

Bruce on Bikers' Rights

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HANG UP AND DRIVE!

Online Ammo for an Awareness War



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (“NHTSA”) has just released Traffic Safety Facts document DOT HS 810791. Here is the introduction:

*“A preview of results from the 2006 Annual Assessment of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Fatalities and Injuries shows that the number of people killed in the United States in motor vehicle traffic crashes declined from 43,510 in 2005 to 42,642, the lowest level in five years. This decline is the largest in terms of both number and percentage since 1992. The preview Data ... shows the decline in fatalities occurred for passenger car occupants, light-truck occupants, and nonmotorists (pedestrian and pedalcyclists). However, **motorcycle rider fatalities continued their nine-year increase, reaching 4,810 in 2006.** Motorcycle rider fatalities now account for 11 percent of total fatalities, exceeding the number of pedestrian fatalities for the first time since NHTSA began collecting fatal motor vehicle crash data in 1975.”[1]*

One reason motorcycle injuries and deaths continue to increase is that more people are riding motorcycles, and many new and “returning” riders are paying a high price for their excesses: excessive speed ... excessive sauce ... and excessive stupidity. That’s unfortunate, but it’s also **Natural Selection...**

<http://tinyurl.com/2939tz>

...and although these latest statistics provide fresh fuel for the lid law lobbies, as veteran motorcycle training instructor John Sowers notes, “...going 80 miles/hr and being drunk and running into a tree won't save you if you were wearing three helmets.”

We must not allow the negative publicity associated with the excesses of the ignorant to overshadow the fact that for experienced and responsible riders, the most significant cause of motorcycle injuries and fatalities continues to be the negligence and **inattentional blindness** of careless, clueless, distracted and impaired cagers. Quoting Motorcycle-Accidents-Lawyers-Attorneys.com:

“Approximately three-fourths of all motorcycle accidents involve another motor vehicle. Two-thirds of these accidents were caused by the motorist failing to yield the right of way. The most common reason given by the motorist involved in these accidents is that they 'didn't see' the motorcycle. These types of accidents account for approximately 50 percent of ALL motorcycle accidents! Recent scientific studies focusing on a phenomenon known as 'inattentional blindness'

may help us understand why car drivers often end up causing accidents with motorcycles they 'didn't see.'"[2]

As the mountain of research assimilated by my partner Madd Ray shows, **a leading cause of inattentive blindness is the driver distraction and impairment induced by cell phone conversations.**[3] In fact, in 2002 The Harvard University Center for Risk Analysis estimated that each year 1.5 million accidents, 560,000 injuries and 2,600 deaths were due to phone use in moving vehicles.[4] And there were only 86 million cell phone service subscribers in the U.S. in 2002.[5] As of May 2007, we now have more than 236 million cell phone subscribers nationwide ... almost three times as many ... and **73% of them are talking while they're driving!**[6] So, how do we address this pandemic problem? Passing legislation that bans the use of handheld cellular devices while driving is certainly not the answer. Why? Because **it is the conversation, and not the device, that creates the distraction.** As the Center for Auto Safety's Executive Director Clarence Ditlow noted in his January 2007 letter to NHTSA's Nicole Nason:

"Research has consistently shown that operating a motor vehicle while talking on a cell phone--whether hand-held or hands-free--increases the risk of an accident to three to four times the experience of attentive drivers. The general consensus of the scientific community is that there is little, if any, difference in crash rates involving hands-free versus hand-held cell phones. The two-way conversation on a cellular phone, not the task of holding the phone, causes a cognitive distraction. This distraction induces 'inattention blindness,' inhibiting drivers' abilities to detect change in road conditions."[7]

That means there is one and only one way to effectively address this issue. We all have to...

HANG UP AND DRIVE!

Are you seriously interested in reducing the number of bikers maimed and killed each year by careless and clueless cagers? If so, then one of the best things you can do to **mitigate inattentive blindness** and make our roadways safer for motorcycling is to persuade as many motorists as you can to "Hang Up and Drive"! Notice that I said "persuade" and not "mandate". Yes, passing laws to ban the use of cell phones while driving is one way to get drivers to shut up and steer, but it is certainly not the only way. After all, "feel-good" laws that ban only handheld devices ... that have limited applicability or negligible penalties ... or that are difficult or impossible to enforce ... will have little impact. We have enough laws like that on the books already. So, if lobbying for a comprehensive cell phone ban with significant penalty and effective enforcement provisions is not an option ... or perhaps not an option for *you* ... **campaigning for awareness** still is. All you have to do is spread this one simple message:

"HANG UP AND DRIVE!"

How you choose to spread the message is up to you. Be creative! Paint it on the tailgates of your trucks and trailers. Put it on billboards and road signs. Stamp it on t-shirts, patches, pins, caps, coffee cups, stickers and banners ... and sell or give them away anywhere you can find a group of bikers or cagers: grocery stores, gas stations, shopping malls, parking lots,

offices, churches, clubs, meetings and events. Add the “Hang Up and Drive” tag line to your web pages, newsletters, press releases, business cards, and email signatures. Tattoo it on your arm ... or forehead ... or any other body part you like to show off. To give you some more ideas and inspiration, I’ve assembled a small cache of online ammunition for your awareness war:

http://LdrLongDistanceRider.com/hang_up_and_drive.php (or <http://tinyurl.com/2fphzp>)

“**Hang Up and Drive**” is sure to save bikers’ lives. So please help spread the message. Do whatever you can, whenever and wherever you can.

Until Next Time ... Ride Long, Ride Free!

Bruce Arnold

Footnotes:

1. <http://tinyurl.com/2szwsq>
2. <http://tinyurl.com/2x88so>
3. <http://tinyurl.com/o9bzh>
4. <http://tinyurl.com/249dxa>
5. <http://tinyurl.com/24u4zc>
6. <http://tinyurl.com/4o87q>
7. <http://tinyurl.com/2hp4d9>

Addendum:

Hang Up and Drive (Song Lyrics from NotPopular.com)

Driving, you're no better than a drunk, so ask yourself, do you feel lucky punk?
Your attention, should be focused on the road, you're like a time bomb, waiting to explode
You're important, or that's what you claim, but to call you, someone would have to be lame
Because you're a danger, to all that you see, you should hang up, and listen to me
I know to keep in touch makes you feel more alive
But when you're on the highway and you're going 35
You can make the call when you arrive
It's time for you to hang up and drive

Car phone, a license to kill, you're a big spender, how high is your bill?
From talking, you've got nothing to gain except cancer, a tumor in your brain
It's just gossip, diarrhea of the mouth
So pick a lane, you can go north, you can go south
You're clueless; you don't know what's up.

<http://tinyurl.com/ywzfzfl>