



THE WAY I SEE IT *by Genevieve Schmitt*

## No Man's Land

Resist the call to stuff more stuff on your bike!

WITH ALL THE NEW technology, tools, gizmos, and gadgets bombarding us, it's nice to know we still have our motorcycles to keep life simple. Or do we? Have you noticed how the evolution of motorcycling is mirroring that of society?

More contraptions, more compartments, more speed, better this, improved that ... and so on and so on. I like things just the way they are, thank you very much.

Just the other day, I popped a piece of gum from its foil tray while sitting in the passenger seat of my Ford Explorer. "Whoops!" I blurted out as the little white rectangle rolled down the top of the left sleeve of my jacket, bouncing off my elbow into the crack between the seat and the center console. "Did it go into no man's land, never to be seen again?" my husband quipped. "No, I think I got it," I replied as I painstakingly reached down with the longest of my digits to finger the piece out of its wedged position. "I almost have it," I sighed as I extended and stretched my fingertip to tap the gum to a place where I could snatch it.

Tink. "Darn it!" I shouted. I had inadvertently tapped the gum deeper into the depths of no man's land. "It's gone. No-man's land it is." This tiny tart of fresh, unchewed gum fell somewhere down in the greasy, crumb-laden track of my seat. I mean way down there, down in the tiny tubular territory tucked under a plastic piece of molding that protects the sharp edges of the track. Immediately, my mind flooded with visions of the next owner of my aged automobile doing a clean sweep of the vehicle, finding my long lost piece of Dentyne, not to mention hardened Kettle Chips, some business cards, and

\$100 worth of coins. "We don't have no man's land on our bikes, do we, babe," my husband declared, affirming to ourselves why two-wheelers trump four-wheelers, at least on that level.

Well, now, think about this. In the old days, we had leather saddlebags and hard-sided bags. Take your pick. You dumped your stuff in there and off you went. Now, there are bag liners, tank bib pockets, windshield pouches, highway bar compartments, Tour-Pak pouches, cup holders, cellphone holders, GPS mounts, video camera mounts, this holder, that holder, all creating lots of little supplementary spaces on our motorcycle to schlepp more stuff. Even motorcycle luggage — backrest bags and tankbags — come with a collection of compartments to stow seemingly needed staples away. And as if that's not enough, riding jackets look like a fly fisherman's outerwear with all the pouches and pockets. In fact, a riding jacket is now judged by the number and kind of pockets it has. It's no longer adequate to have just your standard hand-warmer pockets in the front; we've got zippered breast pockets, interior pockets, and item-specific pockets like that cellphone pocket, a credit card pocket, and an iPod pocket with a little hole through the liner for the earbud wire — as if all these chambers are a good thing. Are they? I can tell you they are not good for me. No sir-ee! More pouches, pockets, and compartments means I can pack more para-

phernalia — the still camera and the video camera, my riding sunglasses and my fashionable off-the-bike sunglasses, my straight hairbrush and my round hairbrush, sunscreen for my face, and a different one for my arms. This is not good, people. I may even bring the kitchen sink!

With all these receptacles comes a greater likelihood of creating no man's land on a motorcycle. "I know it's here somewhere," I huffed as I moved and fussed and dug for that extra bandanna I stashed at the last minute. Wasn't good enough to bring one and wash it out every night. Heck, no. I had the room. Let's just stuff that motorcycle to the gills, why don't we!

No man's land and motorcycles just don't go together. No man's land goes with clothes dryers and cars and, sometimes, closets, but not our two-wheelers for goodness sake. If we can't find stuff on our bikes, we're in big trouble, folks. Motorcycles, for so many of us, are all about escaping stuff, paring down, liberation, getting away from the world and its chokehold on our freedom. That's probably how the word *freedom* got associated with motorcycle riding. So, when the urge strikes to purchase another pouch, resist in the name of freedom. Resist the call to stuff more stuff on your bike! You'll thank me when you're standing by, chuckling, watching a friend huffing and puffing, discovering no man's land has invaded his motorcycle. **AIM**

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