

A.B.A.T.E of Oregon's

MOTORCYCLE

AWARENESS

PROGRAM

by Nic Oliver
Education Director

HISTORY & PURPOSE

In July of 1992, at the Biannual BikePAC Conference, Nic Oliver, the BikePAC Education Committee Chairman and the A.B.A.T.E. Education Director, Mel Yeager, put their talents and drive towards developing a program that would benefit all motorcyclists in the state of Oregon. Recognizing that Education and not legislation is a much better tool for saving lives on the Oregon highways, they started with only an idea and proceeded to develop a way to make their idea a reality. Thus were the beginnings of the ABATE of Oregon, Motorcycle Awareness Program.

Saving lives being the emphasis and education the tool, a presentation was needed that would accomplish those goals. Also needed was a target group that could be reached easily and that would start developing the necessary safety techniques early. It was then decided that the target group would be the beginner driver, the Driver's Education classes in the high schools. This is where the new driver learns the best lessons in safe driving and, as we all know, skills learned early have a better chance at lasting a lifetime when they are learned from the beginning rather than trying to change a "bad habit" developed over time.

This program's focus is not one of promoting motorcycle riding but one of assisting the Driver's Education instructors in teaching the student drivers the importance of safety through awareness. In the Motorcycle Awareness Program we strive to make the student aware of motorcycles on the highways and to get them to understand the importance of sharing the road with them. The program is 45 minutes in length and is offered without charge to any group that wants it. The funding for the program comes directly from ABATE of Oregon, Inc.

The Motorcycle Awareness Program consists of two instructors going to the site of the class and putting on a presentation in which the issues of awareness and safety are discussed. The different topics regarding motorcycle riding are presented and at no time is motorcycle riding promoted nor are legal issues debated.

This presentation is not a personal agenda meeting, with the exception that making the road a safer place for motorcycleists, cars and other vehicles is a personal issue with all persons who use the roads in Oregon and around the country. The aspect of teaching a person how to ride is another area in which the instructors of the Motorcycle Awareness Program do not get involved. Anyone who expresses an interest in learning to ride a motorcycle is referred to the Team Oregon training program, offered by the State of Oregon, for the best in beginner riding lessons.

The M.A.P. (Motorcycle Awareness Program) instructors discuss the safety gear used by motorcycleists and the purpose of this safety equipment. This discussion includes helmets, jackets, gloves, eye protection and more. A video tape developed and produced by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation called "*Cars, Motorcycles & A Common Road*" is also utilized. This video is set in a format that is easily understood and followed by all who watch it. Although the video is geared for the younger audience it is an excellent tool for all age groups.

The M.A.P. Instructors also present a brief history of motorcycle use in the general populace, military and other areas of our everyday lives. The Instructors try to show that all kinds of people from all walks of life ride motorcycles, some every day and some only for recreation.

There is also a practical demonstration performed that shows in actual experience, the problems presented by not actively looking for motorcycles on the roadways. This demonstration consists of one of the instructors hiding their motorcycle behind a car and the students try to find it by standing in one spot and looking.

The next part is when the instructor rides their motorcycle past the group of students at low speeds, making two passes, and the group trying to guess the speed of the motorcycle. These practical demonstrations give a "hands on" approach on the deceptiveness in their size, their speed and how easily motorcycles can be hidden.

The instructors also discuss some local accidents involving motorcycles and automobiles. In a classroom discussion the accidents are analyzed and the students and the instructor try to find a better way of avoiding the accident.

In all things, safety is stressed as the most important issue. It is an important aspect in every thing that we do each and every day of our lives. When safety issues are stressed early in the learning process the proper habits are formed and become as natural as breathing and restrictions on behavior become redundant. No one wants to be responsible for needlessly hurting or killing another person. The responsibility of a person utilizing the roadways is tremendous and must be recognized as such.

Sharing the road and being aware are safety issues that cannot be ignored. It is ABATE of Oregon's pleasure to be able to be a part in making the road a safer place for motorcyclists and other motorists in Oregon. Since its inception, the Motorcycle Awareness Program has been introduced in 19 states and many of them use it regularly, as we do here in Oregon.

August 31, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

The Governors' Motorcycle Safety Advisory Committee is charged with the responsibility to advise the Governor and the Oregon Traffic Safety Committee regarding motorcycle safety. Additionally, the Committee serves to promote and inform the public about motorcycle safety.

The members of the Committee have viewed a presentation of the Motorcycle Awareness Program conducted by BikePac of Oregon and ABATE of Oregon. This presentation provides a clear and down to earth method of informing students about motorcycle awareness from an auto driver's perspective. We also believe that the presentation goes a long way in familiarizing students with safety equipment and the special hazards motorcyclists face.

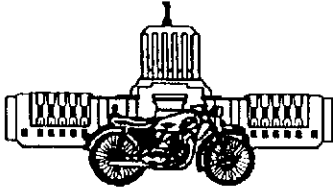
It is the Committee's opinion that the Motorcycle Awareness Program is a valuable tool, and the Governor's Motorcycle Safety Advisory Committee recommends this presentation to all instructors and administrators of driver education.

Sincerely,



Wayne Schumacher
Chair





BikePAC of Oregon

P.O. Box 5612 • Salem, OR 97304

Butch Harbaugh
Legislative Director

Steve Benson • 399-7514
Secretary/Treasurer

October 3, 1994

To Whom It May Concern,

The Executive Board of BikePAC of Oregon hereby endorses and supports the ABATE of Oregon Motorcycle Awareness Program in its goals and activities.

Automobile drivers are all too frequently involved in traffic mishaps and tragedies when they encounter situations for which they are unprepared. The Motorcycle Awareness Program seeks to prepare new drivers to avoid the devastating results of collisions that can happen when a driver "doesn't see" a motorcycle.

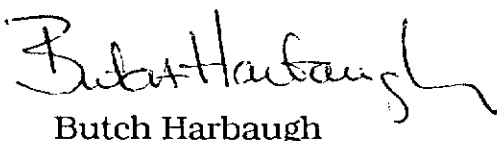
We, as motorcyclists, are familiar with the common scenarios; a car turns left in front of a motorcycle; a pickup pulls out to pass another car, and meets a bike head-on. The stories seem endlessly similar, and present overwhelming consequences for both rider and driver.

Why do car drivers seem to find motorcyclists invisible? We riders think that they don't SEE us because they don't LOOK for us. They are looking for bigger things, and the smaller profile of a motorcyclist, a bicyclist, or even a pedestrian or small child, are not what they expect to see in their path of travel.

The ABATE Motorcycle Awareness Program works to help young drivers learn to LOOK for dangerous situations. When we are prepared for "surprises," we are no longer surprised, and can react more appropriately to avoid an expensive, painful, or deadly collision with another human being.

If you are in a position to help bring this program before a high school class or civic group, please assist Motorcycle Awareness Program representatives in any way you can. The benefits are positive for us all.

Sincerely,


Butch Harbaugh


Steve Benson