Rider Education Report

I hope everyone is doing well so far this year. Each new year brings change, and this year is no exception. By the time this article is published, the next President will be sworn into office, very likely bringing change to government. A new season of your favorite show is just around the corner, with changes in character development and plot lines. Professional sports teams that have been eliminated from post season schedules are busy changing coaching staff. This list could go on and on.

I am not trying to suggest that change is good or bad, rather, it is something we have that will not go away, and so it is something for which we should plan. For example, the powers that be at Microsoft have decided that the Windows 10 operating system is too old to continue to be supported, and because the computer hardware I own is not capable of supporting the new Windows 11, I have had to make a change in my life. Setting up a new computer always brings with it unique challenges for each situation. But proper planning, like checking on-line tutorials and asking questions of people who know, can make the change far less dramatic because you can learn from others' experiences and the choices they made in similar circumstances. In my case, I have a brother that before he retired was the head of his computer department in a major oil company. Based on my needs he knew exactly what hardware I should purchase. One of my children services the application software for large machine tools used by very large companies that make things. He knew exactly how to adapt my old applications into my new machine.

Our hobby of motorcycling reminds me of this "new computer" process. At the end of each year, we have our bikes serviced by someone we trust and then wait until the new riding season comes around. Hopefully the technician looked over the complete motorcycle and looked for changes - worn or damaged items beyond just regular service. And hopefully if anything was found, the parts are ordered, and the appointment is scheduled to get everything right before it is time to ride again. So, now the hardware is covered, but what about the application software? No, not on the motorcycle (many of us still have machines too old for that to be an issue). I am talking about our minds and our bodies. The bike is the tool; we apply technique to make it work. Do we have all our "files" in order for the coming year of riding? Are we ready for any new challenges we might face? I work to keep my "applications" up to date with annual visits to my various doctors, and I try to do cardio and strength training all year long. As a necessity to write these articles, I make time to check various motorcycling websites that offer advice on riding techniques. I continue to expose myself to information about motorcycling that may be useful. And I am sure to take an on-bike class at least once every three years to have someone else confirm my skills have not deteriorated without my realizing it.

Every computer, cellular phone, GPS, etc., needs constant updates to their application software. These updates are more than just a way to get aggravated because you cannot use the device during the update process. These updates are needed to keep the device current with the latest information and ready to work regardless of the tasks you need them to perform. Many updates are automatic, but some applications do not let us know they need to be updated until we use them. When was the last time you started your own "rider app"? Does it need an update?

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