The Journal of Transportation Motorcycling Advocacy

THE DAILY, RIDER

published several times a year by Ride To Work, Inc.



THE MISSION

To advocate and support the increased use of motorcycles for transportation, and to provide information about transportation riding to motorcyclists and to the public.

The annual nationwide Ride to Work Day is the third Wednesday in July. (every year) Riding your motorcycle to work on this day will demonstrate:

- work on this day will demonstrate:

 A) The number of motorcyclists to the general public and to politicians.

 B) That motorcyclists are from all
- B) That motorcyclists are from all occupations and all walks of life.
 C) That motorcyclists can reduce traffic congestion in large cities.
- D) That motorcycles are for transportation as well as recreation. We can change public attitudes about motorcycling in ways that will benefit everyone. Please tell your friends.

EDITORIAL

Someone once told me that motorcyclists have 2 times as many fatalities as bicyclists and 10 times as many as car drivers. Motorbikes are dangerous but they probably aren't that lethal. Another published statistic 'proves' you are 56 times more likely to be killed when walking than when riding in a car...on a per mile traveled basis. All popular statistics are somewhat biased by social bigotry. Anti-motorcycle prejudices thrive because bikes are 'non conforming' vehicles. What makes them seem excessively risky is...partly...that they are potentially disruptive to the order of our transportation system. Superior nimbleness causes bikes to be subconsciously seen as mildly threatening and seditious. Our road network is optimized for cars and light trucks so this bias is well rooted and insidious.

Motorcycling may statistically chart as being riskier because more riders are young, male, and risk (speed/performance) oriented,...or because social drinking may more often be combined with riding than with overall driving activities. Riders sometimes become cynical, alienated or estranged after they've accepted the apparently increased risks of riding in return for it's greater efficiency, enjoyment and fun.

There are lot's of people in cars who do not understand this. Some just...hate...it. (cops and judges, too.) Riders are culturally and socially marginalized whenever they decide to motorcycle for transportation.

Motorcyclists must be more self-confident about their ability (and their luck) than all others on our roads. Riders are the most hyperabled users of our transportation infrastructure...in the same way that athletes surpass general fitness norms. If a rider is killed by some car

running a red light, the driver will get a \$400 fine...and the available charge of vehicular manslaughter will probably not be applied. After all, everyone drives a car, including the judge. Almost everyone appreciates and accepts bikes as 'toys'...so that's how they are understood. This limited awareness is enormously harmful to all transportation-motorcycling riders.

Choosing riding is one of the most serious decisions anyone can make. The consequences of a typical bike accident are far less pre-determined than those of an average car accident. A motorcycle accident may produce no injuries...or death,...depending on the specific crash kinesthetic and what (if anything) a fallen rider bumps into. We ride paranoid, maintain good technical riding skills and do not allow daily experiences to make us overconfident. These disciplines distinguish us from everyone else on the road and help explain some of the public's biases. Sometimes biases are...believe it or not...jealousy-gen-

The advantages of transportation motorcycling are easy to list: More parking, less road congestion, less energy consumption, less infrastructure wear, shorter travel times, more healthy and alert people, etc... Far too few persons view motorcycles as offering practical solutions to transportation, social and environmental problems. Pervasive mechanisms of social bigotry insure that many of motorcycling's risks will be widely misunderstood for some time. But accommodating both less-abled and hyper-abled road users improves conditions for everyone. Much has already been done for the former. (Ask any traffic engineer or planner...) Now we must begin to recognize the valuable contributions of the latter. Us. Transportation-motorcycling riders.

Motorcycling does not exist in a simple paper-covers-rock-breaks-

scissors world. Every SUV does not crush every small car which does not crush every motorcycle which does not crush every pedestrian. How we drive, ride and walk makes a huge difference in all of our individual survival chances. Riding for transportation means placing one less car on the road...or in a parking space. Safely splitting a lane or filtering up to a light can reduce everyone's travel times. Other motorcycle-dense cultures already view riders in more socially positive ways. Riding here is not yet seen as both recreation and a powerful social good. This change will happen if we believe it can. Our cause is just now beginning. To borrow THE phrase: 'we shall overcome'.

There's no substitute for hard statistics. Current information about riding's risks facilitates...and is affected by...cultural biases. Motorcycle commuting may be somewhat more risky than taking a car or riding a bus. On the other hand, it may not actually be as awful as is widely believed. We don't yet know all of the answers or even all of the right questions. Advances in computers, software and other technologies should now permit the generation of truer statistics to more clearly and accurately gauge the risks of motorcycle commuting. If you are a statistician, actuary, data miner, quant, nerd or wonk and are looking for a new hobby, you can help. Vast existing databases are awaiting your examination. We'll distribute your new metrics. Over the long term everyone may begin to understand and appreciate the benefits of having more motorcyclists sharing our roads. It would be soooo great.





Your neighbors are moving further from their jobs. They commute further, one neighbor per vehicle, in larger and larger vehicles: trucks or SUVs. They used to drive VWs, Civics; Now they buy vehicles as if each time they drive they're moving their homes, not merely their bodies.

The freeways are parking lots mornings and evenings. Your neighbors instead choose scenic secondary roads you've ridden on your motorcycle for years. They drive as fast as they would on the freeway — if the freeway were empty. The freeway hasn't been empty since 1971.

About 5mph-over feels right to you on those roads. Your neighbors want to go faster. The wide, sneering grills of their Rams and Expeditions fill your mirrors. When there's a shoulder, you pull over and wave them around. They're never grateful.

You ride anyway.

Your neighbors' high, wide vehicles might as well be semis on the road. Their back windows are tinted dark. You can't see through them or over them. It's scary behind them. The drivers eat McMuffins and chat on cell-phones, not scared at all.

They pause in school zones, mom and dad dropping off Justin and Heather. You creep down School Street in second gear, down a corridor of fear vibrating with the rattle of huge diesel engines.

When mom and dad see you, they look straight through you. Some of their friends are recent Harley riders, but HERE, it's about the kids. You're a biker near a school. Probable pedophile. Possible drug dealer. Certainly unwelcome.

You navigate through sudden SUV U-turns and unpredictable F150 moves. You are beyond fearful. You're a submarine captain listening for the depth charge that cracks the hull, lets black freezing water rush in.

You ride anyway.

On your ride, young guys in baseball hats, one cheek bulging smokelessly, can't stand being behind you. They roar by in their rusty old Ford four-b'-fours. You hear the big, whining mud 'n' snow tires, see the NFL team sticker in the back window.

If the guy's lucky enough to have a girl sitting beside him in that old Ford, he swerves back into the lane scary-close in front of you after passing. You hear the radio blaring as the truck skims by. It's the Dixie Chicks. You hate the Dixie Chicks.

You ride anyway.

When you get to work, you park your bike under cover and peel off your rainsuit. You lay your gloves flat on your saddlebags and stuff your boots with the classifieds as if you believed they'd dry by quitting time. They never have.

People at work do not mention your commuting by bike. They know that if they even start to discuss it with you, they'll blurt out how crazy they think you are. You ride in the RAIN and the DARK, they'd say; Why do you do that?

You can see all that in their eyes. Oh. Again today your rainsuit has leaked a dark stain onto the crotch of your jeans. Your coworkers stare, embarrassed for you. No one speaks.

You ride anyway.

The wide radial tires your motorcycle requires cost ten thousand dollars plus mount-and-balance and last four days. You're either on slick new rubber, warned by your shop to take it easy, or you're thinking about what tires to buy next.

You spend more on tires than rent, more than clothing, more than you do on going out or eating out, more than you ever could've imagined. Thank God your long-suffering sweetie, who got a supermarket bouquet on Valentine's, hasn't seen your check register.

You ride anyway.

You're obsessive about rainy-weather chain lubrication. You know you are. No one else on the planet cares about it, and you're obsessed. You'd like to think you have your little problem under control, but you don't. It hasn't impacted your work life or relationship, but it could...You sense an intervention lies ahead. Tough-love for the chain-lube freak.

You ride anyway.

You've spent four grand on high-tech lights. You're considering changing your bulbs again, based on a glowing magazine test. You know that some people, on learning of your somewhat excessive light-buying behavior, would conclude that you're a genuinely sick person. They would be correct.

You ride anyway.

You get a cold a year. It's not a terrible cold, no worse than enduring a prison camp in Viet Nam or manning an oar in a Roman slave galley. Your cold typically lasts eight or nine days, during which time you forget why you ever thought life was worth living.

You ride anyway.

You take your ex-girlfriend to the airport in her car. She's flying to Italy. She'll be gone a month. She promises to buy you an Italian motorcycle magazine in Florence. She leaves you her wine-colored Mazda Miata, the Special Edition with tan leather and a tan top. CD player. Gorgeous. Enjoy it, she says.

She fills the tank for you, to thank you for dropping her off at UAL Departures and picking her up next month. Sweet woman. Nice car. Rains all week.

You ride anyway.

You sit at a light next to a dark-eyed woman in a print dress in an old Ford station wagon. The instant the light changes, she gasses it, turns right, cuts you off brutally. You yell something not quite coherent at her. She shakes her fist at you: It's YOUR fault! You're SCUM!

You see her three days later, same light. She honks. You look into the old Ford wagon. She's made a little biker doll. It's wearing a tiny white Nolan helmet and, ohmigawd, a jacket just like yours! She pushes a hat-pin through the doll and smiles at you. The light goes green.

You ride anyway.





LETTERS

It's nice to see you undertaking this project! I have a couple of guestions about statements in your newsletter (IssueNo.1).

I was wondering about the basis for your statement that "higher statistical accident rates for riders are due to a greater incidence of excessive speed or impairment (DUI) among motorcyclists." I am an MSF instructor and the curriculum we use states that the incidence of impairment (DUI) among motorcyclists is not higher than among other motorists, just the consequences are. If you rely upon some authority in saying motorcyclists are impaired or DUI more than other motorists, I would be very interested in knowing about it.

Second, the Hurt study (which analyzed the causes of tens of thousands of motorcycle accidents, and remains the best information we have about why motorcyclists are accident-involved) indicates that the major causes of motorcycle accidents is the motorcycle not being seen by other motorists (due in part to a lack of conspicuity on the part of the motorcyclist), followed by factors such as the motorcyclist's inability to swerve or use the brakes properly. I haven't seen excessive speed and DUI identified as causes of higher accident rates for motorcyclists. Can you tell me your authority for saying this?

Finally, do motorcyclists actually have more accidents than other motorists? Again, the MSF curriculum teaches that motorcyclists do not, but that the consequences of accidents for motorcyclists are more severe. Once again, I would appreciate knowing what you rely on in saying that they do.

I hope my requests aren't too burdensome... I figure it's important that we motorcyclists are putting accurate information out there, me included. So thanks for responding.

Happy trails,

Susan Garner Russell (via email)

Thank you for your message and questions. The claims and statements were not taken from empirical or statistical sources like the Hurt report. The Daily Rider flyer was written to encourage participation in Ride To Work day. The source material for most of the content was a variety of articles and clippings published over the last few years. This pro-motorcycle editional material was combined and used without paying very much attention to annotation or documentation because the purpose of the flyer was to advocate riding to work. It is possible that some material was included which cannot be deductively supported. The

question at the center of this concern is: If leisure, social, and sport riding activities are removed from the motorcycling population so that only a small daily commuting rider group remains....then what kind of accident indices adhere to this commuting group, and how do these indices compare to the exclusively automobile using commuting population...and how do they compare to the overall private vehicle population? I would like to be able to statistically verify that motorcycle commuting is statistically 'safer' than the risks for all leisure/social/sport/general motorcycle riding activities. At this point the logic for arriving at that conclusion is inductively based, but with recent data mining capabilities there is a chance that additional kinds of statistically based evidence could be produced. One person with useful technical skills for doing this volunteered to work toward this end, but I do not know if he will produce anything. This kind of information would be useful for both motorcycling and for the Ride To Work day program. If you know someone who might be interested in helping us develop this data, please contact them. Risk is sort of a red herring for motorcycling. On a per mile basis, walking is something like 56 times more likey to involve an individual in an accident which results in death than riding in or driving an automobile. Similarly, being in a car is many times more dangerous than being in an airplane. Motorcycling falls somewhere along that continium...possibly even past the risks of walking (on a per mile traveled basis). But the greater social benefits of walking, bicycling, skating, skateboarding, and motorcycling for transportation all outweigh their higher risk factors (compared to using private automobiles). Despite popular suburbanized, capsulized modern life styles, we are socialized entities. Technologies which increase our socialization and re-inforce positive social behavors might sometimes be more directly risky, but they may also provide overall benefits that outweigh indi-

Let me know if you have questions or if I can be of other assistance. Andy

Wow... that was quite a comprehensive response-- thanksl

I do understand the purpose of the newsletter-and it's a good one. And I'm sure that we working stiffs who ride to work are probably among the more risk avoidant of motorcycle riders in general. I wonder about the um..pitfalls.. of pitting one class of motorcycle rider against another, and the risk that non-riders seeing statements that indicate that there is "greater incidence of excessive speed or impairment (DUI) among motorcyclists" could end up using that against all motorcvclists..

But thanks for your response.... and good luck with your project. Susan

Hi Susan

Thank you for your comments. I do not believe that identifying an existing segment of the motorcycling population and then providing encouragement and affirmation for that segment will pit 'one class of motorcycle rider against another" There is always a xenophobic tendancy to balkanize behavior and culture (i.e. - 'think like me' or 'mine's better than yours' or stuff like that.) but there are real bonds and shared concerns that link all riders from (at one extreme...) the teenage freerider with a 125cc MX bike to (something very different....) the retired two-up touring rider with the Wing and trailer setup. They both like motorcycles and both might be members of WOW or the AMA or any other motorcycle interest groups. These are two examples from almost opposite ends of the spectrum of all motorcyclists, but they both might be riding to work and choosing to support the Ride to Work progam on its direct and unique merits. The Ride to Work program is a unique and sharply focused addition to the existing array of pro motorcycle advocacy, public relations and evangelical groups. Expanding participation in Ride to Work Day is important. Your support will make a positive difference for motorcycling. I hope you will contribute to it's support and will enjoy participating in the Ride to Work program and it's objectives.

Let me know if you have questions or if I can be of other assistance.

Andy

Hi Andy,

I got your newsletter re: rider rights, and will be sending a check in support. I am, however, concerned that you may ask for so much so fast that legislators point at this document and feel like what you are pursuing is too radical. I don't know what the history of other groups pursuing things like this is, but asking for lane splitting privileges in the same breath as improved roads and employers providing the "safe, secure parking" areas may have everybody from police groups to Chambers of Commerce up in arms saying that they are not willing to give an inch for fear of the proverbial mile. Dave Lurye

Hi Dave,

Thanks for your message and support of Ride to Work Day. I understand your points about how we are asking for a lot, but my approach involves

two things: First, make Ride to Work day as popular and successful as possible,....Second... ask for everything...absolutely everything...that would help motorcycling become more popular as a form of utility transportation. (the fun aspect of riding motorcycles takes care of itself) The only way is to ask for everything. What is 'realistic' or 'diplomatic' or 'possible' is not in any way relevant to the goals of this specific type of advocacy program. The analogy is to compare the NAACP with the Black Panthers or more moderate Jewish advocacy groups with more radical ones. The Ride to Work program is deliberately made to be radical in ways that would be impossible for an already politically engaged organization. Ride to Work will not directly advocate illegal riding activities, but there is a definite edge to some of it's goals and positions. I think this radicalness will turn out to be a strength, not a weakness. We will not get as stuck in conventional political issues. We seek to empower and educate and give affirmation to those who ride for transportation...and see what happens as a result. Riding to work is a mundane, boring form of everyday radicalness. I do not expect to change the world, but even a small nudge in the motorcycle-as-transportation direction will help everyone.

From: "Macarthur, Douglas" (via email) What's your position on helmet laws. Notice I say "laws". I believe this should be a free country, myself. Not arguing a safety issue here. This is a "freedom" issue. See you later,-Doug - please respond to helmet issue.

RTW Helmet law position

Ride to Work Inc. does not have any position on helmet laws. We are focused on 'advocating and supporting the increased use of motorcycles for transportation, and providing information about transportation riding to motorcyclists and to the public.' Holding strong subjective views on helmet laws and "freedom" issues is important, but these things should not play a role in a riders decision to use a motorcycle to ride to work. Ride to Work endorses boots, gloves, protective clothing, helmets, eye wear and other gear that can make some everyday riding situations safer and more comfortable, so in that sense, we like helmets. But issues involving constitutional questions centered around the existing helmet laws are not related to our aim to expand participation in Ride To Work day....and to encourage motorcycle use as a fun and practical form of surface transporta-Andy

FUNDAMENTAL RIDING/READING iS

Recommended Reading from Progress: Surface Transportation Policy Project Volume X, Number 3; June 2000 Bureau of Transportation

Divorce Your Car! Ending the Love Affair with the Automobile, Katie Alvorod, 2000. New Society

Publishing Toward Sustainable Communities Transportation Transition and

Daniel Mazmanian and Michael Kraft, eds., 2000 MIT Press

Environmental Policy.

Transportation of Liveable Cities, Vukan R. Vuchic, 2000 CUPR Press

Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities.

Timothy Beatley, 2000 Island Press

Car Free in Cleveland, Alt-Trans Cleveland. 2000 Alt Trans Cleveland Project; EcoCity Cleveland

The Charter of the New Urbanism, Congress for the New Urbanism, 1999 McGraw Hill Professional Publishing

Designing Sustainable Communities Learning from Village Homes, Judy and

Car Free Cities, J.H. Crawford, 2000 Paul & Poe Press

Michael Corbett, 2000 Island Press

Parking Spaces - A Design, Implentation, and Use Manual for Architects, Planners and Engineers, Mark Childs, 1999 McGraw Hill Text

The Wealth of Cities - Revitalizing the Centers of American Life, John O. Norquist, 2000 Perseus Press

The Old Neighborhood - What We Lost in the Great Suburban Migration: 1966 - 1999, Ray Suarez, 1999 Free Press

Sprawl City - Race, Politics, and Planning in

Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson, and Angel O. Torres, eds., 2000 Island Press

The Nature of Economics, Jane Jacobs, 2000 Modem Library

The Livable City - Revitalizing Urban Communities, Partners for Livable Communities, 2000 McGraw Hill

Sprawl Busting: State Programs to Guide Growth. Jerry Weitz, 1999 Planners Press

Bobos in Paradise - The New Upper Class and How They Got There, David Brooks, 2000 Simon & Schuster

Roads - Driving America's Great Highways, Larry McMurty, 2000 Simon & Schuster

Outside Lies Magic - Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places, John Stilgoe, 1998 Walker & Co.

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www.ridetowork.org

218 722 9806

propaganda@ridetowork.org

DIGEST/ELIPS

"One thing we know is that the accident rate for motorcyclists has been declining for many years. Riders now are a much safer group than in the '50s, '60s, and '70s. And through the '80s and '90s things seemed to improve even more, though the decline in registrations at the same time had to have been a large part of the explanation. Motorcycling has undergone another boom, however, and more people are riding again. Unavoidably, with greater exposure comes more accidents, though the best data we've seen recently still indicate that the number of riders is increasing faster than the accident rate, which means that on the whole, motorcyclists are safer than ever. This fact is being ignored. Motorcycle accidents are perceived differently from other traffic incidents; car wrecks are considered regrettable, but a cultural norm; the same result on a motorcycle is viewed as senseless. Or worse, inevitable.

Motorcycles are potentially dangerous, of course, but they don't have to be. The risk inherent to motorcycling seems to me a frictionless sliding scale: depending entirely on your own approach, it can move freely between safe and relaxed recreation and something verging on suicide. No other vehicle offers the movement so easily from one extreme to the other. So yes, you need to think about what you do and be careful."

'Signal to Noise Ratio' editorial by Bruce Reeve in Cycle Canada July 2000, to subscribe, call 514 738 9439

People are famously irrational in deciding what hazard to pay attention to. More Americans were killed in bicycling accidents last year (about 900) than died in all U.S. airplane crashes in the 1990's. But when a big plane goes down, there are big stories - which we all read. Residents of Los Angeles or San Francisco are hundreds of times more likely to die in a household fall from a ladder than in an earthquake, yet the earthquake danger is what people are hundreds of times more likely to discuss. (In the 20th century, about 5,000 Americans died in earthquakes, most of them in San Francisco in 1906. That many die in household falls every four months.)

Our reaction to these different perils is both not quite logical and completely understandable, since we are affected by more than the pure statistical risk. The other factors we inevitably weigh include the element of sudden horror quite high when the earth opens up or you're trapped in a falling plane; an individual's ability to control the risk, which is close to zero for an airline passenger; and the ability to correct or recover from the damage after it has occurred, which is very low for airplane crashes.

Risk Assessment, By James Fallows From The Industry Standard, March 6, 2000

"A recent study in Tokyo showed that if one in every five car drivers were to ride a bike instead, traffic speed would rise by 35 percent and pollution would be 30 percent down."

Performance Bike, April 2000 issue.

"Cars lie to us and tell us we're safe, powerful, and in control. The

air-conditioning fans murmur empty assurances and whisper, "Sleep, sleep." Motorcycles tell us a more useful truth: we are small and exposed, and probably moving too fast for our own good, but that's no reason not to enjoy every minute of the ride."

Dave Karlotski, Season of The Bike 7/00

"...fundamental deficiencies in this methodology are clearly demonstrated by the fact that if the same analysis is applied to all modes of urban transportation, one would reach the absurd conclusion that motorcycles are superior to all other modes of urban passenger transportation. They are cheaper and faster than cars, while their great inferiority in safety and comfort are not considered..."

Transportation for Livable Cities, Vukan R. Vuchic, 1998 (This is the single 'motorcycle' reference in this "authoratative" 350 page guide for transportation planners. Sheesh.)

Maximum businesss deduction allowed US employers per employee parking space they provide: \$175

Maximum deduction allowed employers for van-pool or mass-transit expenses, per employee: \$65

From Harpers Index, July 98 (for motorcycles-\$0)

EVERYDAY RIDES

Although we've received a few responses to 'Everyday Rides', we need more... So send 'em in. (If you don't we're gonna start putting pics of MZ's and diesel Enfields in here...) See issue #1 for additional information about this project.

<u>Endorsed!</u>

Ride to Work Day has been endorsed by the AMA. From the minutes of the October AMA board meeting:

"Ride to Work, Inc. is a new organization devoted to the concept of promoting motorcycling for everyday transportation. The AMA has been approached to endorse "Ride to Work Day," which is held annually on the third Wednesday in July, and honors those who ride to work on a daily basis... The official endorsement by the AMA and positive publicity in American Motorcyclist will certainly help to heighten awareness among AMA members. A motion was made by Mr. Smilie, seconded by Mr. Blank, and unanimously voted to:

Approve and endorse the value of motorcycles as a vehicle for daily personal transportation and designate the third Wednesday in July as 'Ride to Work Day' in recognition of that value."

To join the AMA call 1-800-AMA JOIN.

OTHER STUFF

TDR issue #1 is on our website in downloadable and printable .PDF (Adobe Acrobat) form.

Also downloadable are the following RTW advocacy program materials:

- 1.The RTW 'Hero Rider' award 2. The RTW shop agreement
 - 3. RTW ads

"Worlds Worst
Commute" contest:
Close calls, bad roads,
congestion, mean cops,
etc...Send your true
story entry to
<worstcommute_rtw@rid
etowork.org.> Prizes,
about \$200 in gifts