

NorCal Voyagers Newsletter

September 2004



Your Club Newsletter

You have something you want to see in the NorCal Voyagers Newsletter??? Send it along to news@norcalvoyagers.org and we'll get it in the next issue. You can also send articles to any board member in the club and they will get it to the editor.

We're especially interested in doing personal stories about our members. You don't have to go into a lot of detail, but knowing a bit about our members goes a long way towards a more enjoyable friendship. Get those pictures, campfire stories, and humorous biking experiences out and send them off to the editor for the next newsletter!

Useful Internet Links

Here are some web pages that may be useful to our club members:

Northern California Voyagers Club

<http://www.norcalvoyagers.org>

American Voyager Association (AVA)

<http://www.csonline.net/cybersite/american.htm>

American Motorcycle Association (AMA)

<http://www.ama-cycle.org/>

This Month...

CALIFORNIA/OREGON TOUR

SEP 10-17

Join the club with a weeklong tour of Northern California and Central Oregon.

CLUB MEETING

SEP 25

Monthly Meeting at Wool Growers Restaurant in Los Banos (12 noon)



Next Month...

CAMPING AT SAN LUIS RESERVOIR

OCT 8-10

Just west of Los Banos is the San Luis Reservoir Recreation Area. Camp with the NCVV during this weekend in October.

{See the Web Site for details}

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Club Information/Business

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello NCVV members & Friends. This will be a little shorter than my usual 3 page blab session. We had a nice camp out at the Vets Park in Monterey, The up side was we had 5 members show up and 3 guest, plus Fritz Wells even made an appearance. That was very nice; we were beginning to think he was dead. The weather was much better than what we had over the 4th of July. At least we had about ½ a day of sunshine each day. The down side; we were not allowed to have a camp fire, due to the extreme dry conditions. This will change after the first rain.

We held our monthly meeting on August 28th, at Espana's Mexican restaurant in Los Banos. We hashed out a few items; you can read about that in the minutes you will receive in the new letter.

Don Brubaker is going to Death Valley in January to camp with the IBMC. And there have been some questions raised about the club sponsoring a camp out there in November. I have decided to try setting this one up for November the 19th through 21st. Leave home on the 19th and come home on the 22nd. This will depend entirely on the weather. I would like for those of you that would like to make this trip to contact me no later than the 15th of October.

Starting the 28th of August, 2004 all of our monthly meetings will be held in Los Banos rather than trying to have one at our events. We have found this doesn't work very well. It cuts into Don Brubaker's beer drinking time, along with mine. Our meetings will be held on the last Saturday of every month in Los Banos. Our next one will be at the Wool Growers Restaurant, 609 H Street, Los Banos Ca. Phone #1-209-862-4593. I

made reservations for the 25th of September @ 12:00pm.

I also want to remind everyone that we do have club flags now, and we are working on purchasing some flag poles that will take the stress of a flag flapping in the breeze. This will alleviate breaking your antennas off. The flags are \$10.00 each, and we will soon have some new polo shirts with our new and improved club logo. It's the same as the old one, just a little smaller and now with brighter colors. There are no prices available at this time. But I will send them out when we figure out what it is per shirt.

The September event will be the 6-day tour of Nor Cal & Oregon.

Our next event is a camp out October 8 -9 & 10 at the San Luis Reservoir just west of I - 5 on HWY. 152. You turn off to your south about 1 mile west of the HWY. 33 off ramp. The camp grounds are about 2.5 miles back off the hwy. I took a ride through there last weekend on my way home from Monterey. The grass is all dead and it doesn't look all that appealing right now. They used to keep the grass nice and green all year round. I asked the camp host what happened to the grounds program. He said the state couldn't afford to pay the employees to maintain the grounds, so they let them go, along with the camp grounds. The up side to this is it's nice and quiet back in there and there are fish in the lake if there's still water in it by October. They have water at almost all camp sites and hot showers. Even flush toilets. And lots of trees for shade, It should be nice weather by then.

That's about all I have for this month. Ride safely and keep the rubber side down.

Cheers, Uncle Ray
President NorCal Voyagers

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AUGUST MEETING MINUTES

Meeting was called to order @ 1:10 pm. New members who have never attended a meeting before were introduced. Members were, Bob Lahn, Bob Sparks, and Don Rochester. There were a total of 12 members present for this meeting.

Minutes from last meeting: none available.

Treasurers Report: No current account balance available, Ray read the balance from the June meeting; we had a balance of \$1,463.31. Ray thinks there should be a balance of around \$1,500.00.

New Business:

Ray asked if there was anyone present that was going to make the September 6-day ride, Sept 10th through 16th. Don Brubaker said he was.

Ray asked if we wanted to hold a meeting in Los Banos every month, and forgo trying to have a meeting at our events. There was a motion placed on the floor and was seconded, a show of hands for yes & no. Yes was the majority, the motion carried.

It was suggested we hold the meeting on the last Saturday of every month. A motion was put on the floor and seconded, the motion carried. All meetings will be held on the last Saturday of each month. Our next meeting will be at the Wool Growers, 609 H Street, Los Banos Ca. Phone 1-209-826-4593. On September 25th, 2004.

Ray asked if we were ready and willing to sponsor a ride Inn in 2005, he asked for a show of hands of those in favor & those opposed. The opposed carried. So we will not sponsor a Ride Inn in 2005.

Ray reminded everyone that we have elections coming up in about 3 months, and wants everyone to start thinking about taking a position on the board. He asked for a show of hands from those that would be willing to hold a position on the board. There were no hands raised.

Ray asked for volunteers to sponsor an event in 2005, He asked each person to choose which month they would like to have. They can contact him later with this information. This also pertains to the members that weren't present at the meeting. (See "What's New" on the web page for host signup - editor).

Ray reminded everyone they should make an effort to be more friendly and make all new members as welcome as possible. This makes new members feel more at ease and more like they are welcome as new members. Kind of like the new kid on the block.

Bryce Eichholz showed off his new polo shirt with the clubs new "down sized and up graded" logo. He asked for a show of hands of those that liked it and those apposed. The majority liked it. So we will start ordering them as our stock of tee shirts drops.

Ray asked if anyone had any questions on anything we covered so far, there were none. So he asked if anyone had anything they would like to bring up and talk about, there were none. He asked for a motion to close the meeting, a motion was made and was seconded, the motion carried.

Ray closed the meeting @1:48 pm.

Written by and approved by, Uncle Ray Walls

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MEMBER TIPS AND INFORMATION

Got a tip for the club? Do you do your own maintenance? Have you found a real great place to get your bike worked on? Share your secrets and experiences with the club by sending an article and pictures to the editor. We all can learn from your experiences!

WHEEL BALANCER

Here is a wheel balancer you can make for a small cost. I used a set of bearings I had left over from another project but any non-friction bearing will work fine.



The horizontal adjusting bar is for different width wheels and the vertical one is to make the wheel level. Use the stock axle for the wheel you are balancing. Spin the wheel slightly and the heavier part of the wheel will settle to the bottom. By placing different amounts of weight on the opposite side of the wheel, you can find a good balance.

I got the idea from one I saw on the net. I've already balanced a few wheels on this thing and it works great. I took the first couple of wheels I did to the dealer to see how it came out on their high-speed balancer. They said they were perfect. A welder is required to build this balancer. That and your imagination...



Fritz Wells, member NorCal Voyagers

OTHER EVENTS

2nd Annual Laughlin Run to Fun, hosted by Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort Hotel & Casino in Laughlin Nevada, Oct 21-24.

Proceeds benefit charities and the cost is only \$225 for the package (Thu/Fri/Sat), which includes entry into the Event and Hotel stay at the Riverside Resort (registration for events without hotel available).

Lots of events are planned and some of our club members attended last year (and said it was a very good event to attend).

To get more information or to register on-line, go to:

<http://www.laughlinruntofun.com>

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THE HISTORY OF MOTORCYCLE HELMETS – DEAD OR ALIVE?

Dead or alive? You betcha! That's been the question surrounding the use of motorcycle helmets for many decades. And the big question is: Whose choice is it? That's what we're going to explore here in this history of motorcycle helmets. We'll follow the path of the laws through the years, along with the effects of those laws – from both sides. It's an interesting controversy. And the fact that it's *still* not settled, gives it even more significance.

THE FIRST MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

The first motorcycle was reported to have been invented by Gottlieb Daimler in 1885. We don't think it was built for speed – not like motorcycles today. And with speed not being a factor, nobody really thought of motorcycle helmets. But as people developed their need for speed, motorcycles were made to go faster.

Between 1931 and 1953, the American race for the fastest motorcycle was run by two competitors – Harley-Davidson and Indian Motorcycles. But as the speed of motorcycles increased, so did the number of accident fatalities. It was only then that University of Southern California (USC) Professor C.F. "Red" Lombard developed a motorcycle helmet designed to absorb the shock of an impact. Along with the layer of comfort padding in a helmet, this helmet also had another outer layer of padding that not only absorbed, but spread out the energy created by impact.

In 1953, Mr. Lombard applied for a patent for his helmet. This was the beginning of the development of the modern-day motorcycle helmet. The standard had been set, and helmet manufacturers quickly followed Lombard's lead.

SAFETY AGENCIES SEE A NEED FOR MOTORCYCLE HELMETS

Since the first motorcycle helmet was introduced, safety agencies, many of them government, recognized the need for head protection for riders. The number of head and neck injuries was increasing, and the use of helmets had been proven to reduce this number. So the safety agencies lobbied for mandatory helmet laws.

One safety agency that wasn't government-aided was the Snell Memorial Foundation. It was formed in 1957, in memory of William "Pete" Snell, a sports car racer fatally injured in a racing accident. His friends and widow formed the Foundation for the purpose of providing independent motorcycle helmet testing, with no bias to the government or the manufacturer. Their testing focused on performance, rather than materials and design. They're now recognized and respected as the world leader in helmet testing. Every good helmet has a Snell sticker in it.

In 1958, the California Highway Patrol set an example by requiring their motorcycle officers to wear helmets. These examples weren't limited just to America. For instance, in Australia, on January 1, 1961, the world's first mandatory motorcycle helmet law was introduced.

Then the safety agencies really got into the act. In 1966, the American National Safety Standard for Motorcycle Helmets was introduced, requiring performance standards for helmets that manufacturers were obligated to meet. The following year, the U.S. federal government introduced the Highway Safety Act of 1966 that required states to have mandatory helmet laws if they wanted to receive federal funds for highway maintenance and construction. This plan had its desired effect – by 1975, 47 states had complied.

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In 1974, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) introduced their Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218 (FMVSS 218) for Motorcycle Helmets. These strict standards were mandatory for helmet manufacturers and every helmet was required to have a DOT-approved sticker inside. In 1997, the USC Head Protection Research Laboratories (HPRL) lobbied the government to upgrade the FMVSS 218.

MANDATORY MOTORCYCLE HELMET LAWS – RIGHT OR WRONG?

But in 1975, for some reason, Congress withdrew the requirement and, within 3 years, half the states had repealed their laws. The number of motorcycle injuries and fatalities again rose sharply. What seemed to have been forgotten is that motorcyclists are injured or killed in over 80% of accidents. A motorcyclist is 21 times more likely to be killed, per mile driven, than a car driver. Wearing a helmet would reduce that risk by 29%.

Let's take Louisiana, for example, one of the states that repealed their helmet law. In 1982, they reinstated mandatory helmet use, and the number of motorcycle deaths was immediately reduced by 30%. Those figures were reflected by many other states when they followed suit.

Throughout the controversy over mandatory helmet laws, helmet manufacturers did what they could to provide better protection to riders. In 1967, the first full facial helmet was introduced, providing improved vision. Stronger and lighter helmets were developed, giving motorcycle riders more comfort and more protection. In the 1970s, technology created an increased use of energy-absorbing materials and better eye protection.

But with all this new technology, there were still those who thought they were becoming

more and more restricted by the new motorcycle helmets. "Freedom" was their cry, and they believed they had the Constitutional right to choose whether they should or shouldn't wear a helmet. They argued that it didn't affect anyone else if they were injured or killed in a crash. Well, they were wrong about that!

Many studies were done, measuring the effectiveness of [motorcycle helmets](#), along with the effects of motorcycle crashes. The results emphatically proved that those who chose not to wear a helmet hadn't considered a number of factors. For example, motorcyclists with head and neck injuries didn't carry health insurance, probably for the same reasons they didn't wear a helmet. So those bare-headed riders' hospitalization costs were paid for by the taxpayer. And that doesn't include the social ramifications of their accidents, involving family and friends.

MOTORCYCLE HELMET USE HAS INCREASED THROUGH NORTH AMERICA

Some other interesting statistics surrounding motorcycle helmet use were issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). They estimated that over \$13.3 billion was saved between 1984 and 1999 from helmet use. And they said that another \$11.1 billion could have been saved if all motorcyclists wore helmets. Another fact stood out – only 2% of all vehicles are motorcycles, but 8% of crash fatalities are motorcycle riders.

Now, only 3 states have no mandatory helmet laws. Many states require only minors (17-21 years old) to wear helmets, but this is hard to enforce. Only 20 states and the District of Columbia have all-rider mandatory helmet laws. What's the message there?

Another sector of motorcyclists is increasing in number – what's known as

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“Rubies” (rich urban bikers). This category of riders also has an increasing number of motorcycle fatalities. As people get older, they feel a stronger need for freedom, which includes the freedom to ride their motorcycles without a helmet. Again, the results speak for themselves – no helmets, more deaths.

In the U.S., the federal government can't make national helmet laws because it's under the jurisdiction of individual states, according to the Constitution. However, Canada doesn't have that structure, so they *have* been able to institute a national mandatory helmet law. And it's done its job. In 1973, there were 903 motorcycle fatalities in Canada. In 1997, with mandatory helmet laws in place, there were only 120. Does that prove the point?

Another positive development in Canada came in 1974, when the Canada Safety Council (CSC) introduced a Motorcycle Training Program called “Gearing Up”. It's a voluntary program, but by 2001, 19,000 motorcycle riders had completed the course. 70% of all newly-licensed motorcyclists take this training program. In Quebec, motorcyclists are required by law to take the training program. In Ontario, training is voluntary, but there are incentives for those who chose to take it. So it seems that Canada is setting the best example. Keep up the good work, Canada!

SHOULD YOU, OR SHOULDN'T YOU?

That's the big question these days for motorcycle riders – should you wear a helmet? The statistics lean heavily towards saying “Yes”. There will always be those who feel that their freedom is under attack, no matter what they're doing. It's up to the government to regulate those people. And, as we've seen, some state governments

choose not to do that. And the results in those states speak for themselves.

But our job here, in this history of motorcycle helmets and their governing laws, is just to present the facts. The decision is yours. You do have that freedom (well, in some states, you do). But if you don't want to end up as a statistic, you should follow the Canadian example and wear your motorcycle helmet. Happy riding!

About The Author

Gareth Marples is a successfully published [freelance writer](#), one of experience and diversity. He provides valuable tips and advice for consumers purchasing [motorcycle helmet laws](#), [Shoei motorcycle helmets](#) and [atv off road helmet goggles](#). His numerous articles offer moneysaving tips and valuable insight on typically confusing topics.

This article on the ["History of Motorcycle Helmets"](#) reprinted with permission.

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OTHER EVENTS

October 3rd - Ride for Kids, benefiting the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. **NEW LOCATION:** Yolo County Fairgrounds, 1125 East St., Woodland (enter on E. Gum Ave.) Sign in from 7:30 to 9:30. Ride leaves at 10 a.m. sharp. Entry fee: \$35 includes ride pin, continental breakfast and lunch. Volunteers and escorts are always needed. Contact 707-447-0860. Bill Neander - N. Cal. Ride for Kids Task Force

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The Last Page

And finally...

Don't forget to get the word out about our club, go to the following web link and print out the club brochure. Leave it at your favorite bike hangout or motorcycle shop:

www.norcalvoyagers.org/brochure.pdf

AUGUST CALENDAR

9/10-9/17 **TOUR:**
[N. Calif/Oregon \(Ray Walls\)](#)

Birthdays:

9/6 Joe Schoomaker
9/7 Brian Coldicott
9/22 Mary Tinlin
9/22 Bill Burns

Anniversaries:

9/3 Betty & Ray Walls



Thanks to You!

Thanks for reading the NorCal Voyagers Newsletter. We appreciate the input from the club membership and hope you enjoy this newsletter. If you have any comments, additions, corrections, articles, submissions, please send them along to: editor@norcalvoyagers.org

Please use this Application Form to join the club

Name 1 _____ E-Mail Address _____ Birthday _____
Name 2 _____ E-Mail Address _____ Birthday _____
Address _____ Phone Number _____ Anniversary _____
State _____ Zip Code _____

Number Joining the Club (check one): 1 [] 2 []

Mail Application and Payment (\$10 for 1 member / \$15 for 2 members) to:
Wayne Bright / 2149 Gibson Avenue (Louis, Ca. / 93611-0698