

A quick unscheduled stop at a place can yeild a whole lot of fun. Point in case I stopped at the Trail's End Bar & Grill in Fairchild on my way home and low and behold there's a party going on. (Oh how did you know I was coming through? LOL)

ABATE District 7 was having a fund-raising/membership drive July 13th with a bike show and great food for really great price. Even though I started to think I may be spending the night I kept moving on after a few hours.

I would like to thanks District 7 for their hospitality and for taking my donation for my entry in the bike show along with Chris from Trasil's End for the good food. What the hell, if you can't have some fun in life what is the point. Ride free the rest of the season you all.



Score One for Motorcycle Rights

This spring, we all went to Lobby Day at the Wisconsin State Capitol to meet with our elected officials with a list of action items that we wanted to see accomplished. We wanted the State DOT to use the digital highway sign boards for motorcycle awareness messages. We also wanted some kind of accounting and explanation of where the motorcycle safety funds were going. At the very least it looked like large amounts of money were being wasted on ineffective programs. Worst case scenario, it appeared like money that was promised to be spent on the State Motorcycle Safety Program was unaccounted for and may have been misappropriated for use elsewhere. As the Harley 110th anniversary party loomed near, some of our folks actually started seeing a few of those digital messages as well as hearing a few public service announcements on the radio so I'd like to thank DOT Secretary Mark Gottlieb for hearing our voices and taking some action. It's a long way from a full motorcycle awareness campaign but they're at least starting to lean in the right direction. It's a first step by the DOT and could be a starting point for future discussions.

During this spring's attack upon us by the newspapers, I heard a lot of comments from some members who were concerned that the newspapers portrayed us as reckless heathens of the highway who had no regard for our own safety as well as them calling us a "single-issue" organization. But in true ABATE of Wisconsin fashion, our members sprang into action and answered the call to battle!

We had quite a few members who called their local television stations to voice their disapproval of these stories as well as many of our members who took the time to write letters to the newspapers. I try to track down and refute all the biased information circulating out there but I'm only one person. We truly would not be able to do it without all of us having each others' backs and charging to the rescue. I'd like to give a huge "Thank You" to all our foot soldiers who go that extra mile!

So, things quieted down for a little while but I knew it wouldn't be for long. Shortly after all the articles, they came out with a news story of a young man who was in an accident who credits his life being saved to the fact that he was wearing a helmet. They interviewed him, his father and the hospital doctor all repeating the same mantra: "He would be dead right now if he didn't have a helmet on." I was amazed how all three of these folks could foretell the future and make such bold statements. But more importantly, I knew that the battle was back on again. Gannett News had decided to make a poster-child of this poor guy and use him to push their agenda. It would have been easy for us to rush in and enter the helmet debate, AGAIN for the 39th year! But that's exactly where Gannett wants us. They want us with our backs against the ropes trying to defend our position because that keeps us on the defense. That keeps us on their playing field instead of doing what we do best - promoting motorcycle awareness and crash avoidance. One mark of a great soldier is that he fights on his own terms or fights not at all. We could have gone on the attack and dug up dirt on this young rider and tried to discredit him. But that's only a temporary fix. Like I said, he's just the poster-child for their agenda and any attempt to smear him would have resulted in Gannett moving on and just finding someone else to represent their ideology.

My brothers and sisters, our enemies and our battle field have changed over the

years. So why do we keep trying to fight the same kind of fight as we did 30 years ago? Do you think our enemies aren't wise to how we've been doing things for the past three decades? Some of the strategic maneuvering we've been doing over the last month or so

may be a bit foreign to some of you but this is a different type of conflict. Our opponent is temperamental and arrogant so we should seek to irritate them in order to keep them off their game. If they look like they are going to be taking it easy, we give them no rest. We not only must attack them where they are unprepared but also appear where we are not expected.

It's a different type of fight folks. Gannett has nothing to lose but their pride - something that they hold near and dear which they won't give up without a fight. (Especially not to a bunch of dirty bikers!)

We've made a few strides this year and gotten a few steps closer to our goals. We need to take those successes and build upon them. It's time to lead, follow or get out of the way!

Dean "D-Day" Bartosh
 ABATE of Wisconsin
 Director of Public Relations

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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
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