

# News For Thought

**Rural Africa:** This is tough terrain for health care workers. Roads are often washed out or potholed, if there are any roads at all. In the isolated villages, the sick and injured can't be seen by health care workers. Sometimes, parents walk HOURS to the nearest clinic, carrying sick kids on their backs. The best way to reach these folks? By MOTORCYCLE! Nurses, docs and allied workers get out to where they're needed, and they couldn't do it, if not for these machines. Unfortunately, bike maintenance got overlooked. Worse still, parts and good wrench-turners are in short supply. Many bikes end up rusted hulks after only a few months of service. Somebody with a good brain figured this one out: TRAIN the healthcare folks in motorcycle mechanics! If ever there was a project worth doing, this one is it. RIDERS FOR HEALTH, the group doing this, is in several African countries now, and they're spreading.

MORE POWER TO 'EM!  
Aimgunny@aol.com

**Rocky Mountain** Harley-Davidson has a bang-up website, at [www.rmh-d.com](http://www.rmh-d.com). They're doing a web poll on whether H-D ought to build a modern version of the old SERVICAR, a Harley trike, used by police, parking patrols and for deliveries. I for one would LOVE to see it, but

something tells me there isn't enough dough in it for HD to retool. On that same site, click on "PAST POLLS," and you'll see surprising stuff. Website visitors were asked how much they expected to RIDE the next summer, and only a little over 10% said they would ride over 10,000 miles! I'd have thought MORE than that, but gettin' your knees in the breeze is what counts. Except for 3.9% of the readers, whose vote was: "Ride? That would involve getting it off the trailer!" Aimgunny@aol.com



## Mississippi's motorcycle owners now being taxed unfairly

The Mississippi State Tax Commission recently decided to double and in some cases triple the ad valorem tax on motorcycles. The Tax Commission now directs the collection of more tax on new motorcycles than it does on

cars and trucks that cost twice as much.

For as long as I can remember, the state taxed motorcycles from value schedules based on the displacement of the engine. On Sept. 1, the Tax Commission began using a computer program purchased from R.L. Polk & Co. to calculate the assessed value of each motorcycle. The Tax Commission has denied my Public Records Act request for access to the program.

There are four problems with what is now going on: The sales tax on new motorcycles is 7 percent. Purchasers of new cars and trucks are charged only 5 percent.

Under the current system for collecting ad valorem taxes on cars and trucks, the tax is based on a figure which is 90 percent of Manufacturers' Suggested Retail Price. The calculation of the tax on motorcycles uses MSRP as "true value."

Owners of cars and trucks receive a "legislative tax credit" which significantly reduces the ad valorem tax they pay when they purchase and renew their tags. This tag credit does not apply to motorcycles.

The taxation of motorcycles is done in secret, out of public view. The bottom line is that the state decided this past September to make motorcycle riders shoulder an even more unfair share of the tax burden. The owner of a motorcycle is going to get a very unpleasant surprise when the time for tag renewal comes. I know I did - \$732.94 for one year. Thomas C. Gerity

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## Motorcycle Clubs Oppose Patriot Act

**Renewal:** The Texas Confederation of Clubs is calling on all motorcyclists to contact their Congressional leaders in opposition to the Patriot Act, which is under review by Congress as many provisions are due to expire.

"The Patriot Act is the cornerstone to what we have been fighting against for the past few years, and the gang definitions as the Alphabet Club wants to enforce," said Big Kid, State Liaison for the Texas Confederation of Clubs, in an open letter to the biker community. "As the Helmet Laws around the Country are the Hot Button Issue with bikers, the Patriot Act is the Hot Button Issue with those who want to take away our way of life."

Patriot Act Key provisions:

1) law enforcement officials can gain access to a wealth of personal data, including library and medical records, as part of investigations.

The Patriot Act provides a four-year extension of

1) The government's ability to conduct roving wiretaps — which may involve multiple phones — and

2) To seek access to many of the personal records covered by the bill.

An earlier, pre-Thanksgiving stab at compromise had called for seven-year extensions of these provisions.

Yet another provision, which applies to all criminal cases, gives the government 30 days to provide notice that it has carried out a search warrant. This allows Law Enforcement to carry out sneak and peak searches without letting anyone know for 30 days (the House wants 180 days) after the fact if law enforcement so chooses to use evidence it collected.

Lawmakers in both parties have attacked the measure but yet these provisions still exist, reports the TX COC. We already have more than enough laws on the books to handle crime in America. What we don't need is any more laws taking rights away from American Citizens and lumping us in a group with people who don't fall under our United States Constitution.

Make your US Senators understand that the Patriot Act for the sake of our Constitution and Freedom as God Fearing Americans must be "Killed in the Senate" and to never return to threaten other American's way of life again. Rocky Mountain Harley-Davidson has a bang-up website, at [www.rmh-d.com](http://www.rmh-d.com). They're doing a web poll on whether H-D ought to build a modern version of the old SERVICAR, a Harley trike, used by police, parking patrols and for deliveries. I for one would LOVE to see it, but something tells me there isn't enough dough in it for HD to retool. On that same site, click on "PAST POLLS," and you'll see surprising stuff. Website visitors were asked how much they expected to RIDE the next summer, and only a little over 10% said they would ride over 10,000 miles! I'd have thought MORE than that, but gettin' your knees in the breeze is what counts. Except for 3.9% of the readers, whose vote was: "Ride? That would involve getting it off the trailer!" Aimgunny@aol.com

## Canadian Province wants to Ban Colors:

As part of its efforts to crack down on criminal organizations, the Saskatchewan government wants to ban the wearing of "gang colors" in bars, but local bikers are calling the act unconstitutional. An amendment to the Safer Communities and Neighborhoods Act that's before the legislature would

mean people wearing signs, symbols or logos connected to criminal organizations in licensed establishments could be fined up to \$25,000 and sentenced to up to a year behind bars.

Dean Bell, who has a motorcycle shop in Regina and is a member of the Regina chapter of the Hells Angels, says the proposed legislation is a violation of rights. "We're all disappointed that the government would take such a backward stance and try and legislate something that goes against our charters and our freedoms," he said.

It's part of the province's attempts to create a hostile environment for criminals, say officials. The government has also passed laws expanding the ability to seize property from criminal organizations and canceling liquor licenses in bars that are used as fronts by criminals. Manitoba passed a similar law against "gang colors" in 2002. It's now illegal in that province to wear symbols or colors associated with organizations such as the Hells Angels. Fines range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and convictions can result in jail time of up to six months. The Manitoba Chapter of the Hells Angels is fighting several charges related to the legislation. If the Saskatchewan law is passed, Bell said, he and other members will consult with a lawyer. [www.ON-A-BIKE.com](http://www.ON-A-BIKE.com)



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