2009 Motorcyclists of the Year...KIDS!
[at the center of the year's biggest story]
NICE WORK, BOB AND SHERMI

The article in your November issue about New Hampshire state legislators Bob Letourneau and Sherri Packard epitomizes what it means to live in a state whose motto is “Live Free or Die!” These two men stand for and by that pledge.

They stand tall among motorcyclists, legislators, and are truly fine examples to us all. If more folks got as involved as these two are, we would have a less difficult time passing legislation favorable to motorcycles, as well as enhancing the overall enjoyment and safety of our sport. May their flags wave long and proudly!

William Darling
AMA No. 221856
Longs, S.C.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT SOUND METERS

I just got around to reading the September issue (loved it, by the way) and had one comment. You told us nothing about the sound measurement device pictured on page 46. Who makes it (or them)? Who can purchase it? Is there training on its use? Are there certifications required? Are there periodic recalibrations? Will the manufacturer or AMA be offering tests at upcoming rallies?

Allen Hook
AMA No. 251555
Avon Lake, Ohio

Thanks for the questions, Allen. We answer a lot of them in this issue, on page 16, which offers a simplified view of how to conduct a sound test, and offers information on a video we’ve posted on AmericanMotorcyclist.com. As for the cost, good “Type 2” sound meters typically run a couple hundred dollars. Because of the high price, the AMA encourages clubs and promoters to purchase the devices for use at motorcycle gatherings, and we offer a grant program. Equipment info: ChamHelp.com.

THEY REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If the November issue is an example of the new format, keep up the good work. The cover and article on two old freedom fighters for bikers’ rights were right on.

It’s good to see people with that kind of integrity being recognized. These two, Sherm and Bob, show that bikers can and do achieve positions that can directly represent us in the legislature. If only every state could have this caliber of representation.

Thanks for recognizing these two and letting the world know what they do.

Chuck Coulter
AMA No. 482961
Boise, Idaho

GOOD JOB ON THE SOUND ISSUE

I recently picked up an issue of American Motorcyclist and read about your efforts to promote motorcycle noise control.

My cycling experiences go back 45 years and yes, I once owned a bike with a megaphone exhaust.

Being older and, hopefully, wiser, I realize that’s not good for my ears or others’ ears as well.

Kudos for taking on this important topic.

Good luck!

Chuck Prince
AMA No. 1086758
Columbus, Ga.

IMPRESSIONED WITH DAVID HOUGH

Last weekend I found David Hough’s book, Proficient Motorcycling, in the public library.

Today, I found him in your magazine as an inductee into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame, and I find myself moved to say, “Hip, hip, hooray!” for this wise writer.

A little bit of what he shares isn’t new to me, since I’ve lived on bicycles all my life.

But after teaching myself to ride something with not only two wheels, but also an engine, at age 55, I find Hough’s discussions of such things as countersteering, traction with throttle, decreasing radius turns, and situational awareness to be the next best thing to a motorcycle safety course, which I’m now committed to taking when they start up again next year.

Thanks for honoring Hough’s work.

Dr. Noel A. Taylor
AMA No. 1089614
Columbus, Ind.

A SHOUT OUT TO ONE OF OUR OWN

Karl Duffner, a well-known member of the antique motorcycle community worldwide, has taken ill.

While some AMA members might not recognize Karl by name, many will recognize his motorcycles: His “People’s Choice”-winning “Dick Marin Special” 1960 BSA Gold Star Cafe Racer has been on the front cover of more than one big-name magazine, and is prominently featured in the Metro Racing catalog. His ribbon-winning 1954 BMW R60 purchased by Karl for $550 on March 18, 1959, from a friend’s dad, who purchased it new on May 19, 1954; his blue-and-white 1962 Harley Davidson Sportster OH which he bought new in ’62; or his BMW 1974 R90S bought new in 1974 that has 313,000-plus miles.

Karl has attended Daytona for 40-plus years, and at times has chosen to ride the 2,000-mile round trip on a Honda 250 Rebel or one the R90S. Karl is a lifelong enthusiast whose generosity and easy-going manner has touched many fellow riders. We wish him all the best!

On behalf of Karl’s many friends,
Steve Rooney
AMA No. 548168
Williamstown, N.J.

CONGRESS AT WORK

The following letter was received from a delegate to AMA Congress, the group that formulates AMA rule-changes for approval by the AMA Board of Directors.

After attending the AMA Congress meeting in October, I know that the spirit of democracy, and the conduct of representative governing, is alive and well among the members and leaders of the American Motorcyclist Association.

Three days of discussion, disagreement and consensus revealed to this rookie representative the true essence of a democratic society. Issues concerning the past, present and future operation of the
NEW BIKE TEST PROCEDURE GAINING GROUND ON THE ISSUE OF MOTORCYCLE SOUND

SOUND GURU CHRIS REAL EXPLAINS THE NEW STREETBIKE TEST

When Chris Real rides his motorcycle near his home in Upland, Calif., he always passes a sign at the border of a private community that upsets him: “No Motorcycles Allowed Beyond This Point.”

“I hate that sign,” said Real, a nationally recognized sound expert and president of DPS Technical (www.ChemiHelp.com). “I have dealt with noise by not allowing motorcycles there.”

When there is a sound problem, Real explained in a talk to delegates at the AMA Congress held in Columbus, Ohio, Oct. 8-10, people need to understand it, identify it, study it and then control it.

A new Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) sound test procedure—SAE J2825, “Measurement of Exhaust Sound Pressure Levels of Stationary On-Highway Motorcycles”—is a tool to be used when dealing with sound issues, said Real, who helped develop the procedure.

“It was developed for roadside sound measurement and control of excessively loud motorcycles with significantly modified exhaust systems,” he said. Only very loud motorcycle exhausts would fail the procedure, he said.

The new procedure sets a decibel limit of 92 dBA at idle for all motorcycles. Motorcycles with three or four cylinders have a decibel limit of 100 dBA at 5,000 rpm or 75 percent of maximum engine speed, whichever is less, when using what is known as the “set” rpm test; or for a “swept” test that involves slowly accelerating to the specified rpm.

All other motorcycles have a decibel limit of 96 dBA at 2,000 rpm, or 75 percent of maximum engine speed, whichever is less, for the set or swept test.

“The 100 dBA is with your ear 20 inches away from the exhaust pipe, not at a sidewalk café,” Real said, addressing the source of many citizen complaints about motorcycle sound.

How To Conduct A Sound Test

Conducting an SAE J2825 sound test procedure on an on-highway motorcycle may seem daunting, but it’s easy. Here’s how to do it:

1. Find a clear test site. No wall or sign should be within 8 feet of the motorcycle.

2. Decide whether you want to use the idle, set rpm or swept rpm test procedure. The idle test procedure requires that the motorcycle engine run for at least 5 seconds at idle. The set rpm procedure requires that the motorcycle operator run the engine at the test speed for that motorcycle—5,000 rpm for three- and four-cylinder motors, and 2,000 rpm for all others—for at least two seconds. The swept rpm procedure requires that the engine be slowly accelerated to the test rpm. When the specified engine speed is reached, the throttle is quickly closed. The acceleration should take at least two seconds.

3. Have someone sit on the motorcycle in a normal riding position with one or both feet on the ground. Or you can put the motorcycle up on its center stand, if it has one, or put the front wheel in a restraint so that the bike is vertical. If you are conducting just the “idle” test, you can put the motorcycle on its side stand or center stand without someone sitting on the bike.

4. Set the sound meter for an A-weighting and for slow dynamic response. (For the swept test the meter should be set for a fast dynamic response.) Hold the sound meter microphone 20 inches from the exhaust outlet at a 45-degree angle to the normal line of travel of the motorcycle and at the same height as the exhaust outlet.

5. If the motorcycle has more than one exhaust outlet, test each side of the motorcycle that has an outlet.

6. Take three readings to confirm your data.

To see a video that shows how to conduct a sound test, go to YouTube.com/AmericanMotorcyclist.