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## Hemphill: No need for 'raucous infernal machines'

My wife, knowing my antipathy for labor unions, was stunned when I asked her to send a check to the strike fund of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union, Local 125, in York, Penn.

It was necessary to explain that the union was striking against Harley-Davidson, and anyone who diminishes the number of those raucous infernal machines is a friend of mine.

I am certain that you have had your ears assaulted by machines that clearly exceed noise standards, but they are particularly obnoxious to those of us who drive convertibles because there is no escaping. Our only defense is to pull off the freeway until the damn machine is out of hearing range.

Jean and I spent many moons living on the glorious island of Kauai. It was there that I developed my Harley-Davidson World Tour Theory.

Kauai has but one main road that goes around two-thirds of the island — there is no road around the other part of the island.

All of the island's 50,000 inhabitants live within a mile of the shoreline, and that is also where the single, two-lane road is located.

Several times a week, a Harley-Davidson — probably driven by a tourist who rented it from the local Harley dealer — blasts around the island at full tilt at 2 a.m., awakening about 50,000 of the 50,000 people, many of whom live in single-wall-construction homes without air conditioning. The weather is such that most windows remain open at night.

It is my contention that the Harley-Davidson World Tour gives points to contestants, and a 2 a.m. tour of Kauai counts for waking 100 percent of an entire population in a single hour. Other points are given for awakening the largest population in the shortest time — a 2 a.m. blast through the concrete canyons of high-rise hotels on Waikiki Beach, which I have heard many times; the Greatest Altitude Blast, a 2 a.m. roar through the village of Katmandu; the Lowest Altitude Blast, lighting off at 4 a.m. outside Scotty's in Death Valley ... you get the picture.

It is probably some underground competition, because I can't find it on the Internet, but clearly those who ride such noisy machines get their kicks from annoying people, anywhere and anytime.

Annoying more people in a short time probably yields bonus points. Even annoying the few spotted owls in Northern California is worth a few points, but I suspect that the competition has a sophisticated scoring system.

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If I had that sort of "straight pipe" muffler system on my car, I would be arrested!

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