

# News For Thought



**NORTH CAROLINA:** Lying on the ground with his motorcycle handle bar jammed six inches into his abdomen, Brian Shipwash reached into his pocket and pulled out a small box that was broken and bloody, and asked his sweetie if she would marry him. He'd meant to surprise her at her home but the accident changed things for him. By the way she said YES.

**BIKERS WANT TO PARADE TOPLESS** On December 15, the Massachusetts House of Representatives engrossed H 206, a bill to exempt motorcyclists participating in public parades from the helmet law. "House, No. 206 now goes over to the Senate for its action," said Paul Cote, legislative director for the MMA of Massachusetts. "Maybe when the MMA storms the statehouse on Thursday, May 20, 2004 - we'll have a 'parade!' I like that idea!"

## Norton Management Gets Tour of Leno's Collection

Jay Leno was a truly gracious host to Norton's management team of Jeff Foster (CEO), Rob LaVigne (Mktg) and Jon Oesch (Finance). Leno gave a most interesting tour of his world-class collection of cars and motorcycles that highlighted the unique diversity of both automotive and motorcycling history, as well as Jay's personal taste. Collection highlights included a demonstration of the Jet-bike, vintage Norton Manx and JPS models as well as steam cars capable of greater than 80 mph. Most notable was the presence of current licenses and registrations as well as charged batteries on all vehicles that make everything in the collection a rider. [www.nortonmotorcycles.com](http://www.nortonmotorcycles.com)

**MEXICO:** So Fernando pulled to the side of the road, while on his way from the US to Mexico City, because he smelled something burning. He discovered his Camaro was on fire so he promptly disconnected the trailer he was pulling that had his motorcycle loaded on. Isn't that typical of us all? The guy saves his scooter and lets a rig burn that probably cost more than the scooter. Hell I'da done the same thing.

**EASY RIDER'S GRILL NOW WELCOMES PATCH HOLDERS** The New Mexico Confederation of Clubs is celebrating their first victory! For over a year, an Albuquerque, New Mexico restaurant "Easy Rider's Grill" (no affiliation to Easyriders magazine) has had a sign posted stating that club colors were not allowed in the restaurant. As a result, the NMCOC had established a boycott of the popular restaurant. The NMCOC contacted the owner of the restaurant and adjacent Easy Rider's Motorcycle shop about the offending sign, and is pleased to announce that Reinhart "Rhino" Sherman, president of the NMCOC, managed to convince him to remove the sign; therefore the NMCOC considers Easy Rider's Grill -- recently renamed "Rio Grande Big Dog" -- to be on the list of COC friendly places. Members of the NMCOC recently visited Easy Rider's Grill to celebrate and thank the owner, Clif Fodge. "The COC was really pleased at how open Clif was to speaking with us and resolving this issue," reports Rhino. "I think most folks are willing to see us in a positive light if we can just talk." The NMCOC plans to use this event as a benchmark to convince other New Mexico eating and drinking establishments to remove similar discriminatory signs.

**SAFETY ALERT!** I said something about this last month too. I say it again because it is so important **METZELER HAS RECALLED MOTORCYCLE TIRES.** The tire is: METZELER Model : SPORTEC M-1 P Build Dates : JAN 26, 2003 - FEB 08, 2003. If you wear Metzler tires on your scoot and have any doubt about this get to your tire dealer NOW and get the record set straight. DON'T ride on dangerous rubber. Metzeler will replace those tires that are recalled free of charge to you. This is the first time NHTSA has done anything worthwhile in my mind about motorcycle safety. I'll give them thanks for the heads up.

**"ORGAN DONOR" BILL AMENDED, KILLED IN COMMITTEE** AB 1200 started out as a nice, "clean" helmet modification bill, allowing motorcyclists 18 and older the option of wearing a helmet in California. Then, just one week before the measure was to be heard in the Assembly Transportation Committee, the bill was amended to include mandatory organ donation as a requirement to ride free. The bill's author, Assemblyman John Longville (D-San Bernardino) amended the bill without consulting the bill's sponsor, ABATE of California, in a misguided effort to find a "creative solution" to help the bill gain the votes needed to pass. Obviously, this was one solution that didn't sit well with the riding community, and when the bill was heard in committee on January 12, in front of a room packed with motorcyclists from all over the Golden State, AB 1200 was further amended to remove the offensive amendment and any reference to organ donation. The original bill language was then voted on and the bill lost by 9 aye votes to 11 no votes. Hundreds of riders who rallied at the Capitol that day had hoped that a motorcycle-riding governor would aid their cause, and some carried signs asking Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to "Terminate the Helmet Law." Despite the setback, Jean Hughes, legislative director of ABATE, told the Sacramento Bee newspaper, "We'll be back."

## MASS. BIKERS ROAR OVER INSURANCE ISSUES AND FILE SUIT SEEKING RETURN OF \$100 MILLION IN EXCESSIVE PREMIUMS & COVER OVERCHARGING:

Bikers in Boston are suing the Division of Insurance and Automobile Insurers Bureau saying they've been overcharged more than \$100,000,000.00 in premiums. "For two years at public rate hearings we've brought these issues of coverage not available to motorcycle consumers to the Commissioner and the Auto Insurers Bureau (AIB)," said Betsy Lister of Medford, a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA) and owner of a Medford Insurance agency. "And for two years we've been put off." Now the bikers will be heard I'll betcha. And I'm thinkin' maybe some of the rest of us in other states need to take a look at what those insurers are doing. By the way, besides sitting on the MMA Board, Betsy puts out a great biker e-newsletter! You can subscribe to it by sending an e-mail to [Gypsypashn@aol.com](mailto:Gypsypashn@aol.com).

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Looks like the local companies who manufacture motorcycles in Indonesia aren't looking for new investment, even though the demand is rising there, according to this story I saw online from the Jakarta Post. What's the reason? Well, they don't need new investors because they're **SELLING** damn near **THREE MILLION BIKES A YEAR** over there! Again I say, why not here? Why is the rest of the world building and riding more and more bikes and all we get is more SUV's? Not to mention NHTSA, EPA and the government doing their level best to get bikes off the roads altogether.

**FLANDREAU, S.D.:** A few weeks before this writing, Rep. Bill Janklow filed a motion asking that he either be acquitted of second-degree manslaughter or granted a new trial, claiming prosecutors didn't present enough evidence to convict him of manslaughter when he killed a biker because he was speeding and had run through a stop sign. Next is liable to be an appeal. It's time to quit playing games and hold him responsible for his actions.

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