



## A poke at the pig

I wish I were a bear with a ranger hat and a shovel, because then everybody would love me. Grown-ups would point to me as a lovable example of responsible behavior, children would want their picture taken with me, and furry defenseless woodland creatures would revere me as their savior and buy me drinks. But, alas, I am not a bear with a ranger hat and shovel; I am a biker with boots and jeans and a leather jacket. And for some bewildering reason I'm being demonized by the Department of Energy and the Alliance to Save Energy as the "Energy Hog," a creepy, gluttonous slob in biker attire portrayed in public service announcements as bent on squandering precious resources at exactly that point in time when the price of energy is blowing through the roof and conservation is of critical importance.

Why me? Why us? What does it take to get a damn break around here? Just when it appeared that our day had finally arrived, and the fuel and space efficiency of motorcycles would at long last be acknowledged, appreciated, and celebrated as an example of responsible motoring, we are rewarded instead with the trotting out of a cartoon biker pig as the new national symbol of wanton waste.

The Energy Hog campaign is the brainchild of the Ad Council, the same folks who brought you Smoky the Bear, and is intended to publicize the importance of energy conservation in the same way Smoky championed woodland conservation, especially among the young. But unlike Smoky, who offered virtues for the young to aspire to, the Energy Hog is no fuzzy hero. The creators decided to make him a rapacious fiend in denim and leather instead, presumably to scare kids into behaving responsibly—and we all know how well that works in the long run. And since none of this makes a lick of sense, I did a little digging into the whole selection process of an evil biker pig as our new cultural nemesis and through the Freedom of Information Act I was able to acquire the following internal memo sent by the campaign's point man at the Department of Energy in response to the initial cartoon proposal from the Ad Council's creative team. It might shed some light on the whole affair.

*From: Department of Energy, Undersecretary of Juvenile Propaganda*

*To: Ad Council Public Service Cartoon Committee*

*In Re: Feedback on Energy Cartoon Campaign ideas*

*Gentlemen: Thank you for your expeditious efforts and all the hard work you've obviously put into this important project. I ran your proposal and suggestions by the administration and there seems to be some resistance to adopting an "Energy Camel Jockey" as the evil cartoon character. Some officials at State think it might come off as insensitive to our Saudi friends and since they have all the oil we don't want to tweak their big noses. They're already in a snit about our whole "democracy" harangue. It's also been pointed out by Health and Human Services that the whole camel thing could backfire with the kids since, apparently, they all learned to smoke and drink and shoot pool from some character named Joe Camel, and they love him for it.*

*They're also not crazy about the "Energy Fat Cat" approach, and feel that the specter of an obese Garfield-styled lobbyist flying congressmen to golf dates around the Caribbean in a private Gulfstream while writing up a national energy policy on cocktail napkins over pitchers of margaritas isn't scary enough to children. "Too cerebral," is what I heard.*



## Give vets a break

This is an open letter directed to the manufacturers and sellers of all American bikes, wherever you may be.

Recently, my best friend and brother returned from active duty in the Middle East. The first thing he did upon getting home was to go out and buy himself a new Harley. Out of curiosity, I asked if he was given a

*I didn't get too far with the "Energy Ostrich," either, even though I suggested it could be slightly altered so that the bird's head is stuck in the sands of Iran instead of up its own sphincter. I guess this one was "too cerebral" too, so unless you guys can brainstorm some other ideas, I guess we'll have to go with the Energy Hog/evil biker concept. FYI, there could be some trademark issues here. Apparently some outfit has rights to the word "hog" in reference to motorcycles, but I think Justice can handle that. Beyond that it looks like the path of least resistance. I can't think of anyone of consequence who might be offended except fundamentalist Muslims, who hate the sight of pigs. Win/win, I say. Carry on.*

So there you have it, and it's certainly not the first time bikers have been gratuitously stigmatized, and it won't be the last, and frankly I find being perceived as a societal menace to be a real plus at times, like when I'm trying to skate on jury duty, or run Jehovah's Witnesses off the porch. But what grinds me in this context is that bikers are in reality the least profligate of fossil fuel consumers, routinely getting well over 40 miles out of a gallon of gas on a Big Twin, and adding virtually nothing to traffic congestion—and even less in those enlightened jurisdictions that permit lane-splitting by bikes. The average four-wheeled vehicle gets less than half that mileage when actually in motion, and when it's stuck in traffic, it gets exactly zero miles to the gallon. If anyone in Washington really wants to implement quick and painless palliatives for fuel consumption woes they could push for federal legislation to enable lane-splitting in all 50 states in the same way they used the withholding of highway fund largesse to cram helmet laws through so many statehouses. That would be a start. That would make us the good guys. But it wouldn't make much of a cartoon.

*It's all right here in the diaries. ♦*

discount of any sort for his service. I'm disappointed to report that none was offered to him, nor was one available. I would like to remind all manufacturers and dealers nationwide that it was our veterans who made our lifestyle possible, and they are the ones directly responsible for the whole genesis of our culture. These are men and women who have served

See "Letters," page 48, column 1

**Editor** Terry Roorda  
**Contributing Editor** Robert Filla—South  
**Managing Editor** Charles Ruhe  
**So. California Bureau Chief** Wendell Perry  
**No. California Bureau Chief** "LoDown" Dan Parker  
**Northwest Bureau Chief** Susan Swan  
**Technical Editor** Kip Woodring  
**Associate Editors** Michael King  
 Deanna Linton  
 Cristy Pazera  
**Production Manager** Debbie Macdonald  
**Production Assistant & Calendar** Jennifer Poli  
**Production** Lisa Clark  
 Megan Gillespie  
 Birgit Heidgen-Farquhar  
 Andrea Holtz  
 Bailey Postoloff  
**The Mac Dude** Niel Macdonald

## The Usual Suspects

Kay Cardwell Ernie Copper Ron Danielson  
 eddieboy Roland Haug Marianne Hudspeth  
 Barbara Joans Sam Jones  
 Hazel Perry Mike Savidge

## Repeat Offenders

Steve Austin Jim Banakus Buckshot Becky Collins  
 Christine Davis Julie DeHerrera Lindsay Dove  
 Juanita Facticeau Flea Gypsy Bill Hayes  
 Scott Ivey Nick Jonopulos Kenzo Bob Lowery  
 Keith Machen Randy Mills Felicia Morgan Shadow  
 SuperGlide Gail Teri Troyer Dana Franklin Welch  
 Derrel Whitemeyer David Wiwchar Tom Zimmeroff

## Advertising

### Associate Publisher/Sales Manager

Stuart Sutherland  
 619.593.8700 • 619.593.6284 (fax)  
 ssutherland@affinitygroup.com

### Sales Manager/North & Midwest

Dave Clayton  
 330.723.7883 • 330.723.7671 (fax)  
 dclayton@affinitygroup.com

### Texas & Southern California

Kate Chickering  
 818.240.8217 • 831.438.0993 (fax)  
 kchickering@affinitygroup.com

### Bay Area/Northern & Central California & Southeast

Bev Nehmer  
 831.425.5637 • 831.438.0300 (fax)  
 bnehmer@affinitygroup.com

### Northeast

Jamila Taylor  
 603.431.0810 • 603.433.4223 (fax)  
 jtaylor@affinitygroup.com

### Canada

Roland Haug  
 604.529.1870 phone or fax  
 rollinghog@telus.net

### Classified

Cristy Pazera  
 831.438.7882 • 831.438.0993 (fax)  
 tpress@affinitygroup.com

### Thunder Press, an Ehlert Publishing Group Publication

4865 Scotts Valley Drive, Suite 200  
 Scotts Valley, CA 95066  
 Phone 831.438.7882 • Fax 831.438.0993  
 E-mail: tpress@affinitygroup.com

**For individual subscription service:**  
 Call toll-free: 800.877.6118

### Ehlert Publishing Group

(A Subsidiary of Affinity Group, Inc.)  
 Publishers of *Rider*, *American Rider*  
 and *Cruising Rider* magazines  
 6420 Sycamore Lane, Suite 100  
 Maple Grove, MN 55369  
 Phone: 763.383.4400 Fax: 763.383.4499  
 www.ehlertpowersports.com

### President

Stephen M. Hedlund

### Senior Vice President/Publishing Director

Dick Hendricks

### Senior Vice President/Production

Morris Woolery

### Vice President/Corporate Sales

Steve Schiffman

Published on or about the third week of each month by Thunder Press, Inc. Copyrighted 2005. Reprinting in whole, or part, can only be done with the permission of the publisher.

Thunder Press welcomes your letters, photos, and articles and while we handle them lovingly, we cannot be responsible for unsolicited material. Please make sure you include your name and address with all submissions, and if you want material returned, please include a SASE. A contributor's guide is available and can be requested by phone at 831.438.7882 or e-mail at tpress@affinitygroup.com

