

**Upstate's  
outdoorsman  
Floyd King**



PHOTO By JIM LARAGY

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# THE MISER

**When you're too pooped to pedal  
and too proud to pay, maybe you  
should think 'mo-ped'**

**I**f this nation's energy crisis develops as expected, it is almost certain there will be a moped in your future.

Moped? Even the word is new to most Americans, yet European factories are turning them out by the millions. Mopeds, which may be the wheels of tomorrow, get an incredible 200 miles to a gallon of gasoline.

The average Rochesterian working within the metropolitan area could drive a moped to his job every day with a weekly fuel bill of about 60 cents. He could probably add on all of the family errands and stay within that budget.

"Moped" is a word coined by Europeans for a motor-pedaled bicycle. All the manufacturer did was add a motor to a girl's bicycle, but it was a happy union — it offers the rider a choice of motor or pedal. In fact, an exercise buff can combine the two.

There will be those who groan at the very thought of adding another machine to the American garage. Those who enjoy the quiet of the outdoors will envision another trail bike or snowmobile coming over the horizon with offensive motors snarling at the peace of the countryside.

It is not the intent of the moped to snarl. It is a well-bred machine that is supposed to purr while easing the nation's gas-guzzlers off the highways. Instead of belching blue smoke, it emits a discreet cough with no perceptible pollution.

In Florida, elderly people are doing their shopping on mopeds. In smog-shrouded California, mothers are leaving the second car at home and riding mopeds to the golf course. And on the lovely isle of Bermuda, moped is practically the only way to go.

The average power lawnmower is driven by a 3½-horsepower motor. Moped motors are 1 or 1½ horsepower. That provides the purr instead of a bark and also 200 miles on a gallon of gasoline.

Anyone who can balance a bicycle can ride a moped. Starting is simple, riding a breeze and it will stop in a shorter distance than the average 10-speed bicycle. The ride at average speed is like a pleasant coast downhill.

The various moped designs vary in operating controls, but the easiest way to start is to begin pedaling like a bicycle. When you get up to the speed you wish,

open the throttle by twisting the right handle grip and the motor takes over. Then you just sit back and enjoy the ride. Most mopeds have drum brakes which are easily operated by hand levers.

Mopeds come in two basic types. The cheapest (about \$300) has a one-horsepower motor mounted above the front tire. A small revolving drum pressing against the tire drives the machine by friction. The top speed of this moped is around 17 miles an hour.

The second style has a small 1½-horsepower motor mounted on the frame above the pedals. It still looks like a girl's bicycle but options can be added on so the price tag gets close to \$500. Its top speed is around 30 miles an hour.

Some states limit the speed of mopeds to 30 miles an hour, but the tiny motor makes this about the top speed anyway. Both styles of mopeds weigh about 100 pounds, light enough to easily push over a curb for parking.

**T**he United States probably would be flooded with mopeds now except that uncertainty over state regulations, particularly in New York and New Jersey, has been hold-

ing back imports. Confused legislators in these two states have enacted laws that literally keep the gasoline savers off the highways.

Florida and California, where mopeds are finding increasing acceptance by retirees because of fixed low incomes, have the most lenient laws. They require no registration, no licensing, no insurance and no helmet. However, operators must have a valid automobile driver's license. This is designed to keep youngsters from using the machines.

New York State is at the very top of the list in moped legal confusion. When the machines first appeared, the state legislature set up two classes:

The friction-operated moped was ruled a bicycle with no regulations except the operator had to be 16 years old to ride it. Thus, these machines could be used on all roads in the state except limited access highways.

The chain or belt-driven machines with their top speed of 30 miles an hour were declared "Class B Limited Use Motorcycles" and the driver required to have a driver's license.

*Continued*



## 'A sea of confusion as far as police departments are concerned'

registration, license plates, insurance and helmet.

In addition, the legislature set up a new type of regulation never before required of any vehicle. It made it illegal to use these Class B vehicles anywhere in the state except in six metropolitan areas.

Rochester was one of these and its metropolitan area was fixed as including Brighton, Chili, Gates, Greece, Henrietta, Irondequoit, Ogden, Penfield, Perinton, Pittsford and Webster. Wheatland was left out, so it is illegal to ride a moped in Scottsville.

This also means that anyone living in such cities as Elmira, Corning, Olean or in any rural area cannot ride one of the Class B mopeds.

The moped law was scarcely in operation before Motor Vehicle Commissioner James Melton, by personal decree, included the friction type mopeds with the Class B machines. He notified police departments the Class B regulations should be applied to the friction type.

This so irritated the moped manufacturers that they brought a class action against Melton and the Department of Motor Vehicles. The court overruled Melton and returned to the original law as enacted by the legislature. Melton and the department were enjoined from making any changes in the regulations.

That is where it stands — a sea of confusion as far as police departments are concerned. They claim the machines are identical in appearance and they're not sure which to allow on the open roads and which to keep corralled in the city.

There are bills now in the legislature intended to

change this legal foulup but no one knows just what the new law will be. Meantime, dealers say their sales are almost at a standstill because of the confusion.

All states now licensing mopeds ban them by law from freeways and interstate highways. A vehicle with a top speed of 30 miles an hour is out of place on a speedway, but this may change. The Motorized Bicycle Association believes as the energy crisis worsens, the motorized bikes eventually will have lanes of their own on the interstate highways.

Mopeds already have the blessing of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. After a series of tests, the agency decided it was unnecessary to regulate the machines for either noise or emissions. The putt-putt of the moped was found to be the quietest and cleanest of any highway transportation.

As an indication of the growth of motor bikes, at the International Cycle Show at the New York Coliseum in February, 40 manufacturers had moped displays. Practically all the manufacturers were from Europe. France is the leader, turning out close to 1½ million a year. Italy, West Germany, Austria and Taiwan are the other top manufacturers.

Although thousands of motor-pedal bikes are being used in Europe and they're becoming popular in some states in this country, the promised land for mopeds is Bermuda. That sun worshippers' haven frowns on cars on the island but it does have 30,000 mopeds in use with about half that number available for tourists.

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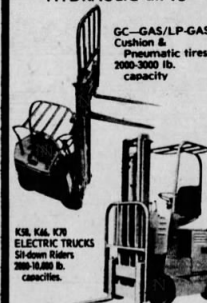
DAN POBENZ

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**Answer:**  
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**Question:**  
Doing what?

**Answer:**  
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