

News For Thought



The United Kingdom just increased the maximum prison term from 10 to 14 years for drivers who are sentenced for killing someone by driving dangerously. This includes those who drive while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol or are "joyriding." The new law comes into effect through the Criminal Justice Act of 2003. Tougher sentencing is also part of the American Motorcyclist Association's (AMA) Motorcyclists Matter campaign and the recently announced "Justice for All," a nationwide initiative that focuses on inadequate sentencing of those who seriously injure or kill motorcyclists. More details about "Justice for All" will be announced soon on the AMA's website, AMADirectlink.com, and in American Motorcyclist magazine.

Helmet Saves Man's Life

This newsbit from Dixie Rider may be evidence that wearing a helmet can save your life, at least if you're being shot at. According to a Channel 13 Eyewitness News broadcast in Houston, Texas, an unidentified man was saved when he was shot by his girlfriend, because he was still wearing his motorcycle helmet. According to the TV news report, the couple had been riding together earlier in the evening, and an argument erupted when they arrived home around midnight. Police say the girlfriend then shot the male in the head, but his full-face helmet protected him from serious injury. The female then barricaded herself in a nearby apartment until police hostage negotiation teams were able to convince her to surrender. She was charged with aggravated assault.

Harley-Davidson corrects media reports on voluntary motorcycle recall

Mar. 29 – On Monday, March 22nd Harley-Davidson Motor Company advised its U.S. dealers of a voluntary recall on a circuit breaker which is used on certain 2001 through 2003 model motorcycles. Widely circulated media coverage of this recall inaccurately reported the models that are affected. The vehicles included in this recall are fuel-injected 2001 to 2003 model year Electra Glide Classics and Electra Glide Ultra Classics (models FLHTCI and FLHTCUI), 2001 model year Screamin' Eagle Road Glides (model FLTRSEI-2) and 2001 to 2003 model year police motorcycles (models FLHPI, FLHPEI, and FLHTPI). Upon notification from the Motor Company in the next few weeks, owners of these motorcycles are encouraged to take their vehicle to a Harley-Davidson dealer to have the appropriate service performed. The required service is expected to take less than one hour and is provided free of charge to the owner.

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The Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA) of Victoria is up in arms over a proposal to require Aussie bikers to affix license plates to the front of their motorcycles so that they can be identified from the front for tolls and for speed cameras. MRA Victorian president Alex Money said the group is planning a protest to alert the general public as to how much money the government would waste in the move. "We just want the public to know the Victorian government is spending \$14 million to introduce motorcycle front number plates," he explained, noting that speed cameras in New South Wales take photographs from behind. Tollway operator Transurban has said it would consider introducing motorcycle tolls if bikes could be photographed from the front. aim-ncom

Daytona Harley-Davidson is crying foul against Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Shaquille O'Neal, claiming he reneged on the purchase of a custom motorcycle. The dealership filed a breach of contract suit recently in circuit court seeking at least \$15,000 in damages against the Orlando-area resident. Because the bike was built for someone of the 7-foot-1 Shaq's size, the Harley dealer claims it is stuck with a motorcycle it can't sell. The Beach Street-based company claims in its suit that the Lakers star center, who started his NBA career with the Orlando Magic, agreed to pay the company to build him a "custom motorcycle, with the design specifications requested by defendant being that the motorcycle be 'out there' and 'blow everything else away.'" The motorcycle was delivered to O'Neal on Sept. 12, 2003, but he refused to pay for it, the suit claims. aim-ncom

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Justice was finally served to 26 bikers who had been ticketed during a "routine" traffic stop for running a stop sign last October while on their way to the Concerned Bikers Association (CBA) Swap Meet in Charlotte, N.C. All the ticketed bikers were represented by North Carolina Aid to Injured Motorcyclists (A.I.M.) Attorney Robert A. Donat, who's courtroom strategy was to show that it is common practice for riders to do a "stop and go" when traveling in large groups. The Assistant District Attorney was also informed that no one was going to plead guilty to the charges and that each and every rider desired a trial (there were four different trial dates, as four different officers wrote tickets that day). Furthermore, that this "routine" stop was nothing more than a harassing intelligence operation, and there was evidence that the whole operation was pre-planned, including statements made by one of the ticketing officers, and the fact that a DMV inspector appeared at the scene. Mr. Donat also found an eyewitness passerby who could confirm that there was a person wearing a ski mask at the scene, and that the bikers were videotaped. The DA finally agreed that this was not worth prosecuting, and every one of the charges was dropped. Robert Donat ("RAD") serves as legal counsel for the Concerned Bikers Association and the North Carolina Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs. "The N.C. COC is currently considering its options now that the charges have been dismissed," said Donat.

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