

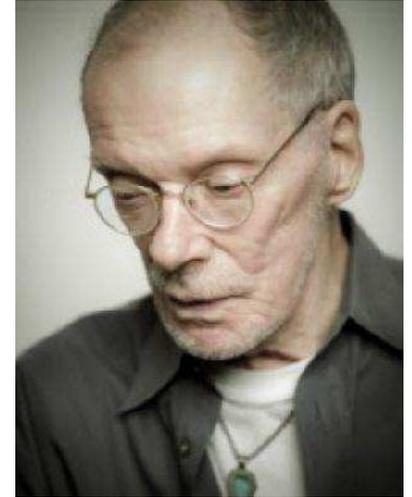


R.I.P. Jack Dowling

Jack Dowling was an early member of our Empire City Motorcycle Club. Jack joined shortly after the club was founded. He died February 24th 2021 at age 89 from complications due to COVID-19.

After Jack was in a motorcycle accident in the early 70's, he established the "Empire City MC Accident Fund" which was designed to loan members, interest free, money to have their motorcycle and bodily injuries not covered by insurance paid until they could repay the loan. The fund still exists today and members, over the years, have made contributions to it as well as utilised it!

Over the last decade, Jack attended several ECMC events. Jack owned Colt Studios, an A1 pornography magazine where he utilised his artistic talents. He studied at Cooper Union School of Art and later moved to Italy where he painted in Venice and Rome and became an Artist-in-Residence at the Positano Art Workshop. In 1968 he became Administrator of Lone Pine Art workshop in California. His early paintings were abstract, but he gained renown for works inspired by vintage photos of family and friends.



By the mid-1960s he had successful exhibitions in group and solo shows and in 1971 he found a new home at Westbeth Artists Housing. For fourteen years Jack served on the Westbeth Artists Residence Council and for twelve, he was Director of the Westbeth Gallery. He was honoured as one of Westbeth's Senior Artists and Icons in 2017.

Jack was also a published writer of short fiction. He was a sought-after source of stories of Greenwich Village life and early gay communities in NYC and Fire Island. He was a long-time summer resident of Cherry Grove, NY, serving as a Fire Commissioner for many years. He was a generous supporter of his fellow artists and the Cherry Grove Community.

Jack is predeceased by his partner Wallace Forstell and his full obituary can be seen here:

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/21552649/John-P-Dowling/New-York-City/New-York/Redden-Funeral-Home>

Highway Bill Passes the U.S. Senate

Tuesday morning (10th August 2021), the U.S. Senate passed a \$1.2 trillion dollar highway bill by a vote of 69 to 30. The bill includes increased funding for roads, bridges, safety programs and of interest to motorcyclists, and the **reestablishment of the Motorcyclists Advisory Council (MAC)** at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Despite the efforts of bipartisan Senators including, Tammy Baldwin (WI-D), Marsha Blackburn (TN-R), Joni Ernst (IA-R) and Ron Johnson (WI-R) the bill fails to match provisions for motorcyclists that the House of Representatives included in its version of highway bill. Nearly 500 amendments were offered to the Senate highway bill. In that group of amendments two focused on motorcyclists, one that expanded protections on the profiling of motorcyclists at check points, and one that included motorcyclists in studies of connected and autonomous vehicles. Frustratingly, these two amendments were not given a vote, as the Senate limited debate on amendments. Allowing only about 20 amendments of the 500 or so offered to be debated and voted on.

Read more about it (and more motorcycle news) here: <https://mrf.org/alerts/>

Helmet Choice: Fact and Fiction

On a nearly annual basis the media in this country is inspired to report stories about motorcycle fatalities on our nation's roadways. Invariably, these stories paint motorcycle rider deaths as a product of irresponsible riders who live in states that have some level of helmet choice. Frequently they report statistics that prove their narrative but fail to paint a full and complete picture. The lens with which these stories are reported often takes the naïve view that crashes can be made "safer" if only bikers somehow followed government helmet mandates.



The only true solution to motorcycle safety and reducing fatalities are proactive measures, which prevent a collision from occurring at all, rather than reactive steps that may or may not offer some level of injury mitigation only after a crash has already taken place. Rider education, which prepares motorcyclists to interact with other roadway users by learning and practising the skills necessary for hazard avoidance and developing a strategy to deal with real world traffic, is the primary component of a comprehensive motorcycle safety plan. Additionally, educating all motor vehicle operators to be alert and free of impairment as they share the road with others is critical in deterring crashes caused by inattention.

When coming across these stories, keep in mind some facts that are omitted from their reports:

Fact: Over the last decade motorcycle related deaths have varied between years but for the most part remain flat. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) data from 2019 shows 5,014 deaths, a decrease from the 2008 5,307 deaths NHTSA recorded. In that same time period registered motorcycles increased from 7.7 million in 2008 to 8.7 million ten years later. In other words, there are a million more bikes on the road and there were 300 less deaths.

Fact: Twenty-nine percent of motorcycle riders involved in fatal crashes in 2017 were riding without proper licensure at the time of the collision. A valid motorcycle license includes a rider having a valid driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement or possessing a motorcycle only license. Proper training and licensing are fundamental parts of motorcycle safety, taking unqualified riders off the road is a common-sense solution to lowering motorcycle fatalities.

Fact: The lack of a helmet mandate in the 31 states who have allowed freedom of choice does not prohibit someone from choosing to wear a helmet. In fact, a 2019 U.S. Department of Transportation audit showed that states without mandatory helmet laws still saw 56.5% of riders choose to wear a helmet.

Fact: A 2019 U.S. Department of Transportation Fatality Analysis Reporting System report showed that in crash study data, where helmet use was known, 36% of motorcyclists killed were not wearing a helmet. Conversely 61% of motorcycle fatalities involved a rider wearing a helmet. The remaining 3% had unknown usage. These numbers closely mirror NHTSA data on overall helmet usage which shows 64% of riders wearing helmets.

Fact: Despite the constant drum beat from safety advocates, the media and Washington D.C. bureaucrats about the ills of helmet-less riders, state legislatures continue to trust the judgment of bikers. Just last year Missouri passed a modified helmet law allowing the choice to ride without a helmet to those who are qualified. In at least three other states, West Virginia, Maryland, and Nebraska there are active campaigns to change their helmet mandates and let those who ride decide.



Helmets should be a CHOICE by all freedom-loving adult Americans and Canadians, not MANDATORY!

Speak with your elected officials today and let your voice be heard!

HELMET CHOICE NOW!! LET THOSE WHO RIDE DECIDE!

EZ-Pass is redefining “highway robbery”

Quietly over the past few years, toll-collecting in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and other places has dramatically changed from “take a ticket/pay toll to a human” to “get an EZ-Pass on your vehicle or raped over tolls with plate cameras”.

At first, EZ-Pass was great for bypassing huge queues for paying tolls, then came discounts for using EZ-Pass (especially if you were a resident of Staten Island and depended on the bridges!) One complaint were the traffic gates. If your EZ-Pass was not read by the tag reader, the gate would not open, stopping everyone in that lane until a human walked over and took your EZ-Pass device, placed it on a special reader close to the gate, and then handed it back to you (pissing off everyone honking behind you!)



Now the traffic gates are gone, as are “cash lanes” and toll-takers – because nowadays, there are dozens of cameras looking and recording your licence plate and (if you have an EZ-Pass account registered to that place, your EZ-Pass account is charged at the EZ-Pass discount rate), if not, a bill will be sent to you in the mail to pay. That is, until 2021...

“Mid-Tier tolling” (<https://bit.ly/ezmidthier>) was introduced in 2021 and is basically a fine you pay for EZ-Pass’ faulty equipment! If their equipment fails to read your EZ-Pass tag but successfully reads your licence plate (number tag), you will now be billed a mid-tier toll which is a mid-point between the EZ-Pass tag rate and the cash toll. Sounds a bit unfair, don’t you think? So do I, which is why I am pursuing a class-action lawsuit against EZ-Pass to rescind this mid-tier toll rate for this very reason.

EZ-Pass is also notorious for **mis-classifying vehicles**, charging you a higher toll! On more than one occasion, my motorcycle (vehicle class 11 according to EZ-Pass) is billed at the toll rate of a semi, truck, car towing a trailer, passenger automobile or other strange thing – every time, when I catch it, triggering a call to EZ-Pass customer service (who can’t fix the problem, but after waiting an hour or more on hold, will open a “ticket” for their support department, whom you may not call directly!) Good luck with that!

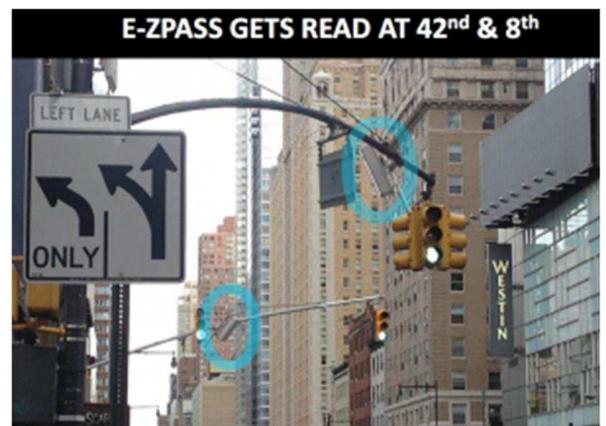
I’m all about automating tolling, but it needs to be fair and accurate. My EZ-Pass has a large black “M” on it, which means it’s for motorcycles only and (after you submit all the forms and paperwork required), will grant you a reduced toll rate for motorcycles. My number tag is registered to a motorcycle and, in fact, the form-factor of my number tag is exclusively for motorcycles! When EZ-Pass reads my EZ-Pass tag or number tag, if it can cross-reference my EZ-Pass account, it sure as fuck can look up my vehicle class for those identifiers to ensure I am billed correctly! (Note: The author of this story has initiated a CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT against EZ-Pass!)

So... until they fix their system, I propose the following: Take your EZ-Pass off your windscreen – put it in the Ferriday cage envelope that EZ-Pass provided you, and stow it away in the event you need it. Make EZ-Pass do all the work! Make them scan your number tag (licence plate), look up your record and bill accordingly! In the event EZ-Pass’ systems fuck up and don’t read (or mis-read) your number tag, you won’t be billed! Until they fix their crappy billing system, let them deal with the fall-out. So what if you pay a “mid-tier toll” when 7 out of 10 tolls aren’t billed! (Note: This does not constitute legal advice from myself nor advice from ECMC!)

Other “cons” for permanently mounting your EZ-Pass:

There are seemingly random EZ-Pass readers all over the place – on non-toll roads for the purpose of tracking you (invading your privacy). You will see them on non-toll roads like US-30, US-22 and even some intersections in New York City! When NOT going through a toll-booth, it’s advisable if you value your privacy, that you remove your EZ-Pass from your vehicle and place in the Ferriday cage EZ-Pass so kindly provided!

Want to know more about NYPD’s invasion of your privacy? The Domain Awareness System utilised by the NYPD is the largest digital surveillance system in the world! The system is connected to 18,000 CCTV cameras video cameras around New York City. It also has access to data from at least two billion license plate readings, 100,000,000 summonses, 54,000,000 911 calls, 15,000,000 complaints, 12,000,000 detective reports, 11,000,000 arrests and 2,000,000 warrants.



The system was highlighted in a May 2013 episode of PBS’ Nova on tracking the Boston Marathon bombers Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. Read more at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain_Awareness_System

175 Illegal Motorbikes Taken Off Streets of NYC

Sean Conlon and Tina Moore of the New York Post report that police swept up 175 dirt bikes and ATVs off Big Apple streets over the weekend, arresting dozens of riders and writing hundreds of summonses, police said.

“ATV’s & dirt bikes are illegal & dangerous to use in NYC,” Police Commissioner Dermot Shea tweeted Monday. “Use it & lose it.”

Shea announced in the tweet that 175 ATVs and dirt bikes were seized on July 24 and 25.



Cops also arrested 30 riders and wrote summonses for 374 operators, according to police.



Since April 20, 651 ATVs and dirt bikes have been taken away from their owners, police said.

They were, however, unable to provide comparable data for prior years.

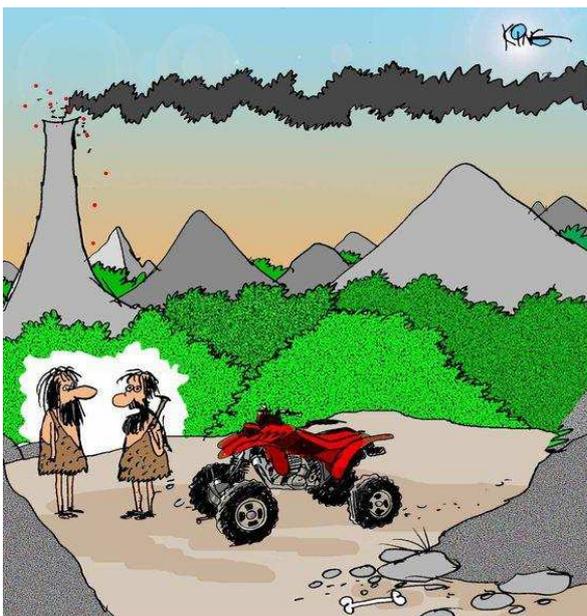
The crackdown comes in the wake of a hit-and-run that left a 4-year-old boy critically injured when a rider on a gas-powered “scooter” slammed into him in a Queens’ park last week.

“No parent should have to endure such a senseless act,” Kim Royster, the NYPD’s chief of transportation, said at the time.

Dermot Shea said 175 ATVs and dirt bikes were taken on July 24 and 25.

A Trinitarios gangbanger was charged and admitted to mowing down the kid with his scooter. The suspect was initially believed to have been driving an illegal motorbike at the time.

It is widely believed that the heavy-handed crack-down on legal motorcycle riders in New York City is a direct result of resident complaints to the police in regard to these unlicensed, unregistered, uninsured scofflaws blasting through red lights, riding on sidewalks, riding the wrong way and being generally obnoxious to others.



“Inventing the wheel got boring. So, I’m inventing something that’s fun.”



“Dad, can you buy this for me? I promise I’ll grow into it.”

UPCOMING EVENTS & RIDES

Some Featured Rides & Events:

Fri 13th – Mon 16th August: RIDE: Montréal Pride Weekend (although pride will NOT take place this year, we will travel to Montreal for the Great Canadian Adventure! If you are planning on going on this ride, please check with our Road Captain about pre-entry anti-COVID-19 requirements at the Canadian Border! You must be vaccinated and test negative both blood and nasal swab!)

Sat 28th – Sun 29th August: RIDE: New York International Air (Aeroplane) Show at the Orange County Airport

Wed 1st September, 20:00 – 21:00: MEETING: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month. This month might be the return to the in-person meetings at The Centre! All motorcyclists are welcome to participate. Attend our Open General Meeting with your computer at: <http://bit.ly/ECMC-OGM>

Fri 3rd – Tue 7th September: EVENT: The Delta International Invitational Run

Sat 11th September: RIDE: 20th Anniversary of the attack on 9/11.

Sat 25th September: RIDE: Bike HSS Benefit Ride. Register at <https://bikehss.org/>

Thu 30th September – Mon 4th October: EVENT: Mates Leather Weekend XXIV

Wed 6th October, 20:00 – 21:00: MEETING: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at The Centre, 208 W 13th St, New York, NY. All motorcyclists are welcome to participate. Check with the signs in the lobby to see which room we shall be in. Alternately, you may attend via teleconference at: <http://bit.ly/ECMC-OGM>

Fri 8th – Mon 11th October: EVENT: ECMC 57th Anniversary Weekend with Anniversary Dinner in NYC on Saturday, 9th October.

Wed 3rd November, 20:00 – 21:00: MEETING: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at The Centre, 208 W 13th St, New York, NY. All motorcyclists are welcome to participate. Check with the signs in the lobby to see which room we shall be in. Alternately, you may attend via teleconference at: <http://bit.ly/ECMC-OGM>

Wed 1st December, 20:00 – 21:00: MEETING: Empire City MC's Open General Meeting, held 8pm-9pm on the first Wednesday of each month at The Centre, 208 W 13th St, New York, NY. All motorcyclists are welcome to participate. Check with the signs in the lobby to see which room we shall be in. Alternately, you may attend via teleconference at: <http://bit.ly/ECMC-OGM>

Fri 3rd – Sun 5th December: EVENT: Empire City MC's 58th Annual Gift Drive & Holiday Party Weekend:

Fri Dec 3rd: Excelsior MC's Trim-A-Tree
Sat Dec 4th: ECMC's 58th Annual Gift Drive & Holiday Party
Sun Dec 5th: Sunday Brunch & Cigar Smoker

REMEMBER: There are plenty of other events and rides added to our official calendar on a regular basis, especially day rides! Be sure to bookmark <http://calendar.EmpireCityMC.com> and come along with us on some great rides! Our physical mailing address is: **Empire City MC, 10 W 15th St, Suite 609, New York, NY 10011-6821.**

For membership information, visit <http://empirecitymc.com/membership.php> to view and download our constitution, bylaws and membership application. We're on social media at <https://mewe.com/join/empirecitymc> where you can chat with us.

Please send any articles, photos or letters to the editor at newsletter@EmpireCityMC.org
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