

FIVE ROUTES TO FEWER RIGHT-OF-WAY VIOLATIONS February 2009

Riders and MROs don't have to agree on a solution to fight the problem!

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, almost two-thirds of all motorcycle crashes are caused by cagers. And in the last installment of Bruce on Bikers' Rights, I pointed out that cagers were responsible for at least 58.87% of all motorcycle fatalities arising from two-vehicle crashes. I also provided you with a constantly-updated window on this problem to help you keep in mind the friends, families, faces and names of the murdered motorcyclists comprising the human side of these statistics:

http://ldrlongdistancerider.com/failure_to_yield_to_motorcycles.php

The proportion of the problem may not seem pandemic here in the dead of winter, when many of our bikes are safely off the streets, but just wait 'til "Motorcycle Awareness Month" comes along and the casualties really start to mount up...especially from crashes involving oversized, gas-guzzling SUVs driven by clueless cagers caring little about our economy ... less about ecology ... and nothing at all about the riders they murder and maim every time they turn in front of the motorcycles they claim they "didn't see": Scientists use the term "inattentional blindness" to define the phenomenon of not being able to see things that are actually there, and you'll find two road-relevant references about "IB" here:

<http://www.visualexpert.com/Resources/inattentionalblindness.html>

"Mitigating inattentional blindness" is key to reducing right-of-way violations ("ROWVs"). But don't let this high-falutin' phraseology lull you into thinking IB is some sort of disease, disorder or disability that cagers can use as a defense against a vehicular homicide charge. IT IS NOT! Inattentional blindness is nothing more than the recognition that people tend to see what their mind expects to see, and what their mind considers important to see. That being the case: Any and every carrot and stick we throw into the mix to increase motorists' (a) expectation of seeing motorcycles on the road, and (b) respect for (or fear of) the consequences associated with violating a motorcyclist's right-of-way, will contribute to the reduction of ROWVs and consequently the number of motorcyclists injured and killed as a result of them.

Let me repeat that for emphasis: ANY AND EVERY CARROT AND STICK WE THROW INTO THE MIX TO INCREASE MOTORISTS' (a) EXPECTATION OF SEEING MOTORCYCLES ON THE ROAD, AND (b) RESPECT FOR (OR FEAR OF) THE CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLATING A MOTORCYCLIST'S RIGHT-OF-WAY, WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE REDUCTION OF ROWVS AND CONSEQUENTLY THE NUMBER OF MOTORCYCLISTS INJURED AND KILLED AS A RESULT OF THEM.

Hopefully I have at this point provided you with an objective definition of the ROWV problem and a rational framework for its solution. That being the case, I propose to you that within that framework are five separable yet synergistic mitigation strategies:

Economics permitting, over the next few months I'll be presenting details and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each of the strategies above, hopefully encouraging you and your MRO to execute the mix most consistent with your philosophy and effective on your turf. In the interim, I have provided you with a short definition for each, plus a teaser link to give you a taste of what we'll be putting on the table in future installments. As always, any constructive comments or serious feedback will be welcome.

Speaking strictly for myself and no other individuals or organizations,

Bruce Arnold