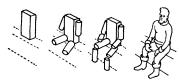


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LETTERS

to the editor

Education needed

I am writing to take great exception to your motorcycle safety article (SN: 6/14, p. 577) quoting John J. O'Mara.

Your article states that O'Mara feels that government should specify such requirements as number of wheels, arrangement and configuration of wheels, protective envelope and restraining or anti-ejection devices. O'Mara clearly wants either to magically change all motorcycles into cars, or (more likely) ban motorcycles from public roads. Particularly discouraging is his desire for restraining devices; he has clearly never ridden a motorcycle and is equally clearly uninformed on this subject.

Also discouraging are the statistics quoted, particularly the statement that the chance of a motorcyclist being killed is 20 times that of a car driver. This article does not indicate that most recent surveys by the various safety agencies indicate that 70 to 80 percent of motorcycle accidents are caused by car drivers, who are keeping a safetyeye for other cars, but not for smaller vehicles like motorcycles. Naturally, when a car-motorcycle accident occurs, it is the motorcyclist who is on the short end of the stick.

I was very surprised, as an avid reader of Science News, to read this article in your excellent magazine. It is neither scientific to use statistics out of context, nor news that a motorcyclist, having allowed himself to become involved in an accident with a car, has a greater probability of serious injury than the car driver. A motorcyclist must ride exceptionally defensively to offset the shortcomings of many car drivers.

The solution to our supposed, and often misguided, "motorcycle problem"

Director: EARL J. SCHERAGO

lies in stricter licensing for all drivers and in better driver education-not in legislation intended to pacify the uninformed.

Your titling of the article by "Motorcycle Controls Needed" makes it appear that you agree with the author. I hope that this is not true.

> Dwight Huffman Campbell, Calif.

Patent treaty

I appreciate the coverage which Sci-ENCE News has accorded to the progress of negotiations of the Patent Cooperation Treaty. It is my hope that members of the scientific community as well as of the patent profession will study the negotiating draft of the treaty which will be available shortly and give us their comments so that we may better serve the interests of the American public during the May-June negotiations next year.

One item in the treatment of the draft treaty may lead those unfamiliar with its details to infer that the filing of a patent application in the language of each country will be unnecessary under the treaty. The treaty provides for an initial filing in one of the agreed languages. To complete his application in the states which he has selected, the applicant must ultimately submit translations if required by local law. However, he may defer submission of the translations and payment of local filing fees for a 20-month period measured from his priority date. This is eight months longer than the present priority period under the Paris Convention and would allow additional time to evaluate patentability and commercial feasibility of the invention. This may be a significant procedural advantage to some applicants.

William E. Schuyler Jr. Commissioner of Patents Washington, D.C.

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