

From the President

IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO POINT OUT INJUSTICES DONE TO MOTORCYCLISTS, WHETHER THEY HAPPEN IN CONGRESS, OR ON THE STREETS, TRAILS OR COMPETITION TRACKS OF AMERICA.

Rider Advocacy

The AMA Champions All Riders—including Racers—in Pursuit Of Their Passion

By Rob Dingman

In speeches and in the pages of this magazine, I have talked a lot about the AMA's role as the motorcyclist's advocate. Most people interpret this to mean protecting the rights of riders through our government relations efforts. While that is a crucially important part of our advocacy work, rider advocacy has a much broader meaning.

One of our responsibilities is to advocate for AMA members on behalf of their passion for and dedication to racing.

When the AMA sold certain professional racing assets to the Daytona Motorsports Group (DMG) in 2008, it was important to our Board of Directors that we not shirk our responsibility to professional racers. To protect the interests of racers in all disciplines, our legal agreement with DMG sought to ensure that DMG wouldn't cherry-pick the disciplines that it wanted to run and abandon those in which it had little interest.

Our agreement also provides that riders racing in AMA professional events continue to be AMA members. While in the past, the AMA membership was

perceived as the tax a rider must pay to race, AMA membership is now included when you purchase a professional license from DMG.

The AMA has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of all riders, and this includes ensuring that racers are treated fairly by race officials. In the interest of giving DMG the opportunity to be successful in its first year, we have not added to the criticism that has been heaped upon them. In fairness, DMG seems to have gotten pretty darn close with the road-racing rules package, treating fans to some of the closest and most unpredictable racing we have seen in years.

There was a particular incident that occurred this year, however, that represents a completely unacceptable action by a race official. The incident was exposed in video that surfaced on the Internet that showed a high-level DMG employee berating AMA member and road-racing competitor Johnny Rock Page (read the full story on page 31). Whether Page was right or wrong is irrelevant. No one who wears an AMA-logged uniform should be allowed

to treat an AMA member how Page was treated.

I regularly receive correspondence from AMA members who say they will not renew their membership due to one DMG action or another or until we, the AMA, fire a particular DMG official or another. Because DMG is a completely separate company from the AMA, and has been granted a license to use our name in the context of professional motorcycle racing, it is not within my power or authority to make any changes at DMG—personnel or otherwise.

It is, however, our responsibility to point out injustices done to motorcyclists, whether they happen in Congress, or on the streets, trails or competition tracks of America. Rest assured that we have been very vocal in our conversations directly with DMG management in advocating for the rights of AMA racing members. Look for the AMA to be more public in its advocacy on behalf of racers in 2010.

Rob Dingman is president and CEO of the American Motorcyclist Association.