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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1978



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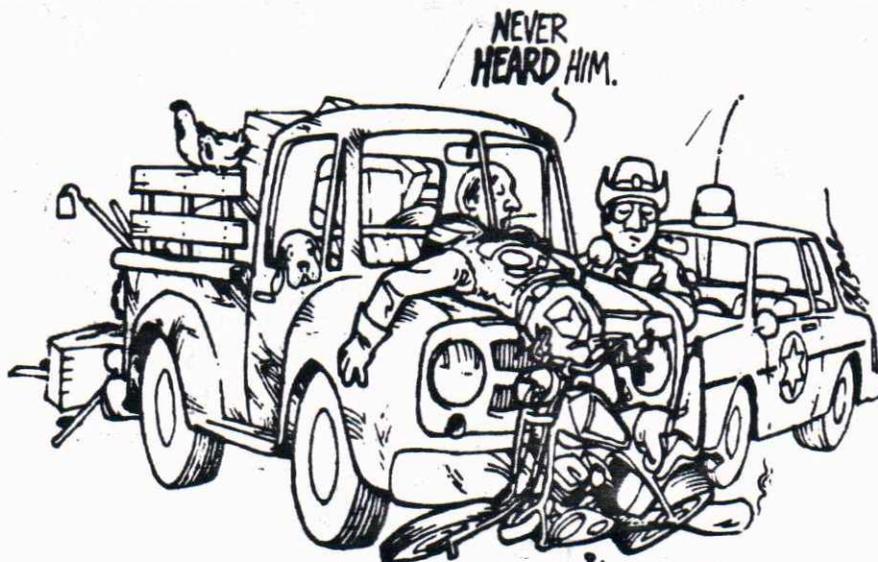
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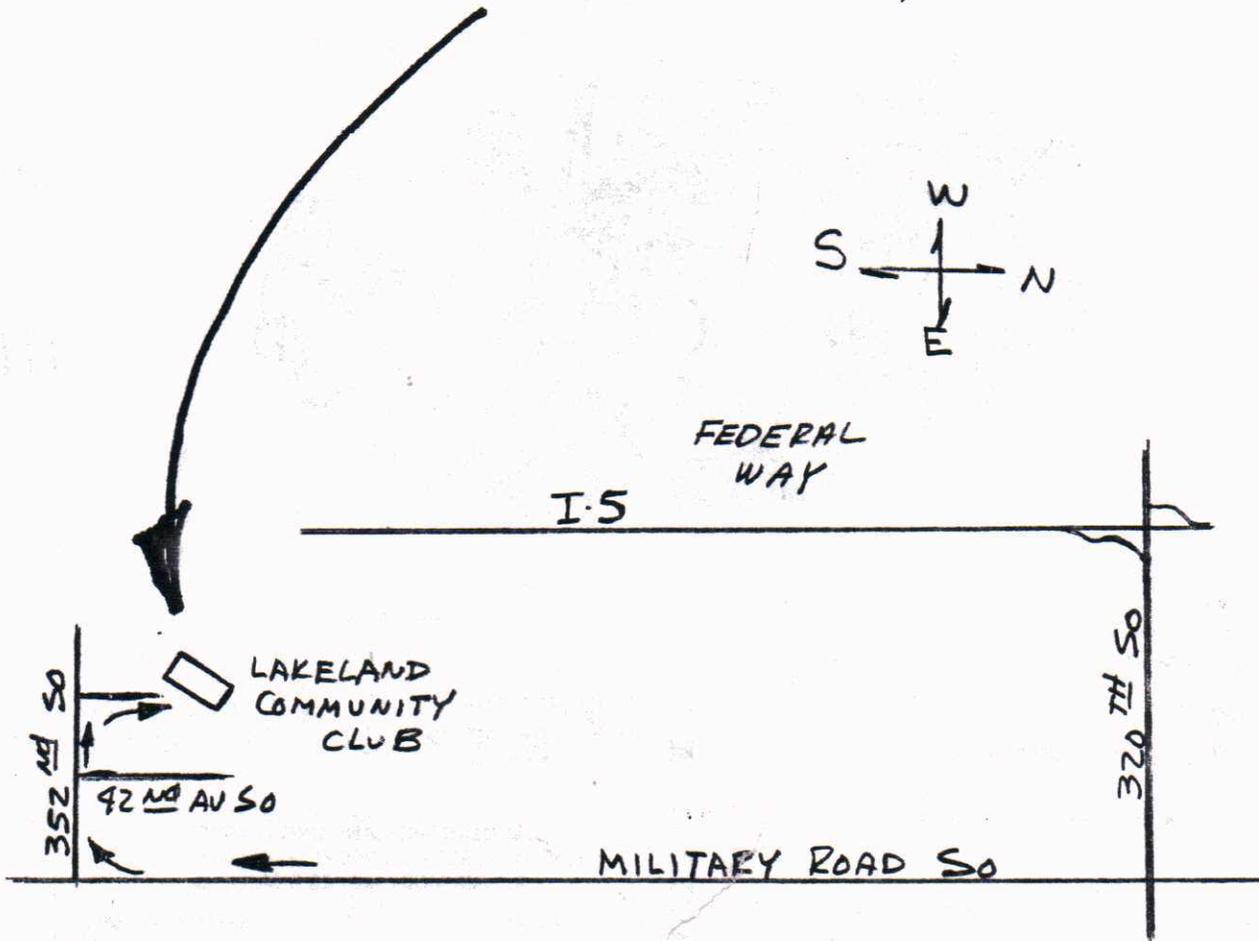
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THINK LIGHTS ON LAWS ARE WORKING?

Of the eight states having the lights on laws, seven have experienced an increase of motorcycle accidents per 1000 registrations from the first full year of enactment through 1973. They are Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Montana, New York, and Wisconsin, which also experienced the smallest growth in accidents.

In a state-by-state analysis by the AMA and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF), it was found that motorcycle accidents increased by 16 percent, fatalities by 23 percent in 1977 over 1976. MSF president Dr. Charles H. Hartman cautions that there is no one single reason for the increases; cites possible factors such as bad riding weather, longer riding period, new riders, helmet law repeals, better accident reporting, increase in number of cycle passengers. AMA adds poor road conditions . . .

ABATE OF WASHINGTON MEETING DEC 11, 1978



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Causes of cycle mishaps

SOME newly published data on motorcycle accidents, a growing headache for traffic-safety administrators, both reinforce the case for the motorcyclist's crash helmet and offer some accident-prevention clues of value to everyone using the highways.

Citing preliminary findings of a study being conducted for the federal Department of Transportation Prof. Harry Hurt of the University of Southern California says his detailed investigation of 900 motorcycle accidents in the past 30 months adds fresh documentation for the value of helmets.

Of the 900 accidents in the sample, Hurt reports, 54 involved fatalities. Of those victims, 85 per cent were not wearing helmets.

The study indicated that cyclists wearing protective headgear and involved in accidents received 23 per cent fewer head injuries than unhelmeted riders.

These figures should be of interest, of course, to this state's Senate Transportation Committee, which is examining the impact of the helmet-law repeal and what might be done

to improve motorcycle safety through action in the 1979 Legislature.

Also of potential value in the federally sponsored study at U.S.C. was the tentative finding that the major cause of motorcycle accidents is the failure of motorists to see bike riders in traffic.

More than half the crashes resulted from motorists' inability to see the riders until it was too late. A motor vehicle turning left into a motorcycle's path was blamed for 45 per cent of all accidents investigated.

High-visibility clothing, especially in yellow colors, might help cut the accident rate for riders, according to Joan Claybrook, director of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Finally, the U.S.C. study produced a preliminary conclusion that may point to a heretofore unsuspected cause of motorcycle mishaps.

More than half the riders involved in the 900 crashes had less than six months' experience with the particular bike involved. And almost 92 per cent never had had any professional or formal driver training.

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