

# Remembrances

*Dave Bucher looks back at some little gems of experience from his 45 years of riding and writing.*

## Two Holes and a Tube

A rented Honda Shadow. November 1996 tour around Florida. I'm cruising the Tamiami Trail, east to west. Left the Northeast cold behind and I am really enjoying the balmy '70s. Not much traffic this weekday, and with open country on both sides and Miami left behind, all I could see was blue sky, puffy clouds and tropical brilliance.

But, before long, the Everglades closed in and the road was lined with dense vegetation. I pulled to the shoulder to take a break and leaned over the Armco barrier to stare into a drainage ditch. It seemed lifeless. But, as my eyes adjusted from the wide open sky to these darker spaces, I thought I saw motion. Then another. Soon things came into focus. The "ditch" was teeming with fish. As I listened the air was filled with the sounds of insects and birds. I smelled the vegetation. Life had exploded into my perception. And then, an ominous splash. Heavy. Close. I really didn't have to guess what that was. Death. Another dimension of life.



It was a seminal moment, due, I suppose, to my just having finished an incredible tome entitled *Vital Dust*, by Christian De Duve, a Nobel-prized Belgian biochemist. It's a comprehensive history of the evolution of life on this planet and despite all the complexity it revealed, the thing I most took away from it was that multicellular life, whether it's the simplest worm, or us, is really nothing more than a tube with holes at both ends.

Sure, as we climb the ladder of life the appendages become more sophisticated, but at its most fundamental level, all life must eat and eliminate.

So, as I looked down, up and around, at the plethora of living things that surrounded me, I was overcome with the oneness I felt. From that moment on, I was no longer an exploiter of life on this marvelous planet, I became a participant.