



In This Issue:

<i>Introduction</i>	pg. 1	<i>ATV Safety</i>	pg. 3
<i>Rain or Shine</i>	pg. 2	<i>Four-Wheeled Road Hazards</i>	pg. 4

BEYOND THE ROAD

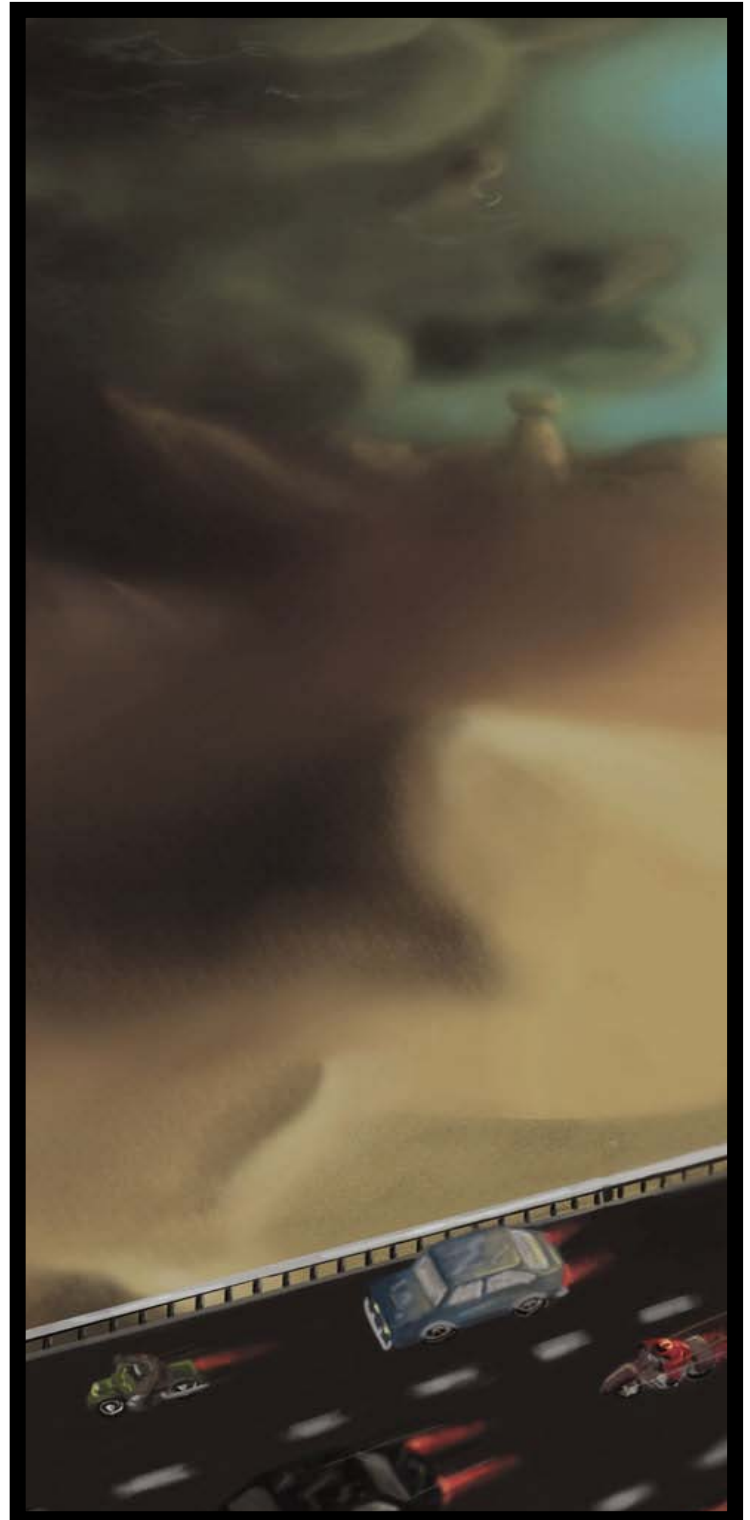
Hello again, road warriors. This issue, we are taking a turn off the beaten path, getting away from the well-paved streets and highways, to visit a few new territories.

Sure, the best time to go for a motorcycle ride is when the sun is out, the roads are dry, and the last thing you have to worry about is getting cold and wet; but we don't live in a perfect world, and the weather isn't always going to cooperate with your riding schedule. However, this doesn't necessarily need to ruin your ride. With a little preparation, the right gear, and proper training, the weather doesn't need to be an obstacle. We have an article for you that goes over the basics of what you'll need to keep riding.

Of course, who says you need to ride on the road at all? For that matter, who says you need to ride on just two wheels? ATVs are becoming more popular all the time, and there is already plenty of overlap between the two-wheel world and the four-wheeled world. Riding an ATV does require a different skill set than a motorcycle or driving a car however, so we've put together a short overview on ATV operation.

Even when you're taking a fairly normal trip, your daily car commute for example, the familiar road can change in an instant if someone else is driving dangerously. What should you do if someone is abusing their right to drive? The first thing is not to follow their example and succumb to road rage. The next is... well, you can read all about it on Page 4.

The road isn't always perfect, and it's not the only place we go to drive or ride. The world of the motorist can be a world of stormy skies, muddy hills, and crazy fellow motorists. We hope this issue will help you identify and reduce those risks so you arrive safe and sound.



Rain or Shine

Preparing yourself and your motorcycle for riding in cold and wet weather.

by Alan Tyson

When you're on a motorcycle, there is very little between you and the world. There's probably no feeling that is closer to flying than riding down the highway with the wind whistling past. When the sky is blue, the sun is warm, and the air is at your back, we remember why we chose to ride in the first place – because it feels like nothing else can.

On the other hand, when the rain and wind are chilling your bones and making the road slick, then cars and trucks, with their climate control, perfectly-tuned music, and all-encompassing glass bubbles, start to look like a pretty good way to get around. Aside from making the ride uncomfortable, wind and rain can be hazards in and of themselves. Strong winds can push you around the road, wet roads reduce your traction, and there are plenty of health risks to riding unprotected (suffering from hypothermia and catching pneumonia among them).

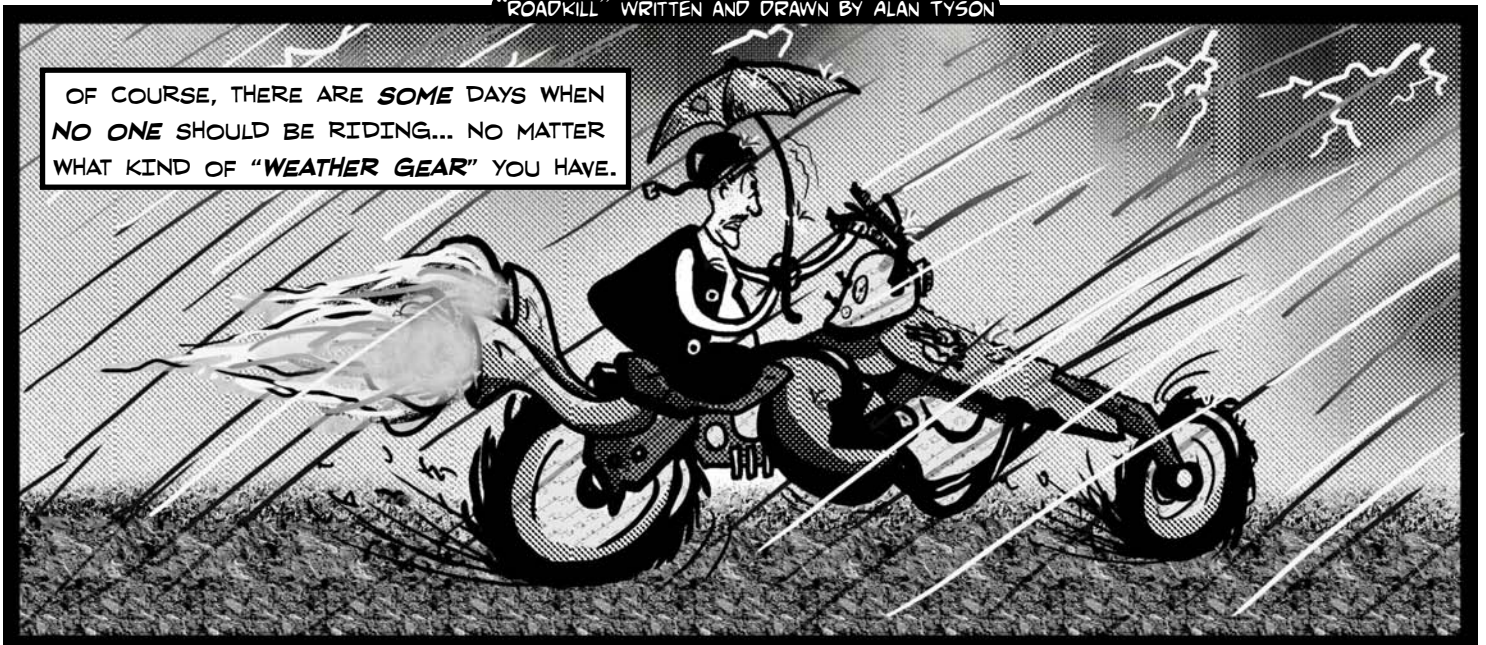
However, if you must ride when the weather's bad, wearing the right kind of waterproof, insulated, and heated gear will help keep you warm and dry. While your bike will never perform quite as well as on a day with good weather, there are steps you can take to make the ride both safer and smoother.

When choosing your wet and cold gear, you should have at least three layers of protection. The first consists of a moisture wicking material, such as Under Armor, with a porous surface to draw the sweat and heat from your body, keeping you dry and preventing overheating caused by the other two levels. Second, there should be a layer of insulation. The materials for this can vary widely, with fleece and wool being some of the more popular choices. This will hold in your body heat, and keep the cold and rain out. Finally, your outermost gear level should be some type of wind block, such as leather or cordura. When your motorcycle is in motion, the ambient temperature can drop more than twenty degrees Fahrenheit from the windchill. A windblock will help immensely.

Of course, while you're preparing yourself for the weather, you should get your bike ready, as well. Make sure your tires are in the best possible condition to handle slick, wet surfaces, have plenty of tread, and that the tire pressure matches the recommendation of your owner's manual (also check the bike itself, as many manufacturers will stamp the maximum tire pressure for a loaded and unloaded bike onto the bike's frame). You should not expose a bike to harsh weather if it is in need of a new coat of paint – moisture on bare metal surfaces causes rust, which will decrease the lifespan of your bike's working parts. Your bike deserves the same protection from the elements as you.

Bad weather might not be most people's idea of the best time to ride, but it needn't necessarily stand in the way of a ride you've been meaning to take for a while.

"ROADKILL" WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY ALAN TYSON



ALL TERRAIN SAFETY

The risks of riding an ATV, and the skills and training that can help reduce that risk.

by Steven Staples

Originally created for off-road transportation, the all-terrain vehicle, or ATV, has morphed into a multi-purpose dynamo, requiring very specific skills to control its inner beast. The vehicle is synonymous with both thrills and spills; their ease of operation, instant pleasure factor, and four-wheel design can cause riders to ignore the inherent risk of riding an ATV. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports hundreds of ATV-related fatalities and hundreds of thousands of emergency room injuries, every year.

It must be stressed that an ATV is neither an open-air car, nor is it a four-wheeled motorcycle. The skills you may have learned for operating these vehicles, while valuable, do not necessarily translate to riding an ATV. It is a class of vehicle all its own, and it requires its own skill-set to handle safely.

Of course, the best way to learn how to handle an ATV is to take a training course. Some manufacturers provide free training or provide reimbursement for training costs, so see if your vehicle's manufacturer offers such incentives. The website for the ATV Safety Institute, or ASI, is a good place to read about ATV operation and safety and to enroll in an ATV Rider Course. Other good sources include the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA), ATVsafety.gov, and, of course, your base's safety office.

Risk can be managed on an ATV by following some basic rules. Always wear a helmet and protective gear. ATV tires are made specifically for off-road use, and won't work as well on pavement, so stay off public roads. When on a hill or slope, keep your weight on the "uphill side" the slope. While some ATVs have passenger seats and handles, not all do. Even if your ATV is designed to carry a passenger, you are responsible for their safety, and you should drive accordingly. Pay attention to age restrictions posted on the ATV, and keep in mind that it is not a toy, and should only be operated by mature, trained riders. Finally, never ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The ATV is rider-active, meaning that stability on an ATV is dependent on the rider's ability to shift body weight from side to side, or front to back, when maneuvering. Rider training helps develop the skills necessary for controlling this dynamic instability. Training also provides a knowledge base for making better decisions, which can reduce risk. In short, training, responsibility, and maturity are all fundamental to fun, safe ATV operation.



**“...THE BEST WAY TO LEARN
HOW TO HANDLE AN ATV IS
TO TAKE A TRAINING
COURSE.”**

Four-Wheeled Road Hazards

How to Identify and Avoid Dangerous Motorists

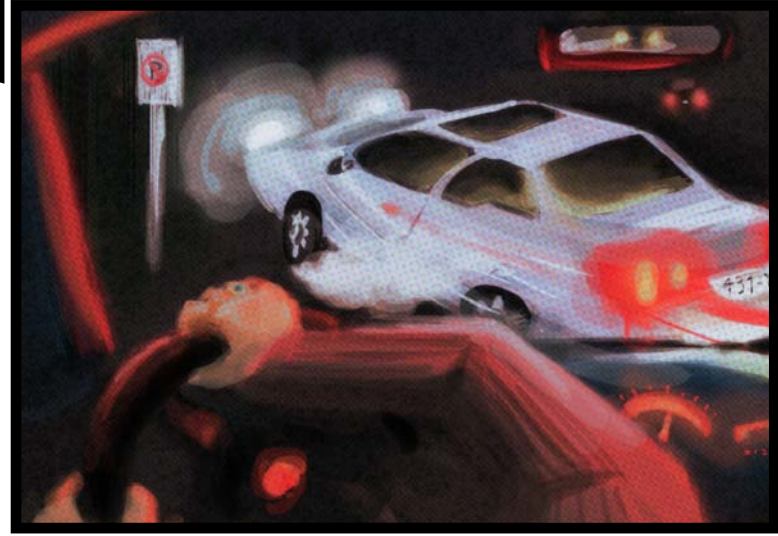
by Alan Tyson

There's an old adage that you are only as safe as the worst driver sharing the road with you. Dangerous drivers, whether they are inexperienced, inebriated, or just plain absent-minded, can make a relatively normal commute a bit more exciting than most of us would probably like. It can be frustrating, knowing that no matter how skilled and conscientious you are as a driver, you still have to contend with all the other... well, pick your favorite insult... on the road with you. Try as you might, you can't force everyone on the road to be as safe as you are.

However, there's no reason to leave yourself to the mercy of dangerous drivers. Whenever you're on the road, you should be aware of the behaviors of others. You don't need to peer into their windows and spy on their every move, but you should watch for a few warning signs that could identify a dangerous driver. They might be slow to react to normal driving stimuli; they will slam on the brakes when they come to a stoplight or sign, or they will stay stopped long after a light has turned green. They may take turns and curves much too tight and fast because they weren't expecting the turn (though such things should be marked on road signs). Perhaps the most dangerous actions are sudden increases or decreases in speed for no apparent reason, or swerving and weaving in and out of lanes.

If someone does one of these things once, it's probably not a major cause for concern, though it does make them worth keeping an eye on. If they make these behaviors into a habit, though, they are putting other drivers, yourself included, at risk.

Before we continue, it bears saying that what may at first seem to be bad driving could, in fact, be a driver reacting to road conditions that you can't see yet. Don't just watch to see what the car is doing. Look ahead to see if they are maybe swerving to avoid a deer jumping onto the road, or if they are suddenly braking because they are at a stop sign that you haven't seen yet. The other driver might be reckless and dangerous, or they might be inadvertently warning you of something really dangerous up the road. Be aware of the whole road, not just the most obvious parts of it.



If you do, in fact, have a dangerous driver on your hands, the most vital thing you can do is to keep calm. Don't let another driver's risky behavior drive you to do the same. React as mindfully as possible, and don't take any actions which could worsen the situation. Keep your distance from the other driver (at least two seconds, possibly more at higher speeds), so that you have enough time and space to react if they really go out of control.

Many driver's first instinct with a dangerous driver is to pass them – after all, they can't harm you if you're ahead of them. This is not inherently a bad idea, but you should never pass a dangerous driver, especially one who swerves and weaves, in a lane right next to them. On a two-lane road, trying to pass is probably the most dangerous thing you could do; on the contrary, slowing down and letting the driver leave you behind lets the danger avoid you, rather than the other way around.

In fact, the best thing you can do in almost any dangerous situation is just to escape it. If you're on the highway and you're being tailgated by a semi truck, take the next available exit, wait a minute or so, then get back on. If a drunk is swerving all over the country road where you're riding your motorcycle, pull over onto the shoulder and wait until you can't see their taillights anymore. Your first responsibility is to secure the safety of yourself and your passengers; only when you have done this should you take any other action.

Above all else, don't let the risky behavior of other drivers turn you into just as much of a danger. Road rage spreads like a virus, but you don't have to catch it if you don't want to. Dangerous situations can be frightening and frustrating, but succumbing to these emotions won't make things any better – quite the opposite, actually. Keep your distance, keep your head, and keep safe. 