

# ***Bruce on Bikers' Rights***

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## **ABATE: Bikers' Rights Organization ... or Social Riding Club?** *Is Your Chapter Making a Difference ... or just Partying Down?*



I was recently forwarded a weekly email newsletter from a local A.B.A.T.E. chapter...

<http://tinyurl.com/6d5r6y>

...for which this opening paragraph would be totally appropriate:

*"Here are this week's bar briefs and drink specials courtesy of A.B.A.T.E., the social riding club that reminds you to 'A'lways 'B'ring 'A'lcohol 'T'o 'E'vents!"*

No, they didn't say that. But they might as well have. Anyway, reading through paragraph after paragraph of biker bar band announcements and exclusive A.B.A.T.E. drink discounts sure made me want to fire up my bike and ride to the party. But it also compelled me to ask this question:

**Let's say you're a biker who never heard of "ABATE" before, and the first email you ever received from "ABATE" was something like the one linked above. After reading it, would you consider "ABATE" to be a motorcyclists' rights organization?**

I decided to share my question and concerns with a few MRO leaders and bikers' rights activists around the country. Most chose not to respond—perhaps out of guilt, or fear of losing popularity, power or position by being labeled a party pooper. A few brave souls did have the courage to say what needs to be said. One of them was BikePAC of Idaho's Tim "TJ" Herzog, who replied as follows:

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*From: Tim Herzog [mailto:tim@bikepacofidaho.org]*

*Sent: Wednesday, July 30, 2008 11:07 AM*

*To: Bruce@LdrLongDistanceRider.com*

*Subject: RE: Would You Consider ABATE To Be A Motorcyclists' Rights Organization?*

7/30/08

*RE: ABATE as a MRO....*

*I am one of the original incorporators of (ANI) ABATE of North Idaho, Inc. back around 1993. Prior to that, our membership belonged to ABATE of Idaho, which was located about 450 miles away in our state.*

*Due to lack of any political involvement whatsoever by that organization, we formed ANI. I served as State Deputy Coordinator and Legislative Chairman from the beginning until 1995 when I resigned.*

*After 10 years of being away, I was coaxed to come back to help out. NOBODY filled my shoes as Legislative Chairman during my hiatus! After being elected back to office and resuming my former positions, the original Coordinator, Willie Stephenson and I immediately initiated ANI's first ever legislation, S1367, Idaho's stoplight bill. It passed successfully and was enacted into law July 1, 2006. Idaho was the fourth state to pass that type of legislation and I believe 4 others have followed suit to date.*

*Ironically, before I resigned in 1995, I was working with the Idaho Transportation Department on the problem with stoplight signalization and if I would have stayed active, Idaho could have possibly been the 1st state to pass such a bill.*

*After 1 year back in office I was defeated by a membership that did not like me for introducing this bill without the permission of another MRO in Idaho. That other state MRO (ICMS), the Idaho Coalition for Motorcycle Safety by the way, lobbied against S1367 in the Senate Transportation Committee hearing on it.*

*After many years of involvement with ABATE, at least in our state, and the total lack of interest of dealing personally with our lawmakers, several of us (original incorporators) began BikePAC of Idaho, Inc. ...*

***I believe many ABATE's around the country have become just social clubs and are no longer focused on the real reason they were formed in the first place.***

*Tim TJ Herzog  
BikePAC of Idaho, Inc.  
[www.bikepacofidaho.org](http://www.bikepacofidaho.org)*

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**What about *your* ABATE chapter? Is it a rights organization ... or a riding club?**

Asking strictly for myself and no other individuals or organizations,

Bruce Arnold

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