

CENTRE STAND

SEPTEMBER 1991



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION OF S.A. INCORPORATED
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MOTORCYCLE RIDERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

Dep. Recreation & Sport
No.1 Sturt Street Adelaide 5000

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4B's AT MALLALA**

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- JUNE - SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER**

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See Calendar for Dates**

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MEETINGS: Last Thursday in Month, Tiger Hotel, Tantanoola, 7:30pm**

- EDITORIAL -

By the time you read this there will probably only be a few days before the Annual general meeting of the Association. Looking back over the issues of Centrestand for 1991 I guess that we almost spent as much time talking about the lack of member support for the nuts and bolts of the Association as we did about the Lights On issue.

I mention it again because the problem may be coming to head at the AGM. There is no doubt that the MRA SA is trying to do more for its members than it has in previous years. An office, a bigger and better Toy Run, a radio show to come, more active representation, a continued quality magazine to name a few services. This kind of service can't continue indefinitely using the time and resources of just a dozen people.

We need, more than ever before, some of you to volunteer. It takes less time than you probably imagine and no training is needed - just the will to do well. Give Justin a ring if you need more information.

Ride Safe
Harald



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

To start off, I am bitterly disappointed with the apathy our membership seems to have.

Last years A.G.M. attracted only 40 odd members to elect the new Committee and because of the lack of interest from our membership to get involved, the same dedicated few ended up taking on more than one position and stretching themselves to the limit.

No association can run like this, so if you want the MRA to continue, we need your help.

Don't just sit on your butts and think someone else will do it because they can't, so get to the A.G.M. and nominate for a position. There are plenty to go around.

Next bitch — the Office. There have been some complaints concerning the hours the office is open.

The same thing applies here. The Office is run voluntarily by myself, Paul Morgan and Steve Fry — when we have the time. For the first two months I was at the office at least six hours a day, five days per week. But we do have other things to do as well. These days we can only get in there infrequently. We are trying to make it work but it is getting impossible without (again) help.

Please, if you can spare a couple of hours per week on a regular basis, please phone myself or Paul Morgan. It's not a difficult job, just a matter of answering the phone, collecting the mail and dealing with membership enquiries and stock sales.

If we don't get some help soon we won't have an office and then you'll really have something to bitch about.

Now onto a more pleasant subject — the Toy Run. The Toy Run Committee has been working its collective butt off to give SA the best Toy Run that has ever been seen. This year participant's children will be catered for with face painting, a play castle, free rides and the odd Loony Toons character as well as Father Christmas.

We have also arranged to help you when choosing a toy with 10% off toys purchased at WASHINGTON'S TOY TOWN, Anzac Highway, on production of your membership card.

Saturday 16th November will be prelude to the Toy Run with a Mini Run, meeting at the Aquatic Centre at North Adelaide at 11:00am and travelling to Westfields Shoppingtown Arndale to deliver Santa. A BBQ lunch in the carpark will be provided by Westfields but BYO drinks. If you would like to participate on the day please phone me before November 9 so that we can determine approximate numbers for catering purposes.

Heres looking forward to seeing lots of new faces and a few old ones at future meetings.

Ride Safe
Justin Kilgariff

'GOANNA' by KNEECAP

*Has Daryl been caught for speeding again? I believe he had his photo taken while he was driving the car. No wonder the wife won't buy him another bike!! How many points have you got now Daryl? Not many I believe!!

I would check out the new steed at the next meeting Knees - Editor.

*Tom's dirt bike has been to the Doctor's again!! Is he thinking of claiming the bike through Mediacar?

2 — MRA SEPTEMBER '91

*Has Peter Mount sold his "Lights On Protest" speech to the ABC so that they can make a four part Mini-series? I think he should sack his speech writer!!

*Who were the people who pushed for the MRA to open an office in the city? How true is it that the same people haven't put in a days work helping out? Shame, Shame, Shame!!!

*Has Tom put in for two rally badges since he went to the "Horse and Cart Rally" twice? Once Friday night to help set up and once Sunday morning (6.30am) to help clean up.

*Mike Engel has the big Kwacka back (looks good) (goes like the clappers). The first day out Adelaide has the coldest morning for five years and the back brake locks on in peak hour traffic. Then a BMW owner gets a call for help.

*Congratulations to Milo and Georgina for the birth of Calum. Both parents and child are doing fine, especially after Milo sobered up.

*Gary of 4B's fame, got the Commodore back after two months in the panel beaters and \$2,000 later. The car was back on the road for two weeks then whammo back in the shop with \$3,000 damage thanks to some mongrel running a red light! I keep telling everyone that cars are dangerous.

Who didn't see whom? - Editor.

*At the Swagman rally, who from the Suzuki Club asked a young lady to get out of his tent? Admittedly it was 2am and the lady in question was a bit under the weather. Also she didn't even belong to that tent. That's one you miss out on!!

*How fast is Big Belly's Kwacka??? How thirsty is Big Belly's Kwacka??? Is it as thirsty as Tom's dirt bike???

*How much did Tom pay Bruce to write the nomination printed in the last issue of Centrestand for his Life Membership? Must have cost bloody heaps!!!

*I still have not received any photos for this column. Doesn't anyone own a camera??? Perhaps I could contact the SA Police for Daryl's speeding photo!!

*I know there is an "Uncle Pervy"!!! Will there be an "Aunty Pervy" (Mrs) soon?

*Which radio personality will be Santa at this years Toy Run — held on Sunday 8th December. Now that's a date to put in the Diary.

*What WOULD HAVE been Tom's excuse for speeding on the "Border Run?" I believe it would have been — "Sorry officer, but as I need glasses for reading only, I couldn't read the speedo clearly!" I might try that one myself!!

*P.S. Vanessa has finally bought Daryl another bike on the condition that he doesn't get caught speeding again. Perhaps that is why the bike is 750cc, a twin to Uncle Pervies Kwacka.



Aussie Photos

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MRA SA NOTES

*Don't forget the QUIZ NIGHT on the 4th October. There is a fund raiser for the MRA so bring your silver. There will be all the usual quiz night games and maybe a few that we just made up. Prizes have been donated by local bike shops and other Adelaide businesses and it looks to be shaping up to be a great night. Numbers will be limited so register your team early.

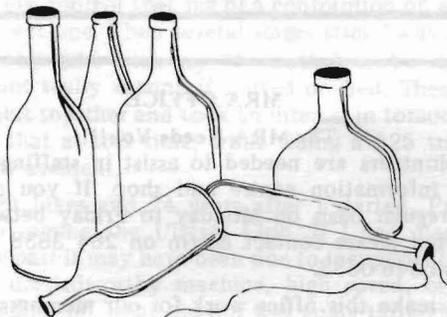
*The TOY RUN will be held on Sunday September 8. As well as the run and toys we will be organising free rides for the kids, BBQ, Greg Baker and Chris Finnen laying down some blues and more. As this is all taking a lot of organisation the Toy Run Committee is going to need some help on the day. If you can spare a few hours to help put up tents, staff the BBQ tent or the coke booth then please contact Mike Engel on 264 6225

*The Mini Run 16th November. See the President's Report for details.

*The MRA 4BS regularly go out to Mallalla for the races to fund raise and advertise the MRA and the 4BS. Help is always needed to staff the stall and to mantle and dismantle the tent. If you are interested in helping ring the 4BS on (08) 264 9810.

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worth
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IT'S LIFE GIVING.**

COMMUNING

OR

COMMUTING?

"Are you able to give me a reason Sir, why you were travelling over the speed limit?" asked the officer politely. "No, I can't." I answered tersely, wishing I was somewhere else. I felt cheated, this wasn't the way it was supposed to happen. There I was, on a regular day, no different to any other, on my way to work. The sun was shining on a beautiful day. The traffic was light, letting me through without a hassle and the motor was humming. The kind of day where you would rather be on the open road again nowhere in particular but instead have decided to be grateful for small mercies and enjoy those that come your way. And now this!

"You were doing 73 kph in a 60 zone". the officer continued, still officially polite. "Would you like to inspect the radar unit to verify the speed?" "Yes I would", I replied still terse but with feeling coming back to my senses as I realised that no one else could be booked until I had verified the evidence of my crime. The walk to the radar unit gave me time to think. Why was I upset? Certainly the \$135 fine had loused up my day. I was only one minute away from work and had never in two years seen a unit on that road. The peaceful co-existence with the universe of the moment past had been replaced with something less desirable, but I think that's what was worst, the realisation that I had become part of a situation that was out of my control and would have been in my control if I had been paying more attention to my immediate surroundings rather than the Universe.

This led me to think about accidents and more specifically, near misses, those more euphemistically termed "emergency situations". These are the ones which you forget about fairly quickly because they are of little consequence. No damage done and occasionally worth some swearing or a comment to your mates later. These situations are, however more important than we realise because they are probably, in the main, of our own doing.

Before you protest too much, consider this — the next time you are in a situation where you have to brake quickly, take evasive action or do something which might interrupt the smooth flow of your trip to wherever you might be going, analyse the situation. Ask yourself a few questions like: Did I see that coming early enough? If I had been travelling at the speed limit would that situation have arisen? Honestly, was I really concentrating back there? If the answers are no, then through omission you have actively contributed to an emergency situation which your good fortune and your skills have prevented from turning into something worse and you then bloody well deserve to be nabbed for speeding.

This is what defensive riding is all about, using your skills to keep out of trouble. And I in future will do my communing with the Universe from a stationary position and concentrate on my commuting.

Harald Lindemann



MEDIA RELEASE

FROM John Panizza, Acting Shadow Minister for Land Transport

MOTORCYCLISTS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

The Federal Minister for Land Transport has consistently ignored pleas from motorcycle organisations to be consulted on important motorcycle safety issues, Acting Opposition spokesman on Land Transport, Senator John Panizza, said today.

The hot issues for motorcycle riders recently has been compulsory "lights on" riding. The Minister, without any real evidence to prove its worth, has decided to introduce a design rule from March 1992 that will mean that new bikes will not have a light switch — the light will come on when the bike is started.

The Minister promised consultation with motorcycle organisations on issues of road safety for motorcycles yet has decided to start an advertising campaign to try to sell his new rule, without talking to motorcycle groups or even letting them see the layout of the campaign.

Understandably, the motorcycle organisations are upset about this, for they believe that having a light on in some circumstances is downright dangerous — it may even be fatal.

The ad campaign will be aimed primarily at young riders, the group most at risk.

Rider associations are angry and would like to know whether the funding for this ad campaign comes from the \$250,000 package that the Minister put up for motorcycle safety? Details of the way the money was to be prioritised and spent were supposed to be decided in consultation with motorcycle representatives.

It seems that this is yet another case of this Government's "consensus" approach to policy making. The only "consensus" that is taken into account is that which the Government wants — not any true consultation processes and consensus decisions.

GENERAL MEETING

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Motorcycle Riders Association of SA Inc. is to be held on Monday 23rd September 1991, at 7:30pm at the Peppertree Restaurant in the North Adelaide Hotel Tynte Street, North Adelaide. All financial members are requested to attend. Supper is provided.

Speaker Michael Sykes on the legal aspects of Motorcycle Safety. Nominations for all Committee positions will be accepted at any General Meeting prior to this date.

Why not come along and join us. All donations gratefully received. The last run saw around twenty people turn up.

BE THERE!!!

Positions Open:

President	Vice President
Secretary	Minutes Secretary
Treasurer	Membership Officer
Stock Control Officer	Register Liason Representative
Publicity Representative	Road Safety Representative
Third Party Rep.	

LIGHTS-ON!!



OUR CHOICE NOT YOUR LAW!

BLOOD RUN

We are meeting at K-Mart Kurrulta Park car park to ride to Red Cross House, Pirie Street, to donate blood.

Why not come along and join us. All donations gratefully received. The last run saw around thirty people turn up.

DATE: Saturday 26th October 1991.

TIME: Meet at 8:30am

MRA OFFICE

The MRA Needs You!!!

Volunteers are needed to assist in staffing the new MRA information centre and shop. If you can assist on a regular basis on Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm please contact Justin on 264 3638 or phone Paul on 346 0633.

To make this office work for our members we need your assistance.

The office is located in the city at No. 1 Sturt Street in the Department of Recreation and Sport on the first floor. Parking is available.

BJ's CORNER

DANCING ON THE EDGE

Do you ever feel like every man and his dog is lined up waiting for their turn to shaft you? Started when I tried to find Bob Browns reply to my last letter about "Lights", (what? Haven't you written to our Minister for transport yet?? Bung a letter off today, they count each letter as representing 10 or 100 pissed off voters, and we all know that politicians hate voters getting pissed off!!) He wrote me such a nice letter saying it would never happen that I thought I'd quote it back at him now it has, but his letter is lost in my filing system.

Then I sat down to read the Sunday Mail, the date was April 14 and in the Letters to the Editor was a burst from some bloke from Meadows about Bike Accidents. It caught my eye both 'cause it was about Bikes, and because it was from Meadows. I grew up in Meadows back when it was a country town, but enough maudlin reminiscing, the gist of this letter was that if there are too many Bike accidents it is probably because of inexperienced riders on Pocket Rockets, with which I agree, (If someone is learning to ride a horse you don't put them on a Melbourne Cup Winner, you give them an old nag.) So what did the Paper do?? They stuck a picture of a result of a bike bike that came off second best with something solid, above the letter, and just in case you can't tell the difference between a big bike and a little one they included a caption to the effect of "Here's a big large capacity machine wot killed someone". They might as well have said "This arsehole doesn't know what he's talking about, we should ban all bikes".

Then, while I'm still venting steam over this, some soapy (I think it was "A Country Practice") features motor cyclists as anti social dropouts trying to convert the country's youth to our hedonistic ways. Yeh! Yeh!, I know they wouldn't know how many wheels there are on a Bike let alone what motorcycling is about, but it still pisses me off because I know that some mothers of both sexes think what they see on TV is real life, and their vote is worth as much as yours.

Then on comes the News, and some poor sod ain't with us no more all because he didn't have enough wheels under him.

Why do motorcyclists die on the road? for that matter, what is a motorcyclist? There are many different sorts of motorcyclists, I know because I've been a few different sorts in my life. I was once a learner on a scooter, I was a menace because I could barely control that pig of a contraption on a dry road, let alone a wet one. Then several stages later I was a wild bastard on a 650 BSA with my life stuffed up by the beurocrats and not really caring if I lived or died. Then I started to get my shit together and took an interest in tomorrow. Funny isn't it that at this time, while riding a 125 trail bike, I had my only accident.

Now, eight bikes and 24 years after I started, I'm looking forward to joining the Ulysses Club. If I had died at some stage in my past it may have been due to inexperience, suicidal behaviour, unroadworthy machine, high speed, or intoxication, depending on what phase I was going through, but if it happens tomorrow it will be due to a moments inattention or sand in the eyes from some damn sand truck.

What I'm trying to say is that if I am different people at different times in my life, with different attitudes and riding styles, how can they lump all motorcyclist road deaths toget-

her and blame Bikes. To make any sense out of the raw data of motorcycle fatalities you need to know age of rider, type of machine, time of day, road conditions, other vehicles, etc. You can't say that I, pushing 40 on my street cruiser, am the same beast as a sixteen year old on a quarter litre scream machine.

There are probably as many reasons for riding Bikes as there are bike riders, I live for the freedom of two wheels, if I have to use the car I feel imprisoned, deprived of my mobility and sense. So strong is my preference for the exhilaration and freedom of two wheels that I ride in all weather. Its all part of the Yin Yang thing, to appreciate light there must be dark, to know warmth you must know cold. To really live life you must be aware of death. The problem with many people is that they don't really believe that they will one day die so they don't bother to live. I see death every day, it is in the bitumen below me, it is in every Stobie Pole I pass, its in every car I see. Knowing death so well I live each day to the full.

Now I don't want to be quoted as saying that Bikes are suicide machines, I am merely saying that on a bike you are really close to nature, you can see all things clearly. Not just the traffic and what's coming up ahead, but all life looks clearer from on two wheels, hanging your face in the wind is a great way to put things in perspective. Of course if you wear a full face helmet then you are getting closer to the car syndrome. A car driver is like an ostrich, if you hide your head then no one will see you, or in the case of a car its just a four wheel bike wrapped in tin foil. Then, because you are so thoroughly protected by those couple of millimetres of tin plate you can safely dump all manner of lethal projectiles on the back shelf so that when you do stop suddenly they all hurtle forward at head mashing speed. Any gain in safety due to design is negated by the actions of the occupants.

Car drivers are sheltered from the harsh realities of life, cold, wet, other cars?? They cannot see the hard, hard road just inches below them, they cannot feel the wind so they don't really appreciate their speed. Its like people walking a narrow ledge, some prefer to edge along the cliff, eyes closed, not daring to look, facing inward all the time, if they can't see the edge they feel safer. Others walk free, close to the edge to look down at the world. Perhaps there is a danger of the edge crumbling, but man, look at the view.

I believe that bikes attract the full living types, and that living life to the full involves proximity to death. It is inevitable that occasionally someone crosses the line. If there were no Bikes I bet we'd find some other way to dance on the edge.

B J Robertson

Country Life

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CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

2ND	Committee Meeting
5TH	4B's Meeting
9TH	General Meeting
19TH	4B's Meeting
21ST-22ND	Bush Pig Rally M.N. Register
22ND	Phoenix Road Race Mallala
23RD	AGM Main Branch
26TH	M.N. Register Meeting AGM
26TH	S.E. Register Meeting AGM
28TH-29TH	World's End Rally, Quorn

OCTOBER

3RD	4B's AGM
7TH	General Meeting
13TH	Road Race, Mount Gambier
14TH	Committee Meeting
17TH	4B's Meeting
21ST	General Meeting
24TH	M.N. Register Meeting
26TH	Blood Run Main Branch
31ST	4B's Meeting
31ST	S.E. Register Meeting

NOVEMBER

4TH	General Meeting
10TH	Phoenix Road Race Mallala
11TH	General Meeting
14TH	4B's Meeting
16TH	Westfield Mini Run
18TH	General Meeting
28TH	4B's Last Meeting for year
28TH	M.N. Register last meeting for year
28TH	S.E. Register last meeting for year

DECEMBER

1ST	A.V.A. Road Race Mallala
2ND	General Meeting
8TH	MAIN BRANCH TOY RUN
9TH	Committee Meeting
12TH	4B's Xmas Dinner Flagstaff Hotel Adelaide
16TH	Main Branch Xmas Drinks North Adelaide Hotel
19TH	S.E. Register last meeting for year

A Letter To The Highways Department From Michael Sykes Of

SYKES BIDSTRUP Barristers & Solicitors

Dears Sirs,

I act for the Motor Cycle Riders' Association of South Australia.

In the past the Association has expressed its concern to the Highways Department in respect to two potential hazards, namely painted lines and temporary metal plates.

In regard to the former we are instructed that the Highways Department acknowledges that the potential hazard could be removed by the application of non-skid paint where it is necessary to have line markings on bitumen surfaces but has delayed the implementation of such works pending the total depletion of existing stocks of paint.

A stage must be reached where the risk of serious bodily injury outweighs the cost to the Highways Department of the purchase of appropriate non-skid paint. We wonder whether that stage has now been reached. In all the circumstances could you please indicate when it is likely that roads which have not been treated with non-skid paint will receive the appropriate application.

In regard to the latter, namely the existence of metal plates to cover road works under construction, our client has expressed similar concerns. The use of metal plates appears to be more prolific than in the past. Indeed at the present there is extensive use of metal plates at the following locations: —

- 1) Corner of Everett Avenue and Anzac Highway, Keswick
- 2) The length of Morphett Street, Adelaide between Light Square and Whitemore Square.
- 3) The length of Pirie Street between Gawler Place and Pulteney Street.
- 4) In Carrington Street.

The hazard represented by the existence of such plates is heightened by the onset of winter rains. It is particularly serious where plates have been utilised at intersections, often demanding great skill on the part of a motor cyclist executing any form of manoeuvre under braking or while executing a turn. In the past attempts have been made to alleviate the danger by applying a surface of bitumen to the plates although we understand this has not in all cases been successful as the bitumen has been quickly removed by the passage of traffic. However, this practice appears to have ceased altogether now.

It is the view of the Association that the risk could be minimised by more advance warning signs of the impending hazard on the one hand and by non-skid paint or bitumen frequently applied to the surface of the plates on the other.

As you know from previous contact with the Association, the Association is prepared to entertain any proposal which will bring about an improvement in road safety especially where the cost involved is insubstantial. On the other hand the possibility of serious bodily injury to motor cycle riders and other road users cannot be lightly dismissed.

We shall be grateful if you will give this letter your due attention and let us know what, if anything, can be done to address the problems outlined.

Yours faithfully,
Sykes Bidstrup — Michael Sykes

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MRA QUIZ NIGHT

OCTOBER 4 1991

7:30pm at the CAFS HALL on Main North Road Enfield. Off Street parking off Regency Road.

Organise a team of 6 for \$30.00 per team. If you can't get a team together then we will find you one. Individual entries \$6.00.

BYO Supper and Drinks

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- Falsely represent that goods are new.
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4B's REPORT

Another three months has come around very quickly. As promised in our last 4BS Report I hoped to have information regarding our Annual Bed Push. Unfortunately we have had to cancel it (permanently at this stage), because there is a new law saying that no-one can collect money walking or at traffic lights, so we have decided after much thought and consideration that we would not be able to do anything this year. We might be able to come up with something else for next year — but we will keep you informed, (any ideas would be greatly appreciated from anyone).

The 4BS have been rather busy again. We have been trying to cover all hospitals again however, with other commitments the Modbury and Flinders have not been visited as often as we would like. If you would like to become a member of the 4BS you are more than welcome to attend our meetings (see Calender for dates). If you would like more information please give us a ring on 264 9810 or come up and see us at MRA Meetings. If you know of anyone in any of the major hospitals please let us know and we will try and get a 4BS member to visit them.

The Cafe Racers invited us to attend their last race meeting with the 4BS Trailer and members on the ticket gate. Many thanks to Greg Janzow, Glen (sorry don't know your last name but many thanks for helping out with the Trailer), Uncle Pervie, Sue (again sorry don't know last name) and Graham (our son). The MRA Tent did not go out because there was no-one to help on the day (too many rallies on that weekend).

The 4BS Recovery Service has been fairly busy — but please remember it is a voluntary service, we do work. The phone numbers are: DARYL 264 9810; GARY 43 8381

All the best for the next few months and hope to see you around (hopefully not in any of the hospitals).

Vanessa Jonathan

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A REPLY TO ROBYN THOMPSON

Dear Ed,

With regards to RM Thompson in the June Centrestand. Be real.

The government has made it compulsory for sidecar passengers to wear helmets. This means that I can't take my son, or my mates' kids in my chair, because no helmet is made small enough. This "Effectively (has) legislated to restrict the ways in which a family may spend time together" (June Centrestand Page 2 Harsher Helmet Laws - Peter Mount).

Then they say to wear a bicycle helmet. This makes the AS 1698 safety standard look sick. Is this fair? No Way! Convertible drivers don't have to wear helmets (Now I'm really getting pissed off).

A part of my job is Vehicle Accident Rescue where you cut the car apart from the bodies, most of which have head injuries. They should wear helmets, or are we just being one sided?

How about less window tinting in cars. Driving training would be nice. Drivers who hit bike riders and say "Sorry, I didn't see you" should be charged with attempted manslaughter. Maybe then they might see a few more of us.

Headlights on is bullshit. I used to ride a Honda ex cop bike with Goldwing fairing, panniers and top box all white, just so that I would be seen. Total — one Honda (Sorry, I didn't see you). Bullshit.

Robyn Thompson, wake up to the government. Eventually they will have all bikes off the road. If you don't believe it just watch.

Fight the government on unjust laws as it's our lives and our life style. If the government gets us successfully off the roads we won't have much choice and eventually become extinct.

Ride free, ride safe
J Francis

continued

Dear Harald,

I write in response to Robyn Thompson's recent suggestion regarding compulsory on-road helmet use. I found it left many issues unresolved for me, so I've set them down for further comment.

As I understand the issue, there are currently no provisions for motor cycle helmet exemption enshrined in South Australian legislation. One may indulge in Ministerial Pursuit and submit to the good Minister a case seeking exemption, but as far as his office is aware, no-one has to date secured a Ministerial Determination for such liberty, on medical or other grounds. Similar to "no ticket - no start", it appears we have now inherited "no hat - no ride", and within a year, a version of "no light - no ride".

The behaviour of those who choose to operate outside the mainstream will continue notwithstanding the innumerable laws enacted by our political nominees. Those who elect to ride minus the 'armour' must surely be aware of what they may initially sacrifice, what the costs are to use the wider community and ultimately, what long-term personal, financial and family losses may eventuate.

We are shortly to reach the 21st century and what this means is still a remarkable mystery to me - but it sounds adventurous. What it has meant so far is that there are increasing numbers of inadequate, inconsiderate, ill-equipped, ill-tempered road users on the loose whose attitudes to other users seem to be that the road is there for them and them only. The roads are not held to be communal, shared pathways. It has meant that as medical technology improves, road users are getting older, and as the community becomes more affluent, access to the road is extending to greater numbers of inexperienced younger drivers generally. Our governments do not appear to be keeping up with these trends: our roads are appalling and increasingly in states of disrepair everywhere and educational resources for all road users is shrinking.

I would concur that in both practice and theory, the wearing of the hat is a fine idea and probably in the overall scheme of the universe, eminently sensible. It seems to me that by sheer weight of numbers which I observe daily on bikes, the ayes have it.

I would have thought though, that the issues were something else altogether.

How do we as individuals come to terms with governments, (which may be well-meaning and well-intentioned), which appear to thrive on legislation-overload and direct us into a corner?

What do we do about informed medical opinion which claims that contemporary helmets (compulsory by law), actually expedite our death in accidents?

What do we do about weighty un-informed political opinion that is at best expedient and at worst ill-founded?

How do we come to an understanding of our own doubts, fears and emotions which are themselves a response to (un-reasoned?) compulsory legislation.

How do we cope with the greater driving public who do not understand motor cycling, see us as an irritation and whose wish seems to be to place bike riders on the endangered species list?

My hunch is that both as individuals and as a cohesive group, we endeavour to remain informed and active in community and political lobbying. We continue to press and urge reform and deliberation on matters which affect all road users, particularly bikers. I would have thought the lobbying of Mr/Mrs Average Suburban Car Driver is a sound place to start.

I believe that over the years, motor cycling groups have already taken the initiative and the lead and are sharpening their skills in the consultative process with legislators, but in order to sustain the energy and focus the direction, on-going support from its membership is required.

Legislation is merely a prescription for ease and order. Groups like the MRA can learn how to sharpen its input into operation and win solid ground in the process. It's important that politicians get the message that people like us put them on North Terrace and in Canberra, and consequently, can remove them just as quickly. I guess our dilemma is to work out what ground we want to cover and at the same time not get bogged down in the process.

In the meantime, life was meant to be enjoyed, I think!

Denise Keane
MRA SA Branch

A LETTER TO THE MINISTER

Dear Sir,

Following your introductory law for passengers in motorcycle sidecars to wear helmets, don't you agree all occupants in convertible or topless cars should also wear a helmet? After all, the motorcycle and sidecar has proved over the years to be the safest and least involved vehicle in any accident.

Better still why not legislate for car occupants to wear 'full face' helmets, this will definitely decrease head and facial injuries in car accidents. Why don't you wear a helmet Mr Blevins on your way to work? Even with your air conditioner you will realise how uncomfortable helmets are, as well as restricting your hearing and vision. Two very important factors for safety in traffic today.

As for under five year olds in sidecars, where do you buy a helmet to fit them? Are their necks strong enough to support a helmet?

If you were genuine about your position in office Mr Blevins you would be promoting motorcycling for what it really is, i.e. the cheapest form of transport privately and fuel wise and the only answer you have to pollution, traffic and parking problems.

I await your reply, if any.

Yours Sincerely,
Wal Morgan - A Motorcyclist

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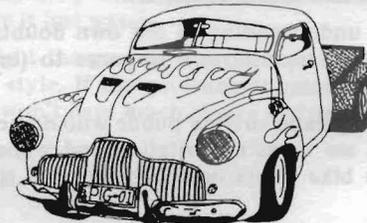
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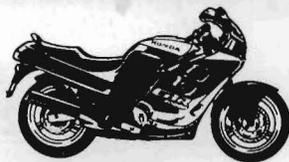
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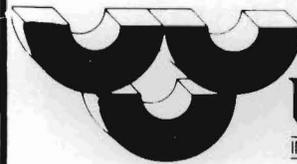
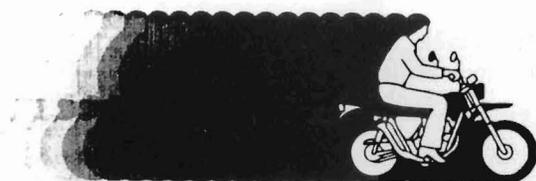
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