



Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation

Vol. 20 • Issue 5

September/October 2009

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

Ohio Residents Fight Back Against Ticket Cameras

See Page 7



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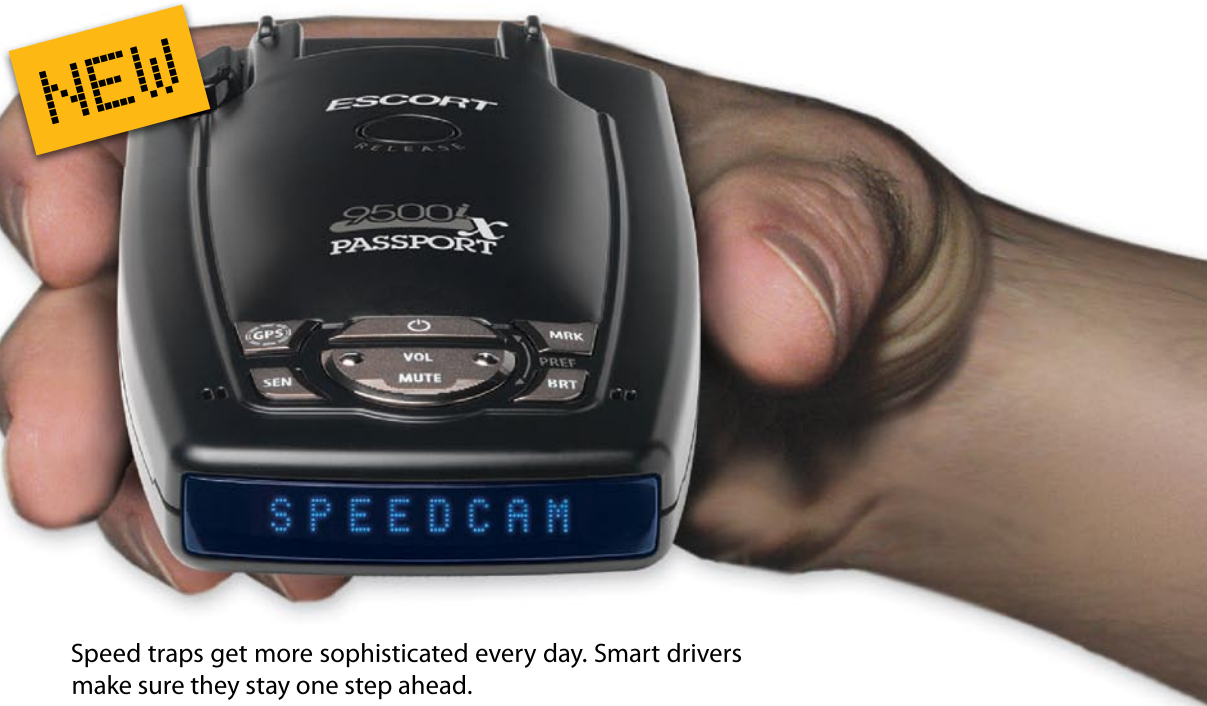
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Driving Freedoms

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Cover

“Ohio Residents Fight Back”



Crisis of the Moment

by James J. Baxter, President, NMA

We are on the brink of annihilation and we just don't know it, or maybe we do and we just don't care? This month's Armageddon is being brought to us by "texting while driving."

The month before it was proclaimed that cell phone use, on the part of drivers, was more dangerous than "drunk driving." In the same time frame, a preliminary study was released claiming that 12,500 people died over a ten year period because the 55 mph speed limit was repealed. Back seat passengers who don't wear seat belts are filling the morgues.

According to NHTSA and MADD, for every drunk driver arrested, hundreds of others are escaping detection. There isn't a storefront plate glass window in America that is safe from a senior driver. And the nation's highways are filled with large trucks with sleeping drivers behind the wheel.

The use of electronic gizmos; be they cell phones, GPS units, "personal assistants," I-pods, satellite radio receivers, or handheld computers has escalated in geometric proportions, including in vehicles. The trend line is straight up and climbing.

Speed limits and traffic speeds on open highways have increased since the repeal of the 55 mph speed limit. Texas and Utah sport limited sections of highway with 80 mph speed limits (and we know humans can't even breathe at those kinds of speeds.)

If we take NHTSA and MADD at their word, there are 200 drunk drivers who don't get caught for every drunk driver that does get

caught (1.5 million a year). That means we have 300 million drunk drivers out there, easily every man, woman and child in the country.

The elderly population is growing by leaps and bounds and most of them keep driving into their 70's and 80's, some into their 90's. These people can't see or hear and they are reportedly loaded with mind-altering drugs. More often than not they can't tell the brake from the gas pedal, according to published reports.

Add in the sleep deprived truck drivers that are wiping out unbelted rear seat passengers and it's amazing any of us survive a venture onto a public highway.

The magnitude of this unharnessed mayhem is proven by government fatality rates for traffic accidents.

Just consider this; in 1995 before universal use of cell phones, before repeal of the 55 mph speed limit, when texting didn't exist, the fatality rate was 1.73 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

In 2008 with cell phones permanently affixed to the ear, rampant texting, an exploding senior population, and 55 a vague memory, the fatality rate is 1.27 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

Ahh, that means the fatality rate has gone *down* 27 percent in this time period.

How can that be?

All of this dangerous behavior, high speeds, distractions, old

(Continued on Page 4)

I Fought the Law . . . and I Won!

Editor's Note: The following account is from a new NMA member who asked that his identity be withheld. Although this was a textbook approach to fighting a speeding ticket, hearing successful accounts such as this never gets old.

Please remember that NMA State Activists and State Chapter Coordinators are excellent resources. Phone consultations are available with NMA staff as well.

In June 2009, the Illinois State Police ticketed me for speeding. I wasn't speeding.

I joined the NMA and decided to take my case to court. I took a half-day off from work to drive down to the Cook County Courthouse in Bridgeview.

After corresponding with the NMA and spending about two hours on the phone with NMA Illinois State Activist Barnett Fagel, I was ready.

I had a briefcase containing questions I intended to ask and all of the paperwork associated with the ticket.

My supporting evidence included a large package from Kinko's (where I had several maps of the area where I was ticketed) printed on cardstock.

Several state troopers were in attendance at the courthouse, including



the one who wrote my ticket, and another that looked very much like the LIDAR gun operator in my case.

When my case was called, I brought my briefcase and my Kinko's package up, and pled "not guilty."

The judge looked at me and asked if that meant I wasn't speeding. I answered, "I was not, Your Honor." He told me to sit

down. Before I sat, I asked, "Your Honor, would you hear a motion?"

Following the advice on the NMA website, I had submitted a discovery request that the Cook County State's Attorney's office ignored. My plan was to move for a dismissal based on their failure to produce the requested materials.

The judge said that he'd hear my motion when I was called back, and so I went to sit down. Just as I sat, the judge called me back right away, and the prosecutor dismissed my case.

Without the help of the NMA, and particularly Mr. Fagel, I would not have been nearly as prepared or confident when I faced the court.

I believe it was the confidence I expressed, the evidence and exhibits I was carrying, and my prepared motion that caused the state's attorney to dismiss the case.

If we had gone to trial, even if I lost, I would have embarrassed the state's attorney and his office. ■

Sting Operation Fails in Pasadena, CA

Earlier this year, South Pasadena police set up a decoy school bus in an attempt to nab drivers who did not stop when the bus was flashing its red lights.

Over 150 motorists each received \$500 citations for violating the vehicle code that says drivers may not pass a school bus with its red lights flashing when it is "stopped for the purpose of loading or unloading any schoolchildren."

The location of the decoy bus was unusual; it first was set up in the midst of a busy six-lane road, not near a crosswalk or intersection.

Some observers to the sting opera-

tion complained that the flashing lights and the presence of more than a dozen officers in the street caused confusion and a distraction for motorists.

During the operation, two police cadets walked on and off the bus as its red lights were flashing. As reported by the *Los Angeles Times*, onlooker Mary Hatton said, "There were no children to be seen from my vantage point."

Ultimately, this led to a request from the South Pasadena Police Department to the courts to dismiss the citations. "We didn't meet the requirements for this code," per Capt. Richard Kowaltschuk. ■

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NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



Put away your PDAs.

Congressional leaders now seem intent on banning the use of PDAs while driving, thanks in part, to a new study from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. No one is quite sure how to enforce the law but that doesn't seem to matter too much; the interest is there.

A ban on texting is also getting high profile support from the Administration. The Department of Transportation is convening a national summit in September to discuss how states could implement the new ban without pressure from Congress.

We can expect more activity on this issue and increased interest among Congressional leaders in directing the states to change driving behavior.

In addition to increased interest in behavior modification, we are now entering a fall season where policy discussion in the House and Senate will focus on the ever-expanding shortfall in funding for road construction.

In August, the Senate agreed to approve a House proposed, temporary transfer of \$7 billion to keep

the Highway Trust Fund afloat. The Highway Trust Fund provides roughly \$40 billion annually to states for road and transit projects.



The account relies predominantly on federal revenues from fuel taxes and has struggled of late to keep pace with spending as Americans drive fewer miles and do so in more fuel-efficient cars and trucks.

Because fuel receipts vary depending on a number of factors, estimates vary for how long the \$7 billion transfer will tide the trust fund over, but the injection will likely keep the fund solvent until at least the end of the calendar year.

But regardless of the account's cash level, lawmakers will still need to decide on what form the next highway and transit authorization will take by the end of

September, when the current \$286 billion spending bill expires.

The House hopes to push forward with their six-year, \$500 billion bill that would overhaul much of the nation's transportation policy.

The Senate, however, wants to simply extend the current authorization by 18 months to provide lawmakers more time to debate the substantial reforms that the House supports, and to figure out new ways to pay for the transportation work.

Paying for the new program will be controversial. A vehicle-miles-traveled tax, or VMT tax, would be a radical change from the current gasoline tax.

Though this approach is gaining support from politically powerful constituents like the environmental community, it is far from clear whether it can be adopted.

One thing is for certain, the current system isn't working and the fight for developing a new one is just starting. Stay tuned because the fall debate will be crucial. ■

Crisis of the Moment

(Continued from page 2)

drivers, dozing truck drivers, seatbelt shunners, and unrepentant drunk drivers, and the fatality rate goes down???

Does this mean our government and related public officials may not be telling us the truth?

Could this be possible?

Maybe the reason is the widespread use of red light ticket cameras? Probably not, it's well documented that they increase accidents.

Same goes for ignition interlock devices. Then again there's the fall back explanation; more tickets, higher fines, and less due process make for safer highways.

And if you believe that, you're spending too much time texting and yammering on your cell phone. ■

The Right Turn on Red Scam*by Greg Mauz, NMA Texas State Activist*

Camera promoters have deceived the public into believing that “red light running” is the leading cause of urban crashes and fatalities.

For the record, red light violations cause a very minor 1.5 percent of all US crashes and only 2 percent of fatalities.

The percentage of urban crashes is less than 5 percent and not 22 percent as dishonest camera promoters claim. For perspective, an American is twenty times more likely to be murdered than killed by a red light violator.

True speeding numbers and percentages are similarly low.

Targeting invisible, non-dangerous violations for a very minor cause of crashes is bad enough, but now camera promoters are exploiting legal right turns on red.

This is another very questionable, not even remotely dangerous, letter of the law versus spirit of the law violation.

According to a 1998 U.S. Department of Transportation report, improper right turns on red caused only 2,378 crashes of 6.33 million U.S. collisions.

That’s a microscopic 0.037 percent of all crashes. Again, safety isn’t even in the picture.

Over 80 percent of Los Angeles County red light camera tickets are

for questionable stops for right turns on red. Cameras in Duncanville, Texas, a city with a population of 38,000, handed out over 40,000 right turn on red tickets.

RedFlex, an Australia-based ticket camera company, started this heinous scam. It’s not just questionable stops either. Many people swear they knew about the cameras and made sure they had stopped!

Clever placement of the stop bar/trigger devices before the actual point of turning can entrap hundreds every day.

An 82-year-old man, dying of cancer, was entrapped in Herlingen, Texas. Despite swearing innocence, writing letters, and attending a hearing, he was forced to pay the fine.

Despite documenting only two improper right turn on red crashes, Burleson, Texas issues thousands of right on red tickets.

Randall James, an award-winning businessman, challenged a right turn on red ticket charged to one of his business vehicles.

He knew for a fact that he was not driving that truck, but despite having a GPS device installed, he was unable to determine which employee was driving during the alleged violation.

James challenged the ticket, but despite proving his innocence, the hearing official demanded payment. James appealed to a real court while a local newspaper reporter observed the scenario.

Two days later, a letter from the city arrived at James’ house. They dismissed the ticket “on a technicality.” Was the dismissal due to fear of media exposure to their extortion racket?

Houston attorney Randall

Kallinen challenged (for a client) three red light on red tickets in court. The judge dismissed the tickets as “hearsay evidence” – there was no proof who was driving the car.

Camera companies promised in the 1990s that they would not target right turns on red and that their trigger lines only reacted to vehicle speeds over 16 mph.

Now they set their lines to flash photograph at 1 to 2 mph. This means that if a front tire rolls over the stop line and stops, a ticket can still be issued.

Legal right turns on red need to be changed from having to come to a complete stop to a yield. Most intersections, with separate right turn lanes, already post yield signs.

It’s petty and vindictive to ticket someone for arguably not coming to a 100 percent complete stop before turning right on red.

Remember, this “violation” causes only a microscopic 0.037 percent of all crashes.

In the real world of driving, right turns on red are already a yield. Millions of drivers obey the spirit of the law by safely yielding as they legally turn right on red.

The letter of the law is wrong and needs to be changed to reflect the safe expedition of traffic. ■

Have an opinion about this or other motorist issues? The National Motorists Association wants to hear from you.

Contact us:

Email: nma@motorists.org

Phone: 608-849-6000

New NMA Brochure Can Help Extend Your Membership

The new NMA trifold brochure inserted between pages seven and eight highlights the value and benefits of being a member of the association, and touches upon some of the key issues that attract the motoring public.

We need your help to grow the NMA at the grassroots level. There is no truer saying than “strength in numbers” when it comes to making real change at the local, state, or national level.

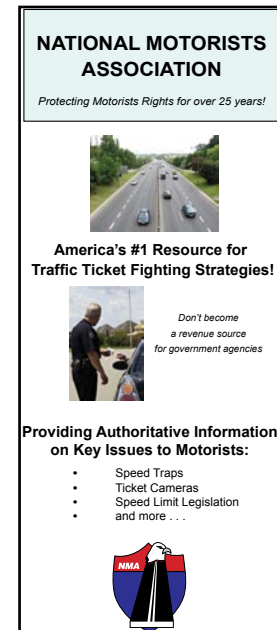
Pull out the brochure, show it to family, friends, co-workers – anyone you believe treasures individual freedoms and shares the desire to protect motorists’ rights.

The brochure includes a *Join Options* panel that can be faxed or mailed to

the NMA to begin a new membership. Of course, enrollment is also easy to do from our website, www.motorists.org.

For each new member that mentions you as their referral, you will automatically receive an additional three months of NMA membership to your existing term. Simply ask the new member to note your name and location (city, state) in response to “Please tell us where you received this brochure” under *Join Options*, or to “Why did you decide to join the NMA” via www.motorists.org.

If you want more of these brochures to leave with members of your Optimists Club or your golfing buddies or at the local salon, let us know. ■



Impressions of Driving in South Africa and China

by Nitin Kibe, NMA Member

I was recently in South Africa (Johannesburg/Cape Town/Pilanesberg) and China (Beijing/Chengdu) and drove/was driven a fair bit.

Here are some of my impressions of expressway driving in those countries.

South Africa is like the UK: drive on the left, overtake on the right. On the six-lane toll expressways, lane discipline is good.

Although most traffic stacks up in the middle lane, rather than the leftmost, the right lane is always clear or promptly cleared for faster traffic.

Speed limits are 75 mph, traffic flows at 80-85 mph, and enforcement is typically through either manned or automatic speed cameras.

On the lighter travelled but still major two-lane secondary roads, the limit is again 75 mph and lane discipline is a delight.

Traffic moves over to a fairly wide and well-paved shoulder to create an extra “middle” lane for overtakers, who

then flash their hazard lights as thanks when they pull back quickly into the lane.



Most cars are manual transmission, and driving is fun.

China is more of a mixed picture, with driving on the right like in the US.

The national toll expressway system is new with autobahn quality four or six lanes, stratified by posted speeds – up to 50 mph extreme right, up to 60 mph middle, up to 75 mph leftmost – with no trucks there.

Driving styles are not good at all. The leftmost lane is often occupied by trucks and buses, in addition to cars,

and they remain there and flash their left blinker as soon as you signal to overtake.

Faster traffic moves into the middle/right lane to pass or if those are occupied onto the extreme right lane or even the right shoulder.

Unnecessary honking takes place. Traffic stacks up by speed, so leftmost lane could be crowded with right lanes empty, but no one moves over.

No one switches on lights in rain, or even when dusk is falling and it’s getting dark.

In cities, the double yellow line separating streams of opposing traffic on undivided roads is routinely crossed.

Left turns in front of oncoming traffic are common and, perhaps because speeds are slow, the oncoming traffic also veers leftward. It is a little alarming.

Overall, the Chinese have yet to acquire the softer skills which make good drivers. ■

People of Heath and Chillicothe, OH Fight Ticket Cameras

Heath Tickets Exceed City Population

Heath, Ohio, a community located 30 miles east of Columbus, installed traffic cameras on July 1, 2009, but held off mailing subsequent tickets until after July 21.

Because of the high number of ticketed violations, the mailings were delayed, ostensibly to allow city council members to modify the city's response to the new enforcement procedure. It didn't dampen the public outcry.

Heath issued over 10,000 traffic tickets during the first four weeks of July in a city with a population of about 9,000. This would have netted the city more than \$830,000, and that is after paying the ticket camera company Redflex.

By July 31, *The Columbus Dispatch* began reporting a series of stories about the Heath photo enforcement program and the swift public reaction.

When the first wave of tickets were mailed on July 21, many drivers began finding out they had received multiple speeding tickets during those first three weeks of July.

Heath Mayor Richard Waugh said the city policy was being amended to allow drivers to post bond on one \$100 ticket so that they could receive a hearing on all of the tickets assigned to them.

Waugh expects that as many as half of the July violations could be dismissed, with the recommendation from him and the city council that "compassion and discretion" be shown by the hearing officer.

This did not stop opponents from submitting a petition to ban the traffic cameras, complete with 420 signatures, to the city council at their August 3 meeting. Only 193 signatures are required to place the issue on the November ballot.

The Heath photo enforcement program consists of ten cameras installed at six intersections. After that initial surge in July, Waugh expects the number of tickets to level off at around 400 per month.

Tim Kelley, councilman-at-large for Heath, directed his comments toward those commuters who were now bypassing the city based on the adverse publicity. "You're not hurting (the council) at all, you're hurting the waitresses, the people who work," he said.

It sounds like a simple matter of motorists exercising their driving freedoms. ■

Chillicothe Ticket Camera Referendum

Chillicothe residents signed a petition to place a referendum on the November 2009 ballot to keep or ban existing ticket cameras in the city.

Assistant Law Director James L. Mann is seeking to block the petition on the grounds that a city may not bind by initiative the law enforcement actions of the county.

Mann also claims that Chillicothe residents cannot impair the contract between the camera company, Redflex, and the city.

In essence, he indicated that the people of Chillicothe have no power to direct city council actions.

Earlier this year, Chillicothe Auditor Bill Morrissey scaled back his initial estimate of \$1.5 million in camera revenue. He asked City Council to lower the expected red-light ticket camera revenue by \$750,000.

The *Newark (OH) Advocate* reported that the Chillicothe deal with Redflex is not as lucrative as Heath's contract with the Australian camera company. Chillicothe is set to receive about one-third of the camera revenue. Heath's take is reported to be in the 69 percent to 79 percent range.

Chillicothe has received about \$232,500 from the photo enforcement program in a six-month period. That is after paying back almost \$49,000 in refunds to motorists.

Some see the November vote to keep or remove the ticket cameras as a toss-up at this point.

Opponents point to revenue production for the city while camera backers try to emphasize safety benefits.

Where have NMA members heard that before? ■



Still Complaining About the NMSL Repeal 14 Years Later

by Gary Biller, NMA Executive Director

“The failed policy of increased speed limits accounted for the deaths of an estimated 12,545 Americans over 10 years of follow-up. The repeal of the National Maximum Speed Law and its aftermath show that policy decisions that appear harmless can have long-term repercussions.”

So begins the Conclusions section of “*Long-Term Effects of Repealing the National Maximum Speed Limit in the United States*”, a report from University of Illinois - Chicago and Hebrew University - Jerusalem researchers, who analyzed and interpreted U.S. highway fatality data from the end of 1995 through 2005.

If that isn't enough to agitate NMA members, who fought for 13 years to repeal the NMSL, the following final statement in the same section of the report probably will do so:

“Lower legal speed limits and improved enforcement through the use of speed cameras could reduce travel speeds and fatalities immediately.”

The preliminary report was published online to subscribers of the *American Journal of Public Health* in July 2009. The final report is scheduled to be published in the September 2009 print issue of the magazine.

NMA membership saw many of the media stories, which highlighted the 12,500 death total. The July 21, 2009 NMA email newsletter, “*Déjà Vu All Over Again – Safer at 55 mph?*” covered some of the major defects in the *Long-Term Effects* study.

Since then, we have received a final draft of the pro-55 article, and we are able to add more specifics to the discussion.

The NMA will be submitting a response to the editors of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Absolute fatality figures, as used in this study, are not accurate indicators in assessing highway safety trends.

Fatality rates have more meaning, particularly when analyzing trends over longer periods of time. Yet the *Long-Term Effects* authors specifically state that their “...data involved counts of absolute numbers rather than rates.”

They didn't use fatality rates because fatality rates contradict their preconceived conclusions.

In reality, U.S. highways have become progressively safer over time.

Table 1 illustrates that fact for the 1995 to 2005 period in question. The data are from FARS, the Fatality Analysis Reporting System, which was the source of fatality statistics used by the *Long-Term Effects* researchers.

FARS reports that the safer highway trend continues. In 2008, fatalities fell to 37,261, a rate of 1.27 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

One of the many difficulties with the *Long-Term Effects* study centers around the concept of GIGO, which I'll refer to more diplomatically as “questionable data in, questionable data out.”

The *Long-Term Effects* researchers employed a mixed-regression model with Poisson distribution to help interpret the various data variables involved, many of which were

not reviewable from their report.

Consider the police reports of fatal highway accidents. The individual fatality reports between 1995 and 2005 were generated by tens of thousands of different sources, and from a like number of perspectives. Often there weren't reliable first-hand witnesses or detailed forensics performed at the scene of the accident.

From this mountain of paperwork, years after the fact and isolated from the actual events, the researchers made choices about which highway fatalities were caused by one or more motorists exceeding 55 mph.

Despite the media exposure highlighting the *Long-Term Effects* conclusions, the general public has the proper perspective.

On July 27, 2009, *U.S. News & World Report* published pro and con editorials to the question, “*Should a 55-mph National Speed Limit Become Law?*”

Jim Baxter penned the “No” response. The editorials were accompanied by an online poll asking readers the same question. The final results?

80 percent “No”, 20 percent “Yes”

We still have work to do to educate the 20 percent. ■

TABLE 1	1995	2005	% Change
Overall U.S. Highway Fatalities	41,817	43,510	4.0
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), 100 million	24,230	29,890	23.4
Fatalities per 100 million VMT	1.73	1.46	(15.6)

The Advocate: Jim Baxter, National Motorists Association



*Editor's Note: The following interview with Jim Baxter was published by AUTOMOBILE in their September 2009 issue. The interviewer was Joe Lorio, who also authored **The Story of the 55**, which appears after the Q&A with Jim.*

AUTOMOBILE: Tell us about the origins of the NMA.

Jim Baxter: It was founded [in 1982] to repeal the 55 mph national maximum speed limit. It's strictly a grassroots organization. The idea was that we could rally all the people who were supportive of getting higher speed limits on the rural interstate system – and other places as well.

That was the formative objective of the organization and remained our primary objective up until 1987, when we were successful in getting Congress to at least allow the states to raise the speed limit to 65. We then became involved in a wider range of motorist issues, but the speed limit and speed-limit-related topics have always been among our primary areas of involvement.

What is the NMA's focus today?

For the past few years, much of our time has been spent on automated enforcement – photo radar, red-light cameras – the whole movement

toward the use of automated means to give people tickets.

Is this a particularly perilous time for motorists' rights?

There are a couple phenomena right now that are working at cross purposes to motorists' rights. First, we see a greater emphasis on traffic enforcement for revenue generation.

There's also an effort to reduce people's ability to contest these kinds of tickets, by removing various due-process rights – for instance, by charging people to contest a ticket.

Do you see this as a Democrat/Republican issue?

No. I wish we could point at one or the other as the boogeyman, but this is more like the government against its citizens.

Are you a known entity among your local law-enforcement agencies?

I've never had any negative experiences because of our position. Actually, a fair number of police officers belong to the organization or are sympathetic with our arguments, because they would much prefer to be out there doing legitimate police work than being used as cash machines for the local unit of government.

You have some old motorcycles. Do you have any vintage cars?

I've got a 1931 Plymouth that I've had since I was fourteen years old.

What's your favorite ride?

I have three old Honda Sabres. I've always liked that motorcycle. That's what I probably ride the most for fun.

I haven't had a car that I'd want to brag about for many years. ■

The Story of the 55

Reacting to the Arab oil embargo of 1973, Congress passed the Emergency Highway Energy Conservation Act, which included a 55 mph national maximum speed limit. President Nixon signed it into law in January 1974.

Predictably, given that interstates were designed for 70 mph travel (in 1950s cars), compliance was abysmal. Studies showed that as many as 85 percent of drivers exceeded 55 mph. Ironically, traffic engineers try to achieve a limit that's higher than the speed at which 85 percent of drivers travel.



Unfortunately, the fuel savings proved negligible (one percent, according to the DOT). In 1987, Congress raised the limit to 65 mph. It was finally abolished in 1995.

Could it happen again? Well, last year, Senator John Warner (R-Virginia) called for a study of the benefits of returning to a 55 mph limit, and Representative Jackie Speier (D-California) introduced a bill to establish a 65 mph maximum.

Uh-oh. ■



News From Around The Country

Arizona

An independent test by Craig Peterson of RadarTest.com determined that speed cameras have had no effect on Arizona highway speeds. The test included at least 200 measurements at each location using the speeds of cars in each travel lane.

California

A California judge has begun throwing out red light camera citations issued in Santa Ana. Orange County Superior Court Commissioner Kenneth Schwartz declared the city's program void because it had ignored several provisions of state law. Local attorneys Mark D. Sutherland and R. Allen Baylishad challenged the city for its failure to provide the required thirty-day warning period before beginning the program and its use of a prohibited per-ticket "cost neutral" compensation scheme.

Colorado

The Colorado Springs City Council endorsed a plan from the police department to install red-light cameras in the city. Police also plan to roll out a photo radar traffic enforcement program in neighborhoods, near parks, and in school and construction zones.

Florida

The city of Pembroke Pines is considering adding red light cameras to several intersections. However, the city is so concerned about being sued for violating drivers' rights that they're insisting that the camera company share any legal costs if there are lawsuits filed.

In another Florida-related story, Christopher Maul, who spent 12 years with the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), says he was fired in June for not writing enough traffic tickets. Internal memos exposed a possible ticket quota, but the FHP denied the accusations and attributed the citation requirements to "performance standards."

Iowa

Larry Sauer, with the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, announced that overtime pay for supplemental traffic enforcement in Iowa for 2009-10 is about \$2.2 million.

Louisiana

A new Louisiana anti-speed trap law took effect on August 15th. The law says that any money that police departments earn from tickets issued to drivers on the interstate going less than ten miles over the speed limit will go to the state, not local police departments.

Maryland

Simmering resentment against traffic cameras is being expressed in acts of civil disobedience in suburban Montgomery County, where in early August an unknown person or people painted over the lenses of two sets of speed cameras in the Cabin John area, rendering them useless.

Mississippi

Jackson city officials have shut down the city's red light cameras to comply with the recent statewide ban on the devices.

Ohio

Opponents of red-light cameras in Toledo, OH – the first midwestern city to install such cameras – gathered 8500 signatures in an attempt to place an amendment on the November ballot to eliminate RLCs. Members of a Cincinnati group that successfully fought the installation of cameras in that city last year, brought the fight to Toledo.

Texas

A government transportation council recently awarded \$3,615,214 in taxpayer money to a foreign corporation for its failure to produce a winning toll road project bid. The council approved the payment as a "stipend for unsuccessful bidders", ostensibly to cover costs the company incurred by applying for loans that would have been backed by federal taxpayers.

Elsewhere in Texas, the operations committee of the North Texas Tollway Authority approved a proposal that raised speed limits across the system to 70 mph. Some exceptions were included however. The previous speed limit on the toll roads was 55 mph.

Washington

A red-light camera that sits in front of a Seattle resident's home has been randomly flashing at all hours of the night, even when no one's close to running a light. Even so, local officials have refused to install a shield to prevent the homeowner from having to see the blinding flashes because they're worried that it might compromise the camera's ticketing abilities.



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



Members Write

My daughter received a summons for exceeding the speed limit of 25 mph in Tuxedo, NY. This village derives its main income from summons they issue around the clock to unsuspecting motorists.

Since I use the standard advice given by the NMA on how to fight tickets, I have been successful in winning cases.

We were herded into a large room and the ticketing officer, now acting as a prosecuting attorney, called my daughter. I went with her as her designated representative. I asked the officer to provide a required deposition which had not been mailed to us. He stated that it was on his desk, but didn't produce it. He then told me I was not permitted represent my daughter and had to leave. When I asked on what grounds, he placed his hand on his service pistol. I left. My daughter pleaded guilty and paid a fine.

I wrote a letter to the judge, describing the circumstances and asked whether a police officer, in full regalia, is a proper substitute for an officer of the court.

Shortly thereafter, my daughter received a letter that the case was dismissed, and her fine was refunded together with an apology.

Nick Neuhaus
Howard Beach, NY

Re Mr. Peters' article, "The Car Insurance Scam" (May/June 2009 *Driving Freedoms*), how does he propose to adequately compensate accident victims/families who are injured/killed by those who have little or no assets?

Thirty years ago, while riding a

motorcycle, I was T-boned at an intersection by a car. As a result, I spent three months in the hospital and had numerous surgeries, including a leg amputation.

The driver had the state minimum required liability insurance of \$20K, of which I received \$15K after my lawyer's take. \$100K would have been much more appropriate for the injuries sustained, but the driver had no assets worth pursuing.

I think all drivers should be required to have at least \$250K liability insurance, or pay into a state-run liability fund that guarantees at least \$250K payouts for such grievous results, or put \$250K in an insurance escrow fund while they hold a driver's license.

If a driver pays into the state insurance fund, never has an at-fault accident, and permanently surrenders his/her driver's license (old age, death, etc.), he/she should be entitled to a full refund with reasonable interest.

Bob Hogarth
Millington, MI

I'll begin by saying I think EVERY cause taken up by the NMA is a just one. However it seems to me we could have a larger impact if more people knew who we were. I would like to see the NMA focus it's efforts on what I believe is our most achievable cause, and I really believe that is overturning the compulsory seat belt laws.

The opposition is always quick

to point out the "potential" innocent victims, such as those run down by drunk drivers or speeders or what have you.

Nobody can point to anyone as being a potentially innocent victim of me not wearing a seat belt! Yes, I know they can and do save lives, but the point is the only possible life to be physically effected is my own.

If we can open the eyes of a larger percent of "Sheeple" in this country to say "STOP" when the local TV station talking head starts a news broadcast with that most irritating phrase "Keeping YOU Safe," then maybe, just maybe, we will have a more recognizable base from which to pitch the next step.

Lonnie Pfeifer
Nampa, ID

Editor's Note: Jim Baxter was quoted in the August 2, 2009 issue of PARADE Magazine on the NMA's opposition to mandatory seat belt laws.

NMA membership has certainly proven to be a bargain to me. I spent \$45 for a family membership and saved at least \$225 in fines and court costs, and that's without counting the significant increase in my auto insurance costs that would have followed a conviction. Hiring a lawyer would have kept the ticket off my record, but it would have cost at least \$350.

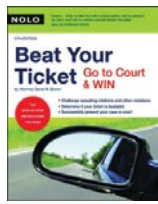
Based on what happened to the accused speeders who had lawyers, I would have shelled out \$500-\$800 in fines on top of that to keep my record clean.

Mike
IL Member

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 402 W 2nd St., Waunakee, WI 53597

Great Deals At The NMA Store!

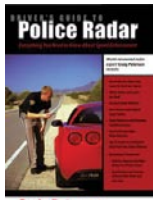
Shop Online - <http://store.motorists.org/>



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.

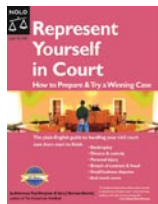
Non-Member Price: \$19.95 **Member Price: \$11.95**



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*.

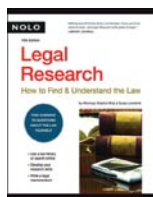
Non-Member Price: \$19.95 **Member Price: \$14.95**



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.

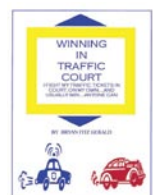
Non-Member Price: \$29.95 **Member Price: \$21.95**



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, and 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
Members: \$30/month
Non-Members: \$50/month

Order Toll-Free: 1-800-882-2785
Fax Your Order: 1-608-849-8697
Order Online: <http://store.motorists.org>

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Represent Yourself In Court		
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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.*

Situation Awareness:
V1 says 2 radars, ahead and behind.

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

What others say about V1

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

PC Magazine

"Best detection range in our tests."

Wired

"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

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

Wired

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

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 Department No. XP99 Fax 513-984-8976
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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
- Ohio residents add sales tax
- 30-Day Money-Back Guarantee

"...it's worth every penny." — Wired