

From the Executive Director of ABATE of Wisconsin Dave Chubby Charlebois

Keeping a United Voice

For the last ten years that I've been writing articles in this newsletter I have reserved July for my rants and diatribes about freedom. You see, I'm a Fourth of July baby and I attribute my patriotic spirit to that. I love this country even when she stumbles. I love being part of the biker culture also, and couldn't imagine life without two wheels, wind, and a roaring engine. Biker culture is as diverse as our country is, and also has its share of missteps. This month I'd like to share my opinion of some of the misperceptions of biker culture and motorcycle clubs with the hope that it will give you a better understanding of the importance of standing up for all motorcyclists, no matter what they ride, how they dress, or whether or not they choose to be a member of a motorcycle club.

Recently there has been conjecture in the courts and within law enforcement circles that the wearing of certain patches may be subject to regulation, or loss of individual rights, and even guilt. The media and entertainment industry are doing their part to fuel the public perception that motorcycle clubs are all criminal gangs (thank you Sons of Anarchy.) In Waco, TX, at a Confederation of Clubs (motorcyclists' rights group for clubs) meeting attended by individuals from numerous clubs ranging from 1% Clubs to Military Clubs, to Religious Clubs, as well as Lone Wolf participants, a melee broke out in which 9 bikers were shot dead. The details of how, when, and why it started change from day to day and person to person. But one thing is clear. If you were one of the several hundred attendees, and were wearing a patch, regardless of club or affiliation, you got arrested and lodged with a 1 million dollar bond. Somehow a patch was deemed as evidence of guilt by association, even if not the same patch. Motorcycle clubs, even self-identified 1% clubs, are comprised of individuals from a cross-section of society. It is definitely fair to say a rebellious mentality permeates the mindset of many in the motorcycle club community. But broad generalizations of criminality are specious at best. Membership includes doctors, lawyers, legislators, veterans, ministers, mechanics, construction workers, truck drivers, and small business owners.

Although we have not seen or have been notified about any increased police presence at biker events in Wisconsin, it is becoming evident that poor public perception of the biker culture and specifically of motorcycle clubs will see increases in law enforcement presence at events that many of our members may attend throughout the country including the Sturgis rally.

Allowing the continued marginalization of motorcycle clubs based on sensationalized generalizations risks setting an extremely dangerous precedent that will ultimately erode the concepts inherent to the survival of a truly free and democratic society. Individuals should be judged by their behavior, not their appearance. Protecting the right of individuals that are members of politically and socially marginalized classes to freely associate, and express that association, serves as the bright-line and foundation that the 1st Amendment relies on to insure these protections are guaranteed for everyone.

No one should feel a requirement to qualify or define the basis of, or intent of a patch they wear on their clothing to anyone, especially the government. And certainly no one should be detained, arrested, or found guilty of anything because of the presence of a patch. How could this be made any clearer than by the First Amendment? And where does it stop once it has begun? Would a patch symbolic of a certain motorcycle brand condemn you to a loss of your liberty? At some point just riding a motorcycle could be seen as aiding and abetting someone accused of a crime. Motorcyclists are individualists, and we wear all manner of patches, whether indicative of a club we belong to, an organization we are in, or simply as a personal expression of something we want to share or proclaim to the world. We bikers have a long history of customs, unspoken but acknowledged rites of respect, and pride of who we are. As a whole we are leaders in the areas of honesty, caring for our own, and generosity. Brothers and Sisters is not just slogan, we live it. I personally do not know a single Meth-dealing, Murder-plotting, Gun-running Hardcore Criminal biker, despite knowing a whole bunch of bikers from all over the country. This does not mean they do not exist but I know they are pretty rare if they do. One thing is for sure, they cannot be identified by a patch.

Shortly after the incident in Waco on May 17, ABATE of WI was asked to take a position on the incident. With the limited amount of accurate information available, our board of directors does not feel it is appropriate at this time to condemn or support either law enforcement or the motorcycle clubs in attendance that day. We have expressed our condolences to those that have lost loved ones and sympathies to those going through the strife of incarceration and legal battles. ABATE of WI does not support or condone criminal activity but we do have great concern regarding the First Amendment rights of club members currently detained,

and the actions of both law enforcement and club members during and directly following the melee.

For over forty years ABATE of Wisconsin's mission has been to give the motorcyclists of Wisconsin a united voice, in regard to their future, their way of life, and their dedication to freedom, no matter what kind of motorcycle they ride or whether they have chosen to be a member of a motorcycle club or not. We have maintained a constant vigil against all discriminatory laws which infringe on the motorcyclists rights or their basic freedoms. We support the Rights of Free Speech, Freedom of Assembly, and the Freedom of Joining an association as outlined in the United States Constitution. We also take part in regular meetings of The Wisconsin Federation of Clubs and the Allied Clubs of America both to encourage them to take an active role in our legislative work and to address any concerns that we may be able to help them with in Wisconsin and will continue to do so.

As a member of ABATE of WI, you can be confident that we will support your rights as a motorcyclist. Our organization has grown significantly over the last forty years and our membership base has become more diverse. It is my hope that all ABATE of WI members accept those around them as equals and deserving of the same rights, whether you're a biker that wears patches and belongs to a motorcycle club, or you prefer Aerostitch gear and a full face helmet. Whether you ride a classic cruiser or a sport bike, and whether you're male or female, we are all in this together. To be able to stand united we need to be accepting of the individual rights of everyone that rides. I have asked a club member to start writing an article to be published in our newsletter that will give our membership a better understanding of why clubs exist, and why we shouldn't be so quick to label them "gangs". To that end, I hope everyone enjoys the Fourth of July holiday and remember; freedom is everyone's business. Until next month...Ride Free.

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.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE YOUR INFORMATION
 _____ Annual Individual Membership \$25
 _____ Annual Couple Membership \$45 *
 (*Two people at same address—only one copy of our newsletter.)
 For Life Membership Rates or to join with a credit card visit our webpage at www.abatewis.org

This is a _____ New Membership or a _____ Renewal Membership

Name: _____

Second Name if Couple: _____

Postal Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

County Of Residence: _____ ABATE of Wisconsin, Inc. does not sell or share our membership information with anyone.

ABATE of Wisconsin, Inc. is a Non-Profit Membership Corporation dedicated to Protecting the Rights and Safety of all Motorcyclists. Paid members receive a sew on patch, membership card, our monthly newsletter and other rights of membership. For more information visit us on the web at www.abatewis.org.

Mail with payment to: ABATE of Wisconsin Membership
 438 N Water St., Black River Falls, WI 54615
 715-284-7415 or 800-386-4442 abatewis@abatewis.org
 Thank you to the Free Riders Press for this support & promotion.

**“WALNECK’S”
MOTORCYCLE
SWAP MEETS & SHOWS**

July 12 Martinsville, IN
8am-3pm
252 Hospital Rd.
Admission: \$6.00

August 9 Springfield, OH
8am-3pm
Clark County Fairgrounds
Admission: \$7.00

August 16 Woodstock, IL
8am-3pm
McHenry County Fairgrounds
Admission: \$8.00

Sept 13 Monroe, MI
8am-3pm
Monroe County Fairgrounds
Admission: \$6.00

American • British • Japanese
Bikes & Parks • Dirt Bikes • Leather
Novelties • Toys and Much More!!

**Sell something old...
Buy something new!**

Reserve your space early for indoors

Walneck's Inc.
7923 Janes Ave., Woodridge, IL 60514
630-985-2097
www.walneckswap.com

The Tailored Hide
Custom Leather

The ONLY full service leather shop in the valley, with the finest customer service available. Repairs and alterations.

M-F 9-5:30 Thur 9-7 Sat 9-2

Motorcycle Apparel
JACKETS
CHAPS
VESTS
SHIRTS
BELTS
SADDLEBAGS
SHEEP SKINS

services
REPAIRS
ALTERATIONS
ZIPPERS & LININGS
REPLACED
R.I.P.
PATCHES & MORE!

Re-upholstery of motorcycle seats
**Authorized Dealer/installer
Pro Pad Gel Seats**
860 S. Commercial St. Neenah, WI
(920)729-6330 54956