

This could happen to any of us

From The
GUNNY'S SACK
AIM-NCOM

GRESHAM, OREGON: A victory to report here, and victory is always sweet. We'd reported here a few issues back (past issues of the Sack are available to read in our online archives, at www.AIMNCOM.com, and click on "news"). To sum it up, the Gypsy Joker MC had a little poker run, open to ALL bikers. It was their "strip-poker run," to girlie joints. Now they come up to our Portland suburb of Gresham, home of recent Miss America Katy Harmon, and we come to find out that the police were bored or paranoid or god-knows-what, but they not only stopped the pack; they treated it as a gosh-darn felony stop! EVERYONE, passengers too, face-down on the pavement, cuffs behind 'em, in the full sun on a 95-degree day. All this for the infractions of supposedly SOME or a FEW of them running a red light, at the end of the pack. Cops claimed they ran one light - very unlikely, to say the least. Four of the bikers were also charged with FELONY Attempting to Elude a Police Vehicle! So, EVERYONE who was cited - most of them members of GJMC - they ALL pleaded NOT guilty, and my boss here - and now I gotta tell ya, I'm proud of the man when I hear this - Sam

Hochberg decided that THIS one was just too outrageous, so he offered to defend ALL of the bikers cited for infractions only, FREE of charge, or "pro bono," as the lawyers say. A lot of you Sack readers know Sam. He's been our Oregon AIM (Aid to Injured Motorcyclists) Lawyer for about 15 years now, handling accident claims for bikers and others, and doing a lot of this sort of pro-bono work, like our other AIM attorneys across the country. On this one, he had the backing of the Oregon Confederation of Clubs (COC), as a Justice Project they support. Sam's also the COC's legal counsel, which he ALSO does pro bono, which means "for the public good." Well, this one was for his OWN good, too. Sam's been a rider for nearly all his years since he was a pup of 21 in NYC, back in '71.

ANYHOW, on one fine September afternoon in Gresham, sixteen bikers showed up for the trial, and they all testified, and damned if Judge Albrecht, Multnomah County Circuit Court, didn't find 'em ALL NOT GUILTY! Took her almost two weeks to sift through all the notes Sam says he saw her taking, but she sent out a letter to Sam, and there were cheers in Mudville that night. Sam wanted to make sure that I'd print the names of some of the people who helped Sam bring that victory: First, our new AIM (Aid to Incarcerated Motorcyclists, in this instance) Criminal Defense Lawyer, JIM RICE. Jim helped handle the prep and defended one of the bikers, so he and Sam BOTH got to talk to every witness. Jim is the guy who talked about the US PATRIOT ACT at the WEST COAST REGIONAL NCOM Conference back in November '02 here in Portland. Jim's a member of OVMA, an Oregon Vets biker association, and MANY ABATE people contributed to Jim's campaign when he ran for Oregon Supreme Court. His campaign poster had him astride a Harley, with his "OVMA" insignia displayed. Besides Jim, Sam says that our biker-veterinarian, Dr. Darryl Leu, did a terrific job testifying, and he made an excellent photographic record and narrative description of the whole incident!! Oh, and member of the Brother Speed MC of Portland was going to testify on what Sam says was a "collateral matter," whatever THAT is, but then he didn't need him after all. He knows who he is, and his willingness to help was MUCH appreciated. And to throw in my OWN two cents, I gotta hand it to the Gypsy Joker MC for standing up for their rights. I mean, y'can't fight 'em if y'don't take the time to take a stand, even on the small battles. My hat's off to them, to Sam Hochberg, and to all the people he thanked. Sometimes, you just have draw the line.

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