

News For Thought



Australia to Owtlaw "Bikies"

Police soon will have the power to "squash" bikie gangs and force them to move elsewhere after the Government's controversial anti-bikie legislation recently passed through Parliament.

Police Minister Paul Holloway said SA (South Australia) was on the verge of having the nation's and perhaps the world's toughest anti-bikie laws. "These are the laws that police have asked for and, finally, we are able to ensure police have exactly what they need to take on these criminal bikie gangs," he said.

When the laws are gazetted, it will be illegal for anyone to associate with known bikies six or more times a year. Bikies also will be banned from specific locations. The Serious and Organised Crime (Control) Bill 2007 also will enable Police Commissioner Mal Hyde to obtain orders from the Attorney-General, Michael Atkinson, declaring bikie gangs illegal.

The Government "hoped" to have the laws in place by July 1. The legislation was criticized as draconian by other states at a March meeting of State and Federal Government ministers. The legislation now goes back to the Lower House for final approval. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

ROW Legislation Passed in Maryland

Leather jackets mingled with pin-striped suits as motorcyclists arrived at the State House to see their driving-safety bill signed into law by Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley.

"The bill will impose a six-month suspension, a \$1,000 fine or both on drivers who injure or kill somebody by violating road right-of-way laws," reported the Washington Post.

Members of ABATE of Maryland have fought for the past five years to pass the legislation, but the fight became personal in 2006 after the driver of a sport utility vehicle was involved in an accident that killed their state director, Marty Schultz.

"As things would have it, we proceeded on with the bill," said Gary R. "Pappy" Boward, chairman of ABATE of Maryland Inc. "Everyone was getting very involved legislatively, this was [Mr. Schultz's] assignment."

"Pappy" told the Post that many bikers were disappointed when the person who struck Mr. Schultz received a minimal fine - less than \$100 - and no other penalty.

The right-of-way bill passed the House and Senate unanimously this year, and had the support of Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administration. The bill applies to all vehicles, but the motorcyclists advocated for it because bikes are tough to see at intersections.

The MVA reported 17,312 "failure-to-yield" accidents in 2006, resulting in 81 deaths and 8,015 injuries. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Bikers Banned from Atlanta Hot Spot

Metro Atlanta motorcyclists have been banned from Atlantic Station, a popular dining and retail district that no longer allows riders to drive through or park there.

Atlantic Station officials say they took action after facing ongoing problems. "They continually don't abide by the code of conduct down here, continually rev their engines really loud," said Brian Leary of Atlantic Station in a television interview with Fox 5.

Atlantic Station started telling motorcyclists about the change last month and will soon post signs and start ticketing violators. "I know it's tough. We do definitely

apologize to the motorcycle owners and riders but in the meantime we are making the change," said Leary. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Car Airbags can Protect Motorcyclists

Ask any motorcyclist what the most dangerous part of riding is and most of them will tell you; "People in cars that aren't paying attention." Not too long ago, an airbag suit was developed in an effort to help reduce the number of deaths and injuries to motorcycle riders. Now, Autoliv Inc., out of Sweden has developed a new airbag system for automobiles that could impact fatality numbers by reducing the impact on riders.

The system uses an airbag mounted in the A-Pillar of the car. When a front end impact is detected, the airbag will inflate, covering most of the car's hood and some of the windshield. Studies show that many injuries and fatalities could be avoided if this simple measure was taken. In fact, the Dutch Cycling Federation estimates that over 60 lives could be saved and over 1500 serious injuries could be avoided every year by using these airbags.

The system won't only serve motorcycle riders however, it will cover pedal bikes and pedestrians as well. Obviously these accidents will be at a much lower speed, but the impact on the hood will still be reduced by a significant amount.

No official word on where or when the system will be installed, but with so much potential, it shouldn't take long. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird News: Lawmakers Go Nuts Over Fake Testicles

With hot-button issues like immigration, the environment, and the failing real estate market crowding the "national conversation" these days, it's nice to see a few ballsy Floridians with the cojones to take on important issues like fake testicles.

The brave Florida state Senate passed an amendment to a transportation bill that would levy a \$60 fine against anyone with TruckNutz or generic-made fake testicles dangling from their rear bumpers. Of course, some naysayers are arguing that there are more important things to legislate against than fake balls, which are harmless decorations for your truck or motorcycle for those who suffer a genital inferiority complex.

Sen. Carey Baker, who proposed the amendment, acknowledged his critics' concerns and said that "I do have more important things to do this session. But I think this is important, too." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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