

Bruce on Bikers' Rights

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WHAT MOTORCYCLISTS NEED IS A UNIFYING ISSUE

Like Vanquishing Those Who Violate Our Right-Of-Way!

*** Dedicated to our fallen brother Steven New and his widow Kerry Anne ***



Why was Scotland the ultimate loser of the Anglo-Scottish wars? Because, as Scottish noble Robert the Bruce admitted in Braveheart, "...from top to bottom this country has no sense of itself. Its nobles share allegiance with England. Its clans war with each other." Much the same could be said about the American Bikers' Rights Movement: Many motorcyclists do not consider themselves "bikers" ... most of them own cages as well as motorcycles ... and our propensity for infighting has long been pervasive:

<http://tinyurl.com/y8abcu>

Why did America's Native Indians lose their lands to the Europeans? Ask a dozen experts and you'll get a dozen variations, but the essential answer is that they failed to recognize the expansion of Western Civilization as a threat to the very survival of their culture, until they were on the brink of extinction, and consequently waited too late to effectively *unify the tribes* and confront the common foe. Once again, much the same could be said about the American Bikers' Rights Movement: We focus so much on the often artificial distinctions between our "tribes"...

<http://tinyurl.com/2cm6c5>

...that we distract ourselves from the very real threats to our freedom of the road, safety on the streets, and survival as a culture. And how much is that hurting us? In an interview published on page 40 of the November 2008 issue of American Motorcyclist, AMA Board Member Erik Buell was asked what he considered to be the biggest challenge facing motorcycling. He replied with "*Short-sighted infantilism. Too many motorcyclists protecting their turf at the expense of the identity of motorcycling in general.*"

What motorcyclists need is a unifying issue: One with universal applicability and appeal ... one that all riders will understand and appreciate ...one that will inspire us to rise above our petty differences ... one that can unite us for the common good.

That issue will NOT be motorcycle safety funds: For MROs where A.B.A.T.E. stands for "American Bikers Aiming Towards Education", negotiations that bring in the state safety bucks are deemed "good for the cause". For those who remember A.B.A.T.E. originally stood for "A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments", those compromises can be seen as a sellout.

That issue will NOT be helmets or helmet laws: There are those that differentiate between the *utility of helmets* and the *futility of helmet laws*, and those that cannot:

<http://tinyurl.com/2d57zg>

There are some that see only the former ... some that care only about the latter ... and many—in no small part due to MRO failures to broaden their base by being more inclusive—that could care less either way.

That issue will NOT be cell phone bans or restrictions while driving: Some will argue this is not a motorcycling issue, despite compelling anecdotal evidence to the contrary:

<http://tinyurl.com/23spaz>

More are sold on “The Great Hands-Free Hoax”:

<http://tinyurl.com/yog8ke>

And most—bikers and cagers alike—are not willing to do the one thing that will make any real difference, i.e., *stop talking on their phones while driving (or riding)*.

That issue MIGHT be vanquishing those who violate our right-of-way: In an open letter to Nicole Nason, I used NHTSA’s own numbers to prove that American automobile drivers were responsible for either causing or contributing to the deaths of at least 58.87% of all bikers killed in two-vehicle crashes in 2005 (the latest data available):

<http://tinyurl.com/849p9p>

Let me repeat that for emphasis: **AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE DRIVERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR EITHER CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEATHS OF AT LEAST 58.87% OF ALL BIKERS KILLED IN TWO-VEHICLE CRASHES.**

Care-less, distracted, impaired and negligent cagers draw no distinctions among our tribes: Kromaposa, Towaposa, Popawili, Eldiwini or Motohican ... we are all equally likely to be the **right-of-way violation** casualty of a cellphone-distracted soccer mom ... who can barely see over the steering wheel of her oversized gas-guzzling SUV ... weaving across six lanes of traffic as she catches up on her favorite soaps with sister Sally and screams at the kids in the back. *This* is an issue that should concern even the most oblivious ATGATTer...

<http://tinyurl.com/92y5dz>

...or the least engaged sportbikers:

<http://tinyurl.com/7st3tg>

It is time for American motorcyclists to make a united stand to vanquish those who maim and kill us by violating our right-of-way. It is time we look beyond what the American Motorcyclist Association calls “Justice for All”:

<http://tinyurl.com/8vkapz>

It is time we recognize that behind statistics like “*ROWVs are responsible for 58.87% of all bikers killed in two-vehicle crashes*” there are people: the guilty cagers at fault for the violation,

and the innocent bikers (along with their family, friends and loved ones) they injure and kill. It is time we demand that our MROs see to it that (a) for the guilty, the punishment fits the crime, and (b) for the innocent, all reasonable aid and assistance is provided ... even if it means cancelling a non-biker benefit ... or ten. And should our MROs fail to respond, we must consider changes in leadership, changes in affiliation, or such independent action as is necessary to assure not only that justice is served in the instant case, but also that a **public example** is made to deter and discourage future violations.

Non-violent civil disobedience (“NVCD”) may be a consideration in some cases, but I am *not* suggesting that bikers break the laws. Instead, I am recommending we give cagers memorable reasons to comply with them...

<http://tinyurl.com/6nmvcg>

Speaking strictly for myself and no other individuals or organizations,

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