

# Alternative Education

*Some folks are not even aware that they are unaware*



**B**Y NOW IT SHOULD BE NO secret that I am a big supporter of rider education, skills improvement, and increased rider development of situational awareness to further protect ourselves from the day-to-day risks associated with the motorsport we enjoy. That is, however, not all we can do to enhance our pursuit of education. There are certainly other venues of learning that can be extremely useful to better ourselves.

As much time as we may spend to prevent dangerous situations, there is always a chance that those “what-ifs” catch up with us and ruin the ride we are enjoying. Taking the steps to be prepared for those unforeseen instances can have just as big a payback as any other part of education. Programs like Accident Scene Management can give the tools needed to control a situation and minimize the possibility of a worse outcome. Sure,

no one wants to think about, or even consider, scenarios that can cause damage or harm, but knowing how to deal with all the aspects involved could make a big difference in the results of a hazardous situation.

Staying on the topic of dealing with those unwanted “what-ifs,” perhaps consider a first aid/CPR course. If you had to attend to the needs of a friend, family member, or just another rider who may be bleeding, have broken bones or worse, would you know what to do? This is when precious minutes cannot be wasted and having the knowledge of how to handle things could make a definite difference for that person. Plus, knowing the proper method to perform CPR could certainly turn a negative outcome into a positive one. If we consider that many of us fall under the category that the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) classifies as Seasoned Riders (those 50 or older), the odds of being with someone that may need CPR is not outside of the realm of possibility. A day on the weekend or a couple of weeknights to attend a local program could repay you more than you’d ever expect.

Lots of things to think about, but how about switching gears from these gloomy, but important, thoughts to accident prevention? With today’s motorcycles, things have gotten so much better in terms of dependability and maintenance requirements, as roadside repairs are more uncommon than just an expected part of the ride. There are also some of us that typically have a dealer or shop take care of those maintenance issues. This requires a level of trust that things get fixed

correctly. Yet even if everything is checked and adjusted properly, once again things can go wrong. Granted, today’s motorcycles are also far more technical than those of years past, but there is still a lot we could gain from taking a basic motorcycle maintenance or mechanical course. Do you need to be able to break down an engine on the road? I know I could, but I also know there is no chance I could put it back together. Yet I do know enough to work my way through some lesser problems that could possibly arise. Learning your way around a set of wrenches and other tools can also be beneficial as part of your T-CLOCS priride program. Believe it or not, I have come across some riders that have no idea how to check their bike’s oil level or even air pressure; some never even thought about or had any clue that things like that should be checked. Sounds odd, but along with the overall rider education process, some folks are not even aware that they are unaware. Like everything else we discuss here, when things like this are not taken care of, serious repercussions can result.

Learning can be fun, eye opening, and the road to further enjoyment of riding. There is so much we can learn to make rolling down the highway a bit safer. I still believe that improving our skills and thought processes are major keys to our overall survival on the road, but there is always so much more we can learn for our betterment. Bottom line: keep learning and experiencing new things, and share that information with others in order to encourage them to do the same. **AIM**