

News For Thought



Motorcycle club aids center for veterans

Rolling Thunder motorcycle club members from western Kentucky, Evansville and Clarksville, Tenn., donated a shaved ice machine and supplies for making flavored drinks to residents of the Western Kentucky Veterans Center in Hanson, Ky., on Dec. 6. "Some residents of veterans homes are without family and are often forgotten during the holidays. It's important they understand how much we appreciate the sacrifices they made for the freedom we enjoy today," said chapter spokeswoman Beverly Williams of Henderson in a press release

Swedish lady rider Annie Seel was going to attempt to ride a motorcycle up the slopes of Mt Everest. Well folks, she did it on a 20 year old dual-purpose Honda XL250 and reached an altitude of 17,404 feet!

She beat the previous record set by a Japanese man by over 200 feet. She had to ride the old bike because importation of new motorcycles to Nepal is forbidden. Quite an accomplishment, Ms. Seel. Congratulations from those of us who couldn't do half of what you did if our lives depended on it!

SAN FRANCISCO: With new guidelines about police surveillance, law officers are being told NOT to attend political, religious, social or educational meetings unless they have reason to believe a crime is planned or has happened. This is in answer to the public outcry over increased surveillance by the California Attorney General. Maybe all the pissin' and moanin' over the Patriot Act is reaching some ears after all. And in this case, it seems those ears have some clout. This contradicts the intent of U S Attorney General John Ashcroft. It's about time someone hears what the public says.

Congressman Janklow Resigns Following Conviction

After only five hours of deliberation, a jury yesterday found Rep. William Janklow (R-SD) guilty of second-degree manslaughter, reckless driving, running a stop sign and speeding for his August 16 crash that resulted in the death of motorcyclist Randy Scott. In light of his conviction, Janklow has prepared a letter to submit to House Speaker Dennis Hastert today stating that he intends to resign from the House of Representatives effective January 20, 2004 - the same day that he will be sentenced on his manslaughter conviction.

Darrel Killion, State Coordinator of ABATE of South Dakota, offered the following comments: "ABATE of South Dakota wishes to express its sincere gratitude to motorcycle enthusiasts and the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) for standing with us and supporting our belief that the South Dakota legal system would provide justice in the Janklow/Scott accident. This decision makes it clear to those who believe themselves to be above the law that they are, in fact, subject to the same justice system that we all live by. This decision is not only a victory for the motorcycle riding public, it is a victory for all users of our highways."

"I would like to thank Darrel Killion and ABATE of South Dakota for their diligence and guidance through this tragedy and trial," commented Karen Bolin, MRF President. "This trial, and the verdict, should remind us all how fortunate we are to live in a country where no one is above the law, where the judicial system is structured to that principle, and where a United States Congressman has been held accountable for his actions by a jury of his peers."

"Even though Rep. Janklow has been found guilty on all counts," reminds Killion, "we must still keep a watchful eye on this case until such time as sentencing has been rendered." South Dakota will hold a special election during its June 1, 2004 primary to fill the remainder of Janklow's term.

MIAMI: Two Miami-Dade Police motorcycle officers collided with each other while providing a traffic escort for a New York Yankees team bus before Game 5 of the World Series. One officer was airlifted from the Pro Player Stadium parking lot, and was listed in stable condition at Jackson Memorial Hospital. The other officer was treated on the scene and released. Maybe they should've taken a motorcycle safety course.

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell Writes Letter of Concern to NHTSA

On December 10, 2003 Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colorado) signed a letter addressed to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to express his "concern and that of motorcyclists nationwide" regarding the agency's motorcycle safety activities. The letter addressed several glaring agency missteps. Chief among these was an effort to advance helmet laws through the United Nations and the recent award of a contract for the study of "Characteristics of Motorcycle Operators." The agency awarded the contract six months before it asked for public comment and White House approval. "American motorcyclists nationwide salute Senator Campbell for expressing these important concerns," stated Karen Bolin, President of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF). "This very day, representatives of several State Motorcyclists' Rights Organizations are in Washington partnering with the MRF to advance the most meaningful motorcycle safety initiative ever advanced in the Congress. Thus, a scrutiny of NHTSA activities could not be more timely."

Additionally, Senator Campbell has signaled to Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) his desire to co-sponsor S. 423, "Health Care Parity for Legal Transportation and Recreational Activities Act."

Observed Deb Craig, State Coordinator of ABATE of Colorado, "Senator Campbell's support of motorcyclists' concerns pertaining to NHTSA's questionable tactics, as well as his intent to co-sponsor S-423, is what we've come to expect given his history as a champion of motorcyclists' rights. His response at this time reinforces our claim that our voices matter. ABATE of Colorado would like to thank Senator Campbell on behalf of motorcyclists everywhere."

"Every motorcyclist in America should thank Senator Campbell," said MRF Vice President of Government Relations Tom Wyld, "and here's how: With Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado), Senator Campbell has introduced Senate Resolution 168 to designate May 2004 as 'National Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Month.' Call or write your U.S. Senators and urge them to co-sponsor S. Res. 168. Persuading your Senator to co-sponsor this resolution would be the best way to express your gratitude to Senator Campbell for his leadership on your behalf."

Senator Campbell's letter to NHTSA will be available on the MRF website in the near future.

Missouri State Representative Dan Ward (D- St. Francois County) has pre-filed House Bill 770 for the 2004 session. HB770 revises section 302.020 of the Missouri Revised Standards to allow persons 21 and older the choice whether or not to ride a motorcycle with a helmet.

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