

News For Thought

NCOM welcomes Oregon State Senator Gary George to the NCOM Convention as a speaker and participant. "Senator George's record of working with the motorcyclists of Oregon is well known throughout the motorcycling community and the opportunity to bring recognition to him for his dedication to the 'Pursuit of Liberty' is long overdue," said Butch Harbaugh, Chairman of the NCOM Legislative Task Force. Senator George will be a Speaker at the Legislative Task Force seminar on Friday May 6th, and will join in a panel discussion with other legislators during Saturday's program.

This year's National Coalition of Motorcyclists Convention is to be held in Nashville, Tennessee, May 5-7, at the Sheraton Music City Hotel, located at 777 McGavock Pike. Call (615) 885-2200 for room reservations, and mention NCOM for the special rate of \$79.00 per night single or double. You can pre-register for the Convention by calling NCOM at (800) 525-5355 Aim-Ncom

After decades of lobbying, Michigan motorcyclists could be roaring closer to being allowed to ride without a helmet. A state Senate panel on Tuesday approved a bill to let bikers ride without helmets if they are older than 21 and either have been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least two years or have taken a safety course. The full Senate, which has proved a major hurdle to past efforts to repeal parts of the state's mandatory helmet law, is expected to vote on the bill Thursday.

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema, R-Wyoming, opposes the bill but is allowing a vote because there appears to be support for passage, spokesman Ari Adler said. Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm also opposes the legislation, spokeswoman Liz Boyd said.

The helmet law, first enacted in 1967, is defended by insurers, hospitals and law enforcement officials who say riders and the public should be protected from the physical and financial risks of going without a helmet. They say helmets reduce the severity of head injuries and argue that

motorcyclists disproportionately account for health benefit claims to a catastrophic injury fund. "Michigan residents understand the inherent and often fatal dangers of riding a motorcycle," said Michael Dabbs, president of the Brain Injury Association of Michigan. Wearing a helmet is common sense, he said. But Vince Consiglio, president of the Michigan chapter of American Bikers Aiming Toward Education (ABATE), said the decision on whether to wear a helmet should be left up to motorcyclists.

"No helmet prevents an accident," he told lawmakers, arguing that safety and training classes better protect motorcyclists. "It's tough out there riding a motorcycle. But you accept a certain amount of risk." Legislation repealing parts of Michigan's helmet law has been approved numerous times in the House, including last year, before dying in the Senate. ABATE says legislation to change the helmet law hasn't cleared the Senate since 1982 and never has made it to a governor's desk. The group's leaders believe they have the votes in both the Senate and House this time around.

One supporter is Republican Sen. Bruce Patterson of Canton, who said personal freedom is every citizen's most important right. When balancing freedom, safety and cost, Patterson said: "My trump card is freedom. Why can't they experience their freedom without becoming a law violator?"

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 6-0 to send the bill to the full Senate.

Those voting "yes" were four Republicans: Patterson, Michael Bishop of Rochester, Alan Sanborn of Richmond and Alan Cropsey of DeWitt. Two Democrats also approved the measure: Virg Bernero of Lansing and Mark Schauer of Battle Creek. Sen. Liz Brater, D-Ann Arbor, left the hearing before the vote but said she opposed the bill for safety reasons.

Philippine Cities Ban Motorcycle Helmets: The Manila Bulletin reported that traffic enforcers have banned the wearing of crash helmets by motorcycle riders in the town proper in Batac, Ilocos Norte as a preventive measure against would-be assassins who may use the head gear to hide their identities. SPO3 Danilo Belendres said that Batac Mayor Jesus Nalupta Sr. ordered the lawmen to enforce the ban in the wake of several gun-slayings involving motorcycle-riding assassins who concealed their identities by wearing crash helmets.

Belendres said the motorcyclists could wear their helmet on the national highways after passing through the poblacion. In Laoag, the traffic enforcers are also enforcing a crash-helmet ban. It was observed that the non-wearing of helmets by motorcycle riders is now tolerated as a security measure against hooded killers. Record showed that the assassins of the late Batac Judge Ariston Rubio and Marcos town Mayor Rogelio Pambid wore helmets when they killed the victims.

Bikers Vs Nascar: As Daytona Bike Week draws to a close, it's interesting to ponder these statistics reported by the Los Angeles Times in an article concerning the Daytona Speedway in their February 20, 2005 edition.

According to a University of Central Florida survey, Daytona Beach's two annual motorcycle rallies, Bike Week and Biketoberfest, generated \$744 million in revenue for the area and an equivalent of 17,800 full-time, year-round jobs in 2001, the year of the UCF study. Speedweeks and the Pepsi 400 in July, by comparison, brought \$560 million and the equivalent of 10,600 full-time jobs.

So bikers are more beneficial to the economy than NASCAR moms and dads. Of course, we already knew that. Aim-Ncom



Sport Bikers Unite: From the founder of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM), Aid to Injured Motorcyclists (AIM) and the Confederations of Clubs (COC), comes a NEW national organization dedicated to America's sport bike riders by helping them to help themselves through networking, organizing and knowledge of the laws. Founded by California attorney Richard M. Lester, the NSBA has joined NCOM to provide sport bike riders with an organization for their clubs and riding groups to join and a forum to voice their concerns and address their issues.

Few people outside of motorcycling understand the implications of "profiling" and being labeled by law enforcement and lawmakers as scofflaws and targeted for discriminatory policies.

NSBA will unite sport bikers and unify efforts to fight unjust laws and enforcement by creating an umbrella group, like NCOM, to bring together riders of all brands of sport bikes for common benefit.

Membership in NSBA is free, and members receive a patch, decal and plastic membership card, as well as the peace of mind of knowing that you're not out there in the wind all alone! Over a thousand sport bike riders joined in Daytona during Bike Week. In addition, the North East Sport Bike Association (NESBA), with a membership base of 17,000 sportbikers, has joined NSBA, and the AIM Attorney Association will serve as its legal counsel nationwide.

For membership information, or to join NSBA, call (800) ON-A-BIKE.

New Hydrogen-powered Bike is to quiet: The world's first hydrogen-powered motorcycle has been launched in Britain. It can reach 50mph in 12 seconds, produces no emissions and is as quiet as a laptop computer - but that could be a problem. Anti-noise campaigners welcomed the prospect of a motorcycle without the usual roar. But engineers are considering adding an artificial "vroom" as they were worried its silence might be dangerous.

Harry Bradbury, chief executive of manufacturer Intelligent Energy, said: "There has never been a silent bike produced, so no one is used to it. As it goes forward towards production, we're going to give thought to some light noise modulation." He is planning to introduce an artificial engine noise which could be used in an urban setting to alert other road users but switched off in the countryside to allow for a peaceful ride. The bike is powered by a briefcase-sized cell filled with high-pressure hydrogen, which needs to be refilled every 100 miles.

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