

News For Thought



Congress forms motorcycle caucus

The U.S. House of Representatives has formed a motorcycle safety caucus, and riders are urged to contact their motorcycle-friendly Reps and ask them to join. A caucus is a group within a legislative body that is assembled to represent a specific interest or influence a particular area of policy. The motorcycle caucus will focus on ways that Congress can improve and advance motorcycle safety efforts.

To become part of this first-ever motorcycle safety caucus, interested House members should contact either caucus co-chairs, Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) or Michael Burgess (R-TX).

Giffords, a freshman member of Congress and an avid motorcycle rider herself, said "We know from national studies that in almost two-thirds of fatal car/motorcycle crashes, the fault was with the driver of the car. We can do more to address this critical problem, and public education is a key to bringing about awareness and a reduction in such accidents."

Burgess is a long time supporter of motorcycling who said he is looking forward to working with motorcyclists across the country on motorcycle safety, education and awareness issues.

Motorcycles to remain less than 100 hp in France

Bad news for French motorcycle riders. The almighty and powerful European Commission has ruled that France is in its legal rights to limit motorcycle power to 100 horsepower.

The French Association of Angry Bikers (FFMC -- Federation Francaise des Motards en Colere) sued the French state and took them to the European courts.

Apparently, having uniform laws in Europe only apply to anything except motorcycles, said the FFMC about the ruling. The EC stated that each country could impose their own restrictions.

The FFMC countered that an extensive study by Dutch TNO showed no correlation between accidents and motorcycles with more power than 100 H.P.

So riding in France on a French-registered motorcycle means you can only have 100 H.P., while anyone else riding in France can ride whatever they want, on the same road, with the same traffic, and cars are not included in the restriction. The FFMC vows that they are not going to let this go...stay tuned!

Arizona town not so carefree about noise

Carefree, Arizona has been on the bikers' radar screen for their controversial noise ordinance, but now the Town Council has voted unanimously to lower speed limits on its main thoroughfare, and elevate noise infractions for first-time offenders from a civil citation to a Class 1 misdemeanor and possible jail time.

The changes take effect in November and targets motorcycles that exceed an 85-decibel noise limit. Instead of a \$175 ticket, violators can be fined as much

as \$2,500 and sentenced to up to 180 days in jail.

In addition to beefing up punishment to crack down on noisy bikes, the council also voted to reduce the speed limit on Cave Creek Road, the gateway between Phoenix and bars in downtown Cave Creek, from 35mph down to 25mph.

Biker has difficulty getting license reinstated

Howard Burley loves his Harley-Davidson. That's exactly why the Arizona biker hasn't owned a car in more than a decade. "You love the feel -- the vibrations and stuff like that," he told 3TV reporter Gary Harper of 3 On Your Side.

But last year, Burley was arrested for drunk driving. It was a huge mistake, but he said he learned from it, and even claims the DUI has made him a better man these days. "Absolutely. I quit drinking. I go through alcohol classes. It was definitely a wake up call," he said.

Burley served jail time, paid all of his court costs and fines and said he's cleaned up his life. The only thing he wants now is for his driver's license to be reinstated by Motor Vehicle Division.

To do that, MVD said all he has to do is install an ignition interlock device. Drivers have to blow into it at random times to make sure they're not drinking while they're driving. If the driver has been drinking, the device prevents the car from starting up.

"The only problem is they do not put them on motorcycles," Burley said. And a motorcycle is all that Burley owns. If he wants to get his license back, he said MVD told him he'll have to buy a car.

Organizations like the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs say Burley's situation is a good example of motorcycle discrimination. "It's another way the government is forcing you into something you don't want to do," said Steven Musgrave with the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs. Although some states do allow motorcycles to have the device, Arizona does not. For now, the state said it's not planning on using the device on motorcycles.

Burley said he and numerous motorcycle organizations that lobby lawmakers are monitoring the situation to see if changes might be made in the future. In the meantime, he's resorted to taking the bus and can only hope the MVD will change its mind.

Weird News: Pork or Hog. Thieves choose the other white meat.

Thieves in China are stealing pork because the staple meat has become so expensive. A Shenzhen newspaper reported that a pork seller was knocked off his motorcycle by robbers who stole his load of over 200 pounds of pork, but left his motorcycle in the road.

He was on his way to a market in Shenzhen, just over the border from Hong Kong, when four men jumped from a mini-bus and threatened him with knives. The pork was worth 2000 yuan more than the motorcycle.



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HBO Announces Biker TV

The pay cable network giant is working with bikers to beef up its lineup. HBO, which is building a new stable of drama series following the departure of heavyweights "The Sopranos" and "Six Feet Under," has greenlighted a project from Oscar-nominated writer Michael Tolkin. Tolkin's "1%," which hails from Management 360's TV division, is set in the world of biker clubs.

"A 1% tattoo has been considered a badge of honor for biker club members symbolizing life on the fringe of American society," reported the Washington Times. "It refers to a statement put out 50 years ago by the American Motorcycle Assn. that said clubs don't represent the legitimate motorcycle community but the 1% who are a threat to the American way of life."

Tolkin penned "1%" and is exec producing the pilot with Management 360's Alex Hertzberg and Guymon Casady.

Quotable Quote "I don't know."

Alexander Kuzmin, the 33-year-old Russian mayor of Megion in Siberia, has banned 25 phrases such as this as a way to make his administration more efficient, and bureaucrats who say "I can't," or "It's not my job" can look for another job.