

# Press Release



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**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE:**

## **More Fatal Motorcycle Crashes; Motorcyclists Still Waiting on Court Hearings' Outcomes**

Deland, FL, January 11, 2011 – 2011 has seen a tragic beginning to the new year. On January 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

Of the very few cases where some type of charges/citations have been filed:

- On **January 18, 2011**, there will be another court hearing in **Seminole County** regarding the crash that killed "Diamond" Dave Mackish in September 2009. Ruth Perez, the driver responsible for slamming into three vehicles and killing Mackish in the process. It is believed that Perez's attorneys have been delaying the trial, and since they're still doing Docket Soundings a year and a half later, it seems to successful. ABATE of Florida, Inc.'s Brevard County Chapter will be attending the Oct. 13, 2010 hearing; contact the Chapter Secretary Jonell Pope at 321-698-5077 for more information.
- On **January 19, 2011**, there will be a court hearing in **Sumter County** regarding the crash that killed four motorcyclists in March 2010. It was reported by some present at Paul Sermons' arraignment that he seemed to display no remorse for his actions. Sermons is being held on \$202,500 bond, and the State Attorney's Office's Prosecutor has invited all motorcyclists to attend these hearings. ABATE of Florida, Inc.'s Sumter County Chapter will be attending the Oct. 13, 2010 hearing; contact Chapter President Nancy Painter at (352) 457-4677 for additional information. Additionally, there will be a group riding to the hearing from the Lake County area as well; contact Lake County Chapter President Casey Staley at (407) 469-2455 for more info.
- On **February 24, 2011**, there will be a mandatory court hearing in **Lee County** regarding the killing of Phillip Baker. Arjuna Jani apparently was not paying attention as he turned in front of Baker's Harley Davidson on September 25, 2010, causing the crash that killed Baker. The Florida Highway Patrol issued Jani a \$159 traffic citation for failure to yield the right of way. Jani is currently free without any additional charges pending. Members from ABATE of Florida, Inc.'s Estero River Chapter will be present at the hearing. Contact Chapter President Tammy Brickley at 239-289-2647 for more information.

ABATE of Florida, Inc. has been trying for years to get the penalties to drivers convicted of hitting motorcyclists after negligent or reckless vehicle operation not only enforced, but made more severe. We will be filing our 2011 Stiffer Penalties Bill shortly in the Florida Legislature. Please contact your elected representatives and ask them to support our efforts.

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