

News For Thought

Pennsylvania Moves to ban Pocket Rockets

Philadelphia Councilman Rick Mariano recently staged a protest of a local Pep Boys to announce his intentions to introduce a measure outlawing the sale of all pocket bikes, he told KYW Newsradio following the death of a teen who was riding the wrong way down a one-way street. Even though the "pocket bikes" are illegal on city streets, they are still being sold in Philadelphia stores.

"They're not street legal -- so where are they gonna ride them? On the sidewalk?," he asked during the Sept 11 protest, organized to pressure the automotive chain into taking the mini-motorcycles off their shelves. So Mariano says at Council's first session next month, he'll introduce a bill to ban the scooters outright. It's not clear yet though if the city has that power, because the state regulates motor vehicles. According to

KYW, similar efforts are in the works at the state level. www.aimncom.com

Weird News: License to bill
Jim Cara just wanted a vanity license tag for his Suzuki Hayabusa sport bike that would make people laugh, but when he chose to put "NOTAG" on his plate, the joke backfired. The new tag arrived under an avalanche of

Wilmington, Delaware parking violations. "All the traffic tickets say, 'Notice of violation. License number: no tag,'" Cara told the News Journal newspaper. City computers, talking to state Division of Motor Vehicles computers, had finally found an address for ticketed vehicles that lacked license tags: Cara's home in Elsmere. He has received more than 200 violation notices, ranging from \$55 to \$125 for violations such as meter expiration.

Cara, 43, admits he's been a lifelong prankster, but this time he says, "the cleanup is going to be worse than the joke." Officials say they are clearing up the glitch, but advised Cara to get a new plate.

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Study Claims Motorcycles Damage Hearing

Is it any wonder why motorcyclists hate "scientific studies"? Here's a new one that's sure to fuel the fires for noise ordinances, as researchers from the University of Florida told the Washington Times that "the noise from a motorcycle is as intense as that from a loud rock concert and can permanently damage hearing." In a test of 33 motorcycles, audiologists at Florida's College of Public Health and Health Professions determined that nearly half produced sounds above 100 decibels when throttled up. That's equal to a chainsaw or loud music, they said. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health warns that exposure to noise at 100 decibels is safe for only 15 minutes. The federal agency cautions that permanent hearing loss can result from eight hours of exposure to any noise measuring 85 decibels or above. "Almost all of the motorcycles we tested reached action-level noise, which in the workplace would require ear protection," said Joy Colle, an investigator in the Florida study, which the university released before it was published in a medical or scientific journal. "Potentially, the vast majority of motorcyclists could be exposed to dangerous levels of noise."

But here's the kicker; in the UF study the noise levels were tested at riders' ear levels from stationary motorcycles when idle and throttled up. How many riders sit astride a parked motorcycle and "throttle up" for lengthy periods of time? At least the audiologists admitted that motorcycle helmets do not provide much protection against hearing loss. No evidence was found that motorcycle noise harmed the hearing of those standing on a sidewalk near the test site either, but you can bet that won't stop lawmakers from citing this "study" as justification for noise ordinances that target motorcycles.

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A good friend will come bail you out of jail, but a true friend will be sitting next to you saying, "Damn, that was fun!!!!"



Fears in Dwight Prompt Discrimination

A post Hog Roast walkabout has turned a once biker friendly village into a place where colors are not welcome. On August 21, several bikers went for a stroll down Main Street in Dwight, IL after a Hog Roast put on by the RonDeVoo Tavern. Villagers saw the bikers and were frightened. Official complaints painted a picture right out of the "Wild One", claiming the bikers had weapons and were on a menacing spree. Dwight police have responded with a NO COLORS policy for the entire village. The chief of police, Tim Hensen, has further added that all bikers will be followed and watched. Tickets will

be issued for the slightest infractions. So far three tickets have been issued to bikers for serious infractions such as parking on the sidewalk. The Zoo's owners and bar manager have told the police that in their 2 1/2 years in Dwight they have worked very hard to keep drugs and dealers out of their establishment. No gang meetings take place in the bar. The Zoo's owners and manag-

er ask out of respect for the law that all M/C's refrain from wearing colors at the RonDeVoo. They also warn that while such a policy is a violation of civil liberties and right out discrimination, bikers shouldn't take the fight to the officer, but one making the policy.

Teens Admit to Prank Causing Biker Crash

Four teenage boys from Waukesha, Wisc., admitted pulling a "stupid prank" by stretching kitchen-variety wrap across a road that caused a motorcycle to crash, according to Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher who said the boys could face charges of being delinquent in juvenile court. Daniel Buckel, 22, of the Town of Waukesha, went out for a ride last month with his girlfriend, Theresa Brzykcy, 19, of Brookfield, when his motorcycle crashed into the plastic wrap stretched between two traffic posts, causing his 2002 Honda motorcycle to slide across the pavement and the two landed on a nearby driveway. Buckel broke a finger and needed 15 stitches to close a gash above his eye, while Brzykcy was knocked unconscious for a short time but was not seriously injured. Buckel, who works as a bartender and selling motorcycles, said the crash caused him to miss two weeks of work. He said he was relieved to learn that authorities had found the suspects

California Amends Handlebar Height Law

Following a spate of handlebar height citations, ABATE of California set out to amend their "no more than shoulder high" handlebar height limit to allow for greater flexibility. Assemblyman Jay La Suer introduced Assembly Bill 2844 to "prohibit a person from driving a 2-wheel motorcycle that is equipped with handlebars so positioned that the hands of the driver, when upon the grips, are more than 6 inches above his or her shoulder height." ABATE lobbied AB2844 through the Assembly and Senate, and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the bill into law on August 23. AB 2844 has become Chapter 280 of the law books and will become effective January 1, 2005

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