

Riding and Writing Potpourri

By Gypsyashn Betsy E Lister

As you know I'm always switching gears with my column, and this month will be no different; except this month I'll be focusing on one issue primarily.

We're experiencing some difficult times, with regards to motorcycling, and with regards to any and all of our freedoms; and I'm afraid if we don't stick up for our rights, we'll all be sheeple herded into a pen and our freedoms as we now know them will be lost!

Big brother is watching, and will soon be in your back pocket picking from you wallet!

Don't believe it to be true? Well, then, stop, think for a minute.... where is this country going? Besides to hell in a hand basket, DOWN, right?

RIGHT!

Now, wouldn't it be just horriific, if our motorcycling miles became "taxable", and we had to pay a tax for every mile driven. What would happen to the wonderful world of motorcycling?

I'll tell you what would happen; it'd become a luxury, and not an everyday event! You wouldn't be able to just jump on your bike and go for a ride without having to plan in advance, how many miles you're going to put on; what time of day you'll be using the highways, where you go; all of that would have to be taken into consideration before just jumping on the bike and heading out down the road! Can you imagine trying to rearrange how you prepare for a ride to include all that?

Where's the freedom of the open road! It's going to be gone soon, real soon!

How can this be you ask? I'll tell you!

The VMT tax HR3311 has been introduced in the House by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-OR, that would establish a federal pilot program to study vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, as a possible supplement to or possible replacement for the current per-gallon fuel tax. The bill, HR3311, does not specify what would happen to the fuel tax if a VMT program were established. This is being case studied in Oregon as I write this article.

Hmmm.... do you see where this is going? Orwell's 1984 comes to mind, and yes, Big Brother is watching us, and will be watching us closer and closer if we don't put a halt to it!

Now why is this happening you ask? I'll tell you why! Because Congress has gotten too damned big for its britches, and has been plundering and pilfering funds that were earmarked for road repairs, and funneling them to other venues. So what we're seeing is, no funds to make necessary road repairs or even to perform road maintenance. Case in point, the bridge in Minnesota that collapsed! That was caused by sheer case of maladministering of funds.

If the funds are taken and appropriated somewhere else because of some malfeasance or misappropriation, or lack of regard, then how are the roads to be maintained? Seems this country rather than taking the time to fix what's wrong; believes the solution to our problems is to make MORE LAWS AND ADD MORE TAXES! Why not just correct and enforce what's already in place?

This is crazy! How long do they think we're going to put up with this?

The other part of the problem is that big business pays big bucks to big lobbyists so that their big trucks don't have to pay big bucks to use the highways! We all know that a 20,000 lb truck will bring more wear and tear to the roadways, than 100 motorcycles; yep they're excused from having to pay because they pay funds to lobbyists who climb in the pockets of Congressmen and women.

Seems this country's system is all upside down and the wealthy (or people of 'means') are excused from having to pay their fair share; and the burden is put on us regular (people of 'no means') folk!

So imagine you're going to take a motorcycle trip to Daytona from say, the Boston area. You start out at 5:00 AM and get on the road and head out! The sun comes up and you're riding through Providence right around rush hour. Because you're using the road at high traffic time, it'll be logged into your GPS and you will get a bill for using the road at a high traffic time. So let's just say, that trip which you planned for a year and budgeted \$3000 for, including lodging, gas, road taxes, food along the way, entertainment, souvenirs, etc, will now cost you \$3500!!

Seeing it like that brings it home! Now what if you're on the road in sales? And are on the road all the time? Can you see a huge portion of your paycheck going to this tax? I can!! I feel for my son who's a rep and on the road all day long! His pay could be reduced by as much as a third of what it is now! And the economy (in these parts, anyway) doesn't seem to be rebounding as well as we all had hoped it would. Unemployment in the Northeast is the highest it's been since, what.... the 80's?

So, if you want to protect your right to ride, and to ride as "free as we're allowed to now, without any further restrictions" SPEAK UP!!! Let your Congressperson know that this is unacceptable; and that Congress has to stop pilfering funds from other means, and leave the highway funds alone, so that we can keep what little freedoms we have left!

Motorcycling's Changed

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*Today I rode, but not too far
 Couldn't afford it, can't afford the car
 I wanted to go to New Hampshire today
 Couldn't go that far, I'm sorry to say
 The tax would have made it
 An impossible trip
 And into my pockets
 My income would dip
 Instead of just worrying
 Bout putting in gas
 I had to worry
 How far I rode my ass!
 An extra \$50.00 dollars
 It would have cost me
 So now only in books
 New Hampshire I'll see
 How did it get so bad?
 You do ask
 Congress has taken it
 To be their task
 To pilfer and plunder
 And misappropriate monies
 And we have to pay
 For their actions, now honey!
 I remember when we all
 Could ride free
 But now it's become
 Something of a luxury
 One that most of us
 Cannot afford
 While Congress
 Takes funds
 And them with them hoard
 Motorcycling's changed
 Not what it used to be
 Everything's taxed now
 And NOTHING is free!!*

Folks, these are troubling times, and I'm afraid if we won't stick up for our rights, we'll lose them! More locally, look what's going on all over the country with the noise issue? Each day there's another article written from another state, another part of the country about noise, and about enacting laws that will prohibit us from changing our exhausts to anything other than EPA stock systems!

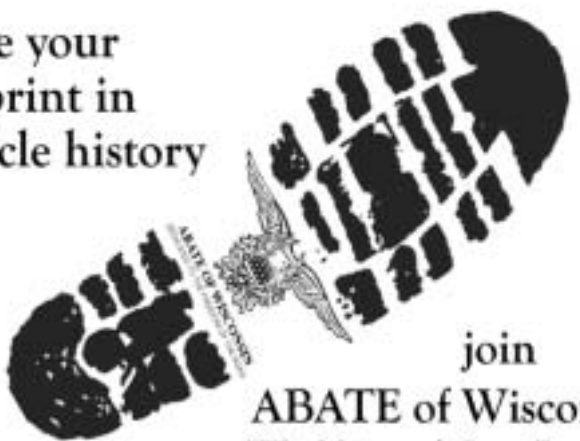
How much of your freedom are you willing to give up?

Ok, that's it from here for now, until next month... keep the sunny side up!

And remember, (that is, right now anyway....) whatever it is, it's always better in the wind!

Gypsy

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