

From the desk of ABATE of Wisconsin's PR Guy

Apathy; lack of feeling, want of passion or emotion. This word may not be exclusive to bikers, as I see a great amount of it hiding out in every corner of our society today. Personally, I will shout till I'm hoarse and write 'till my fingers bleed before I let anyone take my freedoms away. Now, does this mean that unless you're standing on a soapbox letting all bikers know what gross injustices are lurking in the shadows you're apathetic? I sure hope not. Maybe we should chalk up most bikers' apparent indifference to their freedoms and safety to today's society. A society that has made blame shifting an art form and taken away all individual responsibility away. A society that lets insurance companies and lawyers dictate legislation. Over two hundred years ago Ben Franklin wrote "those who are willing to give up freedom for security deserve neither freedom no security" but it seems today everyone is more than willing to give up their basic freedoms so they don't have "stress" about everything. Can't life just be simpler? Does anyone really know when to say enough is enough? How long should we wait for the constant infringements on our way of life to go away? I hope 2011 is the year you chose to rise up and take control of your destiny. Let's show everyone that bikers' are not apathetic, we were just waiting until we got really pissed off to start shouting "enough is enough". Having to follow every right of way violation case to see justice, eight years of theft of motorcycle safety program monies, and insurance legislation that leaves us in the cold should be enough to get you shouting.

Wisconsin bikers will be given the chance to let their legislators know how they feel about some of the recent issues facing them when ABATE of WI (A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments) hosts a lobby day on February 22nd. Buses will descend upon our Capitol from all corners of the state filled with bikers that care about their rights. We have seen over five hundred ABATE members and supporters join us in each of the last three years and we'd be honored if you'd join us. ABATE of WI will have position papers available to take to your legislators and will even accompany you on your journey if you'd like. Many meetings have already been set up to ease congestion at the Capitol and everyone is welcome. Even though it looks like we are going to have a large number of bikers in attendance, this should not be confused with a rally. Rallies are designed to attract the masses, our lobby day is designed to meet your legislators' one on one and lobby for biker issues. That is why it is scheduled for a weekday when legislators will be there instead of a weekend when we could make a strong showing look easy.

The legislative issues of current concern to ABATE of WI are:

- Enhancement of the rules concerning right of way violations defined in Wisconsin Act 466.

- Reaffirm our position on the current helmet law in Wisconsin and offer solid facts

supporting our position.

- Correct the lack of state funding of motorcycle safety programs that part of our registration money is supposed to be spent on.

- Highlight our commitment to motorcycle safety by informing our legislators of ABATE of WI self-funded programs; Share the Road motorcycle awareness classes, awareness materials and rallies, peer to peer anti impaired riding campaign.

Bus routes have been planned to promote attendance at this event and are available online at www.abatewis.org or you can call 715-284-7415 and ask for information.

No experience necessary and you need not be a member of ABATE to attend. We welcome all motorcyclists to join us at no cost, we only ask for you to show respect and courtesy when addressing legislators and members. Someone will be available to join you when meeting legislators.

We shouldn't have to use the word apathy when so many of our basic freedoms are being infringed upon. Bikers wrote the book on strength, spirit, and passion. The days of hoping things will go away are gone. Let 2011 be the year you decide to get involved. To find out more about the issues ABATE of WI will be lobbying about, or to join ABATE of WI, go to www.abatewis.org. I hope to see you at the Capitol.

It doesn't matter what you ride... what matters is that you have the right to ride. Join and Support ABATE of Wisconsin: Protecting your Right to Ride since 1974.		
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Replica of Tramp Unveiled at S & S Cycle Event

By John Gunnell

On Friday, June 27, 2009 a replica of a famous 1939 Harley-Davidson Knucklehead racing motorcycle known as "Tramp" was unveiled during a show celebrating the 50th anniversary of S & S Cycle in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The original Tramp was constructed after the end of World War II and is now viewed as an important historical milestone in the company's history.

Company founder George J. Smith was passionate about Harley-Davidsons and was devoted to making them go faster. Riding Tramp, Smith raced on dirt tracks outside of Chicago in the early postwar years.

A 1997 article in Performance Times said that Smith, in the very early '50s punched his 61-inch Knucklehead up to 74 inches using FL cylinders and flywheels. He then employed a set of ULH flywheels to push the engine all the way up to 80 inches.

According to family members at the unveiling, Smith originally built Tramp as a drag racing bike. They say he intended to win a \$2,000 prize at a Chicago drag strip. The powerful bike won the race, but the promoter didn't pay out the prize money. Smith got only the glory of winning. Of course, in the long run, his victory counted a lot. Through its racing achievements, his S & S Cycle Equipment company became known as a winner.

Smith used the original Tramp to develop homemade pistons, special cylinders and "Knuckle" heads that he modified to take two Riley carburetors. He also developed lightweight push rods that were considered innovative.

Smith took an updated version of Tramp to the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1953 and eventually set records there. The engine in this version of Smith's bike displaced 92 inches and he used the added power to establish a new World Land Speed Record of 152 mph at Bonneville in 1954.

In 1958, Smith and a friend, George Stankos, started S&S Cycle in Blue Island, Illinois, south of Chicago. The S&S stood for the first letters in their last names. A year later, Smith bought out Stankos. His wife, Marge, whose maiden name was also Smith, became the second S in S&S and played a big role in the development of the company. The couple first ran the business out of their basement and used racing to improve their products. S & S stoker engines made Leo Payne a drag racing legend. Still later, collaboration between the Harley-Davidson factory and S & S helped produce Cal Rayborn's 265-mph Salt Flats bike. It was also S & S development work that helped Harley introduce the 4.25-stroke EVO engine in the late '70s.

The Smiths moved to Viola, Wisconsin, in 1968. George J. Smith died of a heart attack in 1980. Marge passed away in 1992. In 2004, the company opened a distribution center in La Crosse. It has about 300 employees, 65 of whom work at the La Crosse facility. The rest are in Viola.

Charlie Hadayia, Senior Manager Racing & Customer Service, for S & S Cycle, rode the replica of Tramp during its unveiling in La Crosse. George B. Smith, the founder's son, was also in attendance. A former company President, he is now Chairman of the Board. Company CEO Brett Smith stood next to him. They said that the replica was as close to the original bike as it could possibly be.

(John Gunnell photo)



This historic photo shows company founder George J. Smith on the original Tramp.



George B. Smith tried to duplicate his father's pose of years ago on the Tramp replica unveiled last June at S & S Cycle's 50th Anniversary event in La Crosse, Wis