

## **BUILDING THE CIRCLE**

**Carol Simpson, CMT/ABATE of TN**

This interactive workshop will help us visualize many of the things that are required to be successful in the motorcyclists' rights arena.

How including awareness programs, rider education, safety programs, law enforcement, judiciary, tourism and other departments of government administration in our efforts to affect motorcycling legislation makes for well-balanced success.

Also, as a leader, helpful hints in team building—melding together Ability, Desire, Opportunity (ADO).

This workshop is in honor of Buck Kitteridge, President Emeritus, who's notable quote is "I'm building a circle, come be a part of the circle." And also a nod of remembrance to former CMT/ABATE legislative director Mike Hays (1955-2007) who commented "They are trying to build a circle and cut us out, we'll just build a bigger circle and bring them all in."

Everyone who attends is encouraged to bring ideas to share with the group—help Build the Circle.

Carol A Simpson  
[csfreedom@aol.com](mailto:csfreedom@aol.com)

**Carol Simpson** is currently the PR/Communications Director for CMT/ABATE in Tennessee, a member of MRF and AMA. Carol began her interest in motorcyclists' grassroots activism in 1985 when she joined Concerned Motorcyclists of Tennessee. Prior to 1985, she was already a devoted motorcycle enthusiast, but had been living in Alabama where there were not ABATE-style organizations.

Carol has served as coordinator for Freedom Rallies, been the Legislative Director for CMT/ABATE, worked as grassroots coordinator in the MRF office from 1995-1997, volunteered in several unofficial capacities during her residence in Maryland from 1995-2005, and is now re-settled in Nolensville, TN and works for State Representative Glen Casada as the administrative assistant to the House Republican Caucus.

Carol rides a 1984 FXRT on a regular basis and occasionally takes her 1973 Superglide for a spin, as well. Three grown children and six grandchildren are the primary sources of joy and activity in Carol's life.

## **Lobbying at Federal, State, and Local Levels, Just the Basics**

### **Todd Riba, Dwight Smith; SCVR, and Tom Workman**

This Break out session is designed to cover the basics of lobbying Government officials' at all three levels. We will discuss lobbying at the State level, Legislative Days, and Committee Hearings. We will talk about the basic structure of The U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate and some basic D.C. lobbying tips.

Then the discussion will turn to dealing with the political process at the local level.

Todd Riba is the Legislative Director for A.B.A.T.E. of MN, Chapter Rep. for A.B.A.T.E. of MN Lake Chapter, State Reps Board Member for the MRF, and the MN State MRF Rep and he also served as the Lake Chapter President for 3 years. Riba is also a member of the St. Croix Valley Riders and A.B.A.T.E. of South Dakota Sioux River Chapter. Todd has lobbied at the state and national level for motorcycle rights.

Dwight Smith served 3 terms as the St. Croix Valley Riders President and the membership of that group grew from 700 to 1,200 during that period. Smith also served as the Vice President of the SCVR for one term and he is a member of the MRF, ABATE of MN, and ABATE of WI. Dwight has attended lobby days in Minnesota and Wisconsin and he has testified in committee hearings at the state level. Dwight has also lobbied along with the MRF in Washington D.C. and he has worked at the local level on motorcycle related issues.

Tom Workman served 10 years in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Tom was the House Transportation Committee chair and he was the driving force behind the passage of the blue dot tail light law repeal, the handle bar height restriction repeal, a red arrow bill, and the first equal access bill in the nation. Workman is currently ABATE of MN's Director of Government Relations and he serves as a Caver County Commissioner. Tom not only served in state government but he has also lobbied at the local, state, and federal level.

## **SMRO Legislative Planning Session**

### **Dave Dwyer and Thomas “Doc Ski” Wasileski, PhD**

This is a discussion group style session to help form the 2009-10 legislative agenda for your MRF. We will ask you to put forth your ideas and needs for our Federal Legislative Agenda.

**Dave Dwyer** has been a member of ABATE of Wisconsin since 1990. He joined ABATE's Legislative Committee at the same time and has been chairman of that committee since 1991. In 2002 Dave first ran for and was elected to the Board of Directors for ABATE of Wisconsin and was re-elected in 2004 for another 2 year term. He is also continuing my work as the Chairman of the ABATE of Wisconsin Legislative Committee.

Since becoming involved with his SMRO Dave has made at least yearly lobbying trips to Washington D. C., with as many as three trips when the need dictated. He makes just as many trips to the Wisconsin capitol, Madison, to testify at hearings and work to build support for ABATE of Wisconsin's state legislative agenda. As a member of the "Right To Decide Committee" Dave has helped to set up four successful helmet protest rallies and rides to the State Capitol with 20,000 to 30,000 participants at each one. He is proud to part of a team that the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel calls "the most effective grass roots lobby in the State of Wisconsin".

Dave has been a member of the MRF since 1990, and the Wisconsin MRF State Rep since 1994. He has worked to further the MRF Legislative agenda through the years. Dave believes that having a strong organization in place in Washington D. C. that works closely with the SMROs and represents interests of the street riders has been critical to the successes he has had over the years.

For the first twenty years of his adult life Doc Ski was an Airborne Ranger and Special Forces soldier. As an A-detachment member of the Army's elite "Green Berets" he served with three of the most active Special Forces units of that era. He traveled to eleven countries on three continents in the fight to defeat the threat of communist domination. Working in these third world nations he learned the true meaning of freedom.

**Doc Ski** took advantage of the opportunities for education offered by the Army and the GI Bill to earn his high school diploma, a Bachelor's degree, a Master's Degree and a PhD. He has worked as a Research Scientist and a Professor of Education in the University of North Carolina system. It was as a Research Scientist that he learned the grant writing skills and procedures that he'll share with us today.

Doc Ski's first piloting adventure of a two-wheeled-powered vehicle was on a Lambretta "pedal-to-start" motor scooter. His first registered vehicle was a Honda CB 350. After 46 years of traveling an unknown number of roads, on one of nearly every known popular brand and size of motorcycle, he now owns only three; two soft-tail replicas he built from scratch, and an Ultra-Glide Classic that he purchased as salvage and rebuilt.

When not working the NC legislature in Raleigh or at home in rural Chatham County (where he manages a home for foster dogs with his beautiful wife Katie) he still enjoys the adventure of the open road. As one of the two SMRO Reps for the MRF, Doc Ski is willing to visit your state to share his thoughts and formal presentations on current motorcycle issues.

Doc Ski has been a member of The CBA/ABATE of North Carolina for more than ten years, and currently serves as the State Legislative Director. He is also the Registered Lobbyist for NC Bike PAC. He is a retired member of the Vietnam Vets Motorcycle Club, and one of the Founding Officers of the North Carolina Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs.

**SMRO Leaders Meeting How the MRF can help you**  
**Kirk "Hardtail" Willard, Jay Jackson, Dave Dwyer,**  
**Thomas (Doc Ski) Wasileski, Todd Riba**

This session is for the Leadership of State Motorcycle Rights' Organizations.

Questions and answers about how MRF works to support your SMRO's needs: what is the protocol for functions like press release forwarding, MRF attendance at SMRO events, Lobby assistance, and an explanation of the Reps program. Examples would be; how to get your Releases run by MRF, how to request MRF attendance at your meetings and training sessions, etc.

## **Making Friends to Influence People**

### **Cindy “Fre” Hodges and Still Ray**

This workshop is designed to get us thinking of ways we can enlarge our options for creating working relationships outside our SMROs and to thereby enhance the productivity of our SMRO, and/or positions in our SMROs. We also want to share our experiences in this area.

Most SMROs all have the same basic positions from state to state. As volunteer organizations, experience is not always required but as we all know, it darn sure helps! (As does mentorship or advice from someone else who has done the job.) Additionally, most SMROs are finding that they need or want to enlist the help of others outside their organization. Perhaps in your state there is more than one SMRO. Perhaps there is a COC. Perhaps your organization would like to reach out to the “brand name” riding clubs, the sport bike riders, or the cruiser riding groups. Is there a protocol to approaching these other groups? Are there organizations and infrastructures out there we do not know of?

This session will explore the way we, as biker’s rights activists, do that. Hopefully, together we can discover new ways to open more doors towards productive networking amongst the Biker Nation. Some things you will find elemental, and some things will give you ideas. Perhaps YOUR ideas and experiences will help others. It is hoped that through open discussion we can discover new things that might work for us back home. The number one thing that makes our “work” easier is for it to be fun. Can enhancing our working relationships be fun? You bet it can!

**Cindy “Fre” Hodges** is a lifetime member of CBA/ABATE of NC and has been since the age of 19. She’s pushing the backside of 50 years of age now so let’s just leave it at that. Having held numerous positions at the state and chapter level, and also nearly three full terms of office with the Motorcycle Riders Foundation as Member Representative to the Board, she has traveled our nation meeting other motorcyclists in the Biker’s Rights arena and had fun meeting folks and very often hooking them up with one another. Cindy rode her first motorcycle, a Honda SL 70, at the age of 11. She has been a passenger on street motorcycles for many years and after a few years of wrestling with the unending dynamics of fixing first her FLH, then a Superglide on a continuous basis; she opted to put the money back into her pocket, and has been happy on a small Honda VLX 600. She rides her VLX all over North and South Carolina and whatever else direction she can find the time to point her front wheel towards, trying desperately not to bust the shifter in her search for another gear.

**Still Ray** has been involved in motorcycle rights for over 35 years. He has been riding motorcycles for over 40 years. He is very old.

His bragging rights are topped off by the receipt of the Farmers Award for Lifetime Achievement in Motorcycle Rights. He is also a Charter member of ABATE of AZ, former Chairman of the Board of ABATE of AZ. He is an MMA member, an AMA member, Arizona Assistant state MRF rep. He is a board member of the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs and is Political Committee Chairman for Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs. And if that ain’t enuf, he is also Managing Editor of the Arizona Spokesman and Charter member and President of Journeymen M/C.

## **How To Be Most Effective In Your SMRO**

### **Kirk "Hardtail" Willard and Mark Buckner**

This interactive workshop covers topics including how to become more active and more effective in your SMRO, understanding yourself and what you're good at, and utilizing strategic planning. The workshop goes on to discuss the "nuts and bolts" of an SMRO, the importance of learning from the experience of others, how to make teamwork really work, and the logical steps we take to build an effective organization.

**Kirk "Hardtail" Willard** has been the Motorcycle Riders Foundation President since 2006 and MRF Representative to the International Motorcycle Co-Operation Group since 2003. He served as MRF Vice President from 2003-2006 and was the MRF SSMRO Liaison on the Board from 2002-2003. Kirk is a member of the Sound Advice Working Group.

In addition to his duties with the MRF Kirk has served with ABATE of Wisconsin, Inc. Board of Directors since 1997; former Deputy Director 2004-2006, former Public Relations Director 1997-2004, current Share the Road Instructor, former Share the Road Chief Instructor, and Legislative Committee member since 1997

Kirk was awarded ABATE of Wisconsin's Patriot of the Year in 2006 and MRF President's Cup in 2004. He is also a Wisconsin Drivers Traffic Safety Education Association Honorary Member.

Kirk attended his first ABATE meeting in Racine Wisconsin in 1985 and has been riding street motorcycles since 1978.

Kirk holds a B.S. in Biology/Chemistry and an M.B.A. in Operations Management.

**Mark Buckner** and his wife Sherry have four children and one grandson. Mark currently owns two Harley-Davidson motorcycles - a 1977 FXE and a 1992 FLHS - along with a 1971 Honda CB-750 "project" bike. Mark has been actively involved in biker's rights since the late-1980s. From 1991-1994, Mark served as the State Coordinator for ABATE of Colorado. Mark is also a former President of the MRF (1994-2000), served as the Executive Director for BIKEPAC of Colorado and an Ex-Officio Board Member of the MRF. Mark also presents training workshops at motorcyclists' rights conferences on a variety of topics.

# How to be the Most Effective in Your State Motorcyclists' Rights Organization

## I. *Setting the Table*

- **Remembering why we're here and who we serve**

- a) Why did you join your SMRO?
- b) Why do you want to become more active?

- **Who stole the magic formula???**

- a) Hard work is its own reward.
- b) Sharing our joy (and misery!) with others.
- c) All work and no play makes Jack and Jill nuts.

- **Understanding yourself... and what you're good at**

- a) Doers and Talkers
- b) Extroverts and introverts, strategists and tacticians

Strategists see the 'big picture' and think clearly about where the organization should be in one, three and five years.

Tacticians operate best when given a specific duty as opposed to thinking about the grand scheme of things. Tacticians are the 'give me a job and get out of my way' people.

Tacticians should be executing the day-to-day tasks of the organization.

Whether you're a strategist or a tactician, learn to appreciate the other. We need both to be successful.

- c) Determine which aspect of the organization best fits your interest and abilities (legislative, PR, safety and education, events, treasury and budgeting, etc).

- **Keeping your priorities straight**

- a) Family
- b) Job
- c) SMRO
- d) Sanity Nights

- **Remember... it's a voluntary organization...**

- a) Don't expect everyone else to work as hard as you do.
- b) Whenever possible, give people the benefit of the doubt.
- c) Working and playing well with others.

- **The Knucklehead Principle**
  - a) Taking pride in what you do.
  - b) Caring about the people you're working for.

## ***II. Meat and Potatoes***

- **Use Strategic Planning**
  - a) Learning how to formulate Basic and Detailed Strategic Plans
- **Nuts & Bolts** (*sage advice from Maggot Mike*)
  - a) Building credibility with members, legislators, shops, clubs and non-members.
  - b) Taking care of the small stuff
  - c) Empowering people
  - d) Unity within the organization
  - e) Egos – how they can help or hurt an organization
  - f) Keeping things in perspective
  - g) Prioritizing goals
  - h) How to get more people to attend meetings
  - i) Focusing on the bottom line – Freedom!
- **Learning from experience**
  - a) Re-inventing the wheel is usually a bad idea
  - b) Fellow SMRO members - teaming experienced people with novices
  - c) Other SMROs / National MROs
  - d) Job, family, friends
- **Creative Thinking**
  - a) Don't be afraid to try a new, non-traditional approach
  - b) Thinking outside the box
  - c) Not trusting old assumptions
- **Embracing teamwork**
  - a) Big team / small team
  - b) Team goals are more important than individual goals
  - c) Hanging out with the right crowd – fighters who know what they're fighting for!
- **Breeding Success**
  - a) Refuse to lose
  - b) Keep each other motivated
  - c) Nothing breeds success like success

- **Logical Steps and the Danger of Assuming**
  - a) “I didn’t know how and I was embarrassed to ask”
  - b) Follow a logical plan when tackling a job
  - c) Don’t assume that others have done their part
  - d) Start by doing a quick review of the necessary steps

### **III. Desert**

- **Dedication, Passion and Enthusiasm**

## **State Legislative Updates**

### **Imre Szauter; AMA**

This breakout session will focus on state legislation that addresses topics of interest to motorcyclists. We will highlight bills on helmets, passenger age restrictions, traffic-actuated signals, handlebar height restrictions, and much more. We will also cover a significant federal legislative issue and show you how legislation in one state can affect all states.

Our goal is not to bore you with legislative doublespeak, but to expand your knowledge of what is going on in state capitals across the country and within the motorcycling activist community.

Whether you are a first-time attendee or returning enthusiast to the MRF Meeting of the Minds, you will learn from fellow riders as this breakout session involves “audience participation.”

***Imre Szauter*** is the Government Affairs Manager for on-highway activities in the government relations department of the AMA (American Motorcyclist Association). He has been on staff since September 2001.

Prior to joining the staff of the AMA, Imre spent over 18 years with a large telecommunications firm as a computer systems specialist. He earned a B.S.E.E. in 1983 and an M.S.E.E. in 1991 from The Ohio State University, College of Engineering, Electrical Engineering Department.

He is a former Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) certified instructor and taught basic and experienced rider courses with the Motorcycle Ohio rider education program for ten years. Imre has been riding motorcycles since 1970.

Imre rides a 1998 BMW R1100RT and a Trek 4300 mountain bike. He claims to be a better motorcyclist than a bicyclist.

## **Lies, Damn Lies, and Politics**

### **John Pierce**

People who ride motorcycles are 37 times more likely to have a fatal accident than people who drive cars!! We see that quoted in the press over and over. Ever wonder if it's true? Well, it's a total fabrication and the government people who put it out know that it is. This seminar is about how the people who work against motorcycle rights twist facts beyond recognition. We'll show you how to read such words as could, might, and possibly. We show you how first they say "maybe" and in the next sentence they say "is" - but it's the same set of "facts". We'll talk about people who may be just a smidge left of center and why they really dislike motorcycles and motorcyclists. We'll talk about the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and why they'd like to see the last legal motorcycle on the planet dumped into the ocean. We'll talk about the kind of logic that will make your next letter to the editor take wings and fly. On top of all that, we're going to have some fun.

FYI

I'll be using two short press releases written by people with titles that make the average Joe accept the fact that they are truly "experts" and should be believed. We'll go through them clause by clause and discuss the mechanics of using weasel words to make anything seem true to non-critical thinkers.

**John Pierce** comes to us from CMT/ABATE of Tennessee where he served as the Legislative Chairman. He's was also the MRF Representative from Tennessee and is a member of the MRF Board of Directors serving as the Membership Chairman. Recently relocated to OK where he has joined ABATE of OK. John is a retired airplane pilot who has been riding since 1959.

## **Accident Scene Management**

### **Vicki Sanfelipo**

What exactly is Accident Scene Management? How does it work? Who supports it? Why should I be interested in the program either as an individual or as an SMRO? This workshop will give a overview of the program know as "Accident Scene Management". It will answer these questions and give you a good perspective of what is involved in the program. We will talk about how it got started, and who it benefits.

**Vicki Sanfelipo** is the Author of "A Crash Course for the Motorcyclist" and is a Registered Nurse at Waukesha Memorial near Milwaukee in Wisconsin. She established the non-profit organization Accident Scene Management, Inc. in 1996 in order to reduce injuries and fatalities to motorcyclists through First Response training. She acts as Director of ASMI yet today. Vicki has worked for over 25 years in a variety of settings throughout the hospital from Critical Care to the Operating Room. She is currently working at Waukesha Memorial Hospital as a Perioperative Educator for the Department of Surgery and is a licensed EMT. Vicki teaches CPR, Defibrillators, and First Aid for the American Heart Association. She has been riding her own motorcycle for over 20 years and has completed the MSF's Experienced Rider Course. She is a life member of A.B.A.T.E. of WI, Charter Member Central WI, H.O.G. & member of Kettle Moraine H.O.G., Motorcycle Riders Foundation, BOLT, Patriot Guard, St. Croix Valley Riders, American Motorcyclist Assoc. and The Iron Butt Association.

You can contact Vicki [info@accidentscene.org](mailto:info@accidentscene.org) or 262-521-2880.

## History of the MRF

### Steve Zimmer

Don't you love when a plan comes together? The MRF started as an idea that grew into a national conference, and then it morphed into a national organization representing thousands of motorcyclists around the country. Through our trials and tribulations we have grown to become one of the foremost, well-know, and respected grassroots lobbying organizations in Washington DC. How did we get there? What is it that keeps us going? This session will look at a brief history of the MRF and how we are organized. We will talk about where we came from so we can better understand where we are and where we need to go. Come join us for a walk down memory lane. You might not have been there but you will wish you had been after this!

**Steve Zimmer** began riding street motorcycles in the early 70's while serving in the U.S. Navy. Riding for recreation and transportation he has ridden coast to coast. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Missouri, 1985. He has extensive graduate work in Organizational and Political Sociology.

Zimmer has been active in the motorcyclist-rights movement since early 1983 when he joined Freedom of Road Riders of Missouri (FORR). He served as State Newsletter Editor for FORR and held several local positions including Vice President and Central Committee Representative. At the end of 1989, he assumed the vacated position of State Legislative Coordinator and began lobbying in the Missouri State Capitol for FORR until 1997.

Zimmer's involvement in the MRF began at the first Meeting of the Minds held in St. Louis in 1985. He attended several of the meetings that saw the formation of the organization we now know as the Motorcycle Riders Foundation. Zimmer served as MRF State Rep number 14 when the Reps program was in its infancy. At the end of 1997, Zimmer was named Vice President of Government Relations for the Motorcycle Riders Foundation in Washington, D. C., serving in that capacity until June of 2000.

He was a member of the working group that developed the National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety released in November 2000. Since 1998 Zimmer has continued as a "Friend of the Committee" on the National Transportation Research Board, Committee on Motorcycles and Mopeds. He was asked in 2004 to be a full member of the TRB committee. He was a member of the AMA Motorcycle Sound Working Group looking into sound/noise issues and regulations. He spoke at the Lifesavers Conference motorcycle session in 2004 and was a presenter at the 2005 Lifesavers. He also represents motorcyclists at many non-motorcycling conferences and events.

## **The Anatomy of a Motorcycle Fatality Case How to effectively follow up on ROW Violations Steve Johnson, Steve Panten; ABATE of Wisconsin Inc and Greg Zaffke; Black Nail Brigade**

This session will break down everything that happens after a Motorcycle Right of Way Violation (ROW) and the process to follow up and make sure that the right things happen. Learn how to work with all the parties involved including: the Police, District Attorney, and Media as well as how to help the family involved. Once a ROW takes place, things in the system move quickly and you need to have a game plan. This session will help you to put together a plan to ensure that when the time comes to act, you are able to be effective.

**Steve Johnson** is a member of ABATE of Wisconsin Inc. and is currently serving as the Regional Legislative Officer for Milwaukee County. He also holds the position of Assistant Public Relations Officer, where he has built many relationships with the media. As a sustaining member of the MRF, he has lobbied in both Washington D.C. and Madison, WI. He enjoys sharing his passion for motorcycles, and finds time to be an instructor with ABATE of Wisconsin's "Share the Road" program. He is a staff Instructor with the Northern Illinois University (NIU) Motorcycle Safety Project and holds a Rider Coach certification from the MSF.

**Steve Panten**, an 18 year member of ABATE of Wisconsin Inc., is currently serving his second term as a regional representative. A three year member of the MRF, Steve has attended several Heartland STEAM conferences and also Meeting of the Minds in 2007. For the last five years, Steve has been an instructor in ABATE of Wisconsin's Share the Road program, which teaches motorcycle awareness in driver's education classrooms throughout the state. Due to his work with Right of Way violations, he was the recipient of ABATE of Wisconsin's prestigious Founders Award in 2008.

With both Steve Panten and Steve Johnson actively following Right Of Way violations, they discovered improperly written citations by local law enforcement. Their vast knowledge and experience lead to the education of numerous Police Departments on the correct way to write ROW citations, the District Attorney's on how to charge violators, and the Judges on the intent of the law and proper sentencing. Their work has also lead to partnerships with local law enforcement agencies that have allowed the "Motorcycle Awareness Message" to reach new levels. They have also organized ABATE of WI members to attend court hearings to confirm violators are being properly prosecuted and sentenced to the full extent of the law.

**Greg Zaffke** founded the Black Nail Brigade [www.blacknailbrigade.org](http://www.blacknailbrigade.org) in response to his outrage after his mother was killed by a distracted driver. This driver, who was painting her finger nails when she struck his mother at a stop sign, led him to paint his nails black in response to the situation. Greg's mother, Anita Zaffke, had a passion for motorcycling that he is carrying forward through his work to campaign and bring awareness to distracted driving. He has logged many miles in many states on his motorcycle working to promoting the Black Nail Brigade and following ROW cases. Greg also brings the perspective of a family member affect by a ROW to our presentation.

**ABATE of Wisconsin's Membership Retention Program:  
How to keep them from riding away...  
Dave "Twit" Linberg and Marlene Bautch, ABATE of WI**

This breakout will discuss the different levels of membership and ABATE of Wisconsin's plan to retain members at all levels of involvement: from "Mailboxers" to the "Genetically Impaired" through a multi-level process of education and mentoring.

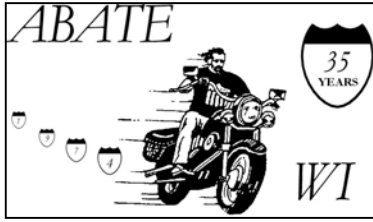
**Dave "Twit" Linberg** has been the ABATE of WI Membership Director since 1996. At that time membership was at 2,400. Slow, steady growth has brought us to 6,800 today. Life membership has gone up from 35 to 336. Twit makes it very clear that he DOES NOT sell memberships... he makes Cheddar Cheese. His emphasis is on how to keep a member after someone else signs them up. Twit is a 24 year member of ABATE of Wisconsin.

**Marlene Bautch** (AKA Auntie ABATE) has been the ABATE of WI State Office Manager since 1996, State Recording Secretary since 1998, Newsletter Editor for the last 10 years and generally has an opinion on all things motorcycle. To support her ABATE habits, she is a full-time mail carrier. Marlene is a 25 year member of ABATE of Wisconsin.

Twit and Marlene live in Hixton, WI where their personal political views have been canceling out each other's votes for years.

Twit: [members@abatewis.org](mailto:members@abatewis.org)

Marlene: [news@abatewis.org](mailto:news@abatewis.org)



(Slide 1) **ABATE of Wisconsin's**  
**Membership Retention Plan**  
*How to keep them from Riding Away*

**Membership Retention** (Slide 3)

- One of the greatest challenges faced by member based organizations is retention.
- Member dues represent a significant portion of operating revenue.
- We depend on member dues to provide services to members and cover our operational costs (Legislative, Education, and Safety Activities.)

**Where do the majority of our members come from?** (Slide 4)

- **Face-to-face contact.**
- Memberships sold to
  - Friends & Family
  - Co-workers
  - Neighbors
  - People you see on a regular basis

**Where do other memberships come from?** (Slide 5)

Trifold/Newsletter Displays at Businesses & Events  
ABATE Webpage  
Saferider, Inc. Students  
"Business Partners" (SWPR, vendors, etc.)

**To Keep More Members**

**you have to Understand All Members** (Slide 6)

- **We have to make it a PRIORITY to respect the members at all levels of involvement...**
- **A Strong Membership is a DIVERSE membership**

## Six levels of Membership

- 1) **Mailboxers™**: These members primarily want involvement through mail, fax or computer. They pay their dues, but that's as far as you are going to get with them... and that's OK. Some people are only comfortable at that level, and we can deal with that, and we encourage them to renew and stay with us. If they ever want to jump in at another level, they are welcome to give it a try. Slide 7

- 2) **Relevant Participants®**: They attend relevant meetings and events. These are the members that you see at a few meetings and/or events. Their interest may come and go depending on whether or not we **catch their attention** or **motivate them into wanting more** at the times they show up. Slide 8

- 3) **Status Conscious®**: They join to add another layer to their image and self-worth. Membership brings them the privilege to associate themselves with the accomplishments of the only organization that has existed in Wisconsin for almost 35 years with the sole purpose of protecting the rights, safety, and education of our motorcycling public. *(This is the level where you may find that they join to get the patch and then never renew...)* Slide 9

- 4) **Shapers™**: They are most active and want to shape organizational policy. You see these members at meetings making suggestions and joining committees. The entry-level Shaper is the “worker bee” of this organization. Put out the call and they will rally and get the job done. Slide 10

- 5) **The Thinker**: They want the organization to add to their fund of knowledge. These are the people you hear about going to conferences, meeting with other groups, and working for ABATE with agencies at the Federal and State Level. Slide 11

- 6) **Genetics**: They share the values of the organization. These are the members who automatically renew because ABATE of Wisconsin is part of who they are. You'll hear them talk about their ABATE Family and like a family they will not always get along, but they will stay to argue another day. Slide 12

- Thank you to [www.suefroggatt.com](http://www.suefroggatt.com) for the free bulletins that contained the six categories that I have used here to demonstrate the levels.

- **Six levels of membership**
- **Dozens of different reasons for joining**
- **Hundreds of different personality types**
- **Riding 40 different types of motorcycles**
- **With a age range spanning 80+ years**
- **Scattered over thousands and thousands of square miles.....**

Slide 13

- **How are we EVER going to keep them all happy?!?**

### **Honor your Members with Personal Attention**

Slide 15

- **Mentoring** a fellow ABATE member is a win-win situation. Not only are you helping the organization: you are helping to protect everyone's motorcycle rights and safety. Chances are very good that you'll also make yourself a life-long friend in the process.
- **Mentoring is helping another ABATE member get to know the organization and their fellow members.**

### **Value for the Dollar and Mentoring 101**

- **Introduce the new member to other members.** Simple but true. The more people within the organization the member knows the more likely they will feel a part of it. The other members that they are introduced to will also help with the mentoring process every time a conversation occurs.
- **Get to know the new member.** Asking a few simple questions will go along way towards giving you more tools to make the new member more comfortable. By knowing what they like, you have a better idea of leading them towards ABATE activities that they will enjoy.
  - Simple questions like—"what do you ride? Do you like to ride in small groups, large groups, or by yourself? Just thought I'd ask, we have a couple of different rides set up for this summer..."
  - "Ever been to a swap meet? Want to check out the swap meet next week? We have a group going over, you'd fit right in."
  - "Where do you work? You make business cards? Great, can you bring me some prices to the next meeting?"

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## Demonstrate Real Value for the Dollar

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- **With the current economic downturn, association members are carefully evaluating how they spend every dollar, whether it is their own or their employer's. As a result, it is even more important for associations to demonstrate real value for each membership dollar. When recruiting members, we need to tell them what they are going to get for their dues. When they join, we again need to tell them what they are going to get for their dues. And when it's time to renew, we need to tell them yet again what they got for their dues. But remember not everyone has the same values...**

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- **Point out what's going on.** You can see some examples of this in the last section, but there is more to it.
- **ABATE can be pretty confusing to a new person.** ABATE of Wisconsin has only one mission: to protect the rights and safety of motorcyclists. Because we go after this mission from many different angles and methods, it can be hard for a new member to grasp all that is going on at once.
- **Break it into small chunks.** Just by working ABATE into conversations, they'll catch on.... If they have a question that you can't answer, help them out by finding someone who can (like your regional rep or district director) and you'll learn more in the process too. **KISS**

Slide 18

- **You can't just ask, "Do you have any questions?" Because most new members won't even know what questions to ask at the beginning. Do what you can to help them through the maze.**
- Show them one of our newsletters and point out which regional report(s) cover your area. Turn to the calendar of events and let them know if you're going to any of them and invite them along. Offer to attend a meeting with them and introduce them to the regional officers.
- When you introduce them to the regional officers would be a great time to explain, "Yup. These are the volunteers who keep things going in this area. These guys report to a District Director, who then reports to the board of directors that we elect every two years... the board of directors and the State Officers you see in the newsletter are the people who "run the organization" with everyone else's help."

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- **Being a part of it—the Upgrade Process.** By upgrade I mean that they have the opportunity to be invested in the group through activity. Slide 20
- Something as simple as buying a couple of 50/50 tickets can be a start—or better yet ask them if they'd help you sell the 50/50 tickets at the meeting.
- Ask them their opinion—but be careful not to be judgmental of whatever opinion they may present. Thank them for their opinion and move on.
- Include them in the discussion of the next event. If they join the discussion, they may even join the event team.

- **Being a part of it—the Upgrade Process.** Slide 21
- All of these little steps together will form into what smoothly looks like routine contact, because that's what it is. It's not calculated to “trap them into membership”. It's a group of polite and welcoming steps that will validate the initial decision of the member to join ABATE in the first place. It's simply saying, “You joined and you are welcome here, and we invite you to grow with us.” When we can say that, we have done our job.
- This routine contact helps to build solid relationships so that when it comes time to ask for the renewal check, the member feels like they are not just a funding machine, but rather, they are a partner with the whole group.

## **Demonstrate Real Value for the Dollar**

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE should be JOB 1**

Slide 22

- Process applications promptly.
- Maintain an adequate supply of materials so the member gets what they expect right away.
- Give them a contact name and phone number/email.
- Tell them what to expect next...
- When they'll get their newsletter
- How to read it
- Who to call with questions – where they belong

**Motorcycle Safety** (Slide 23)

**Legislative - Right to Ride & Education** (Slide 24)

**Events – Fun – Social Marketing** (Slide 25)

**Recognition** (Slide 26)

Starting today...

- Take what you have learned and share it with the rest of your organization, preach it to every officer you have, live it and let people learn from your example...

**Membership Retention is  
EVERYONE'S JOB...**

By Being Here and Learning **YOU** are part of the  
**Membership Retention Team.**

## **MRF Reps Meeting**

### **Todd Riba, Graydon Wheeler and Dave Condon**

This workshop is designed for all MRF State Representatives and Assistant Reps.

Reps will discuss recruiting and retaining members, communication, Reps incentives, and there will be a round table discussion on proven techniques that Reps use to promote the MRF. We will also have a MRF Office Administrator update From Tiffany Latimer, and a Membership Director update from John Pierce. During this meeting elections will be held for MRF State Reps Board Member, so it is very important that all Reps attend.

**Todd Riba** is The State Reps Program Director. He also served on the MRF Board as State Reps Board member and he is the Legislative Director for A.B.A.T.E. of Minnesota.

**Graydon (Grady) Wheeler** was born and raised in New England and has lived on both coasts. He got his first motorcycle when he was sixteen which means he's been riding...a while. Grady never owned a four wheel vehicle nor had a license for a cage until nineteen. He got interested in MC rights at seventeen when he did a cartwheel over a car hood and spent a week in the hospital complete with reconstructive surgery to his leg because a driver "didn't see me". Surgery worked since he's run and completed four marathons.

Grady went to college on a dare; graduated cum laude with a B.A. in English (Psychology minor) from University of Massachusetts/Amherst. He then attended Masters program at San Francisco State until bored with academics. He tends to be somewhat libertarian in his political beliefs. He just needs the government to protect the borders and fix the roads. He doesn't need them to protect him from himself.

Grady is the President of ABATE of Wyoming; a Sustaining Member ABATE of Colorado; a Member ABATE of Nebraska and a Sustaining member MRF. He has two Victorys and one Harley. He rides year-round as long as he can get from the house to a paved road.

Grady owns a church (great place to ride and keep the bikes in winter) and is an Ordained minister in the Universal Life Church.

**Dave Condon** is currently the Chairman of the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association. He has been involved with the MMA for ten years and has served in various other Board of Directors positions during this period. He also serves on the Massachusetts Motorcyclist's PAC. Prior to his involvement with the MMA he was the Executive Director for ABATE of MA as well as Chairman for ABATE of MA PAC. Dave also serves as an assistant to the MRF Board of Directors as the Assistant to the State Representative Program Director as well as the MRF's Assistant State Representative for Massachusetts. Dave has been riding for over 40 years and resides in Salem, Massachusetts.