

MC Bulletins

Fingernail-Painting Woman Convicted in Motorcyclist's Death

Lora Hunt, the woman who was painting her fingernails while driving and smashed into motorcyclist Anita Zaffke, killing her, has been convicted of felony reckless homicide, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) reports. Hunt, 49, reportedly showed no emotion when the jury read the verdict after deliberating a little more than three hours on May 6. The trial lasted two days. Hunt, a nurse, faces up to five years in prison when she is sentenced.

Zaffke, 56, was killed when Hunt, who police said admitted she was painting her fingernails at the time of the crash, smashed into the back of Zaffke's motorcycle at a stoplight in Lake Zurich, Illinois, about 40 miles north of Chicago, on May 2, 2009.

At the trial, Hunt testified she had stopped painting her nails before the fatal crash. Her defense lawyer argued Hunt's actions were negligent, like eating a sandwich or talking on a cell phone in a car, and not reckless, according to the Chicago Tribune. But Assistant State's Attorney Mike Mermel, who prosecuted the case, argued that Hunt acted recklessly, the newspaper said.

"It is not the same as biting a sandwich...It's a voluntary disablement," the newspaper quoted Mermel as saying. "She might as well have been in the back seat making a sandwich."

Greg Zaffke II, the victim's son, told WGN News following the verdict: "There are no winners today. There is no celebration or happiness. Two families will forever carry the hurt and anguish caused by one person's reckless actions behind the wheel."

After the fatal crash, Zaffke began painting his fingernails black as a reminder to anyone he meets of his mother's death. And he formed the Black Nail Brigade Foundation Against Distracted Driving (www.BlackNailBrigade.org) to publicize the dangers of distracted driving, push for legislation to impose appropriate penalties for distracted drivers who seriously injure or kill others, and to boost awareness to share the road with motorcycles. He told WGN News that the Black Nail Brigade efforts transcend his mom's death.

"I love my mom, but I understand that there are other loved ones dying," he said.

US Senator Calls For National Mandatory Motorcycle Helmet Law

According to the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) in an April hearing held by the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) repeatedly called for a national mandatory helmet law. The hearing, entitled "Opportunities to Improve Highway Safety," focused on areas that need improvement when it comes to the landscape of highway injuries and fatalities.

The 86-year-old Lautenberg said that there should be a mandatory motorcycle helmet law for all riders in America. According to the MRF, Lautenberg has a history of lobbying for a federal mandatory helmet law in place. Lautenberg currently chairs or sits on every single senate committee that has jurisdiction over roads and road safety.

During this hearing, Lautenberg was not alone in his appeal for a federal helmet law. The spokesperson for the Advocates for Highway Safety also voiced an opinion that a national helmet law is a good idea. The hearing didn't only focus on the helmet debate, however—in fact, very little of it did. There were other issues covered such as impaired driving, distracted driving and big trucks.

Moto Morini Rescued

Another fabled Italian brand, Moto Morini, appears to have been rescued from permanent closure by none other than the brother of Italy's Prime Minister. Paolo Berlusconi, whose brother, Silvio, is the head of state in Italy, purchased and recapitalized the struggling Moto Morini in late April.

Despite improving sales in 2009, Moto Morini was unable to meet its financial obligations and was forced to file for bankruptcy protection last September. Berlusconi's investment gives the company a new lease on life.

Moto Morini got its start in 1925, when Alfonso Morini built his first motorcycle, a 125cc Grand Prix two-stroke, which he rode to a string of early successes in Italy. The brand was officially launched in 1937. Production was interrupted by World War II, but the company rebounded afterward by continuing to produce and sell lightweight singles before producing its first 350cc and 500cc

V-twin models in the early 1970s. Struggling in the 1980s, Morini was purchased in 1987 by Ducati, and later came under the control of Texas Pacific Group, which bought Ducati. In 1999, rights to the Moto Morini name were purchased by Morini Franco Motori spa, which then developed a new line of motorcycles based on a very competent 87°, 1187cc V-twin developed in 2004. It is expected that this engine will remain the cornerstone of current and future models.

New Mexico Governor Wants More Federal Land Closures

New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson is calling for measures that would lock-up more public lands, including the possibility of banning motorized recreation, according to the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA).

In his opening statement during a White House-sponsored conference on America's Great Outdoors on April 16, Richardson urged the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) to move forward on its National Monument expansion plan. The AMA previously reported on an internal administration document that would set aside 13 million acres in 11 western states without any consideration in Congress. The action could prohibit off-highway riding in the affected areas. For more information on America's Great Outdoors and Governor Richardson's comments, see www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/index.cfm

"While Richardson expresses the importance of recreation to his state in the form of tax receipts and jobs, his method of blocking motorized access to millions of acres of public lands has the potential to threaten the livelihoods of many in the state he governs," said AMA Vice President for Government Relations Ed Moreland. "AMA members need to express opposition to both the DOI plan for expanding the National Monument network, as well as any congressional action that would ban responsible motorized recreation on our public lands."

In a letter to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar dated Feb. 18, 2010, the AMA addressed the concerns of its members and other user groups, stating its opposition to designating areas National Monuments without any public debate. The Interior Department responded to the AMA's letter, claiming the internal document was

merely a “brainstorming session.” However, Richardson’s endorsement of the plan may give the concept further traction within the Administration.

Additionally, Richardson, who is nearing the end of his current term, expressed the need for Congress to develop another omnibus public lands bill. This would follow in the footsteps of the omnibus public lands bill that the President signed into law on March 30, 2009. That bill closed off more than 2 million acres to responsible motorized recreation with virtually no public input.

AMA members and other concerned motorcyclists can contact their elected officials and ask them to oppose the DOI plan by going to AmericanMotorcyclist.com and using the “Take Action” option.

MV Agusta Finds Financier For Potential Customers

In a possible sign that motorcycle financing could be getting easier for prospective new buyers, MV Agusta USA, LLC has announced a new arrangement with Chicago-based MB Financial Bank that will allow MV Agusta USA to offer a competitive retail financing program to MV Agusta dealers, with options to make it easier for customers to own a new or pre-owned MV Agusta motorcycle.

MV Agusta USA says that dealers can now take advantage of a consumer finance program that provides excellent installment options designed to attract new customers. The program features an easy application process, special promotional rates and access to the bank’s knowledgeable lending specialists.

“MB is happy to assist MV Agusta USA in delivering to dealers retail financing solutions that are flexible and cost effective,” says Charles Schaefer, First Vice President, Indirect Lending, MB Financial Bank. “The end result is a program in place that encourages consumers to own a new or used MV Agusta motorcycle.”

For more information on the MB Financial Bank retail finance program for MV Agusta dealers, please visit www.mv-agustausa.com or your nearest authorized MV Agusta dealer.

Motocross Legend Danny “Magoo” Chandler, 1959-2010

Danny “Magoo” Chandler, the wild-riding Northern Californian who played a huge part in the emergence of Team USA as a power in the sport of motocross, died on May 4 as a result of an illness related to the 1985 racing accident that had rendered him a quadriplegic. He was 50.

Although he never won an AMA National Championship, Chandler’s leg-

end grew in stature during the early 1980s, most notably 1982, when he dominated the best racers in the world to win all four motos of the Motocross des Nations and Trophee des Nations—a feat that hasn’t been duplicated since. He also won the 500cc USGP at Carlsbad, California that same year, and was a winner of the fabled ABC Sports Superbikers, which pitted riders from various disciplines on a hybrid racetrack, the event spawning the sport known as supermoto.

Paralyzed after crashing at the 1985 Paris Supercross, Chandler experienced

highs and lows in life, but he was recently in the spotlight again as the motorcycle industry came together to provide a new special needs van so Chandler could continue teaching his motorcycle safety schools. An artist’s rendering of the van was issued by 1982 500cc World Motocross Champion Brad Lackey—who spear-headed the Magoo Van Fund campaign—just one day before Chandler died.

After Chandler’s death, Lackey said, “I will miss Danny with all my heart, and I want to thank everyone around the world who felt the same about the incredible Mr. Magoo.”

Latest Recalls Big Dog

Models: 2004 Bulldog, 2004 Chopper, 2004 Mastiff, 2004 Ridgeback, 2004 Boxer, 2004 Pitbull
Component: Electrical System

Potential number of units affected: 1895
Summary: Big Dog is recalling certain 2004 Chopper, Bulldog, Ridgeback, Mastiff, Boxer, and Pitbull motorcycles. There is a possible loose connection between the harness connector and the electronic harness controller.

Consequence: This condition may cause the motorcycle to experience intermittent loss of electrical power to various components, which can lead to, among other things, a loss of headlamp function or a vehicle stall, increasing the risk of a crash.

Remedy: Big Dog will notify owners and dealers will repair the motorcycles free of charge. The safety recall is expected to begin on or about May 24, 2010. Owners may contact Big Dog at 316-219-9121.

NHTSA campaign ID number: 10V180000

Advanced Carbon Composites, Inc.

Model: EXT-004 helmet
Component: Equipment: Motorcycle: Helmets
Potential number of units affected: 654

Summary: Advanced Carbon Composites (ACC) is recalling all model EXT-004 motorcycle helmets, sizes S/M, M/L, and L/XL. These helmets fail to conform to the penetration requirements of federal motor vehicle safety standard no. 218, “Motorcycle Helmets.”

Consequence: In the event of a crash, the helmet could be penetrated, possibly causing serious injury to the wearer of the helmet.

Remedy: ACC will notify owners of record and will offer a full refund. The safety recall is expected to begin during May 2010. Owners may contact ACC toll-free at 800-300-9813.

NHTSA campaign id number: 10E008000

Models: EXT-001, EXT-002, EXT-003

Component: Equipment: Motorcycle: Helmets
Potential number of units affected: 21,084

Summary: Advanced Carbon Composites (ACC) is recalling all model EXT-001, EXT-002, and EXT-003 motorcycle helmets, sizes S/M, M/L, and L/XL. These helmets fail to conform to the penetration, impact attenuation, and/or labeling requirements of federal motor vehicle safety standard no. 218, “Motorcycle Helmets.”

Consequence: In the event of a crash, the helmet will not adequately protect the wearer of the helmet, increasing the risk of injury.

Remedy: ACC will notify owners of record and will offer a full refund. The safety recall is expected to begin on or about May 31, 2010. Owners may contact ACC toll-free at 800-300-9813.

NHTSA campaign ID number: 10E012000

Xenon-Vision

Model: HID Conversion Kit
Component: Exterior Lighting
Potential number of units affected: 10,000
Summary:

Xenon-Vision has notified NHTSA about a non-compliance in certain HID conversion kits sold for use as aftermarket parts for motor vehicles. The incandescent filament design fails to conform to the requirements of federal motor vehicle safety standard no. 108, “Lamps, Reflective Devices, and Associated Equipment.”

Consequence: When Halogen headlamps are converted to HID light sources, the lamps will emit excessive glare to oncoming traffic, increasing the risk of a crash.

Remedy: Xenon-Vision will notify owners of record and offer a full refund for the noncompliant kits. The safety recall is expected to begin on or about May 10, 2010. Owners may contact Xenon-Vision at 626-698-6753.

NHTSA campaign ID number: 10E009000