



# HEADLINES

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## Just another day in paradise

In the future, when someone asks me what life is like in Bermuda, I will simply recount the time I spent in the company of the TCD last week.

After fourteen months of driving around the island in our little car and renting the occasional scooter from Oleander (they have my credit card on permanent file!), I finally decided to bite the bullet and buy a bike.

No 50cc scooter for me, I wanted something with some pep that would take two of us up and down the hills around our house without creating a major traffic jam. So, I found a nice, used 150 on E-Moo and plunged into the unknown world of motorbike registration.

At first, it all seemed so simple. I had a bike, it was TCD tested, and it was insured until next January. All I needed were new plates (or at least a current sticker). Full of misplaced confidence, I arrived at the counter on North Street, took my number and sat patiently watching the three ads that play in a continuous loop on the plasma monitors at each end of the waiting area. When my number came up, I placed my documents on the counter, and announced my intention to license my bike.

A very pleasant (although no doubt long-suffering) agent read over my paperwork and uttered those dreaded words, “you have a problem” (As it turned out, this would not be the last time that this phrase would be used!) It turned out that the previous owner had received a “fitness” certificate, not a “transfer” certificate from the TCD and so it could not be used to register it in my name. “No problem”, she said, “just go outside and get the guys to change the type of certificate in the computer, and then come back in. I’ll let you jump the line when you return.”

I dutifully went outside circled the building in the wrong direction and finally found the bike “guys”. They cheerfully changed my form and sent me back in. “You have another problem”, she said. It was March 3rd, and my insurance expired on January 31, 2011. As it turned out, to be valid, it had to expire no earlier than February 28, 2011. “Go down to Colonial, get it changed and I will let you jump the line when you return”. I dutifully went off, changed the policy, arrived back, jumped the line again (to the collective glares of everyone else).

“I can’t register your bike” she said, “you don’t have a motorcycle license. Your license is only good for cars and trucks”.

No license, no transfer. I dutifully went around the back and made an appointment for a riding test for the next Monday.

Monday morning I arrived back at the TCD. So as not to expose myself to possible legal action, I won’t recount how I got there with my still unlicensed bike but suffice it to say we both were there for the appointment. I was directed around the back.

“You have a problem”, the examiner said, “you can’t take a test on an unlicensed bike.” I explained my licensing dilemma—no license, no bike plates—no bike plates, no license. We both stood frozen in silence while he considered my plight. “Let me check inside he said” and returned in a couple of minutes “Nope, can’t be done”. “Can you borrow a bike from a friend?” I assured him that I had none. “Can I rent a scooter to take the test?” I asked. “Nope, you need a motorcycle, not a scooter.” Given that the test was just in the parking lot, I wasn’t sure of the legal ramifications involved, but there was no budging him.

Then he made a suggestion that would never have occurred to me in Toronto. He said “Go to the bike shop across the street and see if they will lend you one.” I thought “Are you kidding me?!! But, I was desperate.

I walked in the door and sheepishly told my pathetic story to the salesperson. Before I was even finished, the woman who was working at the counter looked up and said, “Take mine!” I looked at her incredulously. She told her colleague to take a smoke break and drive her bike over to the testing range. It was one of the most wonderful random acts of kindness that I had ever experienced.

Fifteen minutes later, I was officially passed, licensed and waiting once again in line to get my plates. “You were lucky”, the agent said, “today was the last day of validity on your transfer test”. Naturally, I thought. But I also knew that faced with a bureaucratic maze, I was helped every step of the way by advice and kindness of strangers and that is what life is like in Bermuda.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Read-a-thon

March 1st—19th

### Budding Chef Competition

March 20th

### Last Day of Term

March 26th

### First Day of Next Term

April 12th