



# *Driving Freedom*

NMA Foundation

Vol. 19 • Issue 3

May/June 2008

*The NMA Foundation is a non-profit group dedicated to finding innovative ways to improve and protect the interests of North American motorists.*

Lane Courtesy  
Month

PAGE 7



**SLOWER TRAFFIC KEEP RIGHT**

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***Driving Freedom***

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There are an estimated **50 million tickets** issued each year. This year, that number is expected to climb. In fact, the problem is so severe, the *New York Times* recently published an article entitled, *The Taxman Hits in the Guise of a Traffic Cop*, which



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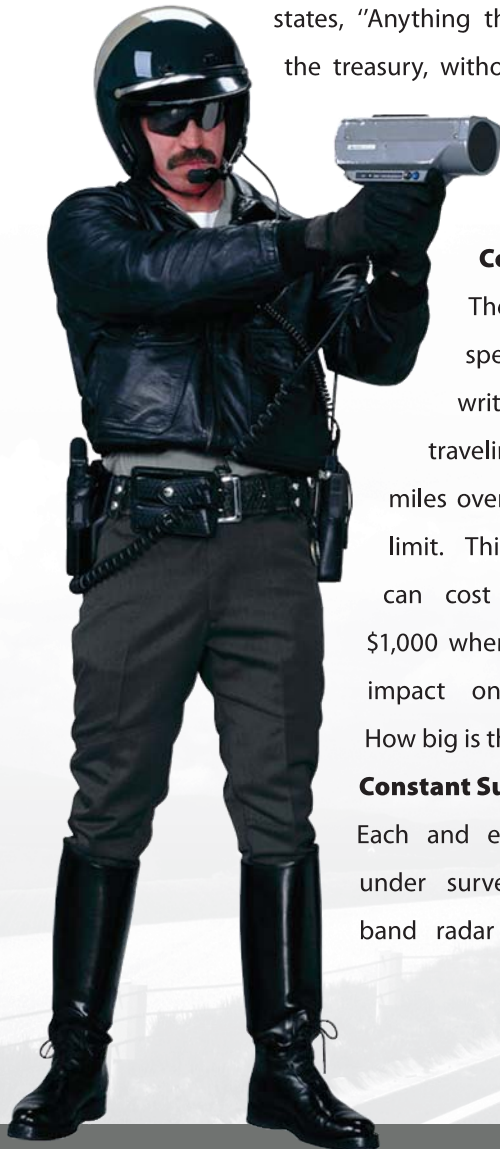
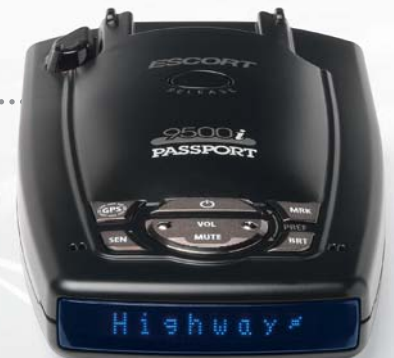
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Cover  
"Lane Courtesy Month"



## Where Do They Stand On Our Issues?

by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

In what has to be history's longest political campaign, I have yet to hear anything meaningful about public policies that directly affect motorists. Sure, there have been inane and uneducated comments stimulated by major events, like the collapse of the bridge in Minnesota. But there has been nothing of substance indicating that any of the candidates have spent a whiff of time developing a cogent, rational, and consistent set of transportation policies for the greatest system of personal mobility that the world has ever known.

Yes, the same criticism could be made for many other important subjects and government dominated functions. And, what politicians say during the campaign and what they do in office are often only vaguely connected or consistent. Still, what bothers and confounds me is that something so important to the economic well-being and social fabric of our country doesn't even merit a perfunctory or patronizing comment from the "stump?"

Consider, well over 200 million citizens drive, many millions spend two, three or more hours each day traveling on public roads. Hundreds of billions of dollars in fees and taxes are collected every year from highway users, ostensibly to build and maintain our system of roads, streets and highways.

Without this system of vehicles and roadways, the United States would have the economy of a third world country. Literally, every single person is reliant, in some fashion, on this system that provides products,

services, jobs, recreation, and security to all of us.

For starters, I'd like to know where the candidates stand on converting our freeways, expressways and other major highways into toll roads. What is their take on mass transit systems? Should they be run as a public welfare program funded by highway user fees, as is currently the practice, or should they be operated like a transportation system, one that is supported by its users?

Do they have any proposals for replacing user fees from liquid fuels if there is a major shift to electrically powered vehicles? How do they feel about camera and surveillance based enforcement systems? And, do they see the funding of court systems with traffic ticket revenue as a conflict of interest?

There have been obtuse references to highway infrastructure and the need for more money (what else is new, government needs more money!) but little recognition that major chunks of state and federal highway user fees are regularly siphoned off to balance budgets, fund non-highway projects, or fund projects that diminish travel system capacity.

It's probably too much to hope that subjects like speed traps, speed limits, breathalyzers, red light ticket cameras, and "professional courtesy" might at least rank up there with knocking down shots in small town taverns or bowling prowess. But, one should be careful about what one wishes for, the campaign staff would probably go to AAA and MADD for advice on position papers. Wouldn't that be a disaster! ■

## From The National Motorists Association Blog

<http://www.motorists.org/blog/>

*We've switched to a blog format for the news section on the NMA website and we encourage you to check it out. The blog will keep you up-to-date on the latest motorist news in an entertaining, easy-to-read format. We generally post new articles to the blog three days a week and you can comment on ongoing stories. You can even subscribe online to get blog updates in your email inbox! Just type [www.motorists.org/blog/](http://www.motorists.org/blog/) into your Internet browser to get started.*

### Maryland Police Refuse To Pay Speed Camera Tickets

Speed cameras in Montgomery County, Maryland have been ticketing motorists for quite some time now. Under their program, the tickets go to the owner of the vehicle instead of the driver. This is a common flaw in ticket camera systems across the country.

Local authorities have decided that it's acceptable to do this to avoid the hassle of tracking down the actual violators.

The average motorist who receives a speed camera ticket can either fight it in court or send in a check. However, the amount of effort and time necessary to get a speed camera ticket dismissed is substantial. As a result, most drivers — even innocent ones — choose to just pay the ticket in order to avoid taking time off work to go to court.

Limited court costs are a key reason why ticket camera programs are so profitable for local governments.

According to the Washington Post, police in Montgomery County are bucking the trend and have decided to use their union resources to avoid paying camera tickets:

*"Among the thousands of drivers who have been issued \$40 fines after being nabbed by Montgomery County's new speed cameras are scores of county police officers. The difference is, many of the officers are refusing to pay.*

*The officers are following the advice of their union, which says the citations are issued not to the driver but to the vehicle's owner — in this case, the county."*

So basically, they've decided to exploit the flaw in the system that they helped create.

The article continues:

*"That view has rankled Police Chief J. Thomas Manger and County Council Member Phil Andrews (D-Gaithersburg-Rockville), who chairs the Public Safety Committee.*

*"You can't have one set of laws for police officers and another one for the rest of the world," Andrews said."*

Unfortunately, too often this appears to be the case, creating unnecessary tension between police officers and motorists:

*"In recent weeks, officers have twice been photographed speeding past a camera and extending a middle finger, an act that police supervisors interpreted as a gesture of defiance. 'There is no excuse for that kind of behavior,' said Andrews, who was briefed on the incidents.*

*During the last eight months of 2007, the department's cameras recorded 224 instances in which county police vehicles were nabbed traveling more than 10 mph over the speed limit, the department disclosed this week in response to an inquiry from The Washington Post.*

*Of those citations, 76 were dismissed after supervisors determined that officers were responding to calls or had other valid reasons to exceed the speed limit. Nearly two-thirds of the remaining 148 fines have not been paid, including an unspecified number that remain under investigation, said Lt. Paul Starks, a police spokesman. He said the number of citations issued to police employees this year is not yet available."*

It will be interesting to see whether the officers will be held to the same standard as normal citizens, who would most certainly face consequences if they refused to pay their tickets. ■



## NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



Money is the name of the game in Congress this year—and not the way you might think. Congress faces constituents angry about high gas prices, less money coming in to the Treasury to pay for roads, and pressure to reduce our use of gasoline by increasing prices.

This summer it appears likely that just when families head out for vacation, gas will rise to, and possibly above, \$4 per gallon. People already want to know what, if anything, the government is going to do to lower this cost. Members of Congress generally respond to voters by assuring them that they will use every tool they have to lower gas prices—including suspending the federal gas tax.

Revenue for the federal Highway Trust Fund is projected to fall with reduced consumption because of high prices and increased use of ethanol that is not

subject to the same taxes. There is expected to be less money to pay for road maintenance and new road construction. This means there will be fewer critical infrastructure improvements, many of which are popular sources of publicity for their Congressional sponsors. Now Congress is casting about to find alternative revenue sources.

Environmental policy objectives push for higher energy prices to promote conservation and efficiency improvements. These same policies appear to encourage less investment in current infrastructure and more in mass transit initiatives. In fact, Congress is likely to endorse a climate change policy that will increase gas prices substantially in an effort to send a “price signal” to consumers to reduce energy consumption. (Just what we need!)

These policies are clearly at

odds and the proposals to address them are troubling. Congress appears likely to enhance the current funding mechanism for transportation by adding revenue to the system based on tolling—instituting tolls on roads long ago paid for by the public, building new roads using tolls to finance the construction, and instituting congestion pricing for road usage. All indications are that motorist related revenue will be diverted to pay for projects unrelated to road improvements or new highway construction.

At the most basic level, the NMA believes that if Congress is going to levy fees on drivers for using roads and justify those fees as necessary to maintain and improve our national highway system, then at least the fees ought to be dedicated to that purpose and not siphoned off for other policy objectives. ■

## Virginia Abuser Fees Officially Repealed

In late March, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine signed into law the final repeal of the abusive driver fees in Virginia.

Any driver who has already paid the exorbitant fees will be receiving a refund from the state. Motorists whose driving licenses were suspended because they could not afford to pay the massive fees will also regain their licenses.

The NMA has spoken strongly against these fees from the beginning and Virginia members followed suit. There’s no doubt that this put tremendous pressure on the legislators to

repeal their money-making scheme.

In fact, Kaine admitted that it was public outrage over the fees that drove the legislature to drop their plans.

“The citizens of Virginia expressed concerns regarding these fees, and based on these concerns, I have signed the bills that repeal the fees,” Kaine said.

The final repeal passed the General Assembly with only four dissenting votes under emergency procedures which allowed the law to take effect with the governor’s signature.

In the state House of Delegates, Majority Leader Morgan Griffith was

the lone vote in favor of keeping the fees. As a traffic lawyer, Griffith stood to benefit financially from motorists seeking legal assistance in fighting the massive fines.

State Senators Kenneth Stolle, Richard Stuart, and John Watkins provided the only votes in the upper chamber in favor of the fees.

State Delegate Dave Albo, a traffic lawyer who designed the abuser fee concept, endorsed its ultimate repeal. However, he only did so after a last ditch effort to salvage the law – and his private practice profits – failed. ■

## The Four Types of Red-Light Violations & How To Stop Them

*By James J. Baxter, NMA President*

Intersection safety issues usually break down into four general problem areas. Each of these situations has unique qualities that defy a universal solution:

### 1) Red light violations just at the moment of signal change.

These are the bread and butter of the ticket camera industry. They are also the most easily corrected violations. The vast majority of drivers willingly comply with traffic lights, and they want to comply – there is no coercion necessary.

This kind of violation is usually rectified by increasing the yellow light time a second or two.

To really do it right, a speed survey should be conducted to determine normal approach speeds for an intersection and then starting with three seconds for approach speeds of 25 mph or less and going up one half second for each five mph increase in approach speed, up to six seconds. When approach speeds hit 40 to 45 mph, an active warning sign properly placed upstream of the intersection is also a valuable tool.

### 2) Accidental entry later in the light cycle.

These are the kinds of crashes that often generate headlines, serious injuries, and fatalities.

This sometimes involves impairment; drugs, alcohol, health, fatigue or vision. Distractions are another possibility – including noisy children, cell phone use, spilled drinks, tuning the radio, and roadside activity.

There are several things that can be done to minimize these crashes, including making sure the lights are highly visible, increasing the signal head size, adding “backers” or other devices that help to differentiate the lights when there is high ambient light behind the light head, and using high intensity bulbs designed specifically for traffic lights.

Removing tree branches, conflicting signs, or anything else that might obscure the traffic light will also help to get the attention of the dull and distracted.

Clarifying signage and lane markings can reduce inadvertent entries into the intersection. Synchronizing traffic lights with the intention of minimizing traffic interruptions decreases the opportunities for accidentally entering on a red light. It also reduces travel time, fuel consumption, emissions, noise, and vehicle wear and tear.

This is also where an “all red” phase can sometimes be of value. Currently, all red phases are typically used to compensate for short yellow durations, but their ultimate value is more

likely to be an empty intersection during an accidental entry.

### 3) Intentional entries against the light.

Intentional entries include emergency vehicles, attempts to elude, entries when lights fail to cycle, and entries during periods when there is no traffic.

As most people know, emergency vehicles can be equipped with devices that allow them to momentarily control traffic lights. This requires compatible signals. The same technology could be employed to address “attempts to elude” by shutting down all entries to relevant intersections. However, this latter application may not be currently available.

On occasion, smaller vehicles fail to activate the sensors that initiate a traffic light cycle. While this is an irritant to the affected motorist, it is not a serious safety problem and some states have addressed this by allowing the motorist to proceed against the light when it is safe to do so.

A combination of newer signal technology, where light cycles are activated by the presence of vehicles, or the use of flashing yellow and flashing red during periods of very light traffic, should largely eliminate illegal entries against the light when the light is really not needed for traffic control purposes.

### 4) Congestion inspired violations.

One of the most commonly mentioned red light violations in urban areas is the left turn after the light has turned red, even when there is left turn arrow.

There are multiple options to addressing this problem, but sometimes congestion is so severe that the only solution is to prohibit the left turn at this location.

Some possible solutions include traffic light synchronization, longer left turn arrows during peak traffic times, right turn/U-turn combinations, more left turn opportunities before and after the problem intersection, and improving the underlying infrastructure.

This short rundown of traffic engineering solutions to intersection safety problems is not the last word on this subject.

However, it’s important to note that the suggestions and recommendations mentioned above actually address the causes of intersection accidents and propose proven solutions.

Conversely, the substitution of red-light ticket cameras will not address the causes of these accidents. In fact, they will cause more accidents. ■

## Fight That European Ticket!

*By Steve Carrellas, NMA New Jersey State Chapter Coordinator*

This is a story about fighting and winning parking tickets. Our story also has its own particular circumstances, including a Scandinavian location.

My wife, Martha, and I were in Sweden last June to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Saab as a car maker. The sixteen hours of daylight provided ample opportunity for plenty of driving and sightseeing.

During our tour of the “Old Town” part of Ystad, we parked in a valid handicap spot and, upon our return, found a parking ticket on the windshield. We headed to the nearby “tourist bureau” and explained our situation. The nice folks there called the parking bureau and a uniformed woman came by shortly to assess the situation. The end result was she took the ticket back because it was mistakenly issued.

The next day in Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden, we were lucky enough to get a regular parking space on the street right across from the historic hotel where we were staying. While checking in, we talked to the hotel manager to confirm the city’s handicap parking privileges that included free parking in both valid handicap and non-handicap spaces.

An hour later as we headed out for our walking tour and dinner, a parking officer was just beginning to write a ticket for our parked Saab. With timing being everything, I approached him and nicely asked what he was doing. (Keep in mind that just about everyone in the Scandinavian countries speaks English.) I then pointed to the handicap placard and started telling him everything we had learned about handicap credentials and parking rules and he gladly gave us the benefit of any doubt and went on his way. The next day we would be taking the 14 km. toll bridge to Denmark where the parking ticket adventure would continue.

The first night at our hotel in Copenhagen also landed us a regular spot right in front of the building. The next morning we found another ticket on the windshield. Later,

when the parking officers were making their rounds near the hotel, we presented them with the ticket and our handicap placard. They made a few cell-phone calls and were instructed to take back the ticket.

When we parked for the last time near the hotel, with full knowledge and compliance with all the rules, we got one last ticket.

The next morning, the day of our departure, I again found parking officers but this time they weren’t willing to take back the ticket. With no time for follow-up, we waited to see what would happen.

In early September, a charge specification from Avis arrived in the mail. As expected, Avis received the unpaid ticket notice and charged our credit card for the overdue parking fine. Fortunately, the charge specification had a phone number and e-mail address for complaints, so we sent an e-mail. A woman from Avis in Sweden named Eva replied (in English) and the final phase of the adventure began.

Eva agreed to look into the ticket with the Copenhagen Parking Authority and translated for us that the reason for the ticket was that the handicap credentials were not fully visible. We could appeal in writing and attach a copy of our credentials. Eva offered to accept our documentation electronically and send it “by post” to the parking authority.

We received a letter from Parking Copenhagen acknowledging our appeal and indicating that, after a review of the matter, they have cancelled the parking fine. They indicated any payment will be reimbursed as soon as possible. Our March statement confirmed it: we had saved ourselves \$140!

We learned a few things with this experience. First, Avis does really “Try Harder” as their slogan proclaims and Eva proved it with her excellent service. And second, the NMA slogan about fighting every ticket prevails no matter where you get one. ■



June Is Lane Courtesy Month

With summer just around the corner and visions of vacations dominating Americans' thoughts, our highways will experience a dramatic increase in traffic. To enhance the travel experience for motorists, we have designated June as Lane Courtesy Month.

Lane Courtesy, also called Lane Discipline, is the simple act of moving to the right to allow faster traffic to pass.

Lane courtesy has a powerful influence on highway safety, traffic flow, and congestion. Arguably, its effect is more important than speed limits, traffic enforcement, or

any other attempt to control driver behavior.

Ask almost any motorist what most raises their ire when using major highways and the answer will be "failure of slower traffic to keep right or yield to the right when faster traffic approaches."

The lane courtesy ethic must be reinvigorated, promoted, and recognized for the contribution it can make toward safer, faster and more enjoyable travel.

We hope that declaring June as "Lane Courtesy Month" will reawaken interest in this incredibly important and positive traffic safety concept. ■

Six Ways You Can Take Action Today

You can help improve Lane Courtesy across the country by employing the strategies below:

1) Lead by example.

Practice Lane Courtesy whenever you drive. Improved Lane Courtesy starts with you.

2) Distribute Lane Courtesy information to friends, family, and co-workers.

Word of mouth is one of the most powerful ways to get the Lane Courtesy message out to the public.

3) Contact your state legislators and urge them to support stronger lane courtesy laws.

Thoughtful letters, emails, and phone calls can have a large impact on what bills your legislators support. Do your part locally by making contact with your legislators.



4) Write to the commander of your state police or highway patrol.

Lane Courtesy enforcement is seriously lacking. Explain to him or her why enforcing this law is so important.

5) Donate to the NMA Foundation's efforts to promote Lane Courtesy.

All contributions to the foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

6) Write a "letter to the editor" to your local newspaper.

The whole point of Lane Courtesy Month is to raise public awareness about this issue, and your letter will help.

Help Promote Lane Courtesy



Help promote Lane Courtesy by attaching our bright red and black Lane Courtesy bumper stickers to your vehicle. At \$1 per sticker, this is an easy, inexpensive way to promote our efforts!

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**Four Great Benefits You're Missing Out On If You Block The Left Lane****Less Congestion****Decreased Road Rage****Better Gas Mileage****Fewer Accidents**

Yielding to faster traffic is a simple concept, but it's often forgotten. Chances are that when you're behind the wheel, you see a bunch of people ignoring this basic driving rule, which is commonly referred to as Lane Courtesy.

When drivers choose to block the left lane, whether intentionally or not, they are making the roads less safe and efficient for everyone. Here are some of the benefits you and the other drivers on the road will notice if you keep the left lane open for passing:

**1) You're Less Likely To Be In An Accident**

By not obstructing other drivers, traffic is able to flow more smoothly. When traffic flows smoothly, there is less tailgating, less weaving in-and-out of traffic, and therefore fewer accidents.

**2) You'll Get Better Gas Mileage**

Lane Courtesy promotes the smooth flow of traffic and helps drivers maintain an even pace. Vehicles use the most gas when accelerating. Less braking followed by acceleration will improve fuel economy.

**3) You'll Get To Your Destination Faster**

Yielding to faster traffic reduces congestion. When traffic is flowing smoothly, highway capacity can be utilized to the fullest extent.

**4) You Will Not Have To Deal With Road Rage**

There's little doubt that "left lane hogs" are a source of irritation for many drivers. The courteous act of moving to the right can eliminate driver stress and conflict.

Despite these clear benefits, some drivers still choose to deliberately block the left lane. The most common rationalization is below:

"I'm driving the speed limit and I shouldn't have to move over for lawbreakers."

Although it may help people feel morally superior to rationalize their behavior in this way, drivers who block the left lane are doing their fellow drivers a great disservice.

Regardless of how you feel about drivers who exceed the speed limit, it's safer and more efficient to let the police sort out the reckless and irresponsible drivers.

There are additional reasons to always yield the left lane to faster traffic:

- Something as simple as speedometer error can result in a five mph or greater difference in vehicle speeds, although both read the same speed.
- The motorist seeking to pass in the left lane may be responding to a family or health emergency.
- Faster left lane vehicles may be preceding an emergency vehicle and seeking an opportunity to merge right.

The bottom line is that no valid purpose is served by blocking the left lane when other vehicles wish to pass.

The first step in improving the driving experience for everyone is to simply practice Lane Courtesy yourself.

Achieving a high degree of Lane Courtesy on America's highways will require a commitment to education, public relations, and a more enlightened approach to traffic management.

State and Federal agencies have invested billions of dollars in public relations campaigns promoting traffic law compliance, seatbelt usage, construction zone safety, and anti-drinking and driving messages, but Lane Courtesy has been largely ignored.

A small investment to promote Lane Courtesy would pay major dividends. Add in an educational component for beginning drivers and reminders for older drivers and the benefits would be immediate. ■

## Six Cities That Were Caught Shortening Yellow Light Times

Short yellow light times at intersections have been shown to increase the number of traffic violations and accidents. Conversely, increasing the yellow light duration can dramatically reduce red-light violations at an intersection.

Some local governments have ignored the safety benefit of increasing the yellow light time and decided to install red-light cameras, shorten the yellow light duration, and collect the profits instead.

Here are some of the cities that have been caught with short yellow light times over the past few years:

### 1) Chattanooga, Tennessee

The city of Chattanooga was forced refund \$8800 in red light cameras tickets issued to motorists trapped by an illegally short yellow light time. The refund only occurred after a motorist challenged his citation by insisting that the yellow light time of 3.0 seconds was too short.

### 2) Dallas, Texas

An investigation by a local TV station, found that of the ten cameras that issued the greatest number of tickets in the city, seven were located at intersections where the yellow light duration is shorter than the bare minimum recommended by the Texas Department of Transportation.

### 3) Springfield, Missouri

The city of Springfield, Missouri prepared for the installation of a red light camera system in 2007 by slashing the yellow warning time by one second at 105 state-owned intersection signals across the city.

### 4) Lubbock, Texas

KBCD, a local television station, exposed the city's short timing of yellow lights at eight of the twelve intersections where the devices were to be installed. Months later, after the ticket cameras proved to be both unprofitable and unsafe, they were taken down.

### 5) Nashville, Tennessee

In 2006, Nashville resident Joe Savage obtained the data on every red-light ticket issued on Broadway Street since 2000. He said that yellow lights are longer at intersections along Broadway until the areas where police are issuing tickets. At those locations, Savage clocked the yellow signal time at less than three seconds, in violation of state law.

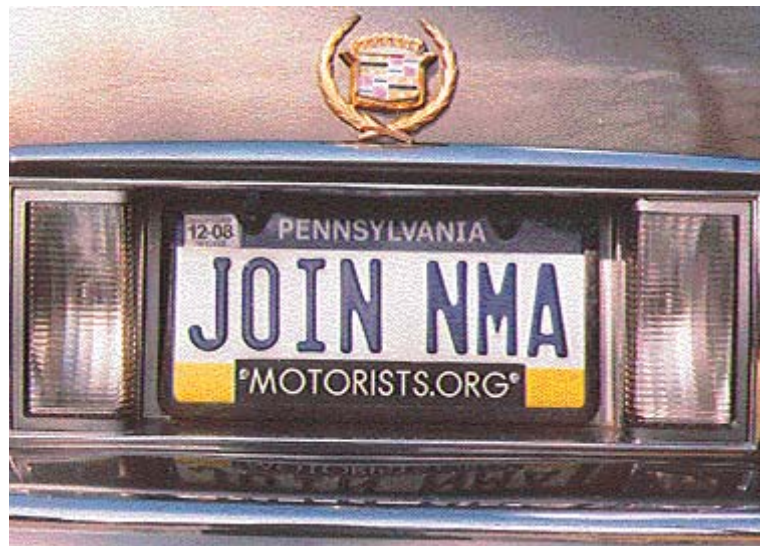
### 6) Union City, California

In 2005, Union City, California was caught trapping motorists with a yellow signal time 1.3 seconds below the minimum established by state law. As a result, the city was forced to refund more than \$1 million in fines. ■

## Asides

*By James J. Baxter, NMA President*

1. One of our most active Pennsylvania members, Tom McCarey, sent us this nice photo (right) of his new custom license plate.
2. I was in Bloomfield Michigan recently and I spotted a black Chrysler Crossfire parked next to my car. It had an NMA decal on the rear window---sure was nice to see that decal, sorry we didn't get to meet.
3. While in Michigan I had a chance to personally visit with Jim Walker of Ann Arbor. Jim is the lead defendant in our effort to make Michigan courts enforce the new Michigan speed limit law. He has done a tremendous amount of good work on behalf of everyone who drives in that state.





## News From Around The Country

### California

Nearly one million special government license plates have been issued in the state of California giving law enforcement, judges, district attorneys, politicians, and their friends immunity from photo ticketing and tolls.

These plates keep the identity of the vehicle owner out of the computerized databases that track ordinary motorists.

This protection ensures that private red light camera companies and collection agencies for parking tickets and toll road violations have no idea where to mail a ticket for nonpayment.

### Georgia

Georgia lawmakers have put up a road block for local governments looking to install more red light cameras.

The plan would require local governments to first apply to the state Department of Transportation to install red light cameras.

It would also require governments to complete an engineering study to see if there's another way to reduce traffic violations and accidents before installing the cameras.

### Louisiana

State Representative Hollis Downs, R-Ruston has authored House Bill 1050 in an attempt to curtail the practice of what he calls "economic abuse by policing power."

Downs' bill would limit the percentage of income a municipality can derive from writing speeding tickets – 35 percent for those with a population lower than 1,000, 20 percent for those with populations

between 1,000 and 3,000, and ten percent for those with populations of 3,000 or more.

Any revenue generated above those percentages would have to be turned over to the state Treasury.

The city official in charge of Lafayette, Louisiana's program that uses cameras to mail tickets to accused speeders has himself been photographed using a device designed to help drivers detect radar traps.

### Missouri

Some cities in Missouri are having a difficult time collecting money from red-light camera tickets.

In Arnold, about 30 percent of the citations issued from October 2005 through January 2008 had not been paid. The nonpayment rate in St. Louis is about 35 percent.

The problem rests in how the cameras operate. In most of the local intersections where the devices are installed, they capture only the license plate of the car running the red light. A notice is then sent to the registered owner of the vehicle.

### New York

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg took the first steps in raising taxes on commuters by resurrecting proposals to place toll booths on bridges into the city that are currently free.

The New York Daily News reported that the City Transportation Commissioner and Deputy Mayor Mark Shaw were dispatched to advocate an \$8 tax on anyone driving across East River bridges and 60th Street.

### North Carolina

Red-light cameras might be coming back to Fayetteville to catch drivers running stop lights. Fayetteville removed the cameras last year after the state required 90 percent of fines to go to schools.

Local school board member Greg West has proposed bringing back the red-light cameras after talking with the mayor. The school board will meet with companies who run red-light cameras to come up with a proposal.

### Rhode Island

Rhode Island based photo enforcement vendor Nestor Inc. has been kicked off of the the Nasdaq stock exchange.

The ticket camera vendor's lack of profitability sent the stock into a tailspin from a peak of \$48 dollars per share in March 2000. The stock had traded for nearly a full year at less than \$1, in violation of Nasdaq rules.

### Texas

About 260 motorists wrongly accused of "red light running" in Corpus Christi, Texas will have their citations canceled.

After receiving numerous complaints from innocent drivers, the Gulf Coast city was forced to admit that drivers who had safely stopped should not have been ticketed.

### Washington

The cities of Mill Creek and Yakima recently decided to not pursue red-light cameras. Wenatchee may also drop their camera plans due to a possible ballot initiative that would give ticket camera profits to the state. ■

As of this printing, this information is current. For more information on this and other motorist news, visit [www.motorists.org](http://www.motorists.org)



## Members Write

I have already written a letter to the editor of the Rockford Register Star [regarding ticket cameras in Illinois.]

The information on your website was invaluable in helping to support the arguments I made.

Unfortunately, every other letter that was written was in favor of the cameras.

On the plus side, both of our local state senators (Syverson and Brudzinski) have come out against the plan. So maybe there is some hope it can be stopped for at least our county (Winnebago.) One state rep for our region (Winters) also opposed it on the House floor.

You're right about the general public – they are generally willing to fall into line with anything government wants. They won't complain until the \$100 tickets start showing up in their mailboxes.

*Jonathan Miller  
Machesney Park, IL*

The dumbing down of drivers in America started with the lure of the automatic transmission. We were all convinced by the sirens' song that our left foot and right arm had something better to do than participate in driving the vehicle.

The current state of driving in the automatic world? I now see people driving with their foot out the window and their right hand doing anything from sending a text message to wrangling some lipstick.

For those that don't want to be the problem, find a performance driving school and go spend a weekend at the track. You'll learn a lot about your car and more importantly, yourself. I

promise it will be the most fun you've had with your car in a long time (in the front seat at least). The life you save could be yours, your kids, or even mine.

*Chris Medico  
NMA Blog Commenter*

### Correction: Laser Expert Responds

In the last issue of *Driving Freedoms* I authored an article on Laser speed measurement devices ("Lasers and PT Barnum"). In that article I used some distance and time examples that were solely for illustrative purposes and should not be

taken as literally accurate numbers.

One number that was intended to be accurate was the speed of a vehicle that traveled one hundred feet in one third of a second.

The article stated that the vehicle was traveling 49 mph. However, for a vehicle to go 100 feet in one third of a second, it would have to be traveling at 204 mph.

Thanks go out to Henry Roberts, resident of the *Experts' Corner*, for pointing out this "minor" error.

Also, the width of a laser beam at 1000 feet is three or four feet, not six to eight feet.

Just goes to show you can't believe everything you read!

*James Baxter  
NMA President*

## How To Stay Updated



One of the easiest, most-effective ways that we're able to get information to you is via email messages.

While the majority of members have provided their email addresses when they joined or renewed their memberships, we still lack valid contact information for some of our members.

If you've recently changed your email address or never sent one in, we would appreciate it if you could send us a note. Our email address is [nma@motorists.org](mailto:nma@motorists.org).

A quick email is all it takes, simply put "Email Address Update – [Your Name]" in the Subject of your email and hit send. You don't even have to write a message.

This will only take you a minute and you'll gain several benefits right away, including faster updates on legislation that matters to you. ■

Your letters are welcomed and should not exceed 300 words. They may be edited for length or clarity. Full-length articles will also be considered for publication and should not exceed 600 words. Submissions may be emailed to [nma@motorists.org](mailto:nma@motorists.org) or mailed to us.

# Great Deals At The NMA Store!

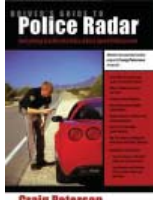
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The Cheetah GPSmirror is a speed camera & red-light camera detector that prevents tickets and helps keep you safe on the road. The GPSmirror comes preloaded with the locations of the cameras, and it warns you with a voice and visual reminder whenever you are approaching a camera.

**Cheetah GPSmirror**


Non-Member Price: \$299.95      **Member Price: \$269.95**



Ever wondered just how close that police officer has to be to get you on his radar? Have you heard that lasers can't be aimed through car glass? Are you getting your money's worth from your detector? These are just some of the questions answered in *Driver's Guide To Police Radar*.

**Driver's Guide To Police Radar**


Non-Member Price: \$19.95      **Member Price: \$14.95**



State and local governments are increasingly relying on traffic ticket revenue for daily operations. This book gives responsible motorists the means to protect their rights by addressing many types of tickets: speeding, reckless driving, defective equipment, and more.

**Beat Your Ticket**

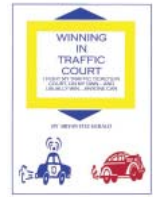
Non-Member Price: \$19.95      **Member Price: \$11.95**



Many laws and statutes that you need to prepare your case are state specific, which means that you will have to do the research. This book gives you the basic understanding of how to conduct legal research. The book explains everything in easy-to-understand terms.

**Legal Research**

Non-Member Price: \$29.95      **Member Price: \$22.95**



This book is a helpful, enjoyable read on how to fight a traffic ticket. The author not only explains how to fight a traffic ticket, but also offers amusing anecdotes along with his justification for fighting every ticket you receive.

**Winning In Traffic Court**

Non-Member Price: \$19.95      **Member Price: \$9.95**

**NMA Foundation Legal Defense Kit**

Represent yourself in traffic court and win! In addition to covering court procedures and strategy, this ten-pound kit includes technical information on speed enforcement devices. It also contains state-specific information on Discovery and Public Records Laws (this is how you get information from the police on your case!). Remember, this resource is being constantly updated and improved.

Call 800-882-2785 to order the Kit and tailor it specifically to your ticket!

\$155 Refundable Security Deposit    \$10 S&H    **Rental Fee: \$30/month**

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Subtotal		
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Total		

# Your best defense against radar



(choose one):  **Situation Awareness?**  
 **Situation Ignorance?**



Mike Valentine: Electronics Engineer and Co-Inventor of the original Escort® detector.

## Situation Awareness.

Fighter pilots just say "SA." When you peel off the military jargon, SA turns out to be man's oldest survival technique: *know what's going on around you.*

For combat pilots, SA is a two-step process. First: know all the threats — where they are and how many. Second: identify each one, friend or foe? A jet warrior will never be surprised by a bogey closing on his six if he has SA.

## The Shrug Factor

When a beeper gives two beeps and then goes quiet, most drivers shrug: "It's probably nothing," they say. Wrong! Two beeps is exactly the warning when instant-on ambushes somebody ahead. You could be next. Every beep may not be radar, but it's a threat until you know otherwise.

V1 has antennas facing both forward and behind, for radar and for laser. It scans all around your car. This patented SA system reports to you through locating arrows and the Bogey Counter. With V1, you won't shrug.

**Situation Awareness:**  
**V1 says 2 radars ahead.**

**Situation Ignorance:**  
 Other detectors  
 always say "BEEP!"

## SA on the Road

The Valentine One Radar Locator is born of my personal passion for SA. I want to know the threats, both radar and laser. *All of them. As far away as possible.*



When Valentine One finds radar or laser, a red arrow points toward the source. Ahead? Behind? Off to the side? V1 tells you instantly. Other detectors? They all go "beep" and leave you guessing, just like they did in the Seventies. Situation Ignorance, in other words.

## Situation Ignorance

Our patents prevent our competitors from matching V1's SA. So they try to distract you with technology. "Intelligence" is the latest claim for a GPS scheme aimed at reducing your Shrug Factor by reducing beeps. But GPS doesn't find new threats, **just false alarms you already know about.**

## Arrows and the Bogey Counter

V1's advanced computer analysis tracks each signal separately. And the arrows point toward each one. A digital display called the Bogey Counter tells "how many." V1 won't keep you ignorant. Example: you see one radar, but there's another ahead. V1 tells you about each one. The beepers just go "beep."

I guarantee V1 to be free of bells, whistles, and distracting gizmos. It's an instrument of Situation Awareness, pure and simple.

**"Awesome...the patented arrows are a huge advantage."**

— MPH, April, 2006

## What others say about V1

**"The Valentine One radar detector provides the best, most comprehensive, most useful, and least annoying alerts."**

PC Magazine, April, 2006

**"Best detection range in our tests."**

Wired, January, 2007

**"The controls and interface are a marvel of logical design."**

Wired, March, 2006

**"This is the only unit that can track radar and laser in 360 degrees, and it can detect multiple threats, helping drivers to better identify false signals."**

Popular Science, April, 2006

**"The only radar detector that works at all is the Valentine One. It shows if the signal is forward, rear, or side, as well as the number of signals."**

Best Life, February, 2007, quoting Alex Roy, four-time trophy winner of the Gumball Rally

Escort is a registered trademark of Escort, Inc.



**Valentine Research, Inc.** Phone 513-984-8900  
 Department No. XP58 Fax 513-984-8976  
 10280 Alliance Road  
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45242



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Please call toll-free **1-800-331-3030**  
 or visit **www.valentine1.com**

**Valentine One Radar Locator with Laser Detection - \$399**

**Carrying Case - \$29**

**Concealed Display Module - \$39**

For covert operation: remotes all visual warnings to a location of your choosing (1" x 2" x 1.5")

**Plus Shipping**  
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**"...it's worth every penny."** — Wired, January, 2007