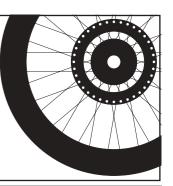
R Newsletter

Motorcycle Riders Association Australia

For All Motorcyclists

Footpath

www.mraa.org.au Winter Edition May, 2003 Contact MRA on 9699 1811



parking

FOOTPATH parking in Melbourne's CBD, which was under threat last month, has been given a reprieve.

The battle to protect motorcyclists' legal right to park their bikes on footpaths in Victoria began with a protest at a Melbourne Council planning meeting on April 3 when the council were all set to ban footpath parking in three more areas of the CBD and to give the CEO Michael Malouf the power to ban other areas. But this recommendation to empower the CEO was deleted by the end of the planning meeting.

The three new sites the council wanted to ban "without a trial period," are: near Her Majesty's Theatre, Exhibition St, near the Princess Theatre in Spring St and near Marland House in Bourke - next to a disabled parking area.

A council report on the footpath parking ban stated the three new areas were chosen "after complaints motorcycles had restricted pedestrian and wheelchair access."

However, at the council's Motorcycles In Melbourne Meeting attended by MRA representatives on April 30, it was agreed by all, that the Spring St site would be removed from the list as it was not an issue.

While it was agreed a restriction to motorcycle parking outside Her Majesty's Theatre was justified, further discussions were needed on the length of the area to be restricted.

With Marland House, it was also agreed to contact the building's tenants specifically the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria to discuss the full impact of motorcycles parking on the footpath outside the building. The council would also investigate whether or not there was sufficient parking for motorcycles in the nearby underground car park and if signs to advise motorcyclists of this parking near Marland House could be displayed.

The need to introduce footpath parking restrictions had become an issue because the council had a legal obligation to act on any complaints, said Terry Makings, the council's engineering services group

"The fact that only one person with a disability has complained and the Melbourne City Council knows about it, then we can be liable," Mr Makings said.

MRA President Alex Money said he had no



GRACE Placencio is a personal injury lawyer specialising in motorcycle accident claims. Recommended by the MRA since 1995, Grace has represented and won compensation for over 200 motorcyclists. For an insiders view on the legal system dealing with motorcycle accidents and advice on knowing your rights see page 4.

problem with restricting parking around disabled car parking spaces and when pedestrian and disabled access is compromised. "But not without consultation with motorcyclists to make sure we are offered alternative parking sites," Mr Money

A decision on whether or not to continue the restrictions on the two existing sites, Collins St (south side) and Flinders Lane (south

side), which have both been under a ninemonth trial, will be discussed at the next Motorcycles In Melbourne Committee meeting on a date yet to be confirmed. Findings of the investigations relating to Her Majesty's Theatre and Marland House would also be discussed at this meeting.

* Harry Listoken was the official MRA representative at the meeting.

EVENT CALENDAR

MRA Celebrates 25 years

MRA Howqua Rally Revisited

Date: Queens Birthday – June 6-9 Where: Howqua near Mansfield * See page 9 for more details. (This is not an official MRA event)

MRA Quarterly General Meeting

Date: Saturday, June 21st Details: Bells Hotel

157 Moray St, South Melbourne

*In order for a member to vote they must have a current membership card. If you have lost/misplaced your card, phone MRA on 9699 1811 or email mraa@rabbit.com.au



Club Room Ph 9699 1811 Fax 9699 1833

22 Ross Street,

South Melbourne 3205

Webb Site: www.mraa.org.au email. mraa@rabbit.com.au MRA egroup: http:go.to/mra

ABN: 28703101330

After Hours:

President:

Alex Money 0414 994 600

Vice President:

Marcel Gomperts 0438 383 800

EDITORIAL:

Editor/Journalist: Heather Ellis

0425 720 193

h.ellis@bigpond.com

Production Manager:

Roger Burns 0408 591 800

thedodger@tpg.com.au

Send advertising copy and

photos to:

thedodger@tpg.com.au

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership Secretary:

Anton Lange

Ph: 9515 7014 Mob: 0413 995 424

Membership fees:

New Member - Single \$40

Family \$57.50

Renewal - Single \$35,

Family \$52.20

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

HOW quickly things can catch up with one in the world of major events. The various working committees are faced with putting place, the project planning arrangements for GP Run, Motorcycle Expo, Toy Run, Poker Run, F1 GP

Add to the importance of these events, the ever-present day to day issues which face us, such as Footpath Parking, \$50 Levy, WRB's, etc. and the tasks facing each Committee are daunting, to say the least. Now, as always, the MRA is dependent on volunteer support. You will soon be asked for your help to fill the many, many positions involved in bringing each event to a successful culmination. The MRA has a proud tradition in running first class public events, but this success comes only if we all "put in". I urge each and every one of us to lend a hand, no matter how small the effort may seem to us, any assistance will be gratefully accepted and any expertise will be put to good use.

It seems that the MRA's lobby efforts and public profile are as critical now, as ever before. We have seen as recently as April 3 the importance of the need for vigilance. A report recommending the prohibition of motorcycle footpath parking at 3 further locations in Melbourne's CBD tabled before the Planning, Development and Services Committee of the City of Melbourne. Had the MRA not taken the initiative to address the Committee, the recommendation stood a very good chance of being accepted and put before Council. I thank those stalwarts who accompanied the task force in the calculated offensive launched against this blatant attack on our rights. A very special thanks to the eloquence of our own Harry Listoken, whose fervor for this topic was undeniably a force in gaining a deferment of any decision before proper consultation on the matter with ourselves and other motorcycling bodies.

Finally, I am buoyed by the reduction in

the motorcycle toll for this year to date. At the time of going to print, we are currently running at 57% less than for the same period last year. If only we could be sure that this trend will continue. The authorities will no doubt claim that an increase in speed cameras and an escalation of enforcement techniques is responsible for this reduction, I would prefer to subscribe to the notion that we, as road users have become more responsible in the areas of hazard awareness and further training recognition.

Whatever the reasons, let's work together to make sure toll continues to fall. Let us also continue to be on the alert for any new or regenerated attacks on our rights.

Vale:

March/April 2003 has seen us mourn the passing of those near and dear to many of us, I express my sincere condolences to Sarah Jane for the loss of her much loved mother Sue, D J McCarthy who lost his father and of course the family of racing legend, Barry Sheene. Our prayers are with you all.

Ride Safe, Alex Money.



Show'n'Shine: MRA wins the trophy for the Best Presented Club in the annual HART Ride for Life weekend held at the HART Tullamarine training facility on April 12-13. More than 1500 people attended the weekend to test ride Honda's latest bikes, buy motorcycle clothing at greatly reduced prices and learn about motorcycle safety and training. Dean Nightingale presents the trophy to MRA President Alex Money.

onlydays

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Ride Calendar

All rides leave from 22 Ross Street South Melbourne at 10 AM unless otherwise stated and have a full tank of petrol.

June 1 Category A

Ride to Redesdale Ride leader John Crans 0418 530 572

June 22 Category C

Ride to Flowerdale
Ride leader Russell Oates 0417 115

July 6 Category A

Ride to Korumburra Leave from Ferntree Gully, east of market.

Meet at 9am, leave 9.30am. Ride leader DJ, ph: 0403 213

July 27

Ride to Belgrave Leave from Ross Street, 10am. Ride leaders Ross & Mark.

Categories:

- A: For those who enjoy tight corners and open roads.
- B: For those who enjoy the sights of our Australian country side in a more sedate style in the company of riders of the same interests and calibre.
- C: For those who have just started off enjoying riding a bike and want to gain more experience.

Korumburra RIDE REPORT 2/3/03

By DJ McCarthy

The starting point for this ride was the Royal Hotel. There were only four of us. Me on the SV, Neil on the scooter, Perry on the Triumph, and Tony on his 1300cc. I figured the early rain had scared others away but it was fine now, I didn't even bother pulling on plastic over the Draggin Jeans. We joking had a brief discussion about who was going to be tail-ender, the linguistics of corner marking with a group of four.

As we headed up to Belgrave the weather started to get a little damper. It got worse, by the time we reached Yellingbo and then on to the Red Parrot Café in Noojee. At about this time I discovered most of my ten-year-old winter gear was not as waterproof as it used to be. I also found out at Noojee that Perry didn't know where the Red Parrot was and he rode us straight to the Toolshed bar. Interesting place up a dirt track, and I mean 'up'. It was 12:30, I knew we wouldn't make Korumburra and the Austral Hotel for lunch and I couldn't get a signal on the phone again so we decided to have lunch at the Toolshed. The weather improved finally and after changing gloves again, I led the valiant troupe back down the track, past the Red Parrot and the pub and turned right up the windy road toward Neerim North. I nearly 'had a cow' on this 'lesser known' road. When I turned a corner and found, well, a cow. I scared her more apparently and she took off.

A quick check of the mirrors to see whether the cow had trampled anyone and we pushed on to Neerim

Junction. As time had run short we decided to turn right at Rokeby over to Drouin, effectively cutting 100 km of the best roads off the route. They'll have to wait until another time.

Tuesday night is trivia night!

Tuesday night is trivia night for Melbourne motorcyclists with a weekly fun competition held at the cosy Quiet Man Irish pub in Flemington. It's a free event and is run by a professional "Triviamaster".

Everyone on two wheels is invited, with riders meeting from 7:00pm outside the Flinders Street entrance to Federation Square and leaving at 7:30pm for the short ride to Flemington for a 8:00pm trivia start.

Or if you don't want to make the ride then just meet us at The Quiet Man located at 271 Racecourse Road, Flemington. Our team is called "Rebels Without A Clue" and if you get there late we're not hard to find J.

The Quiet Man serves great beer (Aussie & Irish) and tasty meals are available. For more pub information checkout www.the-quietman.com.au.

It's a fun night with lots of laughs as well as prizes/giveaways.





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study







Grace Placencio "Legal Eagle"

AS A motorcyclist you may ride all your life without having a serious accident, but then one day you just might...

And this is when you are well advised to contact a personal injury litigation lawyer such as Grace Placencio who has been the MRA's 'legal eagle' since 1995.

Grace has represented over 200 injured riders and has successfully obtained compensation for each and every one of them. The payouts have ranged from \$5000 to \$700,000 in some instances.

"I have represented motorcyclists who have suffered severe psychological injuries, permanent scarring and disfigurement and some who have become paraplegic and quadriplegic as a result of their injuries."

In December 2002, Grace took the bold step and formed her own law firm – Grace Placencio Davies & Company Lawyers opposite the Alfred

Hospital in St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. As one of Victoria's most experienced personal injury lawyers specialising in motorcycle accident claims, most of her clients are referred to her by other motorcyclists.

This reputation first started in 1995 when, as a partner with Greensborough firm David Stagg, Tonkin & Placencio, she became involved with the MRA. "I was invited to join the

"I was invited to join the 1995 Toy Run and I was

1995 Toy Run and I was so impressed that I went to the Elizabeth St MRA headquarters and formally introduced myself offering my services as a personal injuries lawyer for MRA members.

"I remember interviewing my first motorcyclist client at Elizabeth St and I am delighted to advise the case finally resolved successfully in his favour in late 2002 after an enormous battle against four Defendants: the TAC, the relevant council, a road works company and a motorcyclist.

Grace said the jury of six found that the council was negligent in not having put up proper signs diverting traffic from major road works. "Had they placed proper signs the accident would have been avoided."

The Ferntree Gully man was awarded \$500,000 for his injuries.

As well as six years experience, (three years as a partner) with the Greensborough firm, Grace was also a partner for two years with law firm Ryan Maloney Anderson in St Kilda Rd, Melbourne.

Grace said her goal has always been to obtain compensation for injured riders as well as injured persons in the community. All her cases are on a "no compensation no charge" basis.

"I believe each individual is entitled to be compensated and deserves the best representation he or she can have irrespective of whether or not they have the financial means to pay for legal representation."

A common misconception by motorcyclists when it comes to seeking compensation, Grace said, is "I can't claim compensation anybody because I am at fault."

"But that is not always true and every road user whether they are at fault or not is entitled to compensation," she said.

In any accident that arrises out of driving a motor vehicle, you are entitled to loss of earnings and a lump sum payout if you have been assessed as having an 11% bodily impairment or more and of course, if the accident is not your fault, then provided you have a serious injury you can bring common law proceedings.

I've come across so many people who have never claimed from an accident.

"But if you don't lodge a claim within 12 months you loose your right to make a claim."

In representing motorcyclists, Grace often calls upon senior barristers, Queen's Counsel, Road Accident Reconstruction experts and other members of the legal and medical profession.

"These professionals are prepared to work for me until successful outcome of my client's cases."

In some accidents, the motorcyclist can also claim for property damage.

"It could be a situation where there is no bodily injuries but there is extensive damage to the motorcycle and riding gear."

"Recently, I settled a case for a female motorcyclist whose bike and riding gear were damaged to the value of \$5000 when a dog ran across the road into her oncoming path. I was able to obtain compensation from the dog's owner via



their home and contents insurer pursuant to the Domestic & Ferral Nuisance Animals Act."

Since 1997, Grace has also been the MRA's Public Officer - a role that enables her to promote the wellbeing of the MRA to other members of the community, the legal fraternity and the TAC.

Following that fateful day, when Grace signed on as a volunteer at Elizabeth St, she soon found herself a volunteer with the MRA's 4Bs (Bent and Buckled Bikies Bureau) - who attended hospitals to interview injured riders, give moral support and advice on issues such as compensation, insurance claims and government benefits.

"During my years of involvement with the MRA, I have had pleasure in meeting the various Presidents who have worked so hard for the MRA together with their Board members who are all volunteers who keep the Association alive.

"I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to you all."

The TAC helpline is 1300 654 329.

Legal Help

The MRA recommends the following personal injury lawyers who are experts in transport accident claims. They will give initial phone or in person advice without costs and will visit you in hospital if required.

Tim Connor Solicitor Level 10, 350 Queens St Melbourne Ph: (03) 9898 0000 Fax: (03) 9898 0333 Michael Lombard Holding Redlich Lawyers & Consultants 350 William St Melbourne Ph: 9321 9764 Grace Placencio Davies & Co. Lawyers Suite 5, Level 5, 517 St Kilda Rd Melbourne VIC 3004 Ph: (03) 9867 7769 Fax: (03) 9867 7750 Email: gplacencio@bigpond.com



Front number plates reach Stage Four

STAGE 4 of VicRoads investigation into fitting front number plates on motorcycles began on April 28.

"We will look at about 300 motorbikes to see whether or not a plate can be fitted," said Eric Howard, VicRoads Roads Safety general manager. The three-month study titled 'Technical Developments', will involve sticking front number plate labels on bikes with fairings and the aerodynamic testing of naked bikes fitted with a mounted number plates. A major part of the study will involve using 3D modelling in a wind tunnel. "This is to assess if a front number plate affects the bike and its handling in any way," Mr Howard said. In August, a report of Stage 4 would be presented to Transport Minister Peter Batchelor at Ministerial Council meeting. Following minister's

approval of the report, prototypes of both mounted and adhesive number plates would be developed and trailed under real life conditions, Mr Howard said. And who pays if the front number plate is introduced?

"There is some debate about whether or not the front number plate should be brought in through motorcycle registrations," Mr Howard said. However, none of the \$10.2 million collected over the three-year life of the \$50 TAC levy on motorcycle registrations would be used to pay for front number plates, he added.

Stage 3 of the Front Number Plate study, completed in December 2002, involved measuring 30 makes and models of naked motorcycles and working out whether the fixtures and decals could be fitted to these bikes without fairings.

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MRAA QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING

DATE: Saturday 21 June 2003 TIME: 1:00pm sharp - 3:30pm finish

LOCATION: Bells Hotel, 157 Moray Street South Melbourne

All MRA Members and Visitors are welcome.

Please sign the Register Book

AGENDA:

- 1. Welcome the Chairperson for the day
- 2. Confirm Attendance Register list and any proxies
- 3. Apologies
- 4. Minutes of OGM 01 March 2003
- 5. MRAA Board Reports
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Membership Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary: Includes MRAA Business Plan-Stage 2
- 6. Committee Reports
 - Rides Committee: Report by Anton Lange
 - Poker Run Sunday 9 February 2003
 - Events Committee: Report by Marcel Gomperts
 - 2003 Toy Run
 - MRA GP Run-Cranbourne-Phillip Island
 - AGPC F1 Motorcycle Parking
 - Advocacy Committee: Report by Dean Nightingale
 - Wire Rope Barriers
 - \$50 Tax levy
 - Footpath parking Harry Listoken
- 7. General Business
- 9. Set date for next Quarterly General Meeting suggested date Saturday 6th September 2003

WELCOME MR. TREASURER

The Board is pleased to announce the appointment of John Karmouche as MRA treasurer, following the decision by Faye Kerridge to step down after a mammoth term in office.

We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Faye for a job well done. You have guided our finances through some very stormy times Faye, and we wish you well in your retirement, but please, don't be a stranger.

To John, we extend a very warm welcome and are sure that you will bring with you the same enthusiasm and spark which you have shown on the many projects you have undertaken in other, unofficial roles. We all remember with pride your efforts in the WRB issue.

Part of Johns' initial duties will be to put in place our new account-keeping software, so be prepared for some fancy reporting on our finance in the future.

The rest of the Board look forward to a long and successful term in office for our new "Bean Counter".

Faye and Kerrie Ritchie, our former Secretary, have both been awarded well-deserved Honorary Life Memberships in recognition for services to the MRA. Our heartfelt thanks to you both.

The Board.

Noise emissions debate

WHAT is the difference between a Mack truck and a Harley Davidson motorcycle? For a start, the Harley could easily receive a \$500 fine for being perceived as too noisy and the truck would not.

However, it is the MRA's intention to change these current unfair laws relating to motorcycle noise emissions, said MRA member Harry Listokin who is heading the task force to bring about the change.

He said a motorcycle pulled up by a mobile EPA testing unit can expect to receive a fine of \$500 as a first offence if his or her exhaust doesn't conform to the current decibel noise level regulations.

"This is a truly draconian fine and totally non-commensurate with the offence. When we consider road traffic laws which actually concern safety such as speeding, talking on a mobile phone while driving or even alcohol offences nowhere is the initial fine this high." Harry said.

"The government have imposed a \$50 levy for motorcyclists on the pretext they will use this money to improve motorcycle safety yet when asked where the funds are actually going, no one seems to be able to tell us and I suspect it is going into that black hole called general revenue which doesn't help the motorcycle fraternity at all."

Harry said common sense dictates that allowing a motorcycle to be heard by motorists (within reason) goes a hell of a long way to prevent unnecessary accidents.

"There also appear anomalies and inequities in the current EPA Noise Emission Laws in that trucks using exhaust brakes seem to be exempt from scrutiny yet bikes are a prime target for revenue raising."



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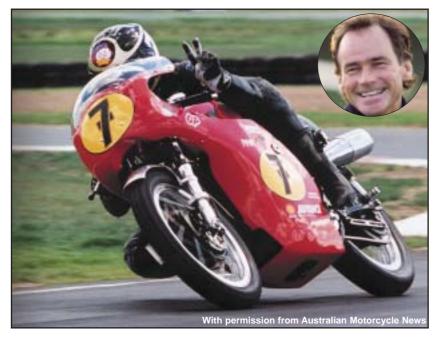
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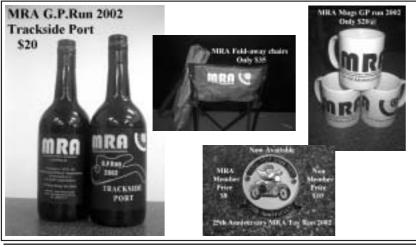
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MRA pays tribute to Barry Sheen





WHEN news broke Barry Sheene had lost his battle with cancer on March 10, the MRA received calls from motorcyclists asking about a tribute ride for Bazza - "for they wanted to pay their last respects."

Motorcycle racing lost a great GP 500cc champion, but motorcyclists everywhere lost a man who represented the true spirit of motorcycling. And on March 29, more than 250 riders gathered in Cranbourne for the Barry Sheene Tribute Ride to Phillip Island for the World Superbike race. Words of dedication and a prayer with a minutes' silence set the mood for a 'ride of reflection' to the circuit where Sheene still holds the 500cc Classic lap record of 1:51.57.

MRA President Alex Money said Barry's passing had left a big hole in motorcycling and motor sport in general.

"When Barry Sheene moved from the UK he chose Australia as his home but he was enough of a larrikin to be a true Aussie. He was held in high esteem worldwide but especially by motorcyclists because he was always ready to step in and help others," Alex said.

Barry Sheene's race career spanned from 1968 to 1984. He won 19 500GPs.

Born 11 September 1950, Barry is survived by his wife Stephanie, daughter Sidonie 18 and son Freddie 14.



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