

reasons I am opposed to a law against hitchhiking apply to all motorists, not just to cyclists:

First, I believe in the Golden Rule. It may sound corny, but I really do. Not because I'm religious. I'm not. But just because it seems to me to be the way people ought to try to live. Just to refresh your memory in case you've forgotten, it goes like this: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." I was in the Navy for 4 years. I hitched rides for thousands and thousands of miles all during those years. I know what it is like to stand out along the road and wait for a ride—sometimes for hours. I swore then that I wouldn't pass up hitchhikers when I was the one driving. I must admit that I do not pick up all hitchhikers that I see. I look them over. But I do pick up many of them.

One of the things that bugs me, not only when it comes to hitchhikers, but for everything, is the number of church-going hypocrites who profess to follow a philosophy of loving your fellow man, but wouldn't help a stranger out regardless of the situation.

If hitchhiking were against the law I would not only lose my right to hitchhike, but also my right to pick up hitchhikers. I'd be deprived of the opportunity to meet lots of interesting people. And to me that is really the worst aspect of this proposal—the loss of one more freedom. I think we already have too many restrictions on our freedom. Society is not well served by well-meaning but unnecessary laws.

Another practical point about laws—any law—is that they cost money to enforce. We don't have enough law officers now, and the courts are so jammed with cases that it takes months and sometimes years for justice to be served. Our policemen and judges should be spending their time with more important things than worrying about hitchhikers.

One final point. One person to a vehicle, be it a car or a motorcycle, is wasteful. It wastes the earth's natural resources, it wastes what clean air is still around, it wastes space on busy roadways, and it wastes space in crowded parking lots. For the sake of ecology if nothing else, the practice of hitchhiking should be encouraged, fostered rather than outlawed.

As to my fiance's question, "What about all the crimes that are committed by and against hitchhikers?" I say punish murderers for murdering, rapists for raping, thieves for stealing, but the mere fact that they may happen also to be hitchhikers or people who befriend hitchhikers is irrelevant.

I didn't win the argument. But she married me anyway. **CG**

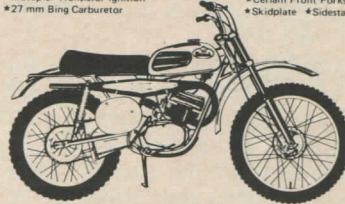
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