



Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation

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



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Innocent Drivers Caught By Ticket Cameras

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Cover
"The Camera Never Lies?"



Hidden Motorist Taxes

by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

What do congestion pricing, HOT lanes, "Cap and Trade," per mile tolling, and ticket cameras all have in common? They are all tactics designed to hide or obfuscate increased government taxation while pretending to provide an ethereal public benefit.

I say "ethereal" because congestion pricing doesn't add capacity or improve traffic flow; HOT lanes do not increase capacity any more than regular lanes; Cap and Trade is just a convoluted and expensive tax on carbon consumption; per mile tolling is no more equitable and is less efficient than taxing fuels; and ticket cameras do not improve traffic safety.

In reality, we are delivered more regulation, rationing, increased surveillance, and restricted or diminished personal mobility.

This is what we get, or will get, in exchange for having our money taken through elusive and untraceable government fees, fines, and charges – mostly for facilities and services we already pay for through existing taxes.

Why does this charade persist?

One reason is that elected officials want to be re-elected.

Supporting more taxes, at least broad based taxes, is not the favored strategy for re-election. A related matter, of considerable concern to motorists, is that past government promises to use motorist taxes, primarily fuel taxes, for street, road, and highway construction and maintenance, have been obliterated.

So called segregated user fees have been milked, diverted, and effectively stolen for projects and purposes for which they were never intended, at least in the minds of voters who



originally supported these taxes.

The result of these broken promises is a jaundiced public that does not believe increased user fees will be used for their intended purpose; not an irrational conclusion.

Another, less obvious, reason for these schemes is that they advance the objectives of those interests that despise individual personal mobility and the vehicles that make it possible.

Any public policy that makes the use of personal vehicles more expensive, more inconvenient, and less accessible is a desirable policy, in their opinion.

They promote these concepts as delivering some kind of public good, but the clincher on the sale, for elected officials, is they will make money for the government while not appearing to be a real tax.

The argument goes; only extravagant rich people, dirty plundering industries, and "bad people" will pay these fees and fines.

Meanwhile, the good folks who ride busses and trains and "green" businesses will enjoy government subsidies.

I'd like to think most people can see through this manipulative rhetoric, but maybe not because it just keeps on coming. ■

Member Ticket Story: A Surprise In The Law

By Gary Multer, NMA Member

In October 2008, I was pulled over by a state trooper on the Maine Turnpike. He issued me a citation for speeding, alleging that I was going 78 MPH in a 55 MPH zone.

In Maine, the tickets have pre-printed information and the officer just circles the statute that he claims was violated. In my case he circled Title 29-A, Section 2073(3).

I'm no lawyer but I know that if you want to defend yourself in court a good first step is always to read the law that you are charged with. The law was easy to look up on the Internet and fortunately it was short and easy to understand.

The law related to the Maine State Traffic Commissioner and it covered the procedures the commissioner uses in order to enact speed limits.

And there it was, a single sentence in a stand-alone paragraph stating: "The commissioner may not set maximums for the Maine Turnpike."

This seemed to good to be true, but there it was in black and white. So I took the ticket and a copy of the law to court. My friends said this was going to be a first. They were sure the judge never would have seen this before.

In court, I asked to officer to nail down the violation that I was charged with. This turned out to be a little more difficult than I expected because he simply stated "speeding."

Of course he is supposed to have a specific statute that he is charging me with, but he did not even know it.

I asked him about the numbers he circled on the ticket and finally got it nailed down for the court that I was charged with violating Section 2073(3) of Title 29-A.

Then I had the officer state that I was on the Maine Turnpike and I

showed the judge the wording in the law that prevents the law from being applied on the Maine Turnpike.

The judge could see that it was clear that I could not be charged with violating this law on the Maine Turnpike, but he did everything he could to get me to admit guilt.

"Do you think there is no speed limit on the Maine Turnpike?" he asked. I responded, "I don't know about that. I am charged with violating this specific law and that is what I came here to defend myself against."

He asked if I thought there was another law that created enforceable speed limits on the Maine Turnpike.

Again, I told him I was only prepared to argue the charges that were brought against me and did not know about other laws.

The Judge asked the officer if there were speed limit signs posted and the officer said that there were.

The judge asked me what I thought the speed limit signs were for. I used the same basic approach, "Anyone can post a speed limit sign. The officer can go out and hang up a speed limit sign, so could I. Even you, judge, could go out and hang up a speed limit sign. But



it would not be an enforceable speed limit unless there was a law that made it an enforceable speed limit. And in this case, any speed limit sign was not enforceable under the law that I was charged with violating."

Finally the judge realized the case would be lost on appeal if he did not let me off, so that is what he did.

It turned out that my friends were right, the court had never heard this argument before.

The judge told the officer that he better go back to his superiors to have things changed to prevent this from happening again, but I don't think they ever will.

As I was leaving the court room the judge expressed concern about others finding out about this, so here you have it. ■

Are you getting the NMA's new weekly email newsletter?

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NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



The House Transportation and Infrastructure committee is preparing to consider a \$500 billion, six-year authorization bill for the nation's roads, rails and transit.

Though no legislative text is available, the proposal is already remarkable for three reasons – first, it is almost twice the size of the current bill, second, it proposes spending more than twice the projected available funding and third, the President does not want it.

Not all the work will focus on roads.

The bill itself is expected to place a heavy emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles – in part through increased funding for transit and rail.

Other new initiatives are designed to track this effort, such as the creation of a new “Office of Livability” within the Department of Transportation which will be charged with making our roads and communities more “environmentally friendly.”

Funding questions appear to be deferred for now, but the two primary vehicles to raise revenues are increasing the gasoline tax and imposing a new vehicle miles travelled tax.

There is no doubt that either will face substantial political opposition but the pressure for more taxes is building – each year the Highway Trust Fund receives less in revenue while expenses for maintaining the roads increase.

Future revenues are expected to decline even more as new cars become more efficient.

Ultimately, there is no avoiding this question – the Highway Trust Fund is expected to fall \$7 to \$10 billion short this year alone.

The President does not appear to be interested in taking this issue on for two primary reasons.

First, the Administration would prefer to defer the debate until later in order to continue to focus on other priorities.

Second, the idea of increasing vehicle taxes is not expected to be popular and right now is not considered a great time to propose raising taxes.

It won't just be the highway bill that focuses on increasing the cost of using the roads. Congress is also debating legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions



through a cap and trade bill.

Though individuals won't have to comply directly, the consequences of this legislation will be felt in the form of increased costs for energy, including gasoline.

According to the American Petroleum Institute, gasoline costs for drivers will increase by several hundred dollars per year starting in 2012 due to legislation proposed in the House.

The bill will also increase costs for home heating, electricity and energy intensive consumer goods.

Finally, for those of you tired of driving your old, gas guzzling relic, Congress has come to the rescue: earlier this month, Congress approved a \$1 billion program to provide credits for people who trade in older cars that get poor gas mileage and replace them with fuel efficient vehicles.

The savings vary but could be up to \$4500. ■

Montgomery County Pulls In \$15 Million In Ticket Camera Fines

According to the Maryland-based radio station, WTOP, Montgomery County is pulling in cash at an astonishing rate from their extensive speed camera system.

Figures from the Police Department show the county has generated \$15 million in revenue during the current fiscal year.

That works out to about \$1.5 million every month!

Breaking the numbers down even further, 9,375 speed camera citations are being issued every week and 1,339 every day.

Add it all up and Montgomery County's speed camera program is racking up an amazing \$53,560 per day in fines.

Things won't be getting any better for Maryland drivers either, because the county just recently

doubled the number of speed cameras to 60.

The county's profits are up from \$11 million last fiscal year.

Not everyone is taking this lying down though.

In addition to a well-organized, but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to put the ticket camera issue on the ballot, one man is taking it upon himself to help out drivers.

Beginning in late May, bright red "Speed Camera Ahead!" signs have been popping up along roads in Potomac, Maryland.

The signs are the work of a mystery resident known as the "Potomac Secret Agent" and are strategically placed near speed camera locations to warn drivers that they are about to pass a speed camera. ■



Fun With Construction Barrels



A North Carolina State University student swiped some construction barrels to create this "Barrel Monster." Unfortunately, the local police didn't find it entertaining and have charged him with vandalism. ■

Best Drivers In Wisconsin & Idaho

Results from the 2009 GMAC Insurance National Drivers Test show that Idaho and Wisconsin drivers are the most knowledgeable on the road.

Idaho and Wisconsin drivers tied for first in the nation, with an average test score of 80.6 percent; New York drivers ranked last, with an average score of 70.5 percent.

This is the second time Idaho ranked first and the second time New York has ranked last in the survey's five-year history. Overall, the lowest average test scores were in the Northeast and the highest averages were in the Midwest.

When comparing genders, men are still more likely to pass the test than women, but the gap is considerably smaller in 2009 (81 percent of males versus 79 percent of females) than in 2008 (87 percent versus 80 percent).

The survey also found that 20.1 percent of licensed Americans would not pass a written drivers test exam if taken today. ■

Arizona Lowers DUI Conviction Standard

The Arizona Supreme Court ruled that showing the potential to drive while drunk is sufficient for a DUI conviction. The case involved a driver who put his key in the ignition briefly to turn on the radio and was arrested – without the engine even being started. ■



A Frequently Asked Question



We get this question a lot:
Q: When does a speed limit take effect? Is it when the driver can first see the sign or is it an imaginary line you cross as you pass the sign?
A: It takes effect as you pass the sign. ■

Turn Signal Optional On Empty Road?

Police in West Virginia may no longer issue tickets to motorists for failure to signal without also showing another vehicle may have been affected by the maneuver, according to a ruling issued in May by the state supreme court. ■



Ohio Drivers Ticketed In Own Driveways



Residents of Toledo, Ohio, are complaining that they received \$25 tickets for parking their vehicles in their own driveways. Mayor Carty Finkbeiner says he stands by the citations but is facing tough questions from citizens and a recall vote in November. ■

Quick Hits

- Vehicle owners could lose their car when passing through Pekin, Illinois if a passenger happens to be carrying something on the city’s list of contraband. In just the first six months that the impounding ordinance was active, Pekin police collected \$124,420 in revenue from towing in the city of 34,000.
- In New York, during the first six months after Suffolk deputy sheriffs took over patrolling the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway from county police, the number of traffic tickets issued plummeted by 63 percent. Even with the large drop in enforcement, the accident count remained essentially unchanged – 1,256 under the police, 1,185 under the deputy sheriffs.
- Montgomery County is considering rules that would mean more speed bumps on the county’s streets. County Executive Ike Leggett has proposed allowing speed bumps on streets with less traffic than currently required, as well as requiring fewer neighbors to approve them. The county estimates that 46 speed bumps would have been added to local roads in the past decade under the proposal.
- The City of Grover Beach, California has reduced the speed limit on Oak Park Boulevard south of Highway 101 to 25 MPH. California’s “speed trap” law makes it a crime to use radar to enforce speed limits that are below the 85th percentile of all speeds observed via speed survey. A 2008 survey established the 85th percentile speed as 38 MPH on this section of Oak Park Blvd. Any speeding ticket issued on this stretch of Oak Park, regardless of the method of enforcement and even regardless of the motorist’s speed, will be dismissed if challenged in court. ■

Thirteen “Isolated Incidents”: Ticket Cameras & Innocent Drivers



Officials in charge of red light camera and speed camera programs claim it is “rare” for erroneous tickets to be issued because a human police officer diligently verifies each and every citation for accuracy before it is issued.

If confronted with clear evidence that their cameras have made a mistake, the camera companies insist that it’s an “isolated incident.”

Here are thirteen “isolated incidents” compiled from the archives of TheNewspaper.com:

The Speed Camera Game

In 2008, high school students in Maryland used speed cameras as a tool to fine innocent drivers in a game.

Because photo enforcement devices will automatically mail out a ticket to any registered vehicle owner based solely on a photograph of a license plate, any driver could receive a ticket if someone else creates a duplicate of his license plate and drives quickly past a speed camera.

And that’s exactly what the teens did.

The private companies that mail out the tickets often do not bother to verify whether vehicle registration

information for the accused vehicle matches the photographed vehicle.

White Man/Black Man Part One

In 2006, Paul Stevens, the latest victim of a freeway photo radar ticket, noticed something strange.

“When I looked at the picture [on the ticket] the male driving the car is Caucasian,” Stevens told KTVK television in an interview. “As you can see I’m a Black-American.”

Scottsdale wanted Stevens to pay \$157 for driving 78 MPH on the 65 MPH freeway – even though neither the Camaro Z-28 in the photo, nor the vehicle’s license plate belonged to Stevens.

White Man/Black Man Part Two

In 2008, the city of Lafayette, Louisiana accused Alan Dukes, the owner of a 2005 Honda motorcycle, of speeding on June 4. Yet the photograph of the alleged violation clearly shows a black man riding a Harley Davidson motorcycle.

The Phantom Atlanta Tourist

In 2008, Hollywood, Florida resident Evelyn Singer received a ticket for running a red light in Atlanta.

The document insisted that Singer pay \$70.

Singer responded with a certified letter explaining that her white Acura looked nothing like the black Pontiac committing the offense alleged in the ticket photograph.

Moreover, she had not been to Atlanta in thirty-five years!

When Singer later called to confirm whether the ticket had been canceled or not, the courthouse either put her on hold or hung up while a Miami television station’s cameras were rolling.

After several frustrating attempts, Singer reached a human and asked how often the cameras make mistakes. “It doesn’t really matter as far as what we’re trying to accomplish,” the unidentified Georgia courthouse official responded.

The Speedy Sensor

The city of Scottsdale, Arizona agreed to cancel speed camera fines issued to 589 innocent motorists. Between December 7 and January 4, a broken piezo sensor embedded in the pavement caused speed estimates to read high at the Shea Boulevard camera located between 120th and 124th Streets.

The Elderly Race Driver

In 2008, a Montgomery County, Maryland speed camera accused an elderly man of hurtling through a busy neighborhood at 70 miles per hour faster than the maximum legal speed – during rush hour.

The automated ticketing machine snapped two photos of the vehicle belonging to Silver Spring residents Terence Brennan, 68, and Helga

(Continued on next page)

Brennan, 76, on Wednesday, June 25, at 4:12 pm.

While the Brennans strongly endorsed the county's photo enforcement efforts, they were baffled as to how Terence Brennan could be accused of driving their Toyota Echo economy car at 100 MPH.

Only after the local media got involved did Montgomery County admit that the camera, which has all the certifications of accuracy and maintenance records needed to allow thousands of citations to be issued, was mistaken.

Right Turn On Red Refund

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

After receiving numerous complaints from innocent drivers, the Gulf Coast city was forced to admit that the drivers had safely stopped when executing a legal right turn on red and should not have been ticketed by the machine located at the intersection of Cimarron and Yorktown.

The Impossible Jeep

In 2007, a Crown Point, New York resident received a speed camera ticket claiming his Korean War-era Blue Willy Jeep had been driving at a speed it is not capable of reaching.

The city of Cleveland, Ohio insisted that Christopher Johnson's 56-year-old military machine blasted past East 71st Street and Chester Avenue at 48 MPH on September 1, even though the vehicle's top speed is well below 35 MPH.

When Johnson tried to resolve the problem through letters and phone calls, he was ignored. However, after a local newspaper called the Cleveland Municipal Court, Johnson's ticket was quickly dismissed.

When Ticket Cameras Go Wild

In 2007, a red light camera in Capitola, California generated \$381 tickets for motorists who did nothing wrong.

The out-of-control camera was located at 41st Avenue and Clares Street and was designed to ticket motorists headed to the local mall. Between 50 and 60 percent of the time the camera was triggered, there had been no violation.

"It's going nuts," Capitola Police Chief Richard Ehle told the Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper at the time.

In addition to other problems, the camera was generating tickets for shoppers making legal right turns on red and ticketing motorists who roll forward before the light turns green.

The Imaginary Speed Limit

In 2007, a former police captain sued Albuquerque, New Mexico to force the city to refund speed camera citations that were improperly issued.

When three of the city's television stations brought cameras to the administrative hearing where Sonny Leeper was to defend himself, the retired captain was quickly found not guilty of speeding.

Leeper, who left the Albuquerque Police Department in 2006, had been accused of driving 42 MPH in a 40 MPH construction zone. The camera, however, had been set to ticket people exceeding 30 MPH, even though there was no 30 MPH sign posted.

Leeper later teamed up with several other defendants and attorney Paul Livingston to demand refunds for up to 1300 motorists wrongly accused.

Cameras Don't Know Numbers

In 2007, a red light camera in Knoxville, Tennessee claimed that a white Toyota pickup truck photographed running a red light was

actually a silver BMW convertible.

Knoxville motorist Tamara K received the \$50 ticket that insisted her Z3 convertible had been seen running a light on May 22 at 8:17pm.

A closer look at the photo showed something interesting.

The optical character recognition software used by the Australian red light camera operator Redflex had mistaken the number "2" on the pickup truck's license plate for the "3" that appears on the BMW's plate.

Exceeding Manufacturer Limits

In 2006, Scottsdale, Arizona police arrested Lawrence Pargo for speeding based solely on the evidence of its photo radar machines that registered his vehicle traveling at an impossibly high speed of 147 MPH.

Scottsdale police maintained that Pargo's rented silver Sonata drove between 102 and 147 MPH past four speed cameras on May 21 at around six in the morning.

Pargo's Hyundai, according to the manufacturer, has a drag-limited top speed of 137 MPH.

The Speedy Rowboat

On December 10, 2007, according to a ticket camera at the intersection of 10th Avenue and West Street in Manhattan, Russell Falkena ran a red light in his rowboat.

They even sent him a \$50 souvenir, in the form of a ticket, to mark the occasion.

However, the photos accompanying the ticket showed a black SUV, with the license plate 3702PH, running the light.

Mr. Falkena was understandably confused because he didn't own a black SUV. He did have a fishing boat registered with that license plate, but that couldn't have been the reason for the ticket. But of course it was. ■

How To Stay Informed On NMA Issues

By James Baxter, NMA President



Frequently we receive a message from one of our members that asks why we haven't spoken out on a particular issue or made our members aware of a specific piece of legislation. Not always, but often we have spoken out on the issue and alerted our members to legislation related to that issue.

The reason the member that originally contacted us did not know this is because we never had his

e-mail address, his e-mail address had changed, or he had not given us permission to contact him via e-mail.

We certainly understand people wanting to staunch the flood of spam that enters their e-mail system, but sometimes useful and desired messages are lost to spam filters or never sent in the first place.

Recently we launched a new member benefit; a brief weekly newsletter. This newsletter usually goes out on Tuesday of each week. Past articles have covered ticket fighting tips, trial tactics, and definitions of misunderstood terms. The members receiving the new email newsletter seem to enjoy it and we have gotten many compliments since we started sending it out.

Our other important reason for

having permission to send you e-mails is our Legislative Alert service.

We do not send out alerts every time a motorist related bill is introduced. The legislation has to be important and showing signs of "movement" before we send out an alert. Keep in mind, that our most powerful tool to affect legislation is your involvement in the legislative process. Your calls and letters to legislators, attendance at hearings, and editorials in local papers do send a message to elected officials.

If you would like to receive our weekly e-mail newsletter and/or receive Legislative Alerts, simply send an e-mail to nma@motorists.org and explain that you would like to receive the e-mail newsletter, legislative alerts, or both. ■

"Flashing Lights" Ticket Dismissed

Mark Zaid was driving with his family to a Nationals game when an officer stepped out into the road and motioned for Zaid to pull over. Zaid said he had not been speeding.

The officer said something to Zaid about obstructing a police investigation, and Zaid replied he was doing no such thing.

Zaid got a \$50 ticket, but it wasn't for speeding. Zaid was written up for prohibited use of flashing lights. Zaid was caught flashing his lights to warn motorists about a speed trap.

Zaid was miffed and took his ticket to court in Rockville, Maryland. The officer didn't show up and the ticket was dismissed.

Montgomery County police spokesman Lt. Paul Starks said that the department has determined it's not a violation to flash lights to warn motorists about a speed zone. However, they do not intend to stop writing tickets for flashing lights.

Zaid is planning to write a letter to the police department demanding an apology and seeking assurance that officers will undergo remedial training. ■

Officials Seize Cars For Personal Use

Illinois State Police troopers seized a high-performance muscle car and set it aside for the personal use of an influential police official.

The Associated Press reported that a suspected drunk driver in a 2006 Dodge Charger was pulled over in January



2007. The troopers used a state seizure law to confiscate the vehicle.

Once the paperwork was complete, the 425-horsepower

vehicle – which had an as-new base price of \$38,000 – was handed over for the personal use of Ron Cooley, 56, the Executive Director of the Illinois State Police Merit Board.

Taxpayers also pick up the fuel tab for the gas-guzzling 6.1 liter V-8 as he drives to and from work each day and on various business trips. According to AP, the Charger is just one of two dozen desirable cars grabbed and kept by state troopers. ■

Source: TheNewspaper.com



News From Around The Country

California

Huntington Beach has decided not to install ticket cameras. Surf City's police chief, Ken Small, told the Huntington Beach City Council that adding cameras to intersections around the city could increase traffic accidents rather than prevent them.

Florida

Fort Lauderdale passed a new law in early June setting up camera enforcement of red light runners at major intersections and setting the fine at \$125. The state attorney general has ruled that cities can't use mounted cameras to issue traffic citations. However, cities get around that by citing car owners in a manner more akin to a code violation.

Illinois

Finance Committee Chairman Edward M. Burke wants to require red-light runners to complete a "Red Light Education Program" – at a cost of \$25 – to prevent them from becoming repeat offenders. Motorists who fail to complete training would pay a \$50 fine. This would be in addition to the \$100 charge for the ticket itself.

Louisiana

Representative Hollis Downs has been pushing to pass a bill discouraging police from setting up speed traps. The bill would require the money police departments earn from tickets issued to drivers going less than ten miles over the speed limit on the interstate, to go to the state instead of local police departments.

Maine

Maine recently became the fourteenth state to ban the use of red light cameras and speed cameras. Governor John Baldacci signed into law a bill introduced by Representative Richard Cebra that prohibits the use of a "traffic surveillance camera to prove or enforce a violation" of traffic laws. Cebra's measure sailed through the legislative process with almost no opposition at any stage of the process.

Maryland

An effort to let voters decide whether jurisdictions statewide should be allowed to install speed cameras fell short of the required signatures, and the referendum will not appear on the 2010 general election ballot. Organizers announced that they had collected more than 16,000 signatures by June 1st. Unfortunately, the state elections board required 17,883 signatures by that date.

Nebraska

The Nebraska State Patrol has a new tool it's using on the state's roads and highways – the Mobile Plate Hunter. The device uses an infrared camera to scan the license plates of passing cars to determine whether a vehicle is stolen, if its registration is up-to-date, or if the driver is wanted by authorities. The state currently has only two of the \$20,000 scanners.

New Jersey

Citing South Brunswick's recent decision to withdraw from a pilot program that uses red light cameras, State Senator Nicholas Scutari has called for an end to the program.

Senator Scutari said though the program purports to be focused on increasing traffic safety, it is really a revenue-raiser for towns and, in fact, could compromise safety for motorists and pedestrians.

New York

Last year, the New York State Police conducted twelve "safety checks" near motorcycle events and they plan on conducting fifteen more this year. Attorney Mitchell Proner is suing the state police because he argues that the state's institution of roadblocks exclusively for motorcyclists infringes on riders' First and Fourth Amendment rights.

Ohio

Ohio lawmakers recently said it's OK for trucks to drive faster on the state's highways, and now they're considering a bill that would raise the speed limit for passenger cars, too. If approved, Ohio would join 32 other states who have raised their speed limits to at least 70 MPH on certain interstate roads.

Texas

A statewide ban of red-light cameras that state Rep. Carl Isett and two other legislators pushed for is dead this session, despite overwhelming support in the Legislature. For three sessions, Isett has sought to outlaw the devices, saying they are just a cash cow for cities. House negotiators said they couldn't agree to the gas tax amendment and Senate negotiators told them that if they did not agree to it the red-light camera amendment would be killed as well. ■

As of this printing, this information is current. For more information on this and other motorist news, visit www.motorists.org



Members Write

I must take exception to Eric Peters' writeup in the May/June issue regarding insurance.

I agree that I don't like spending \$1,200 a year for something "that might happen," but look at the other side of the issue. Say you do have an accident and you injure someone seriously and you have no insurance. What happens? The ambulance chasers drag you into court and you could lose everything you have.

I wish there were another way, but I consider automobile insurance a must, unless you have 100,000/300,000/50,000 laying around that you don't need.

*F.C. Baker
Leesburg, FL*

The police in Fair Lawn, NJ have implemented an aggressive enforcement campaign against motorists who drive through a crosswalk while someone is in the crosswalk.

The crosswalk can be at an intersection or in the middle of a block. The person could be on the other side of the road and still the motorist gets a ticket for someone in a crosswalk 30 feet away.

The result of this is not improved pedestrian safety which is the official reason for the aggressive enforcement.

The result is pedestrians who meander across busy intersections while talking on their cell phones without bothering to see if any cars are in the area.

The result is that Fair Lawn now has adults who know less than children when it comes to looking both ways before crossing the street.

The kicker is that under NJ law the

motorist is responsible for the safety of people who willfully disregard their personal safety while crossing the street.

*Gary Konecky
Fair Lawn, NJ*

I've been with you guys a long time but the May/June issue bothered me.

First, The Car Insurance Scam, by Eric Peters, Automotive Consultant and Angry Nut Case. He may be right or he may be wrong but who could tell through all that anger?

Anyway, that ship has sailed. The fight against global warming, mandatory car insurance, these are done deals, and to use *Driving Freedoms* as a forum for anybody with a bug up their butt dilutes NMA's message.

Roadblocks, DWI statutes, speed limits, speed traps, photo enforcement are issues where our reasoned arguments may prevail. Unless NMA becomes known as a haven for the lunatic fringe.

Otherwise, keep up the good work.

*David Kelly
Tuscon, AZ*

As one who joined in the CCRTL days, I have always enjoyed the exchange of information and opinions among the membership. For once, however, I must object to the substance of two member articles in the May/June issue.

Eric Peters, with whom I normally

agree, dislikes mandatory auto insurance. I sympathize with all opponents of compulsion, but he misses some key points.

An automobile is capable of causing tremendous damage, and it is not unreasonable to require those who drive them to be prepared to cover the costs of an error. One alternative is higher premiums for uninsured motorist coverage, which transfers the cost of insurance from those who are careless to those who are responsible.

In forty years of driving I have never had a claim filed against me, but Peters' suggestion, that I bank the premium money, would leave me far short of what would be needed to cover an accident involving even moderate physical injury.

An option that makes sense would be a requirement to show proof of financial assets – say \$300,000 net worth, as that is a typical coverage requirement – but how many of us can do that?

Wallace Thomas thinks EPA mileage ratings are for suckers. He develops a scenario to show how those ratings can be misleading. It is valid as far as it goes, but even he uses the EPA numbers in his calculations. He ends up demonstrating that EPA ratings are useful even as they don't answer every question. No one ever claimed they did.

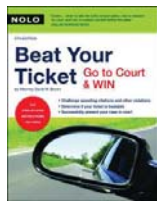
While I may disagree with these two gentlemen, I respect them for putting their opinions forward and thank the NMA for providing the forum.

*Mark Lijek
Anacortes, WA*

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 or mailed to us.

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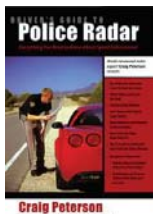
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Beat Your Ticket

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.

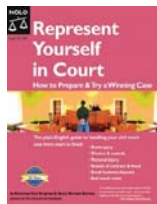
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Driver's Guide To Police Radar

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*.

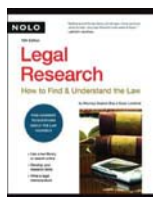
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Represent Yourself In Court

Represent Yourself In Court is written for the non-lawyer. This book offers a step-by-step guide to representing yourself in a civil trial, from start to finish. It does double duty in that you can use this information for any civil matter, not just traffic tickets.

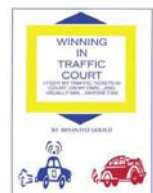
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Legal Research

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.

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



Winning In Traffic Court

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.

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.

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Mike Valentine:
Radar fanatic



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Popular Science

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Wired

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

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GO

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