

Stupid People and the Quest for Knowledge

The Krugerrand is considered taboo by many because it represents the racist apartheid policies of the South African government that reigned between 1948-1994. Like Nazi paraphernalia, this one-ounce chunk of gold is highly collectable because it is a symbol of a by-gone era that some may still be clinging to and others find an unimaginable period in the history of human drama. Make no mistake, hatred and bigotry are still alive today and I am no exception. I focus my hatred on a well-defined population of the planet; stupid people. That is, I hate anybody with an IQ over 40 who doesn't wear adult diapers that chooses ignorant behavior as a way of life; and I don't discriminate.

What's up with the idiot driving a P.O.S. Hyundai with a faded Gore/Kerry bumper sticker going 60mph in the left lane on the highway robbing me of enjoying my 427 Corvette? How about the moron that drives five feet behind you in a car while you're enjoying some two-wheeled therapy on your American motorcycle? Oblivious? Ignorant?

Unlike the idiot and moron in the previous paragraph, motorcycle riders cannot afford to be oblivious to their environment; it's a matter of survival. Common sense and awareness of one's surroundings are what it takes to keep the *rubber side down*. Knowledge about your motorcycle is also a big factor in navigating down the road. KNOW YOUR MOTORCYCLE. Knowing how to maintain your motorcycle is very important. Know the ins and outs of component compatibility when modifying your machine. Right, wrong, and skewed information seems to abound. Here's a few drivetrain brain farts to make your American motorcycle more ride-able and safe:

Pressure washers are great for removing bugs and grime but are the scourge of any transmission vent system. Blasting the vent area on the top cover can force water into the transmission. Water + precision ground gears + bearings = pitting + galling and a shortened transmission service life or worse. Locate the vent port on your transmission top cover and avoid blasting that area with a pressure washer nozzle. Plug or tape off the area if you have to blast some raccoon guts or ear lobes from an ex-wife out of the top cover/starter area.



Powertrain stabilizers really work. I think they should be mandatory equipment on all 1993-2008 FL family motorcycles for anybody who rides over 50 mph. Trouble with the stock FL configuration starts when a 65mph+ sweeping turn is taken with any road undulations. Speed wobbles and chassis dancing from side-to-side can happen without warning and with disastrous results. The True Track and Alloy Art stabilizer systems virtually eliminate chassis dancing and speed wobbles by coupling the bottom of the oil pan to the chassis via heim joints and an adapter bracket. They work even better with a BAKER +1 oil pan because the heim joints bolt directly to the oil pan with no adapter bracket. One footnote to stabilizer systems is that they do cause a little more tactile buzzing on the floorboards and the handlebars, and will reduce the service life of the front rubber mount. But these negatives are trivial compared to the positive of *not* high-siding a juicy sweeper at 80mph.

Do your homework when using factory or aftermarket low effort clutch actuator ball ramps; lower clutch effort is achieved by lowering the clutch pressure plate travel. You can't cheat Newtonian physics. On a brand new bike low effort ball ramps will probably work fine. On a bike with worn clutch plates and a tired cable it may not work. With an aftermarket performance clutch it *definitely* won't work. When the clutch is not released completely, the first symptom will be difficulty in finding neutral, the next symptom will be hard shifting, and the third will be clutch dragging/creep at a stoplight. A sick clutch can be a nuisance and a safety hazard.

Knowledge is what sets you apart from the stupid people. Riders of foreign touring bikes seem to know their machines at a shallow level like any other household appliance in their house—and there's a certain danger in that out on the road. Riders of American machines seem to be more intimate with their bikes. The quest for knowledge about the machine will only make the two-wheeled love affair stronger and make it safer on the road. **IV**

