

Letter from the Chairman

While those on the east coast are beginning to thaw out, those of us on the west coast are finding temperatures moderate to downright hot. While riding weather is typically year-round in the west many start to bring out their motorcycles as we come into spring. This is an excellent time to brush up on perishable riding skills and take special care in checking safety items on our motorcycles.

It's also a good time to self-assess the type of rider you are. Are you a defensive bike rider, aggressive? Do you ride with the flow of traffic or do you find yourself riding faster than traffic? Do you split traffic (California)? Are you riding as safely as possible?

When was the last time you checked your fluid levels, headlights, turn signals, and tire wear? How often do you check your tire pressure, once a week, once a month, every day? Have you considered the only thing between you and the asphalt are your tires?

I was going to discuss lane splitting, or driving between vehicles on the roadway. California is the only State in



Continued on Page 2

Upcoming Events:

General Membership Meeting (GMM)	Mar 21
AZRATPack Alien Invasion	Apr 3-5
General Membership Meeting (GMM)	Apr 11
PMC Greenhorn Ride	Apr 25-26

February's Articles

Part A Issue	
Letter from the Chairman	1
The Bike Stops Here	4
Banquet Report	6
Part B Issue	
Award Recipients	4
Thanks Banquet Team !	7
Feb Sweet Heart Ride	8
Awards Banquet Ride	11
Prescot-AZ Ride	14
Best 15 in Triple Crown	19
Notary Signature Requirement	22
Traveler's Award Update	24

More Great and Useful Information About Your Club and Rides

Part B Issue	
Alien Invasion Tour	13
Three Month Schedule	17
PMC Greenhorn Road Tour	18
Best 15 US Road Challenge	20-21
Wheels on the Road	23
Want Ads	25
SCMA Premier Events	26

Continued from Page 1

the US that allows it. (The Motorcycle Safety Foundation indicates there are others, but I'm not aware). The basic rationale is California allows lane splitting because motorcycles are safer between vehicles than behind them (rear-end collisions). I don't have an opinion about the safety issue concerning lane-splitting other than common sense tactics dictate safer ways to lane split. If you go too fast, you have a greater chance of a collision. If the lanes are too narrow you have a greater chance of clipping a car. If traffic is going fast there is a greater chance of a collision due to a rider's inability to avoid a collision. I lane split when traffic is heavy, very slow, or stopped. I don't like doing it, but I don't like sitting in traffic, especially on very hot days.

There were recent studies by the CHP which ultimately determined lane splitting wasn't more dangerous than sitting in traffic and getting rear-ended. They ultimately came out with safety recommendations. A few other States are now considering changing their lane-splitting laws. So enough about lane splitting.

What really caught my eye when doing the research on lane splitting were the statistics from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and the National Highway Transportation Administration (NHTSA) regarding motorcycle fatalities in general.

I gained a great deal of respect for these organizations because in another life I used to write grants for NHTSA administered by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). These folks really do an excellent job in their analysis of collisions and gathering meaningful statistics. By the way, don't ever call a "collision" an "accident" when discussing drunk driving collisions or you'll lose a finger. The California Office of Traffic Safety clearly wants it known DUI driver collisions are not accidents. I never made the mistake a second time.

So here are some interesting statistics from which you can draw your own conclusions. I found them quite interesting. The statistics come from IIHS and HLDI.

From 1975 to 2001, 17% or more of the fatalities involving motorcyclists were 50 years or older.

From 2002 to 2008, 20% or more of the fatalities involving motorcyclists were 50 years or older.

From 2009 to 2013, 30% or more of the fatalities involving motorcyclists were 50 years or older.

This tells me there is a rise in the percentage of fatalities among older riders. Either older riders are losing their skills, older riders are starting to ride later, and don't develop skills; or older riders are really unlucky. I think the latter is likely not the answer.

Here are a couple of other interesting

continued on Page 3

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statistics, though I don't believe you can draw too much from these numbers.

The number of motorcycle fatalities in the previous 5 years are listed below:


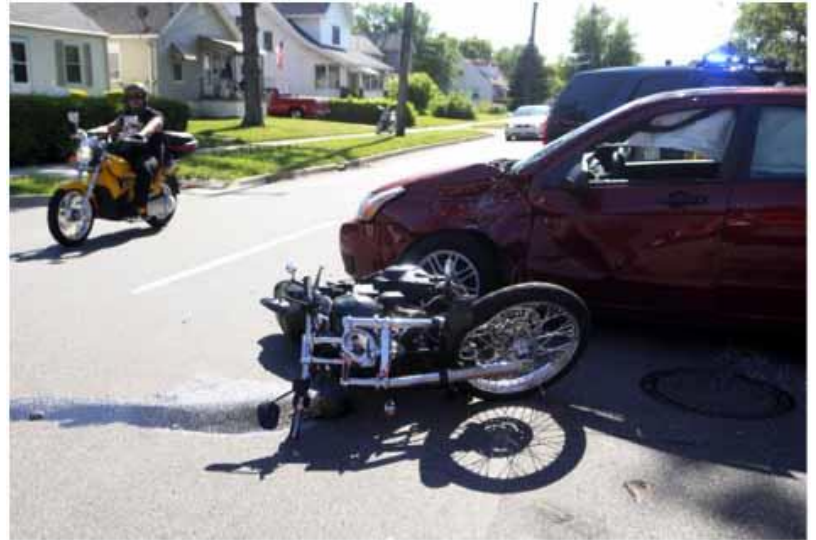
2013 – 4,381
2012 – 4,695
2011 – 4,403
2010 – 4,324
2009 – 4,286

There are too many motorcycle fatalities. The factors for the fatalities vary greatly. Some of the motorcyclists were at fault and many of the fatalities were the cause of other drivers. What is particularly interesting about these fatalities is that about 40%+ are typically solo collisions not involving other motor vehicles. I concluded that many fatalities are caused by the skillset or factors within the control of the rider. It would be fair to say it is in our best interests to maximize our odds by increasing our skillset, taking care of

our equipment, and riding within our limits.

Please be safe out there as I look forward to waving as I pass you going the opposite direction on the highway.

***“We don't stop riding because we get old,
we get old because we stop riding.”***



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THE BIKE STOPS HERE

By Steve Shulman #24462

THE 2015 THREE FLAGS CLASSIC

I had a friend suggest we do the Three Flags Classic in 2015. Do you folks convoy in one pack, do you break the group down in groups of 20 – 25 like they do for the Ride to the Wall? Do I need to be a member to do the ride?

Monica – Madison, Wis.

Monica,

The Three Flags Classic is like nothing you've ever done before. First of all the SCMA is not a motorcycle specific club. We don't care what type of bike (or trike) you ride. Also, we don't have mandatory group riding requirements. This means you ride with whomever you want or by yourself (NOT A CONVOY). You receive a route sheet and you get to the end following the route or taking alternate roads of your choosing. You book your own hotels and travel at your own pace. This is considered a back roads or alternate road ride. We stay off major highways as much as possible. The only requirement in 2015 is you make it to all the checkpoints on time, get the passport (we provide you) stamped at the checkpoints, get the mandatory gas receipt, and check-in at the host hotel before 9 PM on the 5th day (Monday, September 7).

The ride starts on September 3 and ends on September 7. Check-in is on the 2nd between noon and 4 PM. The start hotel is the Wyndham in San Diego and the finish is at the Empress Hotel in Victoria, B.C. You can read more about it on the web site.

You must be a member to register for the ride, so if you and your friend decide to go, go to the SCMA web site

(www.SC-MA.com) and become a member on-line for \$30 each. Then go to the Three Flags icon on the front page, scroll down and register for the event for \$295 each. Registration closes May 31, but there are only 24 spots left of the 300 openings. I hope you'll join us!

---Steve



continued to Page 5

THE BIKE STOPS



HERE

By Steve Shulman #24462

continued from Page 4

THE SCMA ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

I really wanted to go to the SCMA annual banquet this year but I had a conflict and couldn't make it this year. I heard it's a good time but can you tell me more about it?

David – Santa Clarita, CA

David,
Your question comes at a great time because one of our member attendees wrote a great story about it and it's in this month's newsletter. I have to say it was a great banquet with some humor, awards for some accomplished riding, and compassion for our friends who are no longer with us. We look forward to seeing you in 2016 for the 2015 awards! It will be in March 2016 at a location yet to be determined.

----Steve



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2015 Annual Awards Banquet

By Jim Fischer #26000

The crowd started gathering in a private area of the lobby shortly before the official 5pm start. Some members arrived even earlier in the morning for a ride down the coast on what turned out to be a perfect spring day. The group was a comfortably appropriate mix of t-shirts, dress shirts and Gore-Tex riding pants. A cash bar had been set up for us and across from it, a table with cheese and veggie hors d'oeuvres. The space in between filled quickly as conversations

sparked up and reunited riders wandered away to relive the year's events at a nearby table.

The banquet room doors opened and the crowd wandered in. **Gonzo**, the evening's MC, welcomed the group and, as we shuffled between tightly packed tables, he explained and congratulated the crowd for a record ninety-eight attendees at the night's dinner.

continued to Page 7

Awards Banquet continued from Page 7

The first surprise of the evening was that this wasn't going to be another rubber chicken event. Once we were seated the wait-staff made their rounds with bread and salads. Then plated dinners were served and the room got noticeably quieter as hungry riders dug into a selection of steak and potatoes with gravy, chicken piccata or vegetable pasta. **Rodney Chew** and **Victor Casteneda** of the **AZRATPack** projected a slide show of the year in pictures for us to enjoy as dinner progressed.

As coffee and deserts made the rounds **Steve Shulman** welcomed everyone to the awards portion of the dinner. Throughout the night Steve and Gonzo kept things fun and moving along with an Academy Awards hosting style including a brief skit with some jokes and stories sprinkled in between the awards, although it was a little unclear who was Whoopi and who was Billy.

The first presentation of the night was a somber but special award given to **Joe Fitzsimmons**. During the 2014 Three Flags event **Glenn Gelman** suffered a fatal medical emergency. Joe was nearby and stayed with his friend all the way back to



California and his burial. In doing so he forfeited his own Three Flags finish.

In recognition of Joe's

dedication and friendship to a fellow rider the SCMA awarded him a plaque bearing a mounted 2014



Three Flags belt-buckle. An identical plaque was also awarded to Glenn posthumously which was accepted at the dinner by his wife, **Paula Gelman**.

The SCMA is a volunteer organization and next Steve recognized the many people who contributed their time and efforts to the success of the club. The



individual tasks are too many to number from planning and staffing

rides, to back office and tech support and even this newsletter but the volunteers are not. Together Steve and Gonzo presented 27 awards to the people who worked so hard to make 2014 a success followed by a huge round of applause. Without the dedication of those volunteers, none of the rest of this would be possible.

Special recognition was given to **Steve Shulman** to

thank him for stepping into the Chairman's role after Blake

Anderson's passing and keeping the Association on course during these past months. Steve was presented with a life ring stenciled with the words "Rescue Operations" and "USS Shulman".



Mitch Friedman spoke for a few minutes on the Travelers Award. Overall, Thirteen

continued to Page 8

continued from Page 7

awards were presented including two Platinum, three Gold, seven Silver and one Bronze. In addition to plaques, each Platinum level award includes a \$100 cash prize. Lots will be drawn between the Gold finishers at the April General Membership meeting to see which of those three wins another \$100 prize.



Charlie Coyner then shared a few remarks about this year's Best 15 USA Roads Challenge. This event is probably the hardest of all five Premier Rides offered by the SCMA. To qualify as finishers, riders must ride to 15 roads spread throughout the entire United States. Finishers easily cover 15,000 miles or more to complete

this event and it is often paired simultaneously with a Four Corners Tour. Only four finishers received the Best 15 Award this year:

Joe Hallford, Charlie Hart, James Kingdon, and Brian Kunzelmann.



Dannie Fox, Chairman of the USA Four Corners Tour took a few minutes to talk about the Four Corners Tour. In 2014 eighty-four members completed the Four Corners Tour. Because of their number those awards are distributed by mail throughout the year when riders



submit their completed paperwork. Names and statistics can be viewed on the website at:

<http://sc-ma.com/rides/usa-four-corners-tour-site/finishers/2014-finishers>.

Dennis Even shared some thoughts about the California Parks Adventure and Missions Tours and

SCMA'S Affiliated Clubs

Antelope Valley Riders
www.avts.av.org

AZRatPack
www.azratpack.com

BMW Club of Southern California
www.bmwcosc.com

BMW Club, South Coast Riders (aka South Coasters)
www.scbmwrc.com

Pasadena Motorcycle Club
www.pasadenamc.com

Victor McLaglen Motor Corps
www.thevmmc.com

continued to Page 9

continued from Page 8

then presented a beautiful stone style plaque to twenty-two finishers of the Missions Tour and nine finishers of the Parks Adventure.

Triple Crown Award: Twelve riders earned the Triple Crown Award in 2014. This prize is given to riders who, in a single calendar year, complete the USA Four Corners Tour, the Three Flags Classic, and either the California Parks Adventure or the Missions Tour. This



achievement typically requires a rider to log 15,000 to 20,000 miles or more and requires a serious commitment of both time and resources.

Of those 12 riders, **Charlie Hart** also completed two other Premiere events thereby completing all five Premier Events, a feat requiring 25,000 or more riding miles. **Brian Kunzelmann, James Kingdon** and **Joe Hallford** completed one additional Premiere event for a total of four Premier Events, a feat

requiring at least 15 to 20,000 miles.

We believe there are two other riders in the history of our Association who have completed all five Premier Events in a single calendar year. If you are one of those finishers please send Gonzo a note so he can record it on the website.

The Grand Slam Award, which is the completion of all five SCMA Premier rides AND completion of thirteen Travelers' Awards rides, went unclaimed in 2014.



Finally, the grand award for the evening was the 2015 Legacy Award given to **Blake Anderson**. The Legacy Award was created to acknowledge and honor the enduring efforts that some members have provided over a number of years. The Award was first given in 2012 to five early leaders of the SCMA: **Joe Usatin, Dannie Fox, Jan Staws, Joe Mandeville** and **Kenn**

Hatke. Subsequent recipients include **Eleanor Stevens** in 2013, and **Max Marker** in 2014. During his ten years as an SCMA member, five of which were spent as our Chairman, Blake invested countless hours to grow the Association and earn it recognition as a national and international group of riders sharing the passion for long distance riding. Blake's wife Giovanna accepted the award on his behalf to a standing ovation.



continued to Page 10

continued from Page 9

The evening's official events closed with Steve looking forward to the 2015 Three Flags Classic and Gonzo awarding nine door prizes. Five door prizes were generously provided by **GoAZ Motorcycles** of Scottsdale AZ, two headsets were awarded courtesy of **J&M Audio**, the IBA Rally video documentary, *Hard Miles* courtesy of the **Iron Butt Association**, and a \$200 gift certificate made available by **Irv Seaver BMW**.

Every ending is but another beginning, and as the crowd worked their way out the door congratulations could be heard even as plans were being made for the coming year's rides.



Recipients of the Triple Crown Award:
Back Row, L to R):
Charles Lamb, Brian Kunzelmann, James Kingdon, Norm Barnard, Jim Fischer,
front row, Daniel Velderrain, Les Gullery, Joe Hallford, Charlie Hart.



Best 15 USA Road Challenge: (L to R)
Brian Kunzelmann, James Kingdon, Charlie Hart, Joe Hallford, Charlie Coyner (Chair-2014)

continued to Page 11



CA National Parks: (L to R)

Bill Dippel III, Charlie Hart, Les Gullery, David Kent, Brian Kunzelmann, Ed Westlund



CA Missions Tour: (L to R)

David Kent, Ellen Welters, Howard Mieseles, Phillip Jackson Jr, Allen Kelley, Victor Castenada, Darlene Fong, Joe Hallford, Jim Fischer, Alan Hirst, Norm Barnard, Charles Lamb, Charlie Hart, James Kingdon, Daniel Valderrain



Travelers Awards: (L to R)

Standing: Dannie Fox, Dan Hilton, Bill Schmidt, Giovanna Piazza, Alan Hirst, Steve Howe (Platinum). Kneeling: Mitch Friedman, Darlene Fong, Mike Barber (Platinum)

Link to AZRATPack video of their beginning visits to Missions and NP's, and their portions of the Awards Banquet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFcAzB481Ls&feature=share>

Banquet Photos

Photos courtesy of Rodney & Victor of AZRATPack



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Banquet Photos

Photos courtesy of Rodney & Victor of AZRATPack



Some Valuable Fine Print (REALLY !)

Articles and advertising must be received by the 25th of the month in order to appear in the next published issue of the SCMA News. Newsletters are circulated electronically and posted on the SCMA website. Send written correspondence to: Southern California Motorcycle Association, PO Box 487, Norwalk, CA 90651-0487

Email Newsletter submittals to:
GonzoCrossUSA@gmail.com

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SCMA's website is always your best source for complete and current information on our rides and events. Our membership application is there. For more information go to **www.sc-**

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Advertising space is provided to our members only. Regular membership is \$30 for one year and \$50 for two years. Want ads are free for regular members. Sponsoring corporate membership is \$600 per year and includes a half page ad in the newsletter for 12 months and prominent mention at SCMA's March Awards and Appreciation Banquet and the September Three Flags Banquet.



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