

2005 Best Of The West Report

I took off Friday after work and it was great weather all the way to Boise. Warm and clear skies, but lots of bugs mostly where all the cows and goats were. I think that had something to do with it. I also think it is time for me to get a new windshield. I met some friends in New Meadows and rode to Weiser with them where they were having a bike rodeo the next day.

I arrived in Boise around midnight. The thing I like the most about going to BOTW is the people I meet. First off I met a group made up of ABATE of NC, the State Coordinator for Arizona, ABATE of NM and ABATE of WA. They directed me to bike parking and the group there was made up of, WA Road Riders and ICMS, who offered me a beer. Cool guys. I new my bike was safe there so off to bed I went.

In the morning I went to the general session and as soon as I walked in 2 hands went up. Norm and Joel had spotted me. Thanks guys I really didn't want to walk in looking like an idiot not knowing anybody. Opening Session was interesting. HIPAA, and an overview of the TEA bill, speakers knew what they were talking about but it was hard to hear all the questions and what the answers were about cause only one microphone to talk with. HMO's created a loophole for reserving the right to refuse the coverage based on the source of injury. Insurances are actually putting it out in black and white that you will not be covered if you ride or are injured on a motorcycle.

Gang definition needs to be clarified.

Key people in motorcycle rights are Butch Otter who is running for governor and Skip Brandt who is running for congress.

There was an extensive discussion on EPA that was interesting but beyond my comprehension. It sucks getting old I think I have CHS disease, can't hear shit.

They are mandating breathalyzers on cars after so many DUI's and are thinking about right of the showroom floor having breathalyzers on bikes. You blow and if your drunk the bike wont start. It just goes to show that the drinking and riding is getting out of hand.

Lunchtime left me and Tom to fend for ourselves so the first thing on the agenda was getting my chain lubed and tightened. So down to Big Twin we went. A BMW, Ducati and Moto Guzzi kind of place. I felt like I was taking a donkey to a thoroughbred race, but the people were really nice and took the bike in and lubed and tightened and did not charge me for it. They did tell me however I needed new chain and sprockets. Well Tom and I got lunch to go and went back to the Hotel.

We walked into "The beep goes on". Sat down and realized everybody else was there too. We weren't about to get up and walk out so we stayed. It was very upbeat and funny. However it was hard to hear what was going on so I think I will leave that part to the others that were there. Joel cause he was up front. Maybe he is hard of hearing too. Or he was up there cause it was 2 pretty girls giving the class. Whatever the case may be, I know he got more out of it then I did. After that I started asking so where are you going to next.

I went to "Dealing with the media". It was very informative. And I got smart and sat up front this time. First he told us be very careful what you say to the media and how you say it. They can take a 30-minute interview and make a 30 second sound bite that will make you look like an idiot. Tone down your interviews. Media is looking for 15-30 seconds of something that sounds good. #1 rule, speak with one voice. I think this applies to any thing we do with ABATE. We should all be up on what is going on and what we want people to know.

Next, create a press spokesman the only one that talks to the media. The one who knows what we are all about, what is going on, what our position is. Make sure when you talk to the media you are situated well. Like in front of some good-looking bikes or around a lot of people. The better you look the more chance you have of getting aired. Most of what we do is called human-interest story so we will get stuck with a fluff reporter. Talk them into doing the interview getting on the bike and riding off, better chance of getting aired cause they will look cool.

If we are going to have media at an event for Gods sake leave the booze at home, same for weapons. The media will find the worst and that is what will end up in the news.

Print media. General rules speak with one voice. Whenever possible have a press kit made up in advance. What we do, who we are, why we exist. Have a business card, digital graphics and a disc with pictures and text. Make a long version of 1000 words medium 500 and short 250 make it the basis of our belief. A basic press kit will be kept in a ready to go called public service announcements. Send the info in. It may not get aired right a way it may be one day that there is an unfortunate opportunity that they need to fill a space. If your stuff is sitting there and ready to go they will use it.

Make media contacts. Find radio dj's, reporters, and TV guys. Make friends with them they will more likely put your stuff on if they know you and like you and think you are their friend. Keep in touch with them. If you are going to write articles keep in mind,
Try to use ms (Microsoft) word, avoid the use of multiple spaces use tab. Use one font, times or times new roman, do not use all caps if you want to express yourself use italics, get 2 people to proof read for mistakes. Do not use graphics use ditto marks only no <> some programs have codes and if

you use some things it changes the whole document when you send it to the media and they won't take the time to fix all your goofs. Use 1 line sentences, short paragraphs avoid exclamation points, avoid using the same word over and over, single syllable numbers spelled out the rest can be numbered. Make a clean copy find out whom to send it to. Follow up. The one who calls and makes contacts will most likely get their stuff in.

If you want to go to a class to learn how to deal with the media check out a political science class or check your local college and find what they have to offer. Stay on track and don't let them confuse you. Make friends with someone in the media sponsor a baseball team.

You want to send a letter to the editor, first call the editor tell him/her what you are writing about get an okay then make the article, add phone and name. Keep it to the point stick to facts don't get emotional.

Pictures that should satisfy pretty much anybody use a digital camera 500 meg & high res.

The banquet guest speaker was Skip Brandt. You all know he is running for congress now don't you? He was telling us that politicians are human too. They like friends and just like the media speaker Skip said if you want something done meet them get to know them keep in touch. He too is afraid of the media. They will dig up dirt on anybody. He says he has some college buddies that could do him in. I told him never mind the college buddies how about your biker friends and he said he probably has more dirt on us than we have on him. Uh oh

The auction was fun, I don't know why but I got into it for a shirt that one of the auctioneers was wearing. It was a pretty cool shirt with bikes on it. Probably cost about 60 bucks at a HD store. I was willing to donate a \$100 so I started the bidding at \$5 and when it got up to 100 Norm, Ernie and Joel started digging money out to help. Man that guy was good. I actually had quit bidding at 160 and he just kept on going before I knew it I was paying 200 for that shirt. I finally gathered my wits and said I just can't go any higher. Someone else bought that shirt. I hope they're happy in it.

On a personal note, I got to thinking afterwards, the first thing the media speaker said is he had a conversation with someone in MRF and that there are only 2800 members of MRF nation wide. 2800 members. Does that surprise you as much as it did me? We have to make MRF known.

I want to make a motion to put up a % of all the funds my chapter raises for MRF. They are doing all the work for us lets support them. All chapters and state can join together or singly as each chapter. We can hand a check to MRF on a state or chapter level. I don't care. It adds up and we all get the credit for supporting MRF. But we can discuss that later.

I was really disappointed in the turn out at BOTW in Boise, ABATE of NID had 5 people present. What was the problem? We had more than that in Colorado. I didn't even miss any work and the ride was beautiful. There's no need to answer just think on it.

If we are for rider's rights and motorcycle awareness, safety and education we need to start talking about this in our community. We need to start doing runs for motorcycle awareness. We can get the community involved in exchange for doing something for them. This also can be discussed later.

MOTM is Sept 22-25 in Little Rock Arkansas. The next BOTW is in Prescott Arizona 6/16,17.18/ 2006. Lets get back to what Freedom of the road means. By all means it is not free, and it doesn't come cheap. We are a motorcycle rights/awareness organization lets start acting like one. I hope you enjoyed my report and on that note I respectfully request a reimbursement of <expenses>.

Thank you
<Pauline Durst>