



Drivers speeding toward two wheels

Students forgo gas-guzzling cars in favor of better fuel economy.

By Zahra Farah
Stevens High School

Kevin Neeley, 22, Palo Alto College sophomore, used to drive a 1968 Oldsmobile, but it spent more time in the shop than on the road.

Then he had an electric scooter that was so slow he spent so much time getting back and forth from college that he dropped all his classes.

Jonathan Baker, 19, Northwest Vista College

sophomore, used to spend roughly \$80 to fill up his Dodge 1500 pickup that averaged only 12 miles per gallon.

As gas prices approach \$4 a gallon, Neeley and Baker, like a growing number of young Americans, have chosen a more economical mode of transportation — motorcycles.

When Neeley pulled up to a South Side Starbucks, he looked ready to cruise down the highway on his 2008 Suzuki GZ250 that cost \$3,249.

He wore a weathered black leather jacket and helmet, faded blue jeans, dusty black leather boots and sunglasses.

Now that he has faster and more economical

transportation, he is back in school and has come to Starbucks to apply for a job.

He spends about \$12 a week to fill up his tank.

"On a bad day, I get 60 miles to the gallon," Neeley said after driving the motorcycle as his only transportation for five months.

Baker got his Suzuki GSXR 1000 three weeks ago, he said, wearing a bright red, yellow, black and white Tai Chi leather jacket and black boots.

Baker's motorcycle gets 50 miles to the gallon. He was shocked to realize he spent \$80 for his truck to go 250 miles on a fillup while \$15 takes his motorcycle 156 miles.

Gasoline has increased by \$1.053 in Texas in

the past year, according to www.fueleconomy.gov, a Web site maintained by the Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Skyrocketing gas prices have caused Alamo Cycle Plex, a major motorcycle and scooter shop in San Antonio, to see a significant increase in sales.

"We sold 346 motorcycles and scooters just this past month," salesman Daniel Rangel III said.

In the five years Rangel has worked there, he has seen a 30 percent increase in sales of motorcycles and scooters.

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Hope on horizon for homeless



Dylan Elmore

Demitresse Erskion, 18, and her common-law husband, Daniel Asbjornsen, have spent 7 1/2 months on the streets while trying to obtain identification cards to get a job. They said that clean

water was hard to come by while living on the streets, making dehydration an issue in the heat of the summer. **Story, Page 7**

Latest high attracts teens, thwarts restriction efforts

Herb produces brief, intense high with hallucinations.

By Rachael McBride
Clark High School

Taking a puff of his Newport cigarette, 27-year-old Lamar Johnson described his experiences with a hallucinogen that altered his sense of reality.

"That stuff messes with your head," Johnson said. "It didn't last long, but it was a trip. I felt dizzy, and everything I touched and heard and smelled was like magnified."

But this high is different. The drug is legal and at least one Texas legislator is trying to change that.

Salvia divinorum, or simply salvia, is growing in popularity among teens and young adults. Different from but related to the garden plant variety of salvia, it gives users a short-lived high, which may include hallucinations.

Rep. Charles "Doc" Anderson of Waco wants Texas to join the growing number of states that have outlawed salvia. The Republican has tried unsuccessfully to ban the drug in Texas and plans to try again during interim committee hearings in August in Dallas.

"The issue was first brought to my attention by a constituent, whose 14-year-old daughter tried

salvia and came home hysterical," Anderson said. "After doing some research and talking to people who had tried this drug, I realized what a problem it was."

The state representative said his aim in regulating salvia is to protect the public because there are currently no age restrictions on the drug.

"It's tough for law enforcement to control because drug tests can't pick up any trace of salvia in the bloodstream," Anderson said. "Another concern of ours is the brightly colored packaging it comes in. It's almost like bubble gum, and that's part of what attracts the youth, but they don't realize how dangerous it really is."

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Head shops hand out free samples of low doses of salvia.

Andrea Marquise

