

Thursday, April 13, 1989

Bill, if signed, will require helmets for riders of motorcycles, scooters

By Andrea Warrenburg

REPORTER

Operators of motorcycles, motor scooters and mopeds soon may have to give up a little personal freedom for their own safety.

A bill in the Texas Legislature proposed by state Sen. Ted Lyon, D-Mesquite, would require any person operating or riding a motorcycle or moped to wear a helmet.

At press time Wednesday, Gov. Bill Clements had not signed the bill, but was expected to do so. If signed, the law would go into effect Sept. 1.

"The law will decrease accident severity, with possibly 15 percent to 20

percent fewer deaths," Sandra Parsons, Texas A&M Texas Transportation Institute research associate, said. "But it will not reduce accident frequency."

The law will be affecting the nearly 2,300 cycle operators registered with the University Police Department in Fall 1988. Almost 6 percent of all vehicles registered at A&M are cycles compared to just more than 1 percent of all state registered vehicles. Thirty percent of these operators are female.

A casual study of cyclists at A&M conducted in Fall 1988 by Parsons showed 81 percent of students do not wear helmets and more males wear helmets than females.

Katherine Barnett, a junior kinesiology major who rides a motor scooter, said, "I know my parents will be happy about the law. But to me it will be an inconvenience and take all the fun out of riding my scooter."

Had Binion, a junior agricultural journalism major who has been riding motorcycles since he was in second grade, said, "The law doesn't bother me because I wear a helmet all the time anyway."

Parsons and James Lock, TTI research scientist, conducted a fatality study revealing motorcyclists are responsible for more than 65 percent of accidents in which they die, recognizing the need for a mandatory hel-

met law and better rider training.

The study, used in legislative hearings on helmet usage, found 77.5 percent of 142 selected motorcycle fatalities in Texas in 1986 were the fault of motorcycle operators. Parsons and Lock studied 142 of 397 motorcycle fatalities from Texas Department of Public Safety 1986 accident reports through the Traffic Services Microcomputer System, a TTI database software provided to the DPS by TTI.

More than 8,000 motorcycle accidents are reported each year in Texas. Thousands more less-serious accidents probably go unreported, Lock said.

The typical motorcycle rider involved in a fatal accident was a white male, 26 to 30 years of age who was not wearing a helmet and died of a head injury. The average victim was operating a 400 cc to 550 cc motorcycle or 750 cc motorcycle at excessive speeds without a valid motorcycle license and no insurance liability. One other vehicle and alcohol usually were involved.

Parsons said riders need to receive better training, such as advanced rider courses, and licensing should be enforced.

"Most riders drive without a license and the only training they have received is from their buddies," Parsons said.

She also said car drivers and motorcyclists need to be aware of each other on the road. Car drivers should be instructed on how to share the road with cyclists and cyclists need to increase their visibility with headlights turned on at all times and clothes with day-glow stripes.

Parsons said insurance companies should offer incentives to safety-conscious motorcyclists.

"Auto drivers can take defensive driving classes and get a reduction on insurance rates," Parsons said. "If motorcyclists take an advanced motorcycle training class, they should receive a similar reduction."

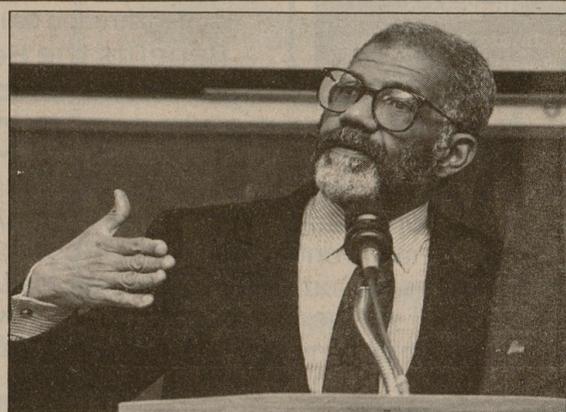


Photo by Kathy Haveman

Ed Bradley, co-editor for CBS' "60 Minutes"

Journalist Ed Bradley reflects on experiences

By Denise Thompson

STAFF WRITER

"I'd rather live in Vietnam than New York."

That's the sentence that changed Ed Bradley's life.

Bradley, best known as a co-editor for CBS' "60 Minutes," spoke to about 50 people in a seminar, "60 Minutes With Ed Bradley," as part of the MSC Wiley Lecture Series. He said this remark led to the most remarkable experience of his life — covering the fall of Cambodia in the 1970s.

"It's hard to look at war and the pain and suffering and say you enjoyed it," Bradley said, "but I did."

After graduating with a degree in education from Cheyney State College in Pennsylvania in 1964, Bradley was teaching school and working part-time at a small radio station in Philadelphia, when he decided to quit teaching and look for a full-time broadcast position.

After applying to WCBS Radio in New York, Bradley spent sev-

eral days listening to the station's news broadcasts to get a feel for their style. However, his quick thinking and ability to "never tell the truth but not tell a lie" got him the position.

"They (the radio station) asked me to send them a tape of actuality — interviews I had done with people," he said. "Well, I had to think fast because I didn't have any. So I told them that we didn't have any because we were such a small station and we didn't save them."

Bradley convinced the station to give him a recorder so he could make a tape of actuality in New York. After finding a story on the front page of the *New York Times* about a principal in a dispute, Bradley went to the principal's office to get an interview.

"I waited outside of his office because his secretary told me he was too busy to see me," Bradley said. "When he walked in the door, I pushed the microphone in his face and started asking

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A&M begins charging \$25 fee to all applicants for admission

School hopes to decrease number of applications, offset processing costs

By Kelly S. Brown

STAFF WRITER

This semester Texas A&M joined many other schools across the nation when it began charging a \$25 application processing fee for undergraduate and graduate students who apply for admission.

Executive director of admissions and records Gary Engelgau said fewer students are applying to Texas A&M, while the number of students being accepted is about the same as compared to last year.

The purpose of the fee is to offset processing costs, and discourage students who are "shopping" for colleges, he said.

Engelgau said as of this week, 12,171 freshman have applied to A&M, while 10,130 of those students were admitted. Last year at this time, 14,966 freshman had applied, a difference of 2,795 from Fall 1988, and 10,017 were admitted. The number of graduate students applying for Fall 1989 was not available.

"Our intention was to knock down the number of applicants by charging a fee," Engelgau said. "The plan is working."

The plan may be working, but some students believe

it may hurt A&M in terms of quality students over time.

Bruce Minchey, a graduate student in agricultural economics, supports an open application process.

"Many graduate students apply to different colleges to see who offers them the best deal," Minchey said. "A great deal of the decision making hinges on who offers the best fellowship or assistantship — a fee cuts the choices, therefore an excellent student that A&M would benefit from, may be disenchanting with the charge and not apply."

Minchey, who is the graduate-at-large senator in the Student Senate, said many students have expressed concern about the fee, saying a fee greatly limits the possibility of a prospective student applying for admission.

Although A&M installed the fee for the first time this semester, other schools, such as the University of Texas and Southern Methodist University, have had the charge for years.

Dr. Ronald Brown, dean of students at the University of Texas, said UT charges a \$25 fee, and a \$45 fee to students applying for admittance into the master's of business administration program.

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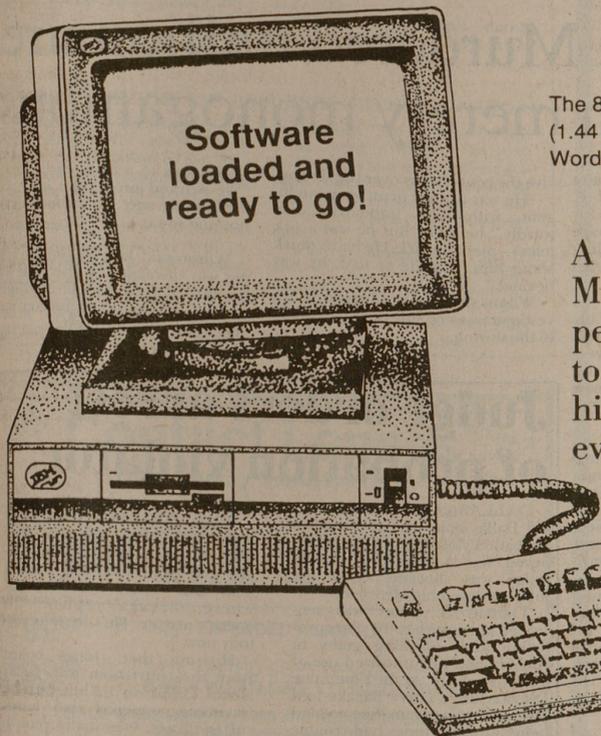
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