

Driving Freedom

NMA Foundation

The Hows and Whys of the Improved SpeedTrap.org

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



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**Driving
Freedoms**

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Editorial Staff

Managing EditorJohn Bowman
Staff WriterGary Biller
Staff Writer.....Robert Talley
Guest Writer.....Ron Wolfe
Editor-at-Large..... Bill Jordan

Cover

*"The Hows and Whys of the
Improved SpeedTrap.org"*



The Business of Drivers' Rights

by Gary Biller, President, NMA

It takes passion and commitment. It takes individuals who believe so strongly in the cause that they dedicate free time to advance the issues they believe in. But to maintain a consistently effective advocacy effort, strong financial resources are paramount. The National Motorists Association would not be approaching its 32nd year as the premier defender of drivers' rights if we paid little attention to the business side of running a grassroots organization.

Over the past 18 months, I have attended several regional NMA member meetings, and in each one I have noted that the organization's annual income is derived almost equally from three sources: members' annual dues, donations and advertising revenue. Take any one of those components out of the financial equation and the NMA would struggle to exist.

That is why we treat each \$35 annual membership fee and each donation, whether \$20 or \$1,000, as not only a vote of confidence but also as a treasure trove that must be protected and nurtured. When faced with a voluntary expenditure, I can't help but think about the potential cost in terms of how many \$35 memberships it represents. We have an inherent obligation to use your investment in the NMA wisely.

A vital part of that obligation is to increase the value of our advertising platforms—NMA websites as well as publications like our popular weekly email newsletter and,

of course, *Driving Freedoms* for the NMA Foundation. I cannot mention *Driving Freedoms* without acknowledging the strong sponsorship we have received from Valentine Research, Inc. and Escort Inc. I suspect their long-running advertisements in our flagship member magazine are as much a sign of support of the NMA's mission to protect drivers' rights as they are a strategy to sell more of their market-leading radar and laser detection devices. The value of that support throughout the years goes well beyond dollars and cents.

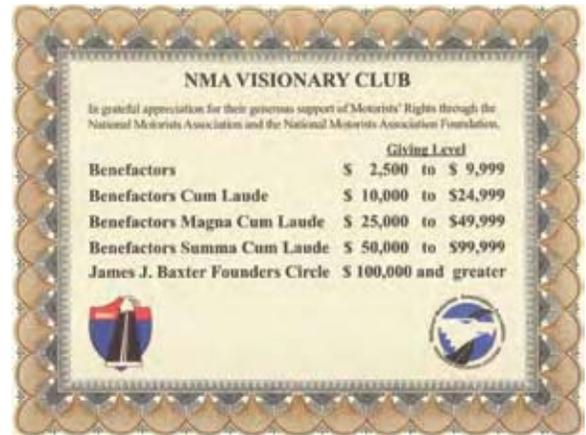
In recent months, we have upgraded the attorney referral pages on Motorists.org to allow further personalization of individual traffic attorney firm listings and to provide a more robust email contact template for those interested in legal representation. The synergy of the NMA's mission to help motorists fight traffic tickets, and the services provided by the attorneys is strong, signaled by the fact that traffic attorneys make up the NMA's single largest group of advertisers.

The most recent and sweeping change of a NMA advertising platform is detailed by the cover story of this magazine. SpeedTrap.org has long been a source of high-volume web traffic for the NMA. That is why we have concentrated some of our resources to upgrade the user interface and draw even more visitors and more advertisers to the site. The upgrade also included

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Members of the **Visionary Club** have demonstrated a commitment to furthering the rights of motorists through their gifts to the NMA and to the NMA Foundation. We are very pleased to recognize their contributions.

You too have an opportunity to become a **Visionary Club** member. Also consider building your legacy for motorists' rights with a gift through our Planned Giving Program. Please contact the NMA for more information. All gifts are applied toward improving and protecting the interests of motorists throughout North America.



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NMA Washington Report

by Robert Talley, NMA Lobbyist



Last year, NHTSA implemented part one of a three-part program to address distracted driving by promulgating voluntary design standards for automobile manufacturers. These standards would prevent in-vehicle installation of driver interfaced electronics that could potentially cause a distraction. If that seems a bit wordy, think radio tuning, integrated cell phone/PDA interfaces or data entry while driving. NHTSA is interested in “locking out” interfaces that might be a distraction when driving and only allowing access when the vehicle is in park.

NHTSA’s official justification is found in the most recent rule: “Crash data show that 17 percent (an estimated 899,000) of all police-reported crashes involved some type of driver distraction in 2010. Of those 899,000 crashes, distraction by a device or control integral to the vehicle was reported in 26,000 crashes (3% of the distraction-related police-reported crashes).” On its face

this would seem to be a significant concern, however it does not address the fact that while cell phone use has increased dramatically, the number of crashes in the U.S. has actually been declining. The two would appear to be inversely correlated.

Nevertheless, federal interest in distracted driving has been on the rise for several years. The last surface transportation bill, known as MAP-21, included federal grants to states for communications campaigns warning of the risks of distracted driving. The hook? To qualify for the grant money states must have passed a distracted driving ban that allows for primary enforcement by the police. These incentives can be pretty rich. North Dakota was one of seven states to receive a grant last year: nearly \$1 for every driver in the state. Why only seven states? Because the other 43 have laws that aren’t stringent enough.

This all raises the question of whether, and to what degree, these laws increase safety. Distracted driving isn’t just about data devices.

Research suggests that distractions such as eating, drinking, personal grooming, reading and talking to passengers can all be significant distractions.

A study completed for the Governor’s Highway Safety Association assessing the status of research on distracted driving and policy options states that “there is no evidence that cell phone or texting bans have reduced crashes” but goes on to recommend that states should enact cell phone and texting bans. Sound odd?

Here is another concern: nine states have enacted cell phone and texting bans that cover instances when the vehicle is stopped. This would appear to be a bit over the top as it is physically impossible to be distracted while driving when stopped.

Another round of voluntary standards for manufacturers is expected soon that will limit how drivers can use verbal interfaces to control vehicle systems. ■

The Business of Drivers’ Rights

(Continued from Page 1)

some administrative enhancements that help automate our advertising services. The numbers of visitors and page views to SpeedTrap.org have increased 25.7 and 48.4 percent respectively since the rollout of the site’s map-based navigation system.

The list of potential advertisers who could benefit by tapping into the clientele attracted to SpeedTrap.org is long. In the coming months, we will be aggressively promoting ad space to

traffic attorneys, radar/laser detector companies, and racing and performance driving schools among others.

It should be no surprise that outside of aggressively promoting our positions on the issues that matter most to motorists, the annual goals of the NMA are centered on the three revenue sources. Growing our membership, improving our fundraising efforts, and developing a broader advertising base will help

ensure long-term financial stability and give the NMA greater power as an advocacy organization.

As we enter the fall fundraising campaign of the NMA Foundation, one designed to provide backing resources for our new Community Support Program grants, please be generous with a tax-free donation that will help the nonprofit foundation and also strengthen both the business and advocacy capabilities of the NMA. ■

Sentinel Award Goes to Ron Ely of Maryland Drivers Alliance

Editor's Note: The NMA developed the Sentinel Award to recognize those who work diligently on behalf of the motoring public, often at personal risk and sacrifice. The award is signified by a framed certificate to the recipient and a press release issued across the recipient's home state. Nominations for the Sentinel Award can be submitted to the NMA for consideration.

Merriam-Webster.com defines an advocate as a person who argues for or supports a cause or policy. That basic description can be applied to many who are active in effecting change. It does not, however, come close to encompassing the intense commitment Ron Ely has toward reforming the laws and practices of a state that is without peer in its command-and-control style of traffic enforcement. If you are familiar with Ron's work, you already realize why he was a shoo-in for the NMA Sentinel Award. If you aren't, read a bit further to become thoroughly convinced.

Ron Ely started the StopBigBrotherMD.org website (now MDDriversAlliance.org) in 2008 after stopping by a Montgomery County, Maryland police station to report a case of credit card fraud. His lasting impression, besides indifference by the police to his situation, was the prominently displayed "Safe Speed" poster with the inscription "Big Brother is Watching You." His first big story as a motorists' advocate publicized the discovery that Montgomery County was paying its camera contractor on a



The Maryland Drivers Alliance website (www.mddriversalliance.org) has become the "go-to" site for learning about drivers' issues in The Old Line State.

per-ticket basis, a deal that violated the intent of a state law designed to ban for-profit quota systems.

As you might guess from the name of Ron's original site, much of his work has focused on the ubiquitous presence of photo enforcement in the state. Maryland hits motorists with a checkbook-emptying dose of both red-light and speed cameras. When speed camera use became widespread, StopBigBrotherMD began publicizing abuses by local governments that weren't reported by the media. For instance, Ron documented an outbreak of more broadly defined school zones for the specific purpose of creating a "need" for more speed cameras.

Ron continued to expose abuses by local and state governments on his site. He obtained damning information through public records requests about improperly calibrated cameras and faulty triggering mechanisms that created tickets for false violations. He testified before state lawmakers, often sparking surprised looks at the evidence that he had uncovered.

In November 2012, Ron faced a hostile "speed camera advisory

committee" in Baltimore when he shared data that catalogued the issuance of false photo tickets. He was threatened with physical removal from the room and lectured for airing "philosophical arguments against speed cameras." Yet city officials already knew and remained silent about the erroneous tickets.

Baltimore had to temporarily shut down its speed camera program after camera vendor Xerox admitted that its cameras were systematically ticketing vehicles for false speed readings. Ron used video evidence and other city data to hasten that admission. While Baltimore continues to stubbornly resist legislative reform that will help prevent such abuses in the future, the local press has begun regular reporting on the pervasive flaws of the speed camera program thanks in large part to Ron's efforts.

Earlier this year, StopBigBrotherMD was changed to Maryland Drivers Alliance to signal that opposition to speed cameras was a mainstream position that affected all motorists. The broader scope of the site now

(Continued top of next page)

includes discussions of other issues such as gas taxes and tolls.

During these past five years of representing the interests of Maryland drivers, Ron has maintained a full-time job and a young family. He continues to expose photo enforcement abuses by local and state government, often paying personally for the processing of public records requests and travel to various committee hearings.

If the powers-that-be think they can intimidate Ron Ely into giving up any time soon, they are sadly mistaken. Ron runs ultra-marathons that can extend up to 100 miles. He has a constitution built for the long run, not just sprints. We cannot think of a better match of a dedicated advocate to a region that is teeming with driver abuses and inequities. Ron Ely is a true NMA Sentinel. ■



Maryland drivers face a variety of perils along the state's many scenic highways and byways.

NMA Foundation Backs Community Support Program

Each year the NMA Foundation identifies a project or cause it will support with the proceeds of its fall fundraising campaign. In 2013, that cause is providing additional resources for the successful launch of the NMA's Community Support Program.

In a letter to NMA supporting members that signaled the launch of this fall's campaign, NMA Foundation Board Chairman Steve Carrellas noted:

"Many of the [Foundation] Directors are NMA members who have fought in the trenches for motorists' rights over the years. The Board is very excited about the prospects for the Community Support Program to bring more changes far and wide. Why? Because we know that where motorist advocacy is applied, it makes a big difference!"

The NMA's Community Support Program (CSP) was launched earlier this year as a major initiative to fund local advocacy efforts for motorists. Supporting members may apply for a



CSP grant at www.motorists.org/other/nma-csp-grant-application.pdf. A link to the application can also be found in the Members Area of www.motorists.org. The application can be completed and submitted online or mailed to the NMA at 402 W. 2nd St., Waunakee, WI 53597.

Carrellas continued:

"The Community Support Program offers the opportunity for NMA members and supporters to take on the leadership for impacting change in their state or local community—with the resources of the NMA and NMA Foundation backing them up. And even if you are not able to be directly involved with a project,

you can certainly support other key motorists' projects with your contribution to the NMA Foundation.

"I strongly urge you to make a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation before year-end to support the CSP with education and research resources. ... Now you have the opportunity for a triple play—supporting the Foundation, the CSP and yourself!" ■

Show your support for the NMA with our brand new all cotton pique polo shirts. Each shirt features sturdy seven ounce material with twill collar, ribbed sleeves, three-button placket and extended tail. The all-new NMA logo is vividly embroidered over the left breast of each shirt. They're available in five colors and only cost \$29.99 each, with proceeds going to fund the NMA's Community Support Program. Order online at www.motorists.org/other/nma-polo-shirts.pdf or call 608-849-6000.

A New and Improved National Speed Trap Exchange

Nothing embodies the spirit of the NMA more than our venerable website The National Speed Trap Exchange. It's been around for a long time, just like the NMA itself. It has assisted countless motorists in their quest to travel safely and trouble-free, just like the NMA. It shines a light on chronic, predatory traffic enforcement practices that have no safety justification, just like the NMA.

When we created the website (www.speedtrap.org) in 2000, we weren't sure how drivers would respond. We knew there was nothing else like it, but we didn't know if people would realize the value of the speed trap information the site presented. Well, 13 years later, everyday drivers have supplied reports on more than 80,000 speed trap locations across the United States and Canada. They've also provided thousands of detailed comments and cast their votes for the most egregious and chronic speed trap locations.

Not only has the Exchange become a critical component of the NMA's mission, it's becoming a key driver of our financial growth. The site's high visitation rates (second only to the NMA blog) have attracted advertisers seeking to efficiently target engaged drivers.

So, with that in mind, we've recently completed a major upgrade to the site to attract even more visitors, and to spur additional advertising revenues and media inquiries. The goal is to spread the NMA message that speed traps are the result of under-posted speed limits coupled with opportunistic traffic enforcement.

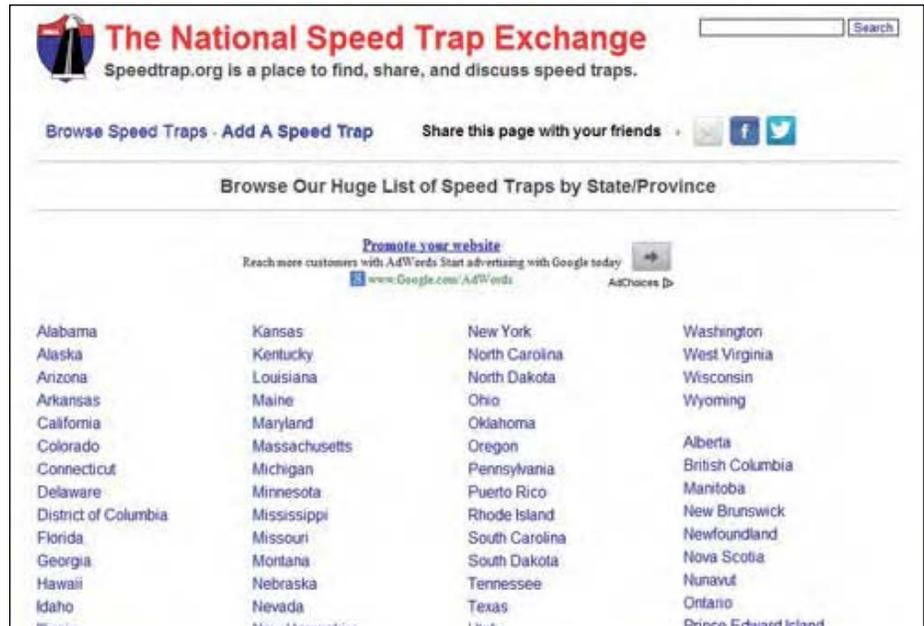


Figure 1: The Previous List-Based Interface of the Speed Trap Exchange

By all accounts the message is gaining traction. The data compiled from the website is routinely featured in local and national news stories, and our annual speed trap rankings, issued as national press releases, always garner a high level of media attention. A recent example comes from an online Time magazine

article titled, "End of the Road for Speed Traps?" The piece lays bare the political and financial motives for setting up speed traps. It also prominently mentions the Speed Trap Exchange along with quotes from NMA President Gary Biller.

The first, and most apparent, update to the Exchange is the

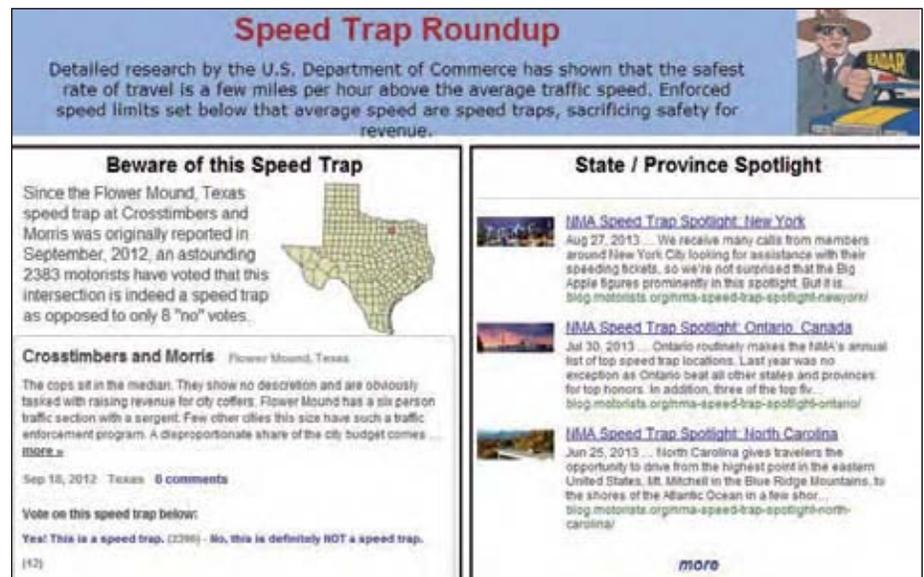


Figure 2: The New Speed Trap Roundup Feature

(Continued top of next page)



Figure 3: The New Map-Based Interface of the Speed Trap Exchange

user interface. Figure 1 shows the familiar list-based interface of the past several years. The navigation process was very basic: Pick a state or province from the list, then pick a city from another list, and then view all the reported speed traps for that community in reverse chronological order. The community speed trap pages remain the same, as does the procedure to add comments or a new speed trap location, but the path to those pages is much more dynamic now.

Figure 3 shows the new home page design. The colorful 3-D map of the United States and Canada signals the primary upgrade from a list-based to a map-based navigation process. Hover over a state or

province with the cursor to highlight that territory and then click to go to a state/province map where cities can also be selected with mouse clicks. The result is a more efficient and more visually engaging means of finding speed trap reports for a given community. Because the state maps cannot possibly show all of the speed trap communities, the user can opt to see a full list of those communities that is virtually identical to the one from the previous version of the site.

The map interface is not the only upgrade to the site. To promote stronger NMA brand recognition, the header content of each page has been redesigned to look very similar to that of the NMA's primary website, www.motorists.org.

The site also boasts a new feature called Speed Trap Roundup which will be updated regularly with fresh content to give our followers and speed trap groupies a reason to visit the site frequently.

The Roundup (Figure 2) appears just below the main map on the home page and consists of two sections. The first is "Beware of this Speed Trap" which highlights a particularly egregious speed trap location or speed trap city.

The other part of the Roundup highlights our "State/Province Spotlight," providing convenient links to descriptions of speed trap activity in particular regions. We've been running this feature on the NMA Blog for the past several months, providing valuable cross-traffic between our most popular web pages. The Spotlight includes links to our most recent articles.

SpeedTrap.org provides users with a unique resource that other sites can't match: a rich archive of speed trap location data complemented by "on-the-road" commentary and feedback from drivers who have actually experienced each speed trap. Plus the behind-the-scenes ranking and sorting capabilities allow us to provide reporters and researchers with proprietary data that's only available through the NMA.

We will be promoting the upgrades to the NMA National Speed Trap Exchange aggressively in the coming weeks and months. A key target will be advertisers from many niches who cater to automotive and driving enthusiasts. (If you know of a firm that fits the bill, let us know.) We will also be looking at additional ways to enhance the site and make it even more appealing. We hope you take a few minutes to check out the revamped Exchange at www.speed-trap.org and then recommend the site to others who may be interested. ■

Out-of-State Ticket Presents Many Challenges

by Ron Wolfe, NMA North Carolina Member

In August 2009, I was traveling from North Carolina to my hometown in Iowa for a class reunion. While driving north on U.S. 61 in Missouri, I was stopped by a Pike County Sheriff's Deputy and given a citation for supposedly driving 81 mph in a 65 zone.

Yes, I believe I was at various times traveling somewhat over the 65 speed limit, but not at the 81 mph I was cited for. Since I hadn't been charged with a speeding citation in over twenty-five years, this was totally new territory for me.

I had thirty days to plead guilty or not guilty, so I made many calls to the Pike County Clerk of Courts and the prosecuting attorney to explore my options. Despite my good driving record, the prosecutor was not willing to negotiate a lesser offense.

The prosecutor told me that my license and driving privileges would not be affected, nor would there be points added to my driving record if I pleaded guilty, since reckless driving only kicks in at 20 mph over the limit. Being naïve and living so far away, I took their legal advice (my first wrong decision), submitted payment, and pleaded guilty, hoping my insurance rates would not take a turn upward.

When I didn't hear from my insurance company for four months, I figured it was all behind me. Wrong.

On January 30, 2010 I received a letter in the mail from the North Carolina Department of Transportation telling me my North Carolina driver's license had been suspended for 30 days. I contacted their office and was informed that in North Carolina, 15 mph over the posted speed limit or more is considered reckless driving and triggers an automatic 30-day suspension. I learned the rule applied to me, even though



my ticket was from Missouri.

I called the prosecutor back in Missouri and explained that their office gave me inaccurate information and that I wanted to rescind my plea. I wrote letters to their office, to the judge and to the Missouri State Fine Citation Center, explaining my situation and telling them that I wanted to rescind the guilty plea. All agreed and the citation was sent back to Pike County Judicial Court to be scheduled for court.

In March of 2010 I joined the NMA to get help in sorting out my options. In reading the material I realized that I probably needed to get an attorney to represent me in Pike County. My attorney tried to get driving school for me in exchange for a guilty plea. But by that time I was not going to change my plea back to guilty!

My attorney never communicated with me over the next five months, so I called the clerk of courts thinking that maybe the citation had been dismissed and that my attorney failed to inform me. They said that my final court date was scheduled for October 20, 2010 and that I could follow the progress of my case on the court's website. There, I discovered that from May

to September the case had appeared on the court docket each month, but the prosecutor had continued the case because the "defendant and counsel failed to pay or appear" each month.

Finally the judge ordered that "the case be continued to October 20, 2010 at 9 am. PAYMENT OR APPEARANCE REQUIRED OR WARRANT TO BE ISSUED." To add insult to injury my attorney stated that I needed to pay him an additional \$750 to continue representing me.

I attended the October court hearing, apologized to the judge and prosecuting attorney for not knowing about the court dates because I thought my attorney was appearing on my behalf. I fired my attorney, requested a jury trial and asked for discovery.

I also learned that the deputy who issued my ticket in August of 2009 no longer worked for the department, which bolstered my hopes that he might not show at trial.

Prior to my trial, I rented the NMA Legal Defense Kit—truly a citation saver. I felt prepared to represent myself, thanks to volumes of information from the NMA, which helped me to focus on how the citing officer misidentified his target vehicle while using his moving radar unit.

Three days before my trial, I called the clerk of courts with some questions and found out that the prosecuting attorney had entered a motion for dismissal without prejudice. I guess I flinched last. What a relief!

But my battle wasn't over yet. My insurance company nearly doubled my premium because of the points from the original guilty plea. It took some effort, but I finally convinced them that my case had been dropped and that they had no right to increase my rates. ■

COMMENTARY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 2013

The Washington Times

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SECTION B

The dirty little secret about holiday traffic ticketing

Blitzing speeders is more about revenue than saving lives on the highway

By Gary Biller

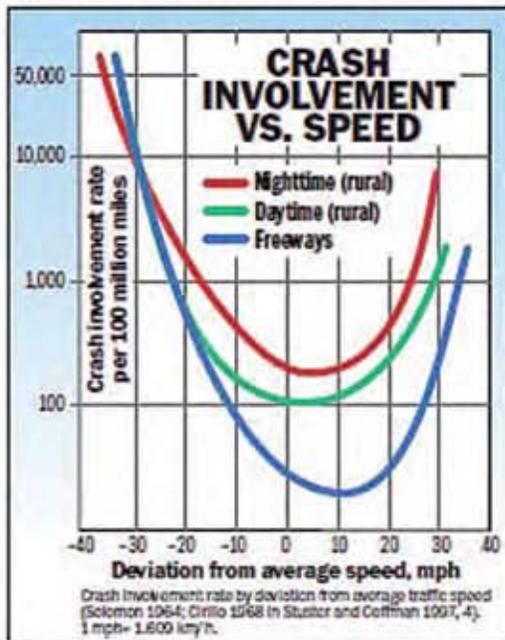
One of the most cherished traditions of the American family is the summer vacation. Packing up the car and heading cross-country for a weeklong camping trip, a visit with those distant cousins or an extended stay near a popular theme park is generally the recipe for a refreshing break from the dog days of summer. Little do most moms and dads know that they are targeted once they pull the family car out onto the highway.

The exorbitant cost of feeding the family on the road, the budget-breaking cost of those water parks and the cost per gallon of gas certainly will get their attention. What vacationers need to be particularly wary of, though, are traffic-enforcement campaigns held routinely across the country that are designed to ensnare drivers and lift cash from their wallets.

Catching drivers for speeding and other traffic infractions is big business, netting an estimated \$5 billion per year in the United States. State and local governments share the pie. At a time when both are searching for any

means possible to fill budget gaps, traffic-ticket revenue fits the bill quite nicely.

The feds are very generous with taxpayer money in this effort, doling out grants for "selective enforcement" in the name of highway safety. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration awarded \$773 million to the states



THE WASHINGTON TIMES

in 2011 to conduct ticket blitzes for a variety of reasons, but mostly speeding. That money was used primarily to pay overtime for police to man speed traps and checkpoints. Year after year, state and local police publicize the number of tickets issued during these campaigns, but when pressed, avoid citing highway accident or fatality

▶ see GARY BILLER | B4

Gary Biller

From page B1

rates that haven't improved. The process encourages ticket quotas, not improved highway safety.

Why is handing out tickets such a prospering business in a difficult economy? After all, if handing out tickets resulted in safer driving conditions, wouldn't there be a reduced need for law enforcement to patrol the roads as time goes on? The answer is in two parts. First, the game is rigged. (More on that in a bit.) Second, very few motorists — probably less than 5 percent — challenge the system. Getting a ticket is embarrassing and stressful; it's best to pay and forget about it. Many ticket blitzes are held on interstate roads, where the likelihood of an out-of-state driver returning to fight a citation is slim.

Many readers are already thinking, "Well, if you don't want a ticket, don't break the law." It's just about time to get back to the "rigged game" assertion, but first let's delve into a bedrock principle of traffic engineering, one that has been largely ignored from the time that man began traveling by motorized vehicle: The risk of crash involvement on our highways is speed-related, but primarily to the extent that cars, trucks, motorcycles and buses are moving at different speeds relative to each other.

In other words, it isn't so much the absolute speed of traffic that causes accidents; it's the drivers who aren't keeping up with traffic flow, causing more braking and accelerating, lane-changing, congestion and frustration among fellow drivers.

David Solomon, a researcher with the U.S. Department of Commerce, spent several years collecting data on the risk factors that cause highway accidents. In a seminal paper published in 1964 — yes,

almost 50 years ago — Solomon found that the least risk of crash involvement occurred with vehicles moving near the average speed of traffic. He documented the safest speed to be about 5 mph faster than traffic flow. Conversely, Solomon's data showed the odds of being involved in a highway accident rose dramatically as vehicle speed dropped below the average for surrounding traffic. The famous "Solomon Curve," illustrated in the accompanying graph, has never been substantively refuted in the intervening years. The nature of driver behavior hasn't changed over time.

Last year, researchers with the Transportation Research Board reported that several speed limits around the country were posted 5 to 10 mph below that of free-flowing traffic in those areas. Artificially low speed limits do not control the natural speed of traffic and, as we learned from Solomon's work, put drivers at those speed limits at greater risk of accident.

Solomon documented the safest speed to be about 5 mph faster than traffic flow.

Thus, the rigged game: The majority of the tens of thousands of citations handed out annually during federally funded ticket blitzes are given to drivers safely navigating with the flow of traffic, despite speed limits posted too low. Even casinos don't have better gambling odds; law enforcement can virtually ticket anyone for speeding in areas where the posted limits bear no resemblance to reality.

Law enforcement agencies should forgo federal grants and use some of the revenue collected during past ticket blitzes to conduct traffic studies that will help establish posted speed limits that are in concert with safe driving habits. Our highways will be safer and the summer-driving vacation will be more enjoyable for all concerned.

..... Gary Biller is president of the National Motorists Association.



Members Write

You assisted me with a “red-light photo-enforced violation.” I remember coming to a stop at the intersection, looking to see that it was safe, and making a right turn leading to the entrance of the I-10 Freeway. But thanks to you and your fine company, I received an email with helpful tips, and it greatly assisted my dialog going before the judge. And I totally agree with you over challenging tickets, especially when you know you were in the right and have some credible evidence to justify your case.

I came to court with these facts: (1) current State of California driving record obtained from my local DMV office, (2) Documentations from my taking AARP defensive driving classes every two years, (3) a graphic representation of the actual “red-light photo enforced intersection” depicting my vehicle from stop, to momentary pause, to making my right-turn. And of course, I pleaded not guilty.

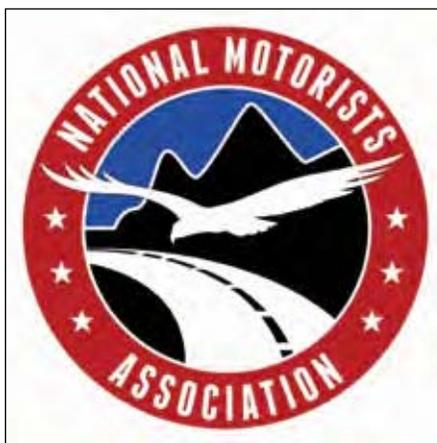
This information was given to the presiding judge. He read it and turned to the Baldwin Park, California, police officers sitting in the jury box area and said, “What do you think”? And that’s how I reduced everything down to traffic school with no points on my license. The key is to act professionally in both body language and how you address the court, and always dress for success! I sincerely appreciate everything you do to aid and assist motorists in making them aware of the laws.

*Paul Allred
West Covina, CA*

Although it does some fairly fine and useful things, isn’t it odd that the American Automobile Association pays little attention to the welfare of automobile owners and the abuses inflicted on them

by unfair and unwise traffic laws and insurance companies? The AAA newsletter devotes the majority of its space to travel and insurance (hmmm—conflict of interest?). Unless they change their practices, perhaps a name change is in order.

*Art Wegweiser
McCandless, PA*



I am a professional designer (communications graphics), and I approve of your new logo.

The old one looked like a frustrated eagle in a black straight jacket. The new one has a friendlier “we will fly free and monitor/protect our road freedoms” feel. Good for you!

*S.A. Gould
Park Forest, IL*

For many years I was in the custom flag and banner business which involved design and execution of custom emblems for government, industry and other organizations.

The cardinal rule is that once an individual has been exposed to a logo, it should be instantly recognizable, out of the corner of the eye, at twilight at highway speeds. The “FORD” oval, Chevrolet bowtie, Coca Cola script,

NYS Thruway emblem all meet these qualifications.

Based on the above criteria, your new emblem is perfect. Congratulations! Whoever designed the new emblem did a superb job.

A New York Member

The real agenda [for proposing to lower the DUI BAC standard from .08 to .05] is prohibition, not safer roads. Statistics, facts and truth do not matter to the anti-alcohol fanatics out there. It is nothing short of criminal to allow obviously biased emotional people like MADD to have any say in the issue whatsoever. They have only one agenda, and the name of the group says it all.

Leaving it up to politicians, the media and strident special interest groups is never going to make driving safer. Why? Because driving is a difficult and challenging activity. As long as human beings drive cars, there will always be some number of accidents and deaths on the roads.

The driverless car is the real solution. I wonder where groups like MADD, the politicians, insurance companies and all those others who make so much money from driving deaths and accidents, will come down on acceptance of driverless cars. My guess is that they will be against them because of the tremendous loss of revenue that will result from dramatically decreased highway accidents and deaths.

*Dick Goodwin
Portsmouth, NH*

The views expressed in member letters do not necessarily represent those of the NMA. 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 and should not exceed 600 words. Submissions may be emailed to nma@motorists.org or mailed to NMA, 402 W 2nd St., Waunakee, WI 53597



News From Around The Country

Now featured, with daily updates,
as "NMA Driving News" at www.motorists.org

National

Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx was officially sworn in as new secretary of transportation. Foxx, who is the 17th U.S. Transportation Secretary, inherited the job from Ray LaHood, who announced earlier this year that he would be stepping down from his post. The U.S. Senate voted 100-0 in favor of Foxx's nomination.

Alabama

Residents of Center Point, Alabama, who received citations as a result of a new traffic-camera system were told they could appeal their tickets in court. But there was a catch: it turned out there was no court to hear such cases. That's the contention of two women, Rhonda Lashon Stubbs and Celeita Snow, who filed suit against the city and Redflex Traffic Systems. The plaintiffs argued that the new system is illegal because "no such court exists" to handle legal challenges, according to their lawsuit.

California

Signaling a possible mini-rebellion, Belmont became the third Bay Area town since March to dump its red-light traffic camera program over doubts the devices make the streets any safer for drivers or pedestrians. Following the lead of Hayward and Redwood City, the Belmont City Council voted 3-1 to can the cameras. Council members cited the confluence of a Chicago bribery scandal involving the cameras' operator and lack of data showing whether the tickets

costing nearly \$500 for running red lights improved safety.

Colorado

The Colorado Department of Health and Environment suspended all testing of blood-alcohol and blood-drug levels at its state toxicology lab pending an investigation to see if the tests were being conducted correctly. An independent lab has taken over testing any new or unprocessed samples in the meantime. It will also retest as many as 800 blood-alcohol samples done by the state lab to ensure they were accurate.

Iowa

It was reported that more than 3,200 license plates issued to local, state and federal agencies are exempt from tickets from Iowa traffic cameras. Iowa Department of Transportation data requested under public records law found that more than 350 agencies have been issued at least one license plate with a special designation, which is supposed to be for undercover or sensitive work.

Louisiana

A New Orleans police commander and the city's former director of public works violated policies related to the city's red-light camera program, according to a report released by the city's inspector general. The report noted that NOPD Commander Edwin Hosli formed a corporation to run the off-duty paid detail for the city's camera

ticket program. Also, former Public Works Director Robert Mendoza improperly expanded a contract related to the same program.

Maryland

A Silver Spring driver received a letter of apology from Montgomery County police after getting a speed camera ticket for driving 34 in a 35 mph zone. The motorist was photographed driving north on Georgia Avenue on May 27 at 9:37 a.m. However, the second picture on the ticket, taken at 10:01 a.m., showed a completely different vehicle.

New York

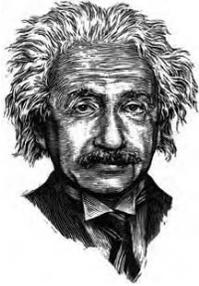
New York State lawmakers voted to allow New York City to install speed cameras near schools. Senator Jeffrey D. Klein sponsored the speed-camera legislation. A spokesman for Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said the governor would sign the measure. The measure was one of many bills approved in the middle of the night just before the Legislature ended its annual session.

Ohio

An appellate court ruled that a class-action lawsuit challenging the appeal process for red-light camera citations filed against the city of Toledo and RedFlex Traffic Systems should not have been thrown out in Lucas County Common Pleas Court. Ohio's 6th District Court of Appeals reversed the February, 2012, decision to dismiss the complaint filed by Bradley Walker, and sent it back to trial court. ■

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

The Experts Corner



If you have a question that only an expert can answer, the NMA can help. The experts here have volunteered to help you. Please mention that you're an NMA member when you contact them.

This is not intended for listing of commercial business services.

Traffic Attorneys

CA Traffic/Criminal Law
James Dirks
jamesjd@att.net

CA Traffic Ticket Defense
Sherman Ellison
15303 Ventura Blvd., 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 91403
818-994-8888
sme@866speeding.com
www.866speeding.com

DWI/DUI, Traffic, License Suspension, CDL, Criminal
Mark Virovatz
832-576-3241
markvirovatz@aol.com

DUI, Criminal, Suspended Licenses, & Traffic Law
Robert Evans
26 Court St. Suite 1406
Brooklyn, NY 11242
718-834-0087

FL DUI/Traffic/Criminal Law
David Haenel
200 North Washington Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34236
941-953-2622
david@fightyourcase.com
www.fightyourticket.com

NY Traffic Law & Accident Law
Casey Raskob, III
Croton-on-Hudson, NY
914-271-5383 (daytime)
info@speedlaw.net
www.speedlaw.net

Traffic & Motor Vehicle Law; Commercial Drivers
Barry S. Jacobson
26 Court St., Suite 810
Brooklyn, NY 11242
718-237-1251
ticklaw@aol.com
www.trafficticketdefense.com

Misc. Law Experts

Patent Attorney
Bennet K. Langlotz
Box 759, Genoa, NV 89411
877-230-5950 (phone & fax)
patent@langlotz.com

Seabelt Laws by State
Roger Roddy
1576 Bella Cruz Drive
The Villages FL 32159
352-674-9399
info@comfortableseatbeltclip.com

Fair Traffic Laws/School Bus Stop Laws/Motorcycle Safety
Justin Jih
jus168jih@gmail.com
<https://sites.google.com/site/jusjih/fairtrafficlaws>

Speed Devices

Radar and Laser Expert
Henry Roberts, BEE, MEE, PE
16-22 Mandon Place
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410
201-797-0733

Radar & Speed Monitoring Devices
Thomas Frank
40 Swan Drive
Middletown, RI 02842
ri@motorists.org

Radar/Laser Detectors: V1, BelEscort, Whistler
Mike Kuhn
Grand Rapids, MI
Cell: 616-826-1110
jobman742004@yahoo.com

Speedometer Accuracy & Odometer Fraud
Eric Sundberg
Southern Electronics
Richmond, VA
Weekdays: 804-423-1100
ecs@carradio.com
www.speedotest.com

Driver/Rider Skills

Advanced Driver Education
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55 Marina Bay Drive
Long Branch, NJ 07740
732-870-3222

Auto Racing (How to start)
Wilbur L. Tallmadge
125 Mountain Dr.
Gilford, NH 03246-6763
603-293-9161

Performance Techniques for Cars and Motorcycles
Michael Pettiford
Louisville, CO
303-666-4113
100mph@go4itservices.com
www.go4itservices.com

Teen Driving
Kenneth L. Zuber
The Helios Institute
Homewood, IL
708-922-3762
heliosinst@aol.com

Emissions

CFC's & the Ozone Layer ("Hole")
Charles Terlizzi
Baltimore, MD
301-801-8808
NMAmd@earthlink.net

Transportation Planning
Steve Bacs
6857 W. Irma Lane
Glendale, AZ 85308
623-572-0349
sbacsfromarizona@aol.com

Other Experts

Accident Reconstruction & Product Liability Analysis
Jerry F. Cuderman II, Ph.D., P.E.
322 Sundance Trail
Liberty Hill, TX 78642
512-913-4840
jc@cgfam.com

Red-Light & Speed Camera Expert
RedLightDoctor.com
Barnet Fagel
847-420-3511
contact@redlightdoctor.com
www.RedLightDoctor.com

Surveyor
Rogell Hunsucker
26025 Mulberry Rd.
Albemarle, NC 28001
704-982-1529 (Daytime)
704-982-1351 (Evenings)

Truck Safety, Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Assn., Inc.
Todd Spencer
P.O. Box 1000
Grain Valley, MO 64029
816-229-5791
todd_spencer@ooida.com

Car Negotiating/ Buying Advice
Mike Rabkin
From Car To Finish
Rockville, MD
240-403-1069
mrabkin@fromcartofinish.com
www.fromcartofinish.com

NMA State Chapter Coordinators and Activists

ALABAMA

Jim Oakes, Activist
Huntsville, AL
(256) 673-0786
JimOakes61@yahoo.com

ARIZONA

Steve Bacs, Activist
Glendale, AZ
(623) 572-0349
sbacsfromarizona@aol.com

CALIFORNIA

Jim Thomas, Activist
Corte Madera, CA
(415) 924-2184
fastestdog@prodigy.net

Paula R. Martin, Activist
Paso Robles, CA
(805) 238-0708
itaigettdone@yahoo.com

Wayne Schooling, Activist
Signal Hill, CA
(562)-279-0557
wayne@ntassoc.com

Christopher Matthew Spencer, Activist
Beverly Hills, CA
(800)-252-5352
borntodeal@gmail.com

CONNECTICUT

Sheldon Wishnick, Activist
Newington, CT
(860) 666-1006
ctnma@cox.net

Greg Amy, Activist
Middletown, CT
(860) 545-4220
grega03@pobox.com

FLORIDA

Mike McGuire, Activist
Palm Coast, FL
(386) 446-6525
mcguire2106@bellsouth.net

Carl L. Ricker, Activist
Brandon, FL
(813) 841-4639
carlricker@yahoo.com

GEORGIA

Christian Stevens, Activist
Canton, GA
(770) 331-6120
MarketableRanger@gmail.com

Josh McKay, Activist
Duluth, GA
(404) 941-5674
mckayje3@hotmail.com

HAWAII

Lopaka Aldrich, Activist
Kihei, HI
(808) 658-5240
lopaka.aldrich1@gmail.com

ILLINOIS

Barnet Fagel, Activist
Buffalo Grove, IL
(847) 420-3511
contact@redlightdoctor.com

Allen Skillicorn, Activist
East Dundee, IL
(847) 417-5611
allen@allenskillicorn.com

LOUISIANA

Angela F. Davis, Activist
Marrero, LA
(504) 780-8467
afd001@cox.net

MARYLAND

Charles Terlizzi, Activist
Baltimore, MD
(301) 801-8808
NMAmd@earthlink.net

MASSACHUSETTS

Web Site: www.motorists.org/MA
Ivan Sever, Activist
Swampscott, MA
(781) 581-1946
ma@motorists.org

John Carr, Activist
Newton, MA
(617) 630-5264
jfc@motorists.org

Ken Michaud, Activist
Needham, MA
(781) 801-9423
ken.michaud@motorists.org

MICHIGAN

Steve Purdy, Activist
Williamston, MI
(517) 655-3591
stevepurdy3@gmail.com

MISSOURI

Dan Hyatt, Activist
St. Louis, MO
(949) 813-4271
hyattdj@yahoo.com

NEW YORK

Casey W. Raskob, III, Activist
Croton-On-Hudson, NY
Daytime: (914) 271-5383
info@speedlaw.net

NEVADA

Chad Dornisfe, Activist
Zephyr Cove, NV
(775) 721-2423
cdornisfe@highwaysafety.us

OHIO

Michael A. Dando, Activist
Newton Falls, OH
(330) 872-0212
madpaisano@aol.com

Douglas Dysart, Activist
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 484-3768
dougdyart@hotmail.com

RHODE ISLAND

Thomas Frank, Activist
Middletown, RI
Voice/Fax: (401) 849-3974
ri@motorists.org

TENNESSEE

Tona Monroe, Activist
Greenback, TN
(865) 856-0814
tona@breezeair.net

TEXAS

Luke Ball, Activist
Humble, TX
Voice/Fax: (281) 360-3707
LBALL1@aol.com

Henry Stowe, Activist
Cypress, TX
(281) 780-4187
Henry_Stowe@yahoo.com

VIRGINIA

Dan Danila, Activist
Bethesda, MD
danila.dan@gmail.com

WISCONSIN

Dwight Johnson, Activist
Sun Prairie, WI
(608) 444-4024
dwightdjohnson@yahoo.com

ALL OTHER STATE CHAPTERS

Web Site: www.motorists.org
National Motorists Association
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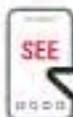
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