

News For Thought



Canadian Colors Case goes to Court

In what is believed to be a provincial first, a trial date has been set for a Hells Angels member who was charged for wearing his club colors in a bar, in violation of Saskatchewan's new colors ban.

Richard Bandet, 34, is charged with the ticket offence under a provision of the Safer Communities And Neighbourhoods Act (SCAN) that makes it against the law to wear "gang colours" in licensed establishments like bars. Under the act, "colours" refers to "any sign, symbol, logo or other representation identifying, associated with or promoting a gang or a criminal organization."

On June 9, during the same weekend as a poker run involving the club, Moose Jaw Police were checking local bars for SCAN infractions when they noticed a biker wearing his colors.

Under SCAN, those found guilty of a first offence under the gang colors section of the legislation face a maximum \$10,000 fine and/or one year in jail. Subsequent offences carry a maximum fine of \$25,000 and/or one year in jail. www.ON-A-BIKE.com



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Victory Lap – ABATE of Illinois Remembers Bike Ban

The signs went up without fanfare, one day they just appeared. No Motorcycles

Allowed from 10PM till 5am they announced to the citizens of America's third largest city. One of the world's most famous roads became off limits to motorcyclists during the late evening. Worse was the very real prospect of the ban spreading. It didn't take long for the fear to become a reality as the No Motorcycle signs began to pop-up on several other city streets.

The reaction among windy city riders was predictable - they were outraged. ABATE of Illinois, the American Motorcyclist Association and the Motorcycle Riders Foundation swung into action. And after a long and protracted fight the signs were removed. The details of getting them removed would require a rather lengthy volume. For the purpose of the report it will suffice to say that language inserted into the interstate funding act of 1998 - called TEA 21- that would prohibit motorcycles from being denied access to federally funded roads (Lake Shore Drive is part of US 41) gave ABATE of Illinois a powerful tool to have the ban lifted. The Motorcycle Riders Foundation's constant presence in Washington was major factor in seeing that language remained in TEA 21.

On September 3, 2007 - as is their annual custom on Labor Day weekend - a large group of riders assemble in the morning on Chicago's trendy Weed Street. Under the Leadership of the Chicago Chapter of ABATE of Illinois they proceed to the Drive and 'run it' from the North end to the South end and back again. This 'in your face' gesture is a victory lap of sorts. Just to let the city know that we are still around and we haven't forgotten the attempt to restrict us from roads that we pay taxes on to maintain.

Many activists in the motorcyclists' rights movement have said all along that the ultimate goal of our enemies is not helmet laws or noise ordinances, but banning motorcycles off the roads entirely. Here was a classic case (there have been a number of others) of that prediction becoming a reality. One percenters, Gold Wing riders, HOG members - it didn't matter - they were greeted with the same message when they hit the drive. It was that motorcycles are prohibited.

What can the MRF do for us? This is a question that we hear on a regular basis. The political future and what type of legislation it may bring can be difficult to predict. If past performances are any indication however; the most apparent thing that the MRF can do for motorcyclists is to keep them on the road.

Fall is a great time to ride. Perhaps it may be a good time to find a favorite road and give some thought while riding as to how the cancerous growth of motorcycle bans has been arrested, but could reappear at anytime. Consider that ride to be your own victory lap and remember the MRF's legislative team continues to be the motorcyclists' watchdog in Washington DC. We are working everyday to see that your access to public roads remains intact.

Enjoy the ride.

Michael Kerr
MRF Vice President

British charity Demands Downsizing of Motorcycles

A row has erupted in England after an influential road safety charity, RoadPeace, called on the government to limit the weight, speed and power of high-speed motorcycles in an effort to slow the pace of rising rider fatalities. Make bikes slower to save lives, claims the charity in correspondence with the Transport Select Committee demanding that ministers issue new regulations "downsizing" motorcycles.

The move has sparked a furious reaction from the British Motorcycle Foundation, notes the Evening Standard newspaper, and the BMF has quit RoadPeace claiming it has been betrayed by the organization it has been an active member of since 2002.

The federation also questioned the charity's figures, pointing out that the majority of motorcycle accidents involved riders of bikes with engines under 125cc. It suggested that pedestrians and cyclists were responsible for many collisions with motorcycles. In a statement, the BMF said: "The vast majority of motorcycle accidents are caused by other road users, road defects or by poor road design."

Sheila Rainger of the RAC Foundation, a motor vehicle safety charity, said: "RoadPeace is authoritative and is listened to but, unfortunately, in this case its demands are based on emotion, not facts." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Weird News

2 Wheels + 160 mph + School Zone = 3 Years of Lockup According to NBC, a 20 year-old Mesa, Arizona motorcyclist was recently sentenced to three years in prison for riding his 2006 Honda CBR 600 through a school zone and crosswalk at speeds over 160 mph. Law enforcement officials first spotted the ex-racer traveling at roughly 140 mph through morning rush hour traffic, and a 30 minute pursuit ended with a foot chase that resulted in the man's arrest. Apparently, his history of reckless driving and riding under a suspended license didn't help his argument in court. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Motorcycle Sales Slow

The runaway freight train of motorcycle sales may finally be slowing down. For more than a decade, motorcycles recorded record sales figures, often showing double-digit annual increases, defying nationwide economic slowdowns and stock market dips. But for the first half of 2007 the Motorcycle Industry Council reports that U.S. motorcycle sales are down for the first time since the mid-90s, and were off by 7% compared to the first six months of last year.

Theories abound, with some suggesting the rise in gas prices and bleak economic picture are making consumers cautious. Others say sub-prime concerns in the housing and auto sectors are making loans less available. Others blame a summer of freaky weather. Others say the slight decline in sales nationwide is a blip that won't last, and point out that 2007 will still be the third-largest year for motorcycle sales.

Dealers noted that with supply catching up to demand nationwide, consumers are getting better deals, with financing incentives, stable pricing, and great values with added features such as anti-lock brakes, fuel injection and other technical improvements for very little additional cost to consumers.

Dealerships have reported seeing an increase in sales of touring bikes and sport-touring models, as graying riders - and their wives in the passenger seat - seek bigger more comfortable rides. Another trend, again driven by the aging biker population, is the move to trikes. New bike buyers are also demanding such add-ons as satellite navigational systems, even though they are relatively expensive.

Motorcycle sales nationally have always been somewhat independent of practical economics, Wade Rice of Rice Honda-Suzuki-Victory told the Rapid City Journal. "They say 3 percent of the population rides motorcycles. That's the bad news," Rice said, but from the dealers' perspective, "The good news is that 28 percent want them." www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Quotable Quote:

"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."
Elmer Davis (1890-1958), American radio announcer and news commentator

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