

The future of Swap Meets....

What is going on with swap meets now a days? I mean really! Attendances down, vendors participation down and variety of products is down . I'm at a loss. But I have been listening to all the great minds of the biker world and their theories for the past couple years, and am going to attempt to put at least my mind at ease about this modern era phenomena.



First off attendances! I realize that the bike lifestyle has changed in the past dozen years. Just like everything it cycled to the practice of teeth pulling to get people to attend. Years ago a swap meet would be jammed with brothers and sisters all getting together for an afternoon to socialize, do a little shopping and just get out for awhile. But according to the scholars among us, the reasons vary from the internet being so much easier to get parts and at times cheaper than buying at a show. Others say the bikers themselves are not as financially fit as they were years ago. Yeah, that could be partly

true. With admissions ranging from \$5-\$12 an event, it is pricey to just walk in the door. But then again, why are there certain bars jammed with people pounding drinks and not even blinking an eye at a hundred dollar bill gone. Theory out the window! My own theory is that in the old days bikers actually got together and hung out in full force just for something to do. Hell back in the early 90's we could easily get a couple dozen blurry eyed brothers together for a run somewhere. Now I guess it's more of an assignment away from the Sunday ice cream run.

I will admit that the shows have gotten away from parts hunters looking to rebuild that old shovel to the rider looking to buy a new t-shirt or get a patch put on. Maybe this is some people's way of saying, "I'm a biker because I went to a swap meet this weekend." Whatever! A show in my eyes should only have one or two of any similar items vendor except for parts. This having 5 sewers spread out amongst 25 vendors doesn't cut it for me. In fact I think this is a major player in the swap meet souring. The thinking of a person starting his/her own business being a vendor at shows to me is a great thing. But I'll let you in on a little secret. New people thinking of the golden paths paved with swap meet attendee cash is a long way from reality. Years ago when there was only a couple t-shirt people, each made decent coin. At least it was worth their time to be there. Now a day's I'm not so sure from what I hear.

I'm not going to put the blame on anyone in particular in this story. Every promoter tries to do something different to rebuild the old days. Wisconsin Swap Meets is trying to incorporate automotive parts into a few of their shows. Others are trying the bike show angle again. Yet others are doing different venues trying to cut costs on themselves but there are only so many big square footage building available. Some though have had a great run like the Donnie Smith Show in St. Paul, MN. This is the 26th year at the same location, always tries to offer a great variety of vendors while keeping it fresh. Walneck's based out of IL has a dedicated following that supports them immensely as well as Paragon out of MI.




Don't read too much into this since it's only some thoughts that have been rattling around in my skull. I for one can say that I drive to many shows all over the state to hand papers out promoting my customers and event advertisers, and it does get old spending the time and gas to see a couple hundred people.

I guess in short, everybody has a different way of doing things and swap meets aren't any different. The characters may have changed and the old school circumstances may have gotten

lost, but someday they will be back. Hopefully!!!!



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.

 **Rescue Shop**
Biker Church

Rushing Wind Ministries Fox Valley
 1110 S. Oneida St. Appleton, WI 54914
www.facebook.com/rescueshopfoxvalley
 Pastor Tommy Bongers
 920.209.1985

At the Rescue Shop you can come as you are. Suits and ties are allowed but the pastor will probably be the one with the t-shirt, blue jeans, tattoos and ear rings.
 1 Samuel 16:7, James 2: 1-4

Black Leather. Tattoos. Jeans.
 { PROPER SUNDAY ATTIRE }

