O<sub>2</sub> sensors. I've found the opposite to be true. Without the Termi ECU, the addition of an aftermarket exhaust system almost makes the bike unrideable.

—LT

## Stebel Horn Installation Difficult On Gold Wing

In your May issue you had an article by Moshe Levy regarding the Stebel Air Horn. I ordered two for my GL1500 Gold Wing and wanted to let you know I could not find any way to mount them so the plastic would go back on the bike as it should. I think it is important for other readers to know that putting these on a Gold Wing may be very difficult. There is just too much electronics and plastic to mount them. I even tried inside the fairing but found that was not possible.

Doug Green  
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## Dryer Sheets Solution For Bug Juice

It is that time of the year again here in Florida when automobile and motorcycle operators are dreading the love bug season. This occurs twice a year here.

Fortunately, a cure for cleaning your vehicle has been discovered! A buddy of

mine who operates a huge motor home and also rides a motorcycle taught me this trick: The bugs melt away when washed off with a dryer sheet (the sheet you put in your clothes dryer to make them smell good).

A new or used dryer sheet will work! Dampen the bug-infested area and then wash with the dryer sheet. A box of 100 costs maybe a dollar and some change at Wal-Mart. You will be amazed how easy it is to get those bugs off.

Randy West  
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## Online Scam

I wanted to alert your readers to an online motorcycle store that is apparently a complete scam. I came across the Web site motorcyclestyle.com while shopping for protective clothing.

My \$483.62 order was processed through their Web page and charged to my credit card within a day or two of ordering, apparently without irregularities, but then—nothing.

Repeated calls to their customer service number went to a voice mail message that was never returned. E-mails weren't answered, and they were impossible to reach at their Woodside, NY location.

After a month of waiting for the shipment, I complained to my credit card company. They accepted my fraud complaint and covered my loss. Any thoughts? How can you protect yourself from this kind of activity?

Richard Flaiz  
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## Modulators Work!

I have had headlight modulators for several years on two bikes, an SR500 and the one I now ride, a K75. Heads actually turn when people see me, and people in front of me seem to slow down when I'm behind them (I must look like a cop).

It's impossible to say if the modulator actually has saved me from an accident, since I use it all the time anyway.

About a month ago, I was stopped for the first time in seven years of using a modulator by a cop who told me it was illegal to have a flashing light on my bike. I showed him the page in the Kisan booklet that came with the modulator, citing the federal law. He didn't know about the federal law, said he'd do a web search about it and didn't write me a ticket.

Jim Ebbatson  
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Hilliard, OH

## Trip Planning With A GPS Device

Thanks for the great articles on GPS options in the April and May issues. But they still don't explain some of the functions that I'm sure most motorcyclists need.

I have used the automobile versions, so I understand how to use the GPS to get me to a destination, but that is not what I'm looking for. How do I use these devices to lay out a future ride and then use them to guide me while I'm riding? Our typical rides are not destination oriented (at least not the most direct route). They typically go from road to road, sometimes in very random directions.

How do we lay out such a ride and then use the GPS to guide us along our route? This is what I want out of a GPS, not the best, quickest route to my end of day destination (which many times is where I started!).

Bob Reil  
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*Bob, the capability you describe is called entering "waypoints," allowing you to lay out a random collection of roads, rather than have the GPS indicate the shortest possible path to a destination.*

*Garmin allows you to do this on your computer, save the routes and transfer them to your GPS unit. The Magellan I reviewed in an earlier article did not have this capability. However the Lowrance iWay 500c that LT Snyder reviewed in his GPS comparison in the April issue has the "waypoint" ability built in. Take a closer look at that one.*

—Steve Larsen

## SUV Size Contributes To Motorcyclists' Deaths

We at *City Bike* think Wendy Moon is right. The growth in the size of four-wheeled vehicles, especially SUVs, in the past decade surely has changed a fundamental aspect of collisions between a two-wheeled vehicle and a four-wheeled one.

No more over the top for us anymore. No, now we get slammed and then sink to the ground in front of the enormous grill and hood of a Ford Expedition or Hummer. It is not a glancing blow anymore but a knock-out punch.

The type of four-wheeled vehicle involved in fatal crashes with two-wheeled vehicles needs to be factored into the survey process in the future. Once it is, we predict a pattern will quickly develop that confirms Wendy's suspicions.

Remember too, that today's SUVs are bigger and heavier than previous models.

We also suspect that pedestrian deaths may also be increasing for the very same reason. That statistic might be highly illuminating when investigated since the same dynamic would be involved.

Brian Halton  
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### MSF Doesn't Teach Experience

I am writing in response to several letters from readers in the May issue regarding the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

I am an MSF instructor in Richmond, VA and have been so for four years. What many people don't (or can't) understand, is that the MSF does a great job of teaching safety awareness and fundamental riding skills. The program is not designed to—and doesn't—teach experience!

The flagship of the MSF is the Basic RiderCourse (BRC). The curriculum is well designed and meets the needs of the experienced and novice rider. It is still, however, a *basic* rider's course.

I learned to ride long before there were formal training programs. I took a hiatus from riding for several years and got the bug again when a Harley-Davidson dealership opened three miles from our home. Before my wife would let me buy a new Harley, she insisted that I take the motorcycle safety class. I didn't think that I could learn anything, but I decided to humor her to get the bike.

Having never ridden a bike herself, I encouraged her to take the course as well so that she would be a better passenger, which she agreed to do.

She aced the skills evaluation—I crossed a line and lost three points. She was so pleased with herself that she decided that she wanted to ride her own dang bike!

I learned three main things from taking the program: 1. The course was a lot more expensive than I had expected—I had to buy two bikes, instead of just one for me! 2. I had some real bad riding habits, lacked any modicum of situational awareness, and was not what I would now consider a "safe motorcyclist." 3. While she aced the program, my wife was then only qualified to do slow-speed turns and stops in a vacant parking lot.

We spent many weekends and countless hours honing these skills and her confidence and only then did we ease into traffic—and only on deserted back roads. She has been riding now for four years and is an experienced and safe rider. We are both still learning.

I tell all my students that story in hopes that they will glean some of the wisdom

that I and others have acquired over the years. Still—you can't teach experience!

John Borden  
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### Clarification On Insuremytrip.com

The June issue of MCN featured a well-researched and clearly explained article on medical evacuation insurance. I am also pleased that the author recommended our company insuremytrip.com as an online source for travel information.

My one concern about this reference is that we're described as an "information-only site and not a provider."

It is true that insuremytrip.com does not literally create or draft the policies (terms, details, coverage). However, on our site you can compare the travel insurance plans of leading travel insurance companies *and* purchase these policies at the same time. Essentially, we provide all the information necessary for consumers to learn about, compare *and purchase* the coverage best suited to their travel needs in one location—one-stop shopping.

Vikki Corliss  
Director, Public Relations  
Insuremytrip.com

### Make Horn Fuses Accessible

The Stebel horn installation article was very good, except for one small item. Placing the inline fuse holders near the horns, and in a location that appears to be under the front fairing is the worst possible place. If the fuses blow you'd have to take the bike half-apart to replace them.

The fuses need to be in a place that is readily accessible at all times.

Henry S. Winokur  
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### The Great Norge

Just read your review of the Norge 1200. Being a new owner, I concur with your well-written article. It was very accurate and "spot on."

I have the same "nits" that you have, with one additional big one. Did you attempt to check the engine oil on your demo bike? It can't be done on the road, since the oil dipstick is inaccessible without removing the fairing. This turns it into a major job. It's a *big* oversight on the engineers and stylists' part!

The Norge is perfect for me with a 29" inseam. I traded two Harleys for it and still have my '06 Road Glide for comfortable long-distance touring. At 65 years old, I am not as nimble as I used to be and on my previous BMWs ('02

R1150RT, '04 R1150RS and '04 K1200GT) I had to install footpeg lowering kits to keep my knees from getting very painful on long distance rides.

They provided a little more relief, alas the Norge over a long-distance ride does not have quite the leg relief afforded by my Harley. But more frequent stops and some exercise help a lot. (If someone makes a footpeg lowering kit or highway pegs for it, I want to know.)

I love my "Goose" and the way it handles. I have shaved some rubber off the centerstand bump pad to raise it a tad, so it doesn't drag quite as bad. Although riding two-up does compress the suspension quite a bit, it's all in all a much better choice than BMW's current offerings. Lower tech, less maintenance, more reliability, and lower cost mean more riding and less time in the shop!

Stevens E. Woodburn  
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### Where To Park On The Sensor Loop

I was excited to see an article about how to successfully trip a loop detector (Set It Off, May 2007). This has been a curiosity of mine for years, and I was glad to see you debunk all the urban legends.

However, chalk this up to a long day at the office, but after reading the article I'm afraid I still don't know where to "park" to trip the loops. Any chance you could draft an image, maybe an overhead image, of where to put a bike to best trip loops? Many thanks.

Marty Tanis  
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Stow, OH

*Marty, here is the diagram you requested.*  
—Franke

