

# News For Thought

News Provided by COAST TO COAST BIKER NEWS compiled and edited by Bill Bish, National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM)



## BIKER VETS VISIT BUSH

The roar of Rolling Thunder at the nearby Capital Mall could be heard across the South Lawn of the White House as eight motorcycles rolled up the driveway to the South Portico where President Bush was waiting to greet them.

Bush shook hands with Artie Muller, president of the Rolling Thunder veterans' advocacy group, and kissed Muller's passenger, singer Nancy Sinatra, a veterans' supporter. Other bikers who rode up the driveway included White House budget director Josh Bolton, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, and various Rolling Thunder leaders. Bush led them on a personal tour of the Oval Office, reported the Associated Press. Later, Bush addressed, via a telephone hookup, a Rolling Thunder rally at Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in the nation's capital.

The president noted the letter of endorsement he recently received from the group. "Artie, I thought you were going to offer me riding lessons," Bush joked. "In the Oval Office, I looked you in the eye as you told me of your relentless pursuit of finding out the plight of many of our POW/MIAs, and I appreciated so much your concern, your care and your persistence," Bush told the rally. "I also want to thank you and your organization, Artie, for honoring the men and women of our military who fight today in Afghanistan and Iraq."

"Ride safe," he told them. Rolling Thunder is an organization that seeks to create awareness of POW/MIA issues and promotes increased veterans' benefits. It has 70 chapters and over 7,000 members throughout the United States and abroad.

## MASSACHUSETTS ENACTS "NELLY'S BILL" TO EDUCATE DRIVERS

Governor Mitt Romney signed House Bill 2124 into law on June 6, 2004, to require at least one hour of a motorcycle safety and awareness module be included in the course curriculum for 398 licensed auto driver training schools statewide. Known as "Nelly's Bill," in memory of Nelson Selig who was killed in 2000 when a 19-year-old driver crossed into the path of his motorcycle, the law will take affect in 90 days. "We're very grateful our legislators who listened to those who ride," said Paul W. Cote, Director of Government Relations for the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association. "This legislation, when implemented, will begin another element of our process at reducing accidents, injuries and fatalities here in Massachusetts," said Cote. Funding for the expectant \$10,000 cost of the materials will come from the state's Motorcycle Safety Program, accumulated by \$2 of each of the 144,000-plus motorcyclist's annual registration fees. "Riders pay their own way," Cote said, noting that during their lobbying day last month, they also sought a \$5 increase of the \$25 annual motorcycle registration fee for more money in their Safety Fund.

## U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE APPEALS BAN ON BIKER ATTIRE IN COURT

The U.S. Attorney's office has appealed a judge's ruling that bars biker attire in a Salt Lake City courtroom. In May, a magistrate judge ordered that motorcycle gear -- especially that worn by the members of Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) -- not be worn in court proceedings for a child sex abuse case currently in federal court. Members of BACA often show up in courtrooms when child abuse suspects are on trial to show support for the victims, and U.S. Attorney Paul Warner says the order barring the motorcycle gear limits the First Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens. Warner's office is hoping that the order will be reviewed, and overruled. Last year, a judge in Provo barred BACA clothing during a sex abuse case involving a child, saying the clothing and logos could influence the jury.

## NOT YOUR TYPICAL REALITY SHOW

Bravo has announced that actors and friends Ewan McGregor and Charley Boorman will star in and co-produce "Long Way Round," a new reality series chronicling the duo's four-month long transcontinental motorcycling journey. The two left from London in late April after taking survival training, first aid, nutrition, bike maintenance and linguistics classes, and plan to arrive at their final destination of New York City by the end of July. Their trip takes them over 20,000 miles, circumnavigating the longest continuous landmass on earth, through the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, China, Siberia, Alaska and Canada before arriving in the United States. They will live off the land and out of a tent, encountering hardships along the way, including cultural and language barriers. "We live in such a comfortable and easy time that it doesn't do yourself any harm to go and test yourselves and survive with just the bare essentials," said McGregor, who is best known for his movie roles in Moulin Rouge, Trainspotting, the Star Wars trilogy and more recently starred in the Golden Globe nominated film Big Fish. Boorman, the son of famed Hollywood director John Boorman (Hope and Glory, Deliverance), is also a movie veteran with a multitude of supporting screen credits including Deliverance, Excalibur, The Serpent's Kiss, The Emerald Forrest and many more. In fact, the two adventurers first met eight years ago on the set of The Serpent's Kiss, where they discovered their mutual passion for motorcycling. The six-episode series will air later this year.

## WEST COAST CHOPPERS GEAR BANNED FROM CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS

The Iron Cross, a recognizable symbol of Nazi Germany, has become a popular design with skateboard companies such as No Fear and biker clothing manufacturers like Jesse James' West Coast Choppers. But school officials in Southern California have banned the symbol and recently mailed over 13,000 letters to parents of children in the Simi Valley Unified School District to inform them of their decision to bar clothing and jewelry depicting the symbol they say is being used by believers of "white power" movements to identify themselves. School officials said that the step was recommended by the Police Department, which considers the Iron Cross a gang symbol, and was taken due to rumors of rising tensions on campus which they fear could lead to violence.

**Something to think about:** Is it just me or does anyone else find it amazing that our government can track a cow born in Canada almost three years ago, right to the stall where she sleeps in the state of Washington. Also they track her calves to their stalls. But they are unable to locate 11 million illegal Aliens wandering around our country. The solution .....Give every illegal alien a cow.

## VIRGINIA GOV VETOES SAFETY BILL

Despite passing unanimously through the House and Senate, Governor Mark R. Warner has vetoed HB 408, a bill that would have required the marking of steel plates on Virginia roadways to make them more visible to drivers and riders. 140 Legislators saw the value and benefit of this key piece of safety legislation, yet Governor Warner rejected a bill that is designed to insure motorcyclists, and the general public, are safer on the roads by requiring that steel plates installed on roadways be clearly marked, reports Jim Cannon of the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists (VCOM).

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