

# ABATE

DEDICATED TO FREEDOM OF THE ROAD



## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

BOX 38094

Washington, D.C. 20020

(202) 292-2324

JANUARY 1978

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When the ABATE National Office was started at our 1978 Daytona Meeting, I agreed to run that office, answer the mail and put out a monthly National Newsletter. I placed one condition on my accepting this responsibility and it was that there would be a clerk-typist hired to take care of the routine typing and filing and other general office work.

To this day, none has been hired and I have been forced to do the best I could with filing and typing. I don't type, so many of the letters we receive are answered in hand written form. At first we only received a few letters and material each week, so the task wasn't too difficult. But, the amount of mail has steadily increased each week to the point where this past week we received over 70 letters. Each letter must be answered. Some simply require a member application be mailed back - something any clerk could do. Others require detailed answers to various questions. Much of the mail we get asks about the National ABATE in Sacramento and many of those are complaints about not having received anything in return for the money sent in. My letters to these questions require a detailed explanation of the difference between National ABATE and ABATE National.

Gary Zoger has been helping with sorting the letters that require answers and those asking for new member applications. His help is appreciated but as you can imagine, we now have more work than two people, working in their spare time, can handle. ~~What we must have is secretarial/clerical help.~~ Your problem is how to pay them. I'll do the best I can for the next 30 days and if no help has been hired by then, I will be forced to resign. Let's hear from you soon.

FUZZY

Abate: Say Bro,

One of my bro's, Mike Travis (Pistol) wrote to you to find out just how roghtous the Abate Organization is, We are joint chapter of bro's, from Bro's M/C/. The people here at the joint hassel us real heavy when we get together to talk scooter bull. We have told them that all we want to do is keep up to date on all the new laws that have come down. About a year ago they came down on us real heavy, and tried to bust us up, separate, ect. They have never had any trouble with our club or any other group of scooter people. You people have got the Bro's support all the way. Just send us the addresses of the people or other organizations that we need to write and we will get down. Also, if there id any way possible I need the addresses of some people that might be able to help us with our problem. Ya see there a lot of biker people here at the joint, but they are worried about the heat. These people won't let us do anything. A good cheap lawyer would do the trick.

I don't have alot of money, but I will try to pay the membership fee's for at least the club officer's I thank you for your time, I hope we can do somethin for ya.

Sincerely Satan Christopher M Keon  
Christopher McKeon #90217

All ABATE should be receiving a copy of the AMA's Government Report every month. If you are not getting a copy, it is probably because the AMA doesn't have your correct address. Drop Gary Winn a note with your correct address and he will see to it that your Chapter is included on their mailing list.

The Government Report, also referred to as the GRP, is a very informative newsletter that includes motorcycle oriented legislative information listed state by state. Also included is current information from the U. S. Congress as well as reports of action being taken by the Federal Bureaucracy that affects all motorcyclists, both street bikers and off road enthusiasts.

The GRP reflects the professionalism the AMA has developed and also shows us their sincerity regarding the street biker's rights to enjoy motorcycling.

It should be obvious to anyone receiving the GRP that the AMA is spending a great deal of time and money on their efforts to combat anti-bike laws and they are more than willing to share their work with ABATE at no cost to us.

After receiving your GRP, you can quickly alert your bros of pending legislation and take the appropriate action.

Frequently, the AMA mentions ABATE's work in both the GRP and the American Motorcyclist Magazine, which is sent to all AMA members and I believe we as ABATE should show our appreciation by publishing membership application blanks in our State Newsletters. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with ABATE members joining the AMA, if they wish.

You can obtain photo ready copy of the AMA membership application by contacting Gary Winn c/o the AMA, Box 141, Westerville, Ohio 43081.

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..... ABATE PATCHES .....  
\$1.00 each to the Chapters.  
Sell - \$2.00 ea.

ABATE of New York  
Box 5172  
Albany, N.Y. 12205  
(518) 459-2320

We can ship C.O.D.

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If any Chapter is looking to purchase in larger quantities, You may order from:

AABBCO Emblem & Embroidery Co.  
1719 West 7th Street  
Los Angeles, Calif 90017

Price is 72¢ ea. in quantities of 250. You must send a 50% deposit (\$90.00).  
Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

- - - - - SOCIAL EVENTS - - - - -

Michigan - - Bike Show, Owassa, Michigan  
November 4 & 5, 1978

- - Second Annual Swap Meet  
Lansing, Michigan  
January 21, 1979

- - 1974 H.D. XLH ser. no.  
4A26612H4--Stolen, Sturgis,  
Michigan, weekend of Aug. 5th.  
Engine polished gold & chrome.  
Info: (616) 651-7718.

NEW ABATE CHAPTERS

ABATE of Alabama  
Box 511  
Weaver, Alabama 36277

ABATE of Kentucky  
227 Georgetown Street  
Lexington, Kentucky 40505

ABATE of Iowa  
Box 23  
LeClaire, Iowa 52703

813 Highland Avenue  
Carrollton, Kentucky 41008

ABATE of New Mexico  
5407 La Merced Ave. N.W.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105  
(505) 831-1826

Rt 3 Box 249  
Ashland, Kentucky 41101

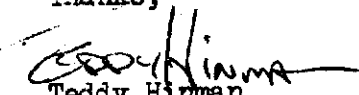
ABATE of Tennessee  
5514 Ringgold Road  
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37412

7703 Kenhurst  
Louisville, Kentucky 40258

A major topic of discussion at the ABATE Meeting at Sturgis, South Dakota August 9-12, 1978 was the existance of two ABATE groups. ABATE National is all of the motorcycle riders who have been fighting discriminatory laws for the past ten years. These are the people who have given up a lot of things to make sure the rest of us knew that someone was doing something for us. They are the people who have actually gotten something done.

National ABATE are the people who advertize in Easyriders Magazine saying that they are going to keep up the fight. They are going to dedicate themselves to the bikers' rights. Their voice is Pat Kaufman. He says he has organized unions, funnelled money into lobbyists' pockets, and pleased politicians. He feels that that is the way to get the job done. He's also the guy who endorsed the \$50 check sent to Keith Ball (Contributing Editor, Easyriders Magazine) by ABATE of Spacecoast for ABATE patches, bumperstickers, and information. That check was cashed in February, 1978, and we have received NOTHING! By the way, Mr. Kaufman said we (ABATE of Florida) had to be recognised by his organization before we could get the names of the people in Florida who have joined ABATE through the ad in the magazine, or the monies they sent in for their memberships. That \$50 mentioned above was YOUR money. Now, WHAT DO YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO DO...?? I, for one, think we should make sure no one misuses our funds or abuses our freedom for any reason. There are ways for us, the motorcycle riders, to put a stop to anyone telling us what we have to do. We will be able to get together and discuss these ways on Sunday, September 3, 1978. COME TO WICKHAM PARK TO DONATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS, AND TO HAVE A REALLY GREAT TIME AT THE PICNIC-PARTY-BASH.

Thanks,

  
Teddy Hirman

ABATE of Spacecoast

Editorial: SOBERING VIEWS ON DEMOCRACIES:

Americans ought to take a close look at some of the things Alexander Solzhenitsyn recently said in an interview published in Paris.

The democratic world, he said, is coming to a decisive moment in its existence and it does not realize what is happening.

"The existence of the civilization it (democracy) created is going to be at stake in the next years," Solzhenitsyn said. "I think it is not aware of this."

The problem, he said, was not economic, because he believes the present crisis could be overcome, but political.

"You have the impression," he said, "that democracies can last. But you know nothing about it. Democracies are lost islands in the immense river of history. The water is always rising. The simplest laws of history play against democratic societies. But this evidence doesn't strike you."

Especially, he cited the Russian Threat, something he could be called an authority on.

"Interior will is more important than a policy," he explained. "If the leaders of the East felt there was the slightest flame in you, the slightest drive to make freedom to survive on your side and spread, if they understood you were ready to sacrifice your life, then at that very second they would give up. Every time that you really showed resolve--Berlin, Korea, Cuba--each time the Soviet leaders retreated."

It is false, Solzhenitsyn said, to think that there are only a small number of dissidents in the Soviet Union.

"I tell you that 80 per cent of the Russians know what the Soviet regime is and what it's worth. They think as I do. Simply, they've chosen to obey."

He could have cited some examples in the United States where a large majority of the people disagree with what has become national policy through the efforts of those in high leadership positions, but most have chosen to go along.

What he appears to be saying is that if enough of these things are allowed to continue to take place against the stream of majority public opinion, the power of that stream soon will be well harnessed.

# THE DOCTOR WON'T PRESCRIBE HELMETS

By David Zinman  
Newsday Science Writer

**T**wo months ago, swarms of motorcyclists descended on Albany seeking repeal of the state's mandatory helmet law. They listened raptly as one of their number spoke from the statehouse steps.

"Nobody is against wearing helmets," said A. Ranald Mackenzie. "But why should wearing or not wearing them be the concern of the law?" Hundreds roared approval.

Though he won their applause, Mackenzie seemed as out of place as a De Soto in a carlot of Volkswagens. He is 50 years old, a widely respected, Scottish-born physician, chief of urology at Long Beach Memorial Hospital and a staff member of Memorial Hospital in New York City.

But as national president of the Motorcycling Doctors Association, Mackenzie shares the younger bikers' enthusiasm for the open road and their distaste for mandatory helmet laws.

"Helmets save lives in some kinds of accidents," Mackenzie says. "But it is the element of compulsion that rubs me the wrong way . . ."

Mackenzie is a man of many faces. To his neighbors in Point Lookout, he is a quiet but solid citizen, the father of three, an accomplished pianist and painter, a conservative both in dress and politics. To his medical colleagues, he is a competent, no-nonsense clinician, an innovative researcher whose studies have been published in the nation's leading medical journals.

But soon, Mackenzie will once again swap his doctor's white coat for his biker's brown leather jacket, boots, leather gauntlets, sunglasses and mandatory helmet. He will mount his black Suzuki RE-5 motorcycle, rev up and power off on a 2,500-mile, five-day ride to Billings, Mont. There, he will preside over the Aug. 26-27 annual convention of the Motorcycling Doctors Association, a small group he organized last year.

Mackenzie does not dispute the hazards of motorcycling. Eighty to 90 per cent of all reported motorcycle crashes result in injury or death, while fewer than 10 per cent of car accidents do. What motivates him—and the three dozen mostly middle-aged physicians and dentists in the group—to devote themselves to a dangerous mode of travel usually associated with youngsters?

"It's in the blood," Mackenzie says, a glint in his gray-green eyes, a trace of a burr in his voice. "I first rode a motorcycle as a teenager. It was about the most exhilarating thing I ever experienced. Some of that remains . . . It's a tremendous thing to flog the iron horse."

The physician-dentist motorcyclists, Mackenzie said, want input with state legislators considering new motorcycle laws and fairer treatment of cyclists in court. "Many times, they are killed and motorists are let off with a slap on the wrist

as if they killed someone of no use to society," Mackenzie said. The group also wants to improve motorcycling safety, compile more accurate and meaningful accident statistics and upgrade the image of motorcyclists.

The latter goal may be the most difficult. In a recent Newsday interview, a spokesman for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said of the cyclists who lobby for repeal of helmet laws: "Have you seen who they are? They are frightening. They are Hell's Angels and the dregs of society. They are appalling people—violent, crude. They pride themselves on their macho. It [fighting helmet laws] is a macho bit . . ."

Mackenzie dismisses this characterization as "stupid and ill-informed." He says rowdy bikers constitute only a minute percentage of the nation's 10 million cyclists. "But," he admits, "our [medical] colleagues look at us [motorcycling doctors] askance. The public must understand that it is the average American who rides a motorcycle."

Whatever the popular image may be, it is a fact that the mandatory helmet law is the most controversial issue among motorcyclists. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an arm of the U.S. Transportation Department, says that motorcycling deaths rose 23 per cent from 1976 to 1977 after 22 states repealed helmet laws.

The repeal (an action since taken by four more states), was a "major factor" in the increase in fatalities, says Joan Claybrook of the safety administration. "Opposition to state helmet laws comes in the face of overwhelming evidence that motorcycle helmets save lives by reducing the severity of head injuries," she says.

Both Mackenzie and the American Motorcyclist Association dispute the administration's contentions. Gene Wirwahn, the association's legislative director, says the fatality totals fail to take into account such key variables as total miles driven, the number of new riders and the weather. Most important, he says, the statistics do not include the total number of accidents.

"To find out if helmets protect, you have to know the number of fatally injured motorcyclists per 100 accidents," says Wirwahn. "This data really addresses whether helmet laws reduce the number of fatalities per accident."

His group has done this, he says, by taking 18 states that have had the helmet law for at least three years and that properly report fatalities and comparing their ratio of accidents to fatalities for the years before and after adoption of the helmet law. The overall fatality ratio was 2.6 per 100 accidents before helmet laws were adopted and 2.5 per 100 accidents afterward—"no statistically significant difference," Wirwahn says.

If proponents and opponents of helmet laws differ on statistics, they also are at odds on

whether the government has the right to mandate safety requirements. Ben Kelley of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, a non-profit group supported by insurance companies, says motorcyclists who are injured or killed are not just isolated accident victims. They become a burden to all of society. Tax-supported ambulances, hospitals and doctors have to care for them. If they are permanently maimed or crippled, taxes support them and their families for the rest of their lives. "Therefore," Kelley says, "the government has a stake in their safety."

But Mackenzie says that if the government takes this approach, it cannot do so in discriminatory fashion. "If the social burden argument is to be sustained, it must be established across the board," Mackenzie says. "Let's look at smoking. There will be 102,000 new cases of lung cancer in 1978. The mortality rate is over 90 per cent and the costs to society are tremendous. How about the country's alcoholics? Their impact on society is enormous. But the government isn't banning smoking or drinking . . . What the government is trying to do by supporting mandatory helmet laws is establish a precedent. The ultimate aim is to harness the motorist [with mandatory seat belts and air bags]. And it knows if it can't make it with motorcyclists, it can't make it with motorists."

Mackenzie's is not the prevailing opinion in his profession. The American Medical Association advocates helmets for cyclists, although it takes no position on laws mandating their use. Dr. Joseph Greensher of Mineola, state chairman of the accident prevention committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, says the ultimate question is whether helmets protect. "I have been in the accident prevention field for 25 years," he says, "and everything I have seen has emphasized there is a reduction in the severity of injury to the head where a helmet has been worn."

Mackenzie points out that some reports say a helmet increases neck injuries, reduces visibility, impairs hearing and intensifies the heat around the rider's head—reports disputed by both the AMA and the motorcyclist association. Nevertheless, Mackenzie says, even conceding the helmet's effectiveness as a safety device, that is not the central issue. "I'm not against wearing a helmet. I'm against the existence of a law forcing people to wear one. It has been passed because motorcyclists are a vulnerable, visible, conspicuous minority."

"It may seem like a small thing to some," Mackenzie adds. "But in 'Mein Kampf,' Hitler advocated the tactic of salami slicing. You whittle away at freedoms a little at a time. If the public acquiesces and surrenders a small part of its freedom, it will soon have no ground to complain about greater encroachment." ■

DEDICATED TO FREEDOM OF THE ROAD



ABATE of Indiana  
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Elkhart, Indiana 46514

Phone: (219) 264-1419

ABATE OF INDIANA

January 6, 1978

TO ALL MY ABATE BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

The last few months have not been easy on anyone, nor on ABATE as an organization. The Sacramento meeting resulted in ABATE being divided into three groups, those supporting Fuzzy, those supporting Easyriders, and those remaining neutral through it all. Probably the most sensible group of all are those remaining neutral. They are not allowing themselves to be prejudice on the situation where by creating sounder judgement once all the facts are presented. However, by having so many staying neutral more difficulty confronts us in getting ABATE back together. It is a mind boggling situation to say the least!

Fuzzy and Gary have worked to establish communication, and to gather information on what the State ABATE Chapters suggest to get the National Office operating. Meanwhile, the response to Easyriders made it clear a lot of ABATE Chapters still support ABATE staying with them on forming the National. Easyriders, however, felt they should not be the controlling factor in the National-understandable after what happen-but felt a responsibility to all the ABATE Chapters they have worked with over the years. Keith Ball was the National Director of ABATE for many years and grew close to many of us. He couldn't see just turning away from individuals he had stood beside over the years, so he answered the ABATE Chapters in behave of Easyriders. He began to pick-up the pieces again by taking out the objections everyone had with the original proposal and incorporating some suggestions from the State ABATE Chapters. He got acouple of bikers to help him establish an ABATE National Office in Sacramento under his guidance.

Now ABATE State Chapters have two National ABATE Offices, and it would seem-on the surface anyway-that ABATE's future looks rather grim. But it doesn't have to be grim. ABATE could have more going for it than anyone ever dreamed possible, if the ABATE Chapters will just stick together.

Keeping an established office in California, where ABATE originated seven years ago, with individuals who worked with the ABATE Co-ordinators can be a great benefit. Having an additional office in Washington, D.C. man by individuals who have worked as ABATE Representatives with the politicians as well as the bikers is beautiful. If you go a step further and have all of this working for all the State Chapters as one organization, it is the most fantastic thing to ever come our way (except possibly repealing the federal black-mail on the helmets).

The California Office could establish testing facilities producing statistical data, set up insurance programs, and many other programs and services while the Washington, D.C. Office would be our watch dog over the federal legislation, and be an information center for state legislative issues. With all the ABATE Chapters united behind these two offices, we could have financing possible for the offices to operate, and a National Board could over see both to insure all ABATE Chapters' voice was reflected in their activities as well as their policies. The State Chapters would benefit beyond belief from this arrangement. They could continue operating as individual organizations, but have the numbers of unity to be a powerful political influence plus have two National Offices supplying all the things needed to be powerful State Organizations as well.

The original division that occurred in ABATE seemed to be a tragedy, but it actually should show us we have more needs than one individual office can fulfill. We have the individuals already there offering their help, and it is just plain dumb not to take full advantage of both offices to the best possible benefit to all ABATE Chapters. You may not agree with this at all, but at least someone is thinking positive!

ABATE was founded on the power of positive thinking! Now I ask ya, who would be dumb enough to go through everything ABATE has had to if they never thought they'd ever accomplish anything! The problems the National situation caused stems from an awful lot of negative attitudes. And that, good people, can destroy all of us. We all have had our share of problems, and we all have had so much on our backs at one time it weighted us down. But we all hung-in-there, licked the problems, and got where we are today. No one can take what we have away against our will. But, no one wants too, except for the D.O.T. that is. So how about everyone calming down, and taking on some good healthy positive attitudes!

It's time for the ABATE Chapters to be united again. Don't allow ourselves to be torn apart from each other, after all, we're all we've got! There is nothing so horrible between us that means we must divide our brothers and sisters. There are no issues so great that can't be worked out together. Let's pull ourselves together and not allow this situation to go on any longer, or grow any worse.

There's at least a hundred different ways to resolve the two National ABATE Offices situation, and I've tried to give ya one example. Like I said, you may not agree with it, but instead of just sitting there condemning and tearing apart everything being said, put your brains to work on ways you feel it can work! Stop this fighting over misunderstandings, and don't throw away something just because you didn't come up with the idea!

What has been created is not bad. The method we used to create it caused all the problems. Methods and misunderstandings never kept us apart before, so why start allowing them to come between us now? Look around and see how many folks are out there fighting for all our rights. One thing for sure, there's not enough! Maybe it's true some of our people need a little re-directing in their efforts, but, by George, they're still OUR PEOPLE! Keith Ball is my ABATE Brother. Fuzzy Davy is my ABATE Brother. If I must turn my back on one of my good ABATE Brothers, then I might as well hang it up now 'cause I can't do that!

Come on ABATE Brothers and Sisters, HELP! There are no rights or wrongs in this, except to be divided against ourselves! Let's start 1978 standing together as we have all the ABATE Years. Let's put all differences aside to start this ABATE year by being a true brotherhood united for all our rights. I hope all of you will join me in my feelings that there's nothing so great that can divide our brotherhood of ABATE. Let's bring all of us together at Daytona with Fuzzy and Keith, and work together on this!

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MY ABATE BROTHERS AND SISTERS! (And here's hoping we are all still ABATE brothers and sisters!)

Riding Free, Living Free, But Standing United!

*Wanda*

Wanda L. Hummel  
ABATE of Indiana

# ABATE

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## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

BOX 38094

Washington, D.C. 20020

(202) 292-2324

JANUARY 1978

ABATE of Washington has come up with a unique means for raising funds and improving P.R.. They are sponsoring a ride-a-thon, but the uniqueness is that they will be riding horses, not bikes. Half the proceeds go to a favorite local charity and half goes to fight anti-bike laws.

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ABATE of Michigan is sponsoring a motorcycle swap meet at the Washington Armory in Lansing Michigan - Jan. 22, 1978 from noon to 6 p.m.. Write ABATE of Michigan, P.O. Box 1032, Dearborn, Michigan or call (517) 321-0097 or (517) 484-1476.

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The National ABATE co-ordinators meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 11, 1978 near Daytona Beach, Florida. Exact location will be announced in the next letter from this office.

Due to the numerous very important subjects that must be discussed and voted on, you are requested to prepare your presentation in writing. This meeting will be run according to Roberts Rules of order so please familiarize yourself with those rules. All co-ordinators please notify this office if you will be attending the meeting. Also inform us of the subjects you wish to be discussed. A list of the subjects will be included in the next letter.

If you wish to camp with ABATE members we have reserved campsites at New Smyrna Beach KOA. You must send us the name and address of each person wanting to camp. Include a check for \$18.00 to cover the week of March 5 thru 12 for each person. Send it to this office not the KOA. Make checks payable to ABATE.

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Due to the onslaught of Federal and State regulations threatening the existence of motorcycling it is vitally important that ABATE unite more closely than ever.

Therefore, attendance at the Daytona meetings should be the number one priority for all ABATE chapters.

If Daytona week will conflict with any of your legislative activities we urge you to send at least one representative from your state chapter so that the interests of your members will be reflected in ABATE policy.

To assist co-ordinators and officers at ABATE, workshops are being planned for Daytona week to cover subjects such as... "How To Better Organize Your State Organization."-"Procedures For Incorporating Your ABATE Chapter" - "How To Promote Driver Education Programs In Your State" and other subjects of importance. Your ideas for workshop subjects are encouraged so send them as soon as possible so that we can schedule all meetings properly.

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Co-operative efforts between the American Motorcyclists Association (AMA) and ABATE are very encouraging. ABATE of Georgia works with the AMA on driver education bills in Georgia and ABATE of Indiana is following the same course of action. Many AMA executives and members are joining ABATE and by the same token ABATE members are joining the AMA. The AMA members joining ABATE



include Gary Winn, Ken Reid and Steve Fordyce. Fuzzy Davy, Warren Bennett and other ABATE members have recently joined the AMA. Reportedly, the AMA will be advertising ABATE in its publications and hopefully ABATE chapters will reciprocate by running ads for the AMA. Together these two organizations represent the total cross section of the country's motorcyclists and working together on legislative matters will be the voice of the country's motorcyclists.

Each State ABATE organization will be receiving periodic questionnaires from National Headquarters in Washington, D.C.. These questionnaires will deal with all subjects of importance to ABATE and must be taken seriously if we are to improve communications between all ABATE offices.

For your convenience a return envelope is included with the questionnaire. Please take a few minutes to fill out the form, including any comments you wish to make.

The results of the questionnaire will be tabulated and published in a forthcoming National Newsletter.

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The New York legislature is seriously considering a change in the State's no-fault insurance requirement, to include motorcycles.

Due to the fact that insurance premiums are set according to the percentage of cost to the insurance company by the policy holder's accidents, insurance premiums for motorcycles are nearly guaranteed to increase 70%. This figure reflects the percent of accident responsibility of the autoist involved in motorcycle accidents.

Repeal of the helmet law will become unnecessary because the number of people able to afford motorcycle insurance will be minimal. The Insurance industry's efforts to ban motorcycles through legislation is in clear evidence here.

Every ABATE chapter should respond by writing to Assemblyman Vincent Nicolosi, Chairman, Assembly Insurance Comm., Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248.

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A meeting of the Daytona Beach Police and ABATE is being set up to improve relations between the police and the bikers attending the Daytona Beach Motorcycle activities in March.

Hopefully this meeting will clear up some of the misunderstanding between authorities and the bikers.

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If there is any doubt in your mind that bigotry isn't one of the reasons non-motorcyclists support helmet laws, this letter from the outgoing President of the American Association of Automotive Medicine should convince you. You'll remember the AAAM is the group that advocates a total ban of motorcycles out of one side of their mouths, then promptly denies the statement. The AAAM receives Federal grants from the DCT for motorcycle studies.

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In this last message, let me say "thanks" to all our members and staff for making this a memorable year for me. Every year, AAAM grows. The budget, membership, our annual conferences, etc. The Proceedings have become a standard reference in many safety libraries. This is due to the enthusiasm of the membership.

I have had a chance to air some of my pet subjects in these President's Messages, and in this, my last, I would like to make a few statements about motorcycles. This will probably put me on the list of "bad guys" for those of who are most affected by my comments. My intent is however, to interest enough people who are willing to participate to concentrate on the real causes of motorcycle injuries and work out counter measures.

Motorcycles are by far our most fatal and injurious form of transportation. In Michigan, motorcyclists have a fatality rate 11 times that of motorists. It is both a form of recreation and transportation, which makes the treatment of the problem much more difficult. Perhaps some of our psychologists and psychiatrists can give us a profile on some of the motorcycle enthusiasts. One thing I believe, is that a motorcyclist is basically a risk-taker, who has an unconscious desire to be injured or killed. It is something like the cartoon I saw with a German-helmeted biker on a chopper who is looking up at a star and, sees a fairy who says, "You have three death wishes." A motorcycle is less forgiving in collisions or loss-of-control situations. Yet, people continue to argue that they shouldn't be compelled to wear helmets because it violates their constitutional right of choice. I heard one statement that perhaps we ought to repeal the helmet laws because the bikers aren't worth saving.

All of us use poor judgement from time to time. When you use poor judgement on a motorcycle, the results are often fatal. We must have seen some crazy examples of motorcycle risk taking. For instance, during a recent seven-inch, slushy snowstorm, I saw a two-wheeled motorcycle traveling at about 55 mph on the Interstate. On another winter occasion, I came upon a bicyclist lying prone on the bike seat and traveling at approximately 50 mph, 20 feet behind a tractor-trailer--he was apparently "drafting" the truck to use it as a wind breaker. He nearly fell off on several occasions before they outdistanced me. I work with a fellow who drove a motorcycle in the field near his home and was injured when he ran his bike into an excavated basement. Sure, these don't represent every motorcyclist, but I bet every motorcyclist has one story to tell you about the time he nearly "had it" or the time he was injured. Racing has provided information to manufacturers and operators in all sorts of sports, from auto racing to boat racing. Did you know that in motorcycle racing, the drivers have their blood typed and allergies painted on the rear of their helmets? I don't know why they chose the helmet, except maybe it is the only piece of their equipment that they wear which is not apt to be destroyed in a crash. Motorcycle racing in many ways is similar to auto racing. It is generally safe, because of the controls during the race on the machines, the environment, and the drivers themselves. As much as we would like to have the same controls on the public highways, we do not. A motorcycle can be operated for recreation off the highway and safety equipment is not required--nor is a driver's license. Injuries and fatalities in trail riding are also part of the total injury picture which is tabulated each year. The responsibility for improving the picture in motorcycling must come with the recognition by the motorcycle industry of hazards which exist to the cycle operator and the public that allows them to operate. We have tried within AAAM to bring representatives from these areas together to find solutions. Although some factions of the motorcycle interests have shown a willingness to participate, some of them have not and prefer to sit back and name "bad guys" and print obituaries of their rapidly turning-over (or is it, turning-under) memberships.

Sometimes, people have drawn comparisons between two-wheeled, non-powered bikes, and motorcycles, however, there are a couple of inconsistencies. One is that a non-powered, two-wheeler can not attain the speeds in which a single vehicle accident is often fatal. Also, bicycles generally are not operated by people legally able to drink. If you have any comments and/or data on motorcycles, send them to the QUARTERLY for publication, or John P. O'Hara, 13-376 Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. 20515

This message was written before the Vancouver meeting was held. I don't know if any action or projects were begun at that time to effectively treat the motorcycle disease in this country, In the 1978 meeting with the IAAM we may be able to compare the U.S. and European motorcycle statistics and perhaps gain some insight into differences and commonalities of the foreign experience. Abstracts are due now so, if you are either with me or against me, lets get busy and write.

Will Nelson

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