

# News For Thought



## Abate of New York to Picket Safety Conference

ABATE of New York announced their intention to picket the NY Highway Safety Conference, October 21st, in Syracuse, where the New York State Police are presenting their Motorcycle Safety Roadblock Scenario to more than 350 professionals from local, state, federal and private agencies "involved in the effort to reduce deaths and injuries related to traffic crashes."

ABATE of New York has obtained an all-day public assembly permit to conduct an informational picket/protest outside of the Conference Center to express their dissatisfaction with motorcycle-only roadblocks, as well as draw public attention to the irony of New York State's misdirection of designated motorcycle safety funds to those very same enforcement tactics being promoted at the conference.

With support from ABATE of NY and in cooperation with the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM), A.I.M. Attorney (Aid to Injured Motorcyclists) Mitchell Proner recently put the NY State Police and DMV on notice that a class action suit

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will be filed in protest of the discriminatory road checks being conducted on state highways during events that draw thousands of motorcyclists.

"Since motorcycles operated in New York are already required to pass annual safety inspections, the current NYS initiative serves only to harass, intimidate and inconvenience motorcyclists, and is an abuse

of discretionary power as specifically acknowledged by the New York State Court of Appeals," said ABATE in a statement.

## Wyoming Bikers Fend Off Noise Ordinance

A proposed noise ordinance is on the "back burner" after scores of motorcyclists flooded the Casper City Council chambers. The council voted unanimously and to a raucous applause to table the proposed change to a noise ordinance, which means it will not be discussed again unless a council member brings it back.

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The proposed change read: "No person shall operate any motor vehicle in the city in such a manner that the public's attention is drawn to the noise created by the motor vehicle."

One biker after another spoke before the council to testify about how "loud pipes save lives." Loud exhaust keeps drivers aware of bikers and prevent accidents, said Jim Siri, a member of Wyoming Central A.B.A.T.E., a motorcycle advocacy group. "Many things distract drivers, and if they aren't paying attention they won't always see motorcyclists, but they may still hear them," he told the Jackson Hole Star-Tribune.

Abuse of a motorcycle on city streets is unacceptable, but motorcyclists also don't want to be unfairly targeted, said Russ Reddick, vice-president of Wyoming State A.B.A.T.E. and co-director of the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM) in region three. He told the newspaper

that he wants to educate riders on how to ride respectfully and also educate drivers on how to be more aware of motorcyclists.

Motorcyclists and the council plan to work together to help solve "irresponsible riding" through residential neighborhoods, both groups agreed.

## Pushing Parking Protections

It used to be bad enough to find someone sitting on your motorcycle, but with more people riding bikes, and parking them, an increasing urban problem appears to be with drivers moving two-wheelers out of their way to make room to park in congested downtown areas. To top it off, they seem to be wheeling them into No Parking zones or onto sidewalks where it's illegal to park.

Recognizing this troublesome trend, the city of Seattle, Washington recently enacted an ordinance making it illegal to move another person's vehicle without their knowledge or consent. Ordinance Number 122761 passed unanimously on August 4 to "prohibit a person from moving a motor vehicle not lawfully under his or her control when the motor vehicle is occupying a parking stall or space on City property."

In addition to a hefty fine, police also warn that "If you damage it, you'd be liable."

## Tougher New Motorcycle Laws Down Under

Finding the freedom of an open road on two-wheels could be a little more difficult for some would-be Australian motorcycle enthusiasts next year, as Queensland authorities get tougher on new riders. As with Europe, some Australian legislators are looking to tighten restrictions on novice riders of all ages. The changes taking effect next July in Queensland include restricting new riders to less powerful motorcycles and prohibit them from consuming any alcohol while riding.

Queensland's Premier Anna Bligh told Parliament that novice riders will have to carry "P" plates, there will be a ban on pillion passengers and there will be a zero-alcohol limit for all ages of learners.

In the past only new riders under the age of twenty-five faced zero-alcohol restrictions, with those older allowed to have up to the legal 0.05 limit. Also, the law that restricted new riders to motorcycles of 250cc engine size will be expanded to an approved list that takes power-to-weight ratio into account.

"Given the significant increase in fatalities from motorcycle crashes, it's clear that we need to rethink our licensing system," Bligh said, "The evidence that many older people are starting to ride motorcycles and their inexperience is contributing to serious injuries and fatalities, we can't ignore that."

New riders face the restrictions for one year before going onto an unrestricted license allowing them to ride any motorcycle and fall under the regular traffic laws.

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## Weird News: Stunt Video Busts Biker

A biker in England was brought down by the Internet and his own video evidence was sentenced for speeding and performing stunts on his motorcycle. The 28-year old rider became the talk of the British press for being arrested after he posted video footage of himself riding a motorcycle at more than 130 miles per hour as well as performing stunts on the popular video site, YouTube. Last year similar events took place in Spain when a group of riders videotaped and posted their speeding rides between two small towns. They were also convicted by authorities who used 20th century footage posted on YouTube

## Weird News: NBA Player Suspended Over Moped Accident

The Golden State Warriors suspended 22-year old guard Monta Ellis for 30 games without pay for violating his contract after he seriously injured his ankle in a Moped accident and then compounded his mistake by lying about spraining his ankle playing pickup ball. The high-scoring high-paid guard probably never imagined that trouble would cost him about \$3 million - there's no doubt Ellis violated Paragraph 12 of the NBA's uniform player Contract, which prohibits a player from engaging "in any activity that a Reasonable person would recognize as involving or exposing the Participant to a substantial risk of bodily injury," including "driving Or riding a motorcycle or Moped."

Ellis, who agreed to a six-year deal worth \$66 million in July, underwent surgery to repair a torn ligament and is unlikely to be healthy enough to return before mid-December anyway, but the suspension means the guard won't be paid during his absence.

He was the second-leading scorer for the NBA's highest-scoring team last season, averaging 20.2 points, 5.0 rebounds and 3.4 assists.

Quotable Quote:: "People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote - a very different thing."

Walter H. Judd (1898-1994) politician, 1981 recipient of Presidential Medal of Freedom

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