

# News For Thought



## Bikers help Hurricane Victims

Bikers have big hearts and a willingness to help the less fortunate, and this generosity is particularly evident in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which ravaged the Gulf Coast on August 29th leaving hundreds dead and thousands homeless in the costliest natural disaster ever to strike American soil.

ABATE of Louisiana and ABATE of Mississippi have set up disaster relief funds to aid bikers who are victims of the storm. ABATE of Oklahoma recently donated \$500 to each of those organizations to assist in their efforts, and many other motorcycle clubs and organizations are also contributing. ABATE of Florida set up a 3-acre shelter in the panhandle for those forced from their homes by the floodwaters and damage.

Rolling Thunder members from their Mississippi chapter went into flooded areas and helped direct distribution of donated necessities to disabled and displaced veterans.

The Christian Motorcycle Association rendered aid to Katrina refugees by serving coffee and offering essential needs in their time of distress.

American Honda announced that the company would make Personal Watercraft, All Terrain Vehicles and off-road motorcycles available to local agencies providing emergency relief efforts in the affected areas. To ensure the quickest possible assistance preparations have been made to supply units through local Honda dealerships in the vicinity.

Harley-Davidson announced that it is making a \$1 million donation to the American Red Cross Hurricane 2005 Relief Fund for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and will also donate a 2006 touring motorcycle to be used as a fund-raiser on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno." Celebrity guests will autograph the motorcycle, which will then be placed up for bid on eBay. A similar "Tonight Show" fund-raiser to benefit tsunami relief efforts raised \$810,000 earlier this year.

Boston Harley-Davidson teamed up with defending World Series champion Boston Red Sox players in hope of raising \$1 million through the Rally for Fellow Americans in Need. Two Harleys, one bought by the team and the other donated by the Harley dealership, were auctioned off. Sox teammates Keith Foulke, John Damon, Kevin Millar and Gabe Kapler all ride Harleys and participated in the fundraising effort. "This is our country and there's a serious tragedy in New Orleans and if everybody contributes something, somehow, I think it can work," said first baseman Millar.

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## Gas Hikes Boost Interest in Two-Wheelers

Motorists tired of paying an arm and a leg for fuel are giving up their gas-guzzling SUVs and cars in favor of a more economical — and more fun — mode of transportation: motorcycles and scooters.

NADAguides.com, a leading vehicle information website, today announced that during

the past three months, more people researched scooter and motorcycle pricing and specifications at its website than at any other time during its five-year history. Experts for the company cite high gas prices as a leading cause for the boost in its online motorcycle traffic, saying car, truck and SUV owners are realizing they can dramatically reduce their monthly gas budgets by owning a motorized two-wheel vehicle as an alternate means of travel.

"The motorcycle and scooter market is red hot right now," said Lenny Sims, Managing Editor at NADAguides.com. "On average, it takes about \$60 to fill an SUV with a tank of gas and about \$15 to fill a motorcycle when you consider today's gas prices. With numbers like these, it's easy to see why people are making the switch to a more economical approach to driving." Sims goes on to say that motorcycles and scooters offer a convenient mode of travel as well. "Economics aside, they're convenient in traffic and easy to park. If you live in a crowded urban area -- or a fast-growing suburb for that matter -- they offer a quick and easy way to get around town."

During the months of June, July and August 2005, traffic to the motorcycle section of the NADAguides.com website reached 810,901 visitors, an increase of 31% compared to the same timeframe a year ago.

So what were the most commonly researched motorcycles at NADAguides.com during June, July and August of this year? According to the website, five makes and models zoomed past the competition: 1. Harley Davidson XL1200C 2. Yamaha YZFR65/C YZF-R6 3. Honda VT750C4 Shadow 4. Honda CBR600F411 5. Honda CBR600RR3. Following are the top three most researched scooters: 1. Honda Silverwing 2. Suzuki Burgman 3. Vespa ET4. [www.on-a-bike.com](http://www.on-a-bike.com)

## Massachusetts Bikers harrassed over helmets

A group of about two dozen Massachusetts motorcyclists riding in the Yankee Homecoming parade on Sunday, August 7th were ordered by police to don their helmets. When one of them refused to obey, citing a newly enacted law excluding motorcyclists participating in public parades from the state's helmet law, he was pulled from the parade by police.

Motorcyclists are now accusing police of being ignorant of the law, and some of them are so angry about their confrontation with police that they are calling for another boycott of the city of Newburyport, similar to one three years ago when motorcyclists felt they were being unfairly targeted by police in a crackdown on loud pipes and told to stay out of town. Their participation in the parade, at the invitation of the city, was meant as an "olive branch" to show that relations between the city and the riders had improved.

"There's just this negativity toward motorcyclists," said Paul Cote, legislative director for the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association. "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

"I am the law," the officer said, according to Cote, the biker who was kicked out of the parade for refusing to put on his helmet.

But the law was changed in February 2004, allowing an exception to the requirement that motorcyclists wear helmets for a "properly permitted public parade." Helmets are otherwise required at all times on roads in Massachusetts. Some of the riders challenged by police on Sunday were the very same ones who spent five years lobbying for that change in the helmet law, Cote said.

The reasoning was that most parades travel at very slow speeds, and the whole point of being in a parade is so spectators can see them, something that is hard to do when faces are covered by helmets, Cote said. Helmets can also be very hot during a parade when the temperatures hit 90 degrees, as they did on that Sunday, he added.

Police later admitted they were wrong, acknowledging that the law now allows motorcyclists to take off their helmets during parades, but have refused to issue an apology. [www.on-a-bike.com](http://www.on-a-bike.com)



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**Motorcycle** fatalities nationwide have surged to their highest levels since 1987, even as overall highway deaths continue to decline. In 2004, 4,008 motorcycle riders were killed in highway accidents, up 7.9% from 2003 and 89% higher than in 1997, according to a new National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report. Meanwhile, passenger car deaths dropped 3.2% to 19,091 last year. NHTSA cites as possible causes: a sharp rise in motorcycle ownership, an increase in inexperienced bikers riding powerful machines, and rollback of mandatory helmet laws in several states. Americans bought an estimated 734,000 new on-highway motorcycles last year, up from 230,000 in 1995, according to the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. Motorcycle groups opposed to helmet laws point to the changing face of bikers, reports USA Today. Jeff Rabe, lobbyist for the Modified Motorcycle Association (MMA) of California and member of the board of directors for the National Coalition of Motorcyclists (NCOM), said more "middle-aged executives" are riding powerful machines without training. "There's a huge group of people ages 35 to 50 who have purchased motorcycles," Rabe said. "But they're still beginning riders."

**Pinkerton, Ohio** -- The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) and TrueSports, Inc. have announced that AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days 2006 will be held July 28-30 at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course in Lexington, Ohio. As in previous years, AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days will kick off a ten-day celebration of motorcycling at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, concluding with the AMA Honda Super Cycle Weekend presented by Dunlop Tire the following weekend, August 4-6. Veterans of AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, which attracts an estimated 40,000 enthusiasts each year, will notice that the 2006 event will be held two weeks later than its usual mid-July weekend. Other sporting events during the summer of 2006 prompted what is expected to be a one-year departure from the traditional dates. AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days 2006, which will benefit the Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum, will include exhibits of classic motorcycles and memorabilia, the all-brands AMA Swapmeet, bike shows, a full slate of American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association (AHRMA) racing, and other features to be announced in the coming months. [www.AMADirectlink.com](http://www.AMADirectlink.com)