

News For Thought



Governor Vetoes Michigan Helmet Law Repeal

For the second straight year, Michigan riders successfully maneuvered a helmet law modification bill through their state legislature and onto their governor's desk, and for the second time Governor Jennifer Granholm has vetoed the measure.

Motorcyclists had hoped that by adding certain amendments, such as pumping up the state's economy by charging \$100 per year for the right to ride helmetless, and by winning support from the state's top law enforcement group, they would convince Granholm to change her mind this time around.

But despite overwhelming support in the Legislature and endorsement of House Bill 4749 by the Michigan Association of Police Organizations, as well as the promise of an additional \$25 million annually pouring into the state coffers from freedom-minded riders, Granholm quickly dispatched the bill again citing safety concerns and insurance costs.

It would now take a two-thirds vote of both chambers of the state Legislature to override Granholm's veto, an option ABATE of Michigan and the Michigan Confederation of Clubs are looking into. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Myrtle Beach Considers Helmet Law to Deter Rally-Goers

"Enough is enough," has become the campaign slogan by residents of Myrtle Beach, SC and members of the City Council as they considered options to put a stop to local motorcycle rallies and deter bikers from attending.

One option under consideration is the passage of a local ordinance to require motorcyclists to wear helmets within the city limits. During the public discussion period at a packed City Council meeting recently, resident Ronnie Felts said he has spoken with members of the South Carolina Legislature who urged the city to push the state for a local option on the state's helmet law, which now says no motorcyclist 21 or older is obligated to wear headgear.

The city cannot now pass any law more restrictive than the state's, though according to The (Myrtle Beach) Sun News which reported on the meeting, Mayor Pro-Tem Wayne Gray said there are efforts underway to allow municipalities to do just that.

Even though the bike rallies fill the city at least two weekends each May -- during the Harley-Davidson Cruisin' the Coast rally and the Atlantic Beach Bikefest -- the audience gave Joyce Harris a standing ovation when she told the council that she and others had already been in touch with officials in Fort Lauderdale, FL who publicly declared spring break parties were not welcome any more and the city began heavily enforcing stricter ordinances to deter them from coming.

No one in the audience spoke in favor of the rallies, and each of the council members agreed they want to put an end them - neither of which is sponsored by the city. "We're going to do what we can to shut the sucker down," said councilman Chestnut, who also received a standing ovation.

City Manager Tom Leath, City Attorney Tom Ellenburg and Police Chief Warren Gall are planning to come up with options to present to the council, which will likely include higher taxes to pay for a permanent solution to the problem. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird News: WEE, WEE, WEE All The Way To Court

Did you know that Tacoma, Washington has a law that could ban Harley-Davidson motorcycles? According to the News Tribune, an interesting court case has developed involving the owner of a hog, city prosecutors are arguing that the owner is violating a law banning hogs in the city limit. Taking his case to superior court, it appears that Harley-Davidson motorcycles could be banned within the city limits.

While this court case is really about the definition of a "hog" the definition in the book city prosecutors are using define a hog as:

Black's Veterinary Dictionary, which defines a hog as a "male pig after being castrated."

Collins Essential English Dictionary's first definition of hog is a "castrated male pig."

Encarta defines hog as "a full-grown domestic pig, especially a castrated male pig."

But www.dictionary.com defines hog as slang "a large, heavy motorcycle."

Luckily the court case is really about animals and the defense lawyer was just using the hog definition of a

motorcycle as an example of how the city was using the wrong terminology. But it does go to show that the wrong interpretation of an old law on the books could really impact motorcycles owners, at least in Tacoma.

Hopefully they get the law straightened out and decide on what really is a hog and what ain't, so bikers can ride into town without "breaking" Tacoma's anti-hog laws. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Drivers Make it Tough to be an Easy Rider

A new poll reveals that car drivers wish they didn't have to share the road with motorcycle riders. And most bikers, in turn, want car drivers to be more careful on the road. According to the online survey of licensed Connecticut drivers, conducted by Directive Analytics on behalf of Allstate Insurance, if the state's car drivers had their druthers, about one in four would have bikers banned from highways and parkways. And nearly half said bikers should not be allowed on roadways altogether in inclement weather.

Why the animosity? Because Connecticut car drivers consider motorcycles unsafe. Eighty percent of respondents thought motorcycles are more dangerous or much more dangerous than other vehicles. One in five, in fact, said they have come close to hitting a biker. Illustrating just how anti-motorcycle they are, 75 percent of drivers said they would not let their child ride one.

But, the gripes aren't just on the part of motorists. The survey also reveals that bikers overwhelmingly (80 percent) thought they were safer on the road than car drivers, stating that car drivers are careless and don't pay attention to what's going on around them. Bikers also found car drivers to be aggressive, trying to cut riders off, as well as impatient, tending to tailgate cyclists.

"Whether we prefer four wheels or two, we all have preconceived notions, and perhaps even strong opinions, about other drivers -- but these opinions should never get the better of us while we are in our vehicles," said Andrea Short, Allstate Field Product Manager. "Particularly now as the warmer weather approaches and heavy traffic re-emerges, all drivers should be careful and cognizant of fellow drivers at all times so we may share the roadways safely." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Quoteable Quote:

"I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost to maintain this Declaration of Independence, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is worth all the means, and that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction."

John Adams (1735-1826), Patriot and 2nd President of the United States, in a letter to his wife Abigail on July 3, 1776



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McHenry County Fairgrounds, Rte 47 & Country Club Rd.
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