

News For Thought

Deer, cows and even squirrels are to blame for more than 26,000 injuries along the nation's roads each year, the government said recently. It is the first time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has ever examined how many people suffer non-fatal injuries in car accidents involving animals.

1. In half of the animal-related accidents surveyed in 2001-02, motorists were injured by hitting the animal while the other half were hurt by swerving to avoid hitting the animals, said Ann Dellinger of CDC's motor vehicle injury prevention team.

Each year, about 200 people die in animal-related crashes out of the nearly 44,000 traffic fatalities nationwide according to the latest Federal highway data. There were 247,000 crashes involving animals in 2000, the latest federal highway data available. The CDC doesn't know if the number of car-animal accidents are on the rise. They typically happen on rural roads or highways. Although nearly nine out of 10 such accidents involve deer, the CDC's crash study also found cows, squirrels, bears, dogs and raccoons to be major contributors.

The CDC said putting tall fences at deer crossing spots and channeling deer to underpasses would help, but noted the cost might be prohibitive for many public roads budgets. (Associated Press)

KRYPTONITE NOT SO SUPER, MAN The U-Shaped steel locks that bikers and bicyclists have relied upon for years to thwart thieves has been picked apart, quite literally, by an Internet video that shows how to pick the most secure locks known to cyclists with a Bic pen. Just stick the non-writing end into the cylinder-shaped keyhole and twist. The New York Daily News reported that lock maker Kryptonite is scrambling to reassure customers that it is working on a solution, and they said it will provide free product upgrades for certain locks purchased since September 2002 and urged consumers to visit its company's Website to learn how they can participate in the security upgrade program. Although the trick apparently works on many locks with tubular cylinder technology including vending machines, some ignitions and other security products, it's the bike industry's best known locksmith, Kryptonite, that's feeling most of the heat. Industry experts say that a recall could cost tens of millions of dollars and would affect riders around the world. Bill Bish- AIM-NCOM

ROBOCOP ON WHEELS The Waukegan, Iowa Police Department is looking to purchase a BikeBot. The BikeBot is a robotic motorcycle cop that can be operated by remote control and can speak in-sync with the operator. The BikeBot costs \$5,000 and would be used in demonstrations at area schools. A police spokesman said that students react well to the machine as it is used to give safety lessons and other information. Bill Bish AIM-NCOM



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Bikers fill ward with toys The Southeast Alaska Panhandlers M/C hosted the 10th Annual Toy Run on Sunday, Sept. 19 at Bartlett Regional Hospital. Working with the Douglas Volunteer Fire Department, bikers and their supporters came together on motorcycles of all makes and models. Each brought a stuffed animal or small toy to contribute to the program. Each person who brought a toy or donated \$10 cash was rewarded with the traditional meal of barbecue ribs and beans. Donations by local merchants helped round out the menu. The Panhandlers M/C Toy Run concentrates on local children and those who must visit the hospital for illness or trauma. The effort to relieve some of the stress of a hospital visit was initiated when hospital administrator, Bob Valliant, approached the local motorcycle club and proposed the idea. The Panhandlers M/C coordinated the event with local fire departments to gather toys and host the barbecue.



NUDE RIDER DIES DOING STUNT It's no wonder that motorcycle fatality statistics are on the increase when you consider the rising popularity of "extreme" street riding, with sport bike riders performing wheelies, stoppies and other high speed antics on public roadways, often hot-dogging for the camera. Holding It Big Entertainment specializes in filming such street stunts, but the company president is now facing charges of reckless endangerment and negligent driving stemming from a rider's fatal wheelie. On Sept 12, 21-year-old Shaun P. Matlock of Frederick, MD died when he was performing a wheelie, riding without pants, and crashed into a tow truck parked on US 340.

Matlock's bike and helmet bore logos reading "Holding It Big", and the president of the Baltimore-based company, Benjamin M. Meacham, 22, of Frederick, was allegedly driving in a nearby vehicle videotaping the fatal ride, and then later erased the tape before police could confiscate it. He was charged under a provision stating that anyone who induces, causes, coerces, permits or directs another person to commit a traffic violation also is guilty of the violation, Frederick County State's Attorney Scott Rolle said.

Another bare-bottomed rider, Brandon M. Edwards, 21, of Ijamsville, who also was allegedly doing wheelies for the camera, was charged Sept. 20 with reckless driving, negligent driving, driving on a learner's permit without the required supervision, and indecent exposure.

Trooper David Ward, who investigated the case, said the only explanation he has heard for the lack of pants was "they wanted to do something they didn't think anybody had done before."

TRAINING FILM FREE WITH EVERY BIKE Now here's a great idea from across the pond, where the Motorcycle Industry Association (MCI) is planning to produce a rider training DVD that will be distributed with new motorcycles in England. The safety DVD will be issued with all new bikes purchased at franchised dealerships to educate newbie riders about safer motorcycling in a modern documentary format. Bill Bish AIM-NCOM

St. Louis, MO motorcyclists don't get their fair share of spaces when it comes to parking, but there might be some spots opening up due to activism from local motorcyclists from the AMA Community Councils and AMA District 18.

1. None of the city-owned garages, which are the vast majority in and around downtown, allow motorcycles due to the systems they installed being all solid-state 12-volt systems with a magnetic probe detector -- a loop of wire imbedded in the pavement. The probe sends a signal to an electronic switch called an 'operator' that tells it something is coming, timers then close it automatically. When closing, the gates use a safety cut-off switch that reverses the direction if it encounters an obstacle.

However City Treasurer Larry C. Williams' office, who heads St. Louis' parking services, wants to find a way to get motorcycles allowed. Unfortunately, the answer to this problem is not an easy one, and solutions are as varied as parking gate manufacturers and installers.