



January 2011 – 2011 has seen a tragic beginning to the new year. On January 5th a Davenport couple was killed when 19-year old Shawn Douglas Crosswell “lost control of his car” and crossed into the oncoming traffic lane with his car, killing 61-year old Edward Ira Sparks and 52-year old Judith Ann Sparks. The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) has not stated if any charges were filed, or if even a ‘failure to yield’ or ‘violation of the right-of-way’ citation was issued.

Miles away on the same day Dennis J. Bedard, 42, was killed while riding when he was involved in a crash with a Chevrolet Suburban on Estero Boulevard in Bonita Springs, FL. FHP stated that the crash is still being investigated, and have not yet stated if anyone is going to be cited. The driver of the Suburban was not injured and has not been named as of yet.

Although we hate to hear of these fatal crashes, we must not lose sight that if the crash is the result of negligent operation of a car, truck, or other motor vehicle, the offending driver **SHOULD BE CHARGED**. Without severe penalties for this reckless and/or negligent operation that is costing motorcyclists’ their lives, a majority of the drivers will have no motivation to watch for the motorcycles sharing the same roadways.

By the time you’re reading this, there will have been another hearing come and gone in the Seminole County case where Ruth Perez hit and killed “Diamond” Dave Mackish, as well as the Sumter County case in which Paul Sermons hit two bikes killing four motorcyclists. Coming up on Feb. 24th there will be another hearing in the Lee County case where Arjuna Jani turned in front of Phillip Baker, causing a crash that killed Baker. Members from ABATE of Florida, Inc.’s Estero River Chapter will be present at this hearing; contact Chapter President Tammy “Patches” Brennan at 239-289-2647 for more information on this situation.

ABATE of Florida, Inc. has been trying for years to get the penalties to negligent or reckless drivers convicted of hitting motorcyclists not only enforced, but more severe. We will be filing our 2011 Stiffer Penalties Bill shortly in the Florida Legislature. Please make sure to check out our website’s Legislative Information Center and contact your elected representatives to ask them for their support in this efforts.

Even with all this work to be done, all of us need to let loose every now and then. Daytona Bike Week fills this need perfectly. And better yet, ABATE of Florida offers motorcyclists attending Bike Week an option that saves them hundreds of dollars when they decide to stay overnight during the event. We have our annual campground about 20 minutes from downtown Daytona Beach with tent camping only \$15 (plus FL tax) per night; full 20/30/50 amp RV hookups are also available for a different rate. Our gates open up at Noon on March 4th, close at Noon March 13th. We have everything you’ll need on site; 24-hour security, hot showers, food, beverages, vendors, ATM, and tons of bikers partying! All this and you’ll also be helping fund our ability to continue to fight for the rights of motorcyclists in Florida. Make sure to visit www.abateflorida.com for more information!

Hope to see you all at ABATE of Florida’s Bike Week Campground!

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