

On February 6, 1970, we arrested eleven men, after filing fifty-four separate charges of selling and possession of deer. All were released after making bond.

After waiting sixteen months, we finally went to court. The arrests had been made in bordering counties, Cherokee and Delaware. Cherokee, three men and Delaware, nine men were charged.

The three men in Cherokee County entered pleas of guilty on June 10, 1971. Two were fined \$1,000 each and court cost, for possession of illegal deer. The same two were fined \$100 and court cost for selling game animals. One has sixteen cases pending and was released on \$1,250 bond. Second has five cases pending and was released. Third has three cases dismissed, sixteen cases pending and released on \$1,250 bond, to be tried next term of court.

June 18, 1971, went to court in Delaware County. Seven men entered pleas of guilty. Eleven cases on possession, fined \$110 and cost. Four cases fined \$10.00 and cost for selling deer. One man jumped bond and a warrant was issued. One man, case dismissed.

In Cherokee County, violators received the maximum. In Delaware County violators received the minimum.

We feel this has done a lot of good. The public has started to give more reports since these criminals have been exposed.

We believe this to be a fine program, with a great future. I have not gone into detail about the many phases of the program. However, if any of you are interested I would be glad to discuss the details with any of you during the conference.

Each undercover agent works under an assumed name, for protection. He is issued a drivers license, hunting license, fishing license, Social Security number and car license plates under this assumed name.

## **THE INVASION OF THE MINI-MONSTERS**

### **A Look at Some Problems of Off-road Vehicles and Their Relations to the Environment**

*By* GRADY W. PHELPS

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My fourteen year old son approached me recently and said: "Pop, I want a motor bike."

The very thought sent a chill down my spine and invoked visions of trace chains, black leather jackets with eagles on the back and long-haired hippie-type individuals traveling in roving bands. . . . I remembered Marlon Brando astride a Triumph in "The Wild Ones" and had apocalyptic images of aggression and revolt. I could see a Greasey Rider on an iron horse with 74 cubic inch lungs and apehanger bars booming down the freeway to rape John Doe's daughter behind the nearest viaduct, happy with his swastikas, burnt rubber, crab lice and filthy denim.

When I was fourteen, I dreamed of having my own horse and riding off into the west like all my cowboy heroes did every Saturday evening at the movies. But if Trigger had been laden with the pseudo-erotic symbolisms that cling to any Harley Chopper, the poor nag could not have been hobbled! The motorcycle is an object that provokes both desire and outrage—depending on which side of *thirty* you are!

But, not wanting to widen the generation gap and having just finished a hunting season loaded with problems dealing with motorcycles, I dutifully decided to find out more about these monsters! I took my son to see "Easy Rider"—and saw Captain Marvel and his fringed partner shot-gunned off their raked chopper on a southern back road. We saw Joe Namath's head bloodied with a chain in "C C and Co."

I learned that outlaw club christened themselves with such unsavory names as the Animals—Axe-men—Equalizers—Exterminators—Marauders—Raiders—Road Vultures and on down to the Warlocks and Wheels of Saul. . . . I had about made up my mind that generation gap or not, this thing had gone far enough. Certainly in a vernacular such as this there could be no wholesome recreation for my fourteen year old!

But then I read, "You meet the nicest people on a Honda" and discovered another side to this two-wheeled madness! No sane member of Hell's Angels would be caught dead on a trail bike and trail bikers have no use for choppers! We visited a number of the shops in town and learned of such exotic names as Suzuki, Bultaco, Kawasaki, Yamaha! These shops are clean and cater to clientele of middle income families for family fun. I found that only about 3,000 members belong to the "gangs" while some 3,000,000 regularly ride bikes in this country. Bikes are big business today. . . . At the end of World War II there were fewer than 200,000. Most of them are imports from Japan, Germany and Britain. The majority are small civilized creatures below 500-cc in engine capacity. But the popularity of the big monster, which can go from a stand-still to 60 mph in less than six seconds flat and cruise at 90 mph, has also ascended.

There is one to fit every pocketbook. A 2 hp mini-bike, which is popular among the 8-12 years old group, sells for \$125.00. A big Harley costs \$1,000 more than a Volkswagon . . . A "chopper", the ultimate in the bike world, is even more expensive, when all the stripping, chroming, raking, moulding, metal flaking and polishing are completed, a chopper, righteously gleaming from fishtail exhaust to brakeless front wheel, may have cost the owner \$5,000 in material and labor. The cost to insure these beasts is heavy, since to many companies owning a bike is *prima-facie* evidence of irresponsibility. The risk of theft is high, especially in cities where case-hardened steel chains and medieval looking padlocks must tether the mount, if the rider so much as stops for a hamburger.

Highway Patrol dislike bikers and are apt to assume that a Hell's Angel lurks, benzedreened, inside every rider. They will plaster the riders with tickets for the slightest infractions. Worst of all there are accidents. Big bikes are superb manifestations of engineering skill, but they are utterly vulnerable. There is no body shell, no padding, no safety belt—nothing to cushion the body that may wrench forward over the bars at 50 mph and possibly become no more than a leaking bag of tissue and bone fragments when the concrete has finished with it. On any long trip, moreover, the biker stands to encounter at least one frustrated, car-swaddled Milquetoast with blood in his eye whose hope it is to run him off the road.

So why ride? There are of course impeccable reasons! Such as: bikes are easy to park; they save on gas; they pollute the air less than cars do! However, the impeccable reasons are not always the real ones. A noted Harvard Medical School Psychiatrist, was told: "Driving it is a very physical, almost sexual feeling . . . When you accelerate there is nothing between you and nature. The wind blowing in your face is a marvelous sensation. It has tremendous appeal."

The Harvard graduate student was telling why he had just bought his third motorcycle, despite having suffered serious injuries in two cycle accidents during the previous six months.

Buying a bike is buying an experience that no other form of transportation can give. It is a unique high that, like pot, has spun its own culture around itself. The name of the game is freedom! A biker, being more mobile, is on a different footing from a driver. He is less affected by traffic. Instead of being trapped in a cumbersome padded box; frozen into the glacier of unmoving steel and winking red tail lights on the ribboned parking lots that expressways have become, he can slide through the spaces; he can travel the back roads and woods . . . trails

impossible for his four-wheeled cousin. Thus, we have arrived at the problem that is tormenting those of us whose wooded serenity has been so mercilessly shattered.

Where I work, these chattering creatures come in hordes, driven by grandfathers and 9 year olds, alike! During hunting season, the hunter, instead of hearing the clear sound of a deer hound running, is deafened by the noise resembling a thousand frenzied chain saws. So great is the noise and distraction that, through resolutions from County Commissioners, land owners and our own Game Commission, we had to restrict their use on all but a small portion of the area. This was no small chore, since the land owner, the Florida Forest service, sees trail riding as a popular form of recreation which deserves as much consideration as hunting and fishing. But since trail riders contribute nothing toward outdoor recreation, we in the Game and Fish Commission viewed it with something less than amenity. Even if restrictions could be carried out equitably, we found apprehending violators difficult. Trying to follow them through wooded sections without roads; over stumps and across ditches; and under fences was impossible in patrol cars!

And bikers are not the only ones giving trouble. For years frog and alligator hunters, sight-see-ers and tourists have roared through the Everglades. Places that were once out of reach of mechanized man have now surrendered their quiet serenity. More recently, dune buggies, snow-mobiles and newest of all, the All-terrain Vehicle called ATV's have scoured the country from Maine to California. Not even the moon is exempt—as both the United States and Russia have left their tell-tale tracks.

In some states, I'm sure, these vehicles must be registered. In Florida, we require all vehicles not bearing a valid license plate to display the name and address of the owner, if he is using the vehicle for hunting or fishing. We also have certain regulations for air-boats. But, by and large, most off-road vehicles in this country are relatively free from regulation!

No one disputes the value of these versatile gadgets to people who live and work in remote roadless areas—farmers, ranchers, Eskimoes and even our own wildlife officers have used trail bikes in sections of the Everglades. But to Nature lovers, off-road vehicles represent the ultimate invasion of privacy—the land equivalent of outboard motor boats that now choke the nations lakes and rivers. In some wilderness areas, un-declared war has broken out! Hikers and cross-country skiers have blocked trails with felled trees. In response, some bikers and snow-mobilers carry chain saws to slash road blocks and cut free firewood. Not only do some marauders on ATV's or bikes occasionally strip hunters' shacks or loot vacation homes—the new machines cause more general damage. Trail bikers litter the landscape with beer cans; pull tap rings; plastic bags; oily rags and empty bottles. Pistol packing snow-mobilers are decimating Alaskan Caribou. There are reports of over-hunting elsewhere: At Minnesota's tiny remote Pierz Lake, a reporter counted 67 snow-mobilers and 120 fishermen one winter day. They took 556 pounds of medium sized fish—about a year's production for the lake!

In Michigan's upper Peninsula, a snow-mobiling club planned a fox hunt in which the winner would get to crush the panting beast under his tracks. The event was eventually squashed by public outrage! Other drivers play a game of "spooking"—the object is to chase a terrified deer until it drops. This is a favorite past-time of some air-boat operators in the everglades, where running in belly deep water, the deer is easily caught!

Reports say that many Maine paper companies may soon close their forest to recreational use! Snow-mobilers have unwittingly flattened entire plantations of snow covered seedlings . . . In parts of California's

Sequoia National Forest, trail-bikers were banned after they started erosion that was ruining hills and the breeding grounds of golden trout . . . With their chubby six wheels churning, ATV's ravaged blueberry crops; chew up stream bottoms and rip the thin top layer of vegetation off swamps.

Drivers also damage themselves . . . There were 84 fatalities among snow-mobilers last year. Forced up steep inclines ATV's buggies and bikes can flip over like a turtle—drivers underneath.

Noise pollution is another problem spawned by these vehicles. They make a racket like a chain-saw and users tend to ride in packs. Snow-mobilers, in fact, have been run down by trains and one bike rider was forced to drive from a 30 ft. trestle, because the bike engine drowned out the sound of approaching locomotives!

*It seems* better regulations would solve some of the problems!

Meanwhile, I must head for the woods . . . on my son's trusty Yamaha!

## KENTUCKY CONSERVATION OFFICERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND EVERYDAY DUTIES

*By* HUGH CRUMP  
*Supervisor, Third District*

While working at the Third Wildlife District Office at Louisville, Kentucky, a young man by the name of Bill Smith came into the office and inquired about the possibilities of becoming a Conservation Officer.

His first question was, what were the qualifications that he would have to meet in order to be eligible to apply for this position?

I readily replied that he must be between the ages of 23 and 33. His body weight must be in proportion to his height (he must not be excessively over-weight). He must pass a rigid physical examination, take a state merit examination and be placed on a register according to his score. It is from this register that a Conservation Officer is hired whenever there is a vacancy. The top three candidates on the register are contacted and interviewed. The applicant must live in the county in which a vacancy has occurred in order to be eligible. The person should have deep feelings towards preservation of our natural resources; should be of good moral character and accepted by his community. He must be able to supply character witnesses.

Then Mr. Smith inquired about salary and benefits which a Conservation Officer receives.

I remarked that, at the present time, the Kentucky Conservation Officer stands at Grade 11 under the Merit System at a starting salary of \$480.00 per month, and he must fulfill a probationary period of one (1) year before becoming eligible for an increment in that same grade. The top salary in that grade would be \$676.00 per month within an eight-year period. He would be provided an expense account that can run anywhere from \$100 to \$150 a month, depending upon the area that he would be patrolling. This money would be in the form of mileage at eight cents per mile. He must furnish his own vehicle. The Department provides his uniform and equipment that would be required in his territory. We have a state retirement system and are provided with a \$5,000.00 life insurance policy. A Conservation Officer receives 12 vacation days plus 9½ state holidays. He may accumulate sick leave days at one per month.

Bill Smith then proceeded to ask just what his duties would be as a Conservation Officer?

The primary duties are to enforce the game and fish laws of Kentucky. He is the sole protector of fish and wildlife in his county. Even though his primary purpose is enforcing game and fish laws of the Commonwealth, he has other duties pertaining to the various Divisions within