

Rider Education Report

Recently I was asked “why do I ride motorcycles?” which got me thinking. And July offered much time to think about it as I was very busy doing a lot of riding. I think for me, it is the journey more than the destination. Many times, I have reached a planned destination, only to find it looks just like it was pictured on the internet, or the magazine article. Some of the destinations of course, like the view from Mount Blue Sky, Colorado, are impossible to truly appreciate in pictures, but the overall view was the same.

What was not the same was the journey to get there. Descriptions of the ride are interpretations of the author, and each person has a different view, or presumption, or attitude, or goal, which affects their perspective and the effect on their experience. Any number of things can happen at any time during any journey. Being prepared for all of them is usually outside the scope of motorcycling but preparing for them we still must. I find there is a short list of equipment that covers a very long list of possibilities.

I am certain you know some of the equipment that I am about to recommend, and maybe even own some or all of it. A first aid kit because, well, you just never know when you or someone you meet on your journey may need exactly what you have. I have used the first aid kit I carry more times to help strangers than I have used it for myself. A good rain suit keeps you dry when the weather gets wet, and because they tend to be wind proof and offer another layer, can keep you warm when the weather turns cold, or when you climb above 12,000 feet. A small tool kit like the one Honda includes in the many variations of Gold Wing to tighten up your nuts and bolts and help you keep everything together. A tire repair kit and a small electric air pump can keep you rolling when providence is otherwise trying to flatten your mood. A small flashlight to brighten a dark moment, and a small multimeter to troubleshoot an inconvenient electrical issue. And finally, a roll of some sort of strong and sticky material to keep everything together when fasteners are missing or never existed in the first place.

When we traveled to Greenville for Wing Ding 35, I found that I needed to make a temporary repair on my brake lever to keep the brake lights functioning properly. I stopped at a convenience store and bought a small roll of duct tape, which did what I needed it to do, and we made it home without any additional drama. Over time, that roll of tape has helped several riders fix what was broken long enough to get home safely. When the last few feet were removed from the roll, I found an even better replacement product. Walmart sells T-Rex tape, a *ferociously strong tape*® that surprised me with its quality. This is sold as a duct tape but does not include the usual woven fibers of standard duct tape. But it is a very strong acrylic material and will stretch quite a bit to help you get a good seal on whatever odd shape you are trying to keep together. The adhesive is quite tacky and sticks strongly to a variety of smooth surfaces and is very weather resistant. If you see me on my Gold Wing, and are curious about T-Rex tape, ask me, I'll show you my roll.

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