

Motorcycle Awareness Program going strong for over twenty-two years

ABATE of Arizona's Motorcycle Awareness Program (M.A.P.) is currently presented to student drivers education classes twice per year at five East Valley high schools. The motorcycle awareness program supports ABATE's awareness of motorcycles mission statement. The goal of the M.A.P. program is to introduce students to and increase their awareness of motorcycles in today's traffic situations.



The Motorcycle Awareness Program (M.A.P.) is aimed at the target high school driver's education class audience because the future drivers of Arizona need to be aware of motorcycles before they ever get behind the wheel. It is hoped that the "future drivers of Arizona" share the program's information with their friends and family.

The M.A.P. presentation and presentation materials were originally created by East Valley Chapter member Sporty Jim Steckbauer. The program has come a long way from presenting with chalkboard diagrams, overhead projector slides, and VHS movies to an informative PowerPoint presentation which presents awareness of motorcycles using graphics and videos from NHTSA, MSF, Texas Department of Safety, Utah Department of Safety, and ABATE of Pennsylvania's OSAL {Operation Save A Life} Program. East Valley Chapter members Joe Silk and Jim Silk ensure that the program information is up to date and reflects current traffic situations and laws. For example, the presentation was recently updated to include information on the ABATE-sponsored lane filtering bill and subsequent law.

Using the current information and PowerPoint, Jim and Joe have primarily been responsible for showing students how to 'Share The Road' twice a year for the past 22 years.

Photos and video graphics of who motorcyclists are, what they drive, and what motorcyclists look like out there on the road are demonstrated in their presentation. After they present some great awareness information, the students then take a short quiz on what was shown. Presenters verbally go through a nine

continues on page 14



continues from page 13
14

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question quiz with them, giving examples of real life experiences that relate to each question throughout.

{ed: From the way Jim explained it to me, it seems like portions of the presentation are intended to 'personalize' the motorcyclists to the students... talking about different riders & their experiences [who], [what] their reasons are for riding, and the numerous situations [where] they might, as drivers, interact with bikes on the roadways. Now, thanks to this class, rather than seeing a motorcycle as just another vehicle on the road these young drivers are more likely to see a motorcyclist as a person, going about his or her day.}



Part of the presentation includes going outdoors to witness a few motorcycle 'ride bys' and having the students guess its speed. This helps demonstrate how hard it is to judge the speed of a motorcycle. The 'narrow profile' of a motorcycle coming at you is discussed, including how easily it can be hidden

by small objects or possibly even ignored due to larger vehicles around it. The outdoor demonstration ends with a brief demonstration on how a rider operates the bike and what a future passenger should do when riding.

Many motorcycle riders have assisted Jim and Joe with the awareness classes over the past 22 years. The greatest assistant to the class is the person operating the outdoor demonstration. Without a motorcycle rider doing these demonstration rides, the class would not be a success. It is a small part, but a huge difference to make the student drivers of Arizona aware of bikers.

The goal is to expand this MAP program statewide, ideally with at least one volunteer instructor in each ABATE Chapter. The program is in need of certified instructors in the Phoenix, Tucson, Show Low, Flagstaff, and western Arizona areas.

The primary purpose of ABATE's Motorcycle Awareness Program is to spread the word about safely sharing the road, safe motorcycling, and to promote a positive image of motorcyclists. What better way than to speak to the future drivers of our state? The students will hopefully be better equipped car and truck drivers and also be more aware and watch out for us.

Although most of these classes are for High School drivers education students, the MAP can be presented to other high school classes (such as a health class) and other organizations to help them meet their safety education requirements. Promoting awareness thru rides, banners, and street demonstrations are helpful but providing visual and demonstrative awareness examples provided in a classroom environment ensures a lasting and more substantive impression on how to look out for a motorcyclist.



If you are interested in learning more about the MAP program, either to assist the existing classes or to get the program implemented in your area, contact Jim Silk at the contact information below.

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