

From the desk of ABATE of Wisconsin's PR Guy

Celebrating our 35th anniversary has led me to do a lot of reading into the history of our organization. Of course it helps that I have a personal relationship with many twenty-five plus year members who have offered to share an extensive collection of literature and paraphernalia to help me with my research. Now that spring is upon us and we gear up to promote motorcycle awareness this month leading into the riding season, it really brings together the many responsibilities ABATE of Wisconsin has taken on over the years and even how we've toned down our attitude a bit whether as a matter of survival or maybe just to follow the wave of political correctness that has swept the nation. Whatever the reason, I've said many times that ABATE is not just about ensuring our freedom of choice when it comes to helmets, it is about fighting all unjust totalitarian laws and taking on the responsibility of educating both bikers and the general public in the pursuit of safety for us all so that we can enjoy the freedom of the road. As you read this I'm sure the media has started its rhetoric about the need for all motorcyclists to strap a lid on if they want to be safe and hopefully I will be able to give you some very simple facts to argue a very valid point. Long ago we adapted to using the phrase "freedom of choice" to make people understand that we weren't arguing the futility (if they work) of helmets, but the choice as free adults to make our own decision as to what keeps us safe on the road. But, before that somewhat politically correct phrase was used bikers wore t-shirts emblazoned with large white letters that read "END THE HELMET HOAX". Now I understand that time moves on and the civil disobedience and anarchy of the sixties and seventies might not be the way to proceed in the new millennium but we should all be drawing a clear picture in our minds about what our true beliefs about helmets really are because I have listened to and read enough fraudulent information about helmets and their benefits to finally say enough is enough, let's finally put an end to this hoax.

Although we should pay close attention to what happens in other states regarding their rights and freedoms, we should always remember that our record in Wisconsin speaks for itself. Wisconsin has seen a steady decline in m/c fatalities since 2004 when our fatality rate was 4.44 per 10,000 registered motorcycles. Our 2008 fatality rate was 2.79 pending final analysis of registered motorcycles in the state, a decline of almost twenty percent in the last year alone. We have seen an 84% increase in registrations with only a 36% increase in fatalities and a 34% increase in total crashes since 2000. If someone wants to argue that the only reason for a lower fatality rate is due to our limited riding season, compare our statistics per registered motorcycle with Nebraska, Michigan, New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, Washington, or Oregon. All are mandatory helmet states with the same riding season. For those that would like to argue that helmetless m/c crashes cause unjust public burden, consider how much in medical costs our nation would recover if we would ban all carbonated beverages and fast food restaurants. For that matter, if the government would just ban the use of sidewalks and walking we could reduce medical costs of a much more substantial proportion from slip and fall accidents than any savings that might occur by instating a mandatory helmet law. With ABATE of Wisconsin currently being the sole provider of motorcycle awareness education and information in the state, is a helmet law really the next course of action our legislators need to take? Or should some initiative be taken in the area of crash prevention by our motorcycle safety program coordinators? Let the facts speak for themselves.

It is not a question of "if" the tirade of pro-helmet media articles will begin this year, but when? Maybe you've already read some articles or internet blogs on the subject. People need to understand that we are not playing football or riding a bicycle. We are bikers and if we crash there are many mechanisms of injury besides hitting our head. The standard that helmet manufacturers use to have their helmets DOT "certified" is a manufacturing standard not a performance standard and regarded as such. So there are no statistics to prove that a helmet will prevent head injuries in a crash. There are also no statistics on the number of crashes prevented without the obstructed vision and hearing that comes with strapping that silver bullet to your head. Wisconsin and the nation need to move beyond the failed practice of "safer crashing" and move towards crash prevention. Is it the governments' job to protect us from ourselves? Or, is it our responsibility to use our experience and judgment to make those decisions for ourselves? Take it upon yourself to look beyond the false perception that the media and those that stand to gain from our loss of freedom like to cram down our throats. Believe in freedom, end the helmet hoax. Until next month...Ride Free



**27th Annual NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN CHARITY
MOTORCYCLE SHOW & DANCE
MANITOWOC COUNTY EXPO
MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN
APRIL 25 & 26, 2009**

SHOW HOURS: SAT. 10AM-9PM - SUN. 10AM-4PM
SHOW ADMISSION: \$4 - SENIORS: \$2 UNDER 12 FREE

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nonstop music: **"Johnny Wad" & "The Toys"**
Dance Admission: \$5 in advance - \$7 At the Door

Proceeds to: *Special Olympics & Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice*

INFO & REGISTRATION: HOBAN'S CYCLE PH. 920-726-4990
10629 Hwy. 42, Newton, WI 53063
www.hobancycle.com e-mail: hobanbrothers@lakefield.net

Sponsored by: Hobans Cycle Shop and Ant Hill Mob M. C., Ltd.
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For Booking Information contact:
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9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

- ABATE BOOTH -

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