

NCOM Convention – Nashville, Tennessee

Submitted by Shar, State of Minnesota, Office of AIM Attorney, Stephen R. O'Brien.

This year was the 20th NCOM convention and it was celebrated in grand fashion. The hotel was most accommodating – they opened their bar early for us and had an excellent Cinco de Mayo event on the 5th for the start of the Convention. Lots of bikes and lots of people. The ABATE chapter of Tennessee co-hosted the event and sure provided us with lots of information on the local stuff – of course, being in Nashville, music was all over. From Blues to Bluegrass and many took the opportunity to partake of the local flavor. As always, the Tattoo shop was a very popular place (like we didn't know that already).

The information exchanged had a positive tone to it unlike many of the past conventions. It was encouraging to hear of many things in the works all over the country that folks were optimistic about passage of bills this time around through their legislative bodies. Much was focused on the illegal search and seizures, helmet laws (an on-going battle), and I was very proud to be from the State of Minnesota as Stephen O'Brien presented an excellent history of our Equal Access Law and how we are continuing to defend our rights to wear colors, ride our bikes and be accepted anywhere we go. It is the hope that more states will have an Equal Access Law as significant as ours be passed this year.

On the down side, The "Gang Bill" followed. It isn't pretty and it is coming – I urge you to visit AIMNCOM.COM and take a look at what is happening. It is urgent and imperative that we act or find ourselves really classified as "gangs". Riding clubs and touring groups as well. GET ON BOARD AND WRITE! There is a blank letter ready for printing on the site – just fill it in – can't get any easier than that!

The sage continues - we all need to be forever vigilant about this Patriot Act and Patriot Act II. Sundown clause is coming and I, for one, hope it sets. Big Brother watching is one thing, mandatory submission to our private information is entirely another. Michael Mandelman, AIM Attorney of Wisconsin has made it his passion and his presentation was right to the point. We must stop this from happening. Write to your legislators and let them know we don't need more supervision and invasion of our privacy – this country was founded on FREEDOM, we need to keep it that way.

Sliders "Golden Hour" presentation was a must attend. That all-important one hour time period from when a biker goes down that can determine if he or she survives. It would be a good idea to have someone in the club or riding group trained in first aid and CPR on all rides. There are precious minutes where we could save a life. He is a paramedic and did let us know that an untrained individual can do more harm than good. If all you can offer is staying with the person down, do it and call for help. When the professionals arrive, get out of the way.

He continued to talk about riding, we need to be more aware of what is going on around us than any cage driver. Lets face it – how many brothers and sisters have you heard say "the dummy that hit me says they never saw me". It is true. Think of how much of a profile you and your bike present going down the road. How much of the lane of traffic do you take up? A quick glance before making a turn is not enough to register our presence to a cage driver that is not aware. There is no answer to how to make ourselves more visible, we keep trying – pulsating lights on the front are now permitted in Minnesota as well as the blue dot tail light and still they don't see us. We say loud pipes save lives – listen sometime – cracking the throttle can create quite a noise but in general riding – the noise is mostly behind us. Short of wearing hunter blaze orange and having flares out the handle grips, we are the ones that have to raise our level of observation to avoid an accident. May is Motorcycle Riders Awareness Month – get out there and let everybody know we are on the road.

The Confederation of Clubs General Patch Holders meeting really pointed out what this is all about. Coming together with a common goal and support and help one another in our efforts to keep us riding free all over the country. Every year, it ends with all the Presidents and/or Representatives from all the attending clubs locking arm in arm. This year, that feeling spilled out of the room and just blanketed every one there with a feeling of accomplishment and pride that if we can set aside our differences and come together, what the hell is wrong with the rest of this country? Clubs sharing information and talking – to see that many colors all in one place – it was a sight!

The final event of the Convention was the Silver Spoke Award Banquet and that bell rang way too many times – indicating those brothers and sisters we lost this past year.

That is just an overview – Gunny's Sack – gotta love that man – has the best coverage of all the events and award presentations. Way to go, Gunny! His articles are available every month at WWW.ON-A-Bike.com. Check it out!

We will be in Louisville, Kentucky next year – same time, Mothers Day Weekend. If you can get there, do it! It is really worth it. See you there!

Here is another issue that was brought up at the convention.

The formation of the "American Biker Party" to promote and further biker issues in the political arena. The party will seek out and support those candidates that will represent the motorcycling community in general and all Americans who believe in individual Freedom and the Constitution. More information and details will be made available in the near future. For more info on the American Biker Party check out www.americanbikerparty.com Always remember: "The price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance" Ride Safe and Free... Frog

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