

February 2009

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- Feature Stories • Touring
- Vintage • Sport • Off Road
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- *American CycleRider™*

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Mailed from
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Permit no.14

Lynn Wisnieski
Aerostich Riderwear
8 South 18th Avenue West
Duluth, MN 55806

www.MidwestMotorcyclist.com

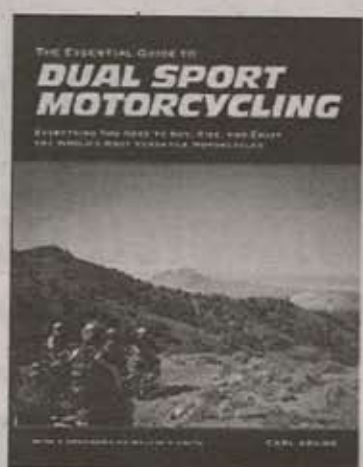
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For me, winter time is the best time to catch up on my motorcycle-related reading. Magazines are read almost as soon as they enter the house but books tend to sit gathering dust until I can dedicate serious time to reading. Frigid temperatures and continual snow fall have made this winter perfect for catch-up reading. While I'm still in the midst of reading two books, two others have been successfully completed.

The first book I read is *The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling, Everything You Need to Buy, Ride and Enjoy the World's Most Versatile Motorcycles* by Carl Adams. None other than Malcolm Smith wrote the forward for the book. For me, this was not a book to read from beginning to end. Instead, I started reading the "Increasing Your Enjoyment" section near the back of the book first. The chapters about *Organized Activities, Exploring and Navigation and Trips and Touring* stimulated my new-found interest in dual-sport / adventure touring. Adams' tips are incredibly



detailed and the photos show not only beautiful scenery and trails but also help to explain detailed instructions.

Every time I picked this book up, I found myself in a different section. As a novice in the dirt, the basic and advance riding techniques were quite helpful in the reading; we'll see how good those techniques will be when translated to the trail. The maintenance and trailside repairs provided specific preparations and helpful tools that might be needed in the event of a breakdown - the inevitable breakdown - on the trail. While I already spend a good deal of time and money on maintenance, descriptions of some trailside repairs were incredibly helpful.

To Our Readers

The Essential Guide to Dual Sport Motorcycling is both a "How to" book and an inspiration. I learned techniques that I will likely use while on the trails this spring. I also found myself excited about the prospects of expanding my motorcycle experience to include more time in the dirt. I spent my first five years riding a motorcycle in the dirt. That was almost 40 years ago. As time passed and I became more in tune with street riding, the dirt was a memory. This book and the experiences riding local dirt roads this past year have me thinking it's time to get back to my roots. I feel both inspired and better prepared for those trail rides as a result of this book. Available from White Horse Press (www.WhiteHorsePress.com).

The second book took me entirely by surprise. I have long thought that motorcycle riding provides a zen-like calm and have talked with other motorcyclists about riding in "the zone." I always assumed that this calm was generated by the concentration required to ride a motorcycle in a skilled manner, most often while riding in fast and/or challenging conditions. Focus on your riding and your mind has no time to wander to other topics. While this level of concentration does lead to what might be called meditative states of mind, there are apparently other reasons that we motorcyclists are so drawn to the speed and motion that riding provides.

Bodies in Motion, Evolution and Experience in Motorcycling is a book that delves deeply into the "psychobiological" reasons that we ride. Written by Steven L. Thompson, a former *Cycle World* Editor-at-Large and *Cycle Guide* Editorial Director among many other journalism credentials, *Bodies* takes a scientific look at motorcycle riding. The book includes a comprehensive appendix with a detailed bibliography and Stanford University Vibration Study. Acrostich founder and owner Andy Goldfine contributed the foreword for the book.

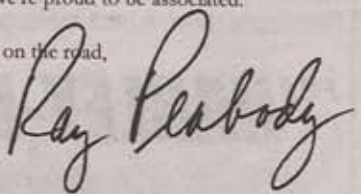
Thompson asserts that our desire for speed and movement is ingrained in our biology, down to the level of our genes. It started with our distant ancestors who lived in the trees as a defense against predators. Those ancestors learned to move quickly and confidently from tree to tree. Thompson equates the experience of that speed and movement through the trees to riding a motorcycle. He provides significant evidence to support this hypothesis. There is much more to Thompson's book; too much to summarize here.

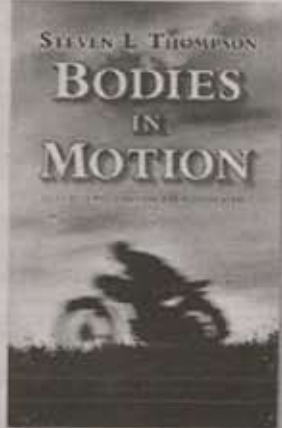
Bodies in Motion is not exactly a page turner. The reading is challenging. I found myself reading and then re-reading some sections to ensure my understanding. I found it to be similar to a college text book. Thompson has obviously thought long and hard about

our desire to ride and the foundations of that desire. He's done a lot of research to better understand why so many of us enjoy riding as much as we do. While sometimes challenging to read, I found myself enthralled with the concepts Thompson presents. I like to understand the "why" and "how" things work. The author presents some compelling arguments about the reasons we like to ride. Published by Aero Design & Mfg. Co., Inc. and available at www.aerostich.com.

This February issue is full of terrific stories for you. From the BMW G 650 GS test by international motojournalist Gabe Ets-Hokin and the Piaggio MP3 400 review by Diane Ortiz to the *Cycle World* International Motorcycle Show assessment by Ken Wickle and the Safer Riding: Clutch Control article by Pat Armitage, we hope you enjoy every contribution.

Thanks for reading. We hope you're not struggling with economic issues as so many are right now. The bright spot - the thing on which we're focusing our attention - is the coming riding season. Riding has a way of shifting problems to the background, letting us clear our minds and enjoy what we're doing at the moment. As always, with no regrets for asking, please patronize our advertisers. They support this publication and the motorcycle industry in your area. They're good folks with whom we're proud to be associated.

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