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Bikers; Who are these people?

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Bikers; Who Are These People?

by Julie Coleman

This research was conducted in an effort to offer an insider's look at Biker culture and how Bikers define their community, their identity and their place within American society. The study participants were Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts and the people who associate with them.

Methods

Study participants were gathered primarily through referral, purposive and convenience sampling methods. I had initially intended to conduct a minimum of ten scheduled, semi-structured interviews, with a possible ten impromptu, semi-structured interviews. Due to the active nature and busy lifestyles of the study participants this turned out to be too ambitious a goal for this study. I was able to conduct seven scheduled, semi-structured interviews that followed a flexible interview guide. For these interviews I obtained formal written consent. For the purposes of evidencing and documenting my research I was able to obtain several formal written media releases as well. Again, due to the active nature of members of the Biker culture and their associates the majority of the interviews for this research were obtained through verbal consent, were unstructured, and took the form of more casual conversations which were based primarily on what the study participants felt they wanted to speak about as it concerned the research being conducted.

I conducted field site research and participant observation in and of the Biker culture, its members and associates as well. I traveled to several different motorcycle, cultural, and social events in Oregon and Washington, driving my own motorcycle more than 2000 miles, and as a passenger over 1000 miles more.



It is common for the social events Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts attend to draw attendance from residents of many different states. Therefore, this study had a broad scope and included data gathered from subjects who permanently reside in many different locations all over The United States. Please also access a short video I have edited

which allows you, the reader, to come for a ride with me at the Hell's Canyon Motorcycle Rally in Baker City, Oregon at the following link:

<http://soundideas.pugetsound.edu> under the video files associated with Summer Research, Coleman, J.

I used hand written field notes when appropriate and an audio recording device to record data and conduct interviews when circumstances allowed. I also took digital photos and video of

various events. Unfortunately, due to some difficulties obtaining written media releases, I was unable to photograph or video record as many events or study participants as I had hoped. Although members of the Biker culture are eager to represent themselves in a more accurate and positive way, many Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts are very concerned with the ramifications and the social stigma of being labeled a “Biker” and the effects this could have on them professionally. Many potential study subjects expressed fear of reprisal if they were to be identified as a Biker from their employers and people who did not understand what a Biker really was. Although I reassured potential subjects that the video or photos were for research purposes, in an effort to protect these potential study subjects, I did not pursue consent forms or media releases if serious objections were raised. Unfortunately, I also had to discard some interviews and research materials pertaining to subjects who had previously signed media releases and consent forms as well. When they heard about the study outside of their immediate social group, family group, or club or had doubts about what the material might be used for, some study subjects requested that their consents and releases be withdrawn for comfort and safety reasons. I am mentioning this in an effort to impress upon the reader that the negative stereotypes and social stigma assigned to the American Biker have/has a real human impact and can very negatively affect members of the Biker culture and their associates in real and tangible ways. The fear of these negative affects is very real, and as I will discuss later in the research, so are the consequences.

Quantitative research was also conducted using electronic surveys administered through Survey Monkey® and in hard copy when electronic means were impractical. These surveys explored the concepts of; family (biological vs. chosen), gender relations, socialization, trust of law enforcement, dedication to riding, demographic information, and lifestyle choices. The electronic survey was publicized by word-of-mouth, the handing out of the small promotion cards containing the title of the study and the web address at which potential research subjects could access an open letter explaining the research at the end of which was an active link to access the survey, a webpage developed through an organization entitled “ABATE of Washington” (A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments), and a half page open letter published in the ABATE of Washington newsletter, Vol. 32, Issue 6, June 2010. (Please see appendices A:1, A:2, and A:3.)

One of the most positive facets of the Biker culture, which was proven by the unexpected amount of publicity this study received, was that Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts alike have a strong sense of community and social support. With the support of ABATE of Washington and its members and board of directors, the word about this study was spread to countless motorcycle riding community members and their associates. With the support of the Biker and Motorcycle Enthusiast community I was able to obtain 123 responses to this survey, only a small fraction of which were filled out in hard copy.

By comparing and contrasting quantitative survey results with the qualitative data gained from interviews and participant observation, as well as looking for contradictions in data, I was able to discern the differences and similarities in and between what the study participants do and what they say they do. While analyzing the results of the survey I noted many dimensions that helped to support the sociological assertion that there are more differences within groups than there are between groups. For example, more than 60% of the survey respondents reported that they do not smoke cigarettes. Before I analyzed the survey results, I thought, as I am sure many others do, that people who rode motorcycles tended to have higher rates of cigarette smoking than people who do not ride motorcycles. As I conducted participant observation during the

study I noticed that very few Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts were smoking. In this case the survey results were confirmed by my observations. The fact that so few Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts smoke cigarettes now also proves a similarity between the Biker culture and American culture in general. I suspect that the causes of lower numbers of smoking Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts are the same for the lower numbers of American cigarette smokers in recent years; an increase in education surrounding the health risks of smoking, limited public establishments where smoking is allowed, and the high cost of cigarettes.

One dimension that the survey measured which did not prove to be true between the survey results and what I observed was trust of law enforcement. Preliminary evaluation of the survey results appeared to indicate that survey respondents did tend to trust Law Enforcement Officials, but more often than not would not call for the help of a police officer unless it was absolutely necessary. What I observed during participant observation was that Motorcycle Enthusiasts and Bikers have very little trust for law enforcement, do not believe that law enforcement will act in their best interests, and would go to great lengths to be self policing and make every effort to handle a situation without getting law enforcement involved, even if it seemed that it would be in their best interests to have asked or assistance from a police officer. During interviews, when I asked both Motorcycle Enthusiasts and Bikers if they felt law enforcement officers would act in their best interests, more often than not, the answer was no. When I asked if they would feel comfortable calling the police for assistance, the answer was either "...not unless I had to." or "Absolutely not!"

The electronic survey and its results are still under the process of analysis. There are still many responses to the survey, the interview responses, and what I observed through participant observation which need to be compared and contrasted. There are also several correlations and regressions to be completed through further data analysis of the electronic survey results. This information will be forthcoming and posted as an amendment to this initial report.

Literature Review and Some History on the Development of the Biker Stereotype

Unfortunately, the tide of public opinion concerning the American biker changed drastically in 1947, thanks to a staged photo published with the intention of selling copy for "...Life Magazine..." (Gardener N/D.) On July 4th, 1947 the Gypsy tour rode into Hollister, California. The Gypsy tour was an American Motorcyclists Association (AMA) sponsored off road racing circuit primarily made up of motorcycle riding, ex-servicemen home from World War II. They were coming to the town of Hollister to engage in a weekend of riding skill exhibition and harmless fun. As is the case at most crowd drawing public functions that serve alcohol, there were a few disturbances. The local police were reported to have had to block off the streets because the motorcycle riders, drunk on testosterone and alcohol, were performing stunts on their motorcycles. The majority of the reported injuries received at, what would later become known as "The Hollister 'Motorcycle Riot'" (Gardener 1998), were self inflicted. The arrests made were primarily for public drunkenness. The perpetrators were released as soon as they were assessed to be sober.

In 1998 Mark E. Gardner interviewed several eye witnesses to the 1947 Hollister event. Of particular importance is an interview conducted with a man named Gus Deserpa who lived in Hollister at the time of the alleged riot. Deserpa explains the circumstances



behind the Life Magazine photo that changed public perception of the American Biker. Deserpa told Gardner that he saw a photographer scooping broken beer bottles together in a pile, then rolling a motorcycle into the mess. He saw another man drag a drunk man out of one of the local bars and prop him up on the motorcycle, put a beer bottle in the drunk's hand and rush to take a photo before the drunken man fell backwards off of the bike. Deserpa further stated that he thought to himself "...that isn't right..." He then stood behind the drunk propped up on the motorcycle because he was "... thinking that they wouldn't take it if someone else was in there. But they did anyway." (Deserpa qtd. by Gardener 1998.) Deserpa's testimony was authenticated by his presence in the photo that appeared on the cover of Life Magazine. (Coleman, unpublished work 2008)

I had initially written in the research proposal that the literature on the concept of Biker culture and the people associated with it is primarily negative and sensationalized for self serving purposes, whether that be from the point of view of Law Enforcement or individuals who self identify as Bikers. As recently as 2009, Thomas Barker and Kelly M. Human wrote an article for the Journal of Criminal Justice entitled "Crimes of the Big Four Motorcycle Gangs" in which they divide organized motorcycle riders into only two groups; "...conventional and deviant clubs..." (2009: 174). They then further subdivide the clubs they designate as deviant into a "...subculture of bikers..." who are to be considered even more "...norm violating...[and]...deviant motorcyclists..." (2009: 174.) Barker and Human further go on to offer a negative representation of international criminal statistics involving four internationally known motorcycle clubs. With such far reaching statistics involving what they term as a small "...subculture..." (2009: 174) this seems an effort to credit a small percent of a large global community with an alarming number of crimes. This well published alarmist point of view, and others, are the basis for many stereotypes American Bikers who choose to belong to these motorcycle clubs have to endure. Many researchers, in an effort to represent motorcycle clubs and their members as a group of dangerous criminals, offer no opposing opinion, nor do they offer any research attempts at gathering any opposing data to their negatively skewed research whatsoever.

During the research process I brought the Barker and Human article to the attention of some members of the Biker culture. I had come to know these Bikers as accomplished researchers concerning the political battles in which the Biker culture itself has become involved lately. They proposed the idea to research the arrest and/or conviction records of Law Enforcement Officials and persons with confirmed associations with nationally or regionally well known Motorcycle Clubs against each other in order to establish which group had a higher frequency of arrests and/or convictions for violent crimes. I conferred with a research librarian at The University of Puget Sound, my own resources from The Washington State Department of Corrections, and a personal contact who had experience conducting criminal investigations. The most promising resource for these types of statistics we could ascertain was the Western States Information Network (WSIN). I sent emails to contact the address provided on the website. After several attempts with no response, I initiated a telephonic campaign to acquire this information from WSIN. I was eventually given a contact person at the California Regional Office for The Department of Justice/Office of Criminal Statistics. After several weeks of voicemails we were finally able to speak person to person. Although I was impressed with this individual's persistence in trying to get in contact with me, I was disappointed with the results. She explained that the sort of demographic information I was looking for was not the sort of information they kept in their databases. When I inquired as to where she thought I should look, she suggested

trying to get in touch with someone who works with the State Gang Task Forces. When I explained that I would also need information on the arrest records for Law Enforcement Officials to complete my analysis she said she had no idea where I would get these statistics other than the news papers.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, I had to abandon this information pursuit at this point. I had already followed this means of investigation for several weeks to no end and was not going to have time to pursue it any further. However, I do think that this sort of research would be worthwhile in pursuing further at another time, or possibly by another researcher. I believe that the results of comparing criminal statistics between members of law enforcement and Bikers as social groups are essential if the claims of researchers such as Barker and Human are to be properly argued against. I believe ascertaining accurate and unbiased criminal statistics and comparing them to any other major subculture would prove valuable to build a credible rebuttal to the stereotype of bikers as a criminal American subculture.

As I further stated in my initial literature review, books like "HELL'S ANGEL The life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angel's Motorcycle Club" (2001) authored by well known, self proclaimed 'Biker King Pin', Sonny Barger, formally the President of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club, offer readers little to help American Bikers in their attempts to break through negative stereotypes. Over the summer, I read and reviewed several books written by undercover law enforcement officers, members of the Biker culture, and other authors detailing the Biker culture. Two books in particular seemed of great importance to discuss in the final research.

The first book is "HELL'S ANGELS; a Strange and Terrible Saga" by Hunter S. Thompson, reprinted with a biographical introduction by Douglas Brinkley (1999). The reasons for my viewing this particular book as important are; its significance in developing the negative stereotype of the American Biker and the deep seated grudge against Hunter S. Thompson that old time Bikers are still passing down to new generations of Bikers. During my research I was told repeatedly by old time Bikers to read Hunter S. Thompson's book about The Hell's Angles. I was told if I read that book I would understand why I meet with such distrust and resistance when I ask Bikers who don't know me if they would be interested in speaking with me.

There is no question that the year Thompson spent living and travelling with The Hell's Angels in the mid 60's was a flamboyant year for the club. However, and I think that this is what many forget when they read this book, it was a flamboyant year, a flamboyant decade for that matter, for the United States as a whole. This country was involved in a war thousands of miles away in which many of its young people were dying, the civil rights movement was waging a war at home on US soil, and drugs and free sex, although still socially condemned, were pervasive in America in every state in the union.

Hunter Thompson was an opportunist with a great opportunity to make a literary name for himself and he took full advantage of it. Due to previous events, such as the Time Magazine article and photo surrounding the 'Hollister Riot', and Hollywood's portrayals of Bikers in movies like "The Wild One" with Marlon Brando in 1953, the stage was already set for the negative biker stereotype. Thompson did nothing more than capitalize on a stereotype with a group of bikers that, even by their own account, enjoyed the notoriety his presence and resulting book brought them.

Hunter S. Thompson was a creative writer. He made a name for himself by looking at the world and society in his own unique way and writing about it with a flourish that was eventually labeled "Gonzo Journalism." (Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson 2008) When suggesting how a politician might warn society of the impending arrival of a group of

Hell's Angels, Thompson thought up this imaginative, but inflammatory and potentially damaging description...

Filthy Huns breeding like rats in California and spreading east. Listen further for the roar of the Harleys. You will hear it in the distance like thunder. And then, wafting in the breeze, will come the scent of dried blood, semen and human grease... The noise will grow louder and then they will appear, on the west horizon, eyes bugged and bloodshot, foam on the lips, chewing on some rooty substance smuggled in from a foreign jungle... they will ravish your women, loot your liquor stores and humiliate your mayor on a bench on the village square... (36)

This is a small example of the mind that wrote of an alleged Hell's Angels gang rape in Monterey, California in 1964 (Thompson 12) for which there were no credible witnesses or evidence and no one was ever tried or convicted.

In the interest of investigating Hunter S. Thompson to satisfy my curiosity as to who this man was, I watch the biographical film, "Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson." (2008) Some of this film had archived footage of Thompson's time spent with the Hell's Angels. While this film was interesting and did add to Thompson's credibility as far as having actually spent time with the Hell's Angels, it did little more than to convince me that this author spent a lifetime walking a fine line between fantasy and reality. Graphic descriptions from Thompson's ex-wife of his violent mood swings, drug use, and penchant for the dramatic confirmed my suspicion that he wrote the book detailing the time that he spent with the Hell's Angels with less of an interest in accurately representing this club, or the Biker culture itself, than for building a name for himself as a writer. In the film even Thompson's close friends comment on his propensity for exaggeration. With all of this said, I think that it is time for the few members of the Biker culture who still wear the wound of what they see as Hunter S. Thompson's betrayal of their culture to let go of this grudge. I would also urge those outside the culture to consider the source when they read books like Thompson's.

I also feel the need to discuss the book "Honor Few, Fear None; The Life and Times of a Mongol" (2008) by Rubén 'Doc' Cavazos, the former president of the Mongols Motorcycle Club. Unfortunately, the author of this book, Doc Cavazos has not only perpetuated the negative stereotype of the American Biker, he has allegedly turned what was once a legitimate motorcycle club into little more than a street gang. His book details his transition from a street gang member, growing up on the streets of East L.A., in what he refers to as "Gladiator school..." (33), to becoming a patch holder in the Mongols Motorcycle Club. This book was published in 2008. In January of 2009 Rubén 'Doc' Cavazos pled guilty to racketeering and conspiracy charges in federal court (Seattle Times 2009.) Cavazos book could leave the reader with two impressions; all the violence and crime that Cavazos has been involved in in his life is a matter of unfortunate circumstances and that he did the best he could, or that this man started out as a gang member and naturally transitioned to another gang by becoming a member of the Mongols M/C (Motorcycle Club.) Unfortunately, neither of these impressions will leave a good nor accurate impression of the Biker culture.

The outcome of Cavazos' involvement in the Biker culture and his alleged recruitment of street gang members, who had never mounted a motorcycle before or since, as foot soldiers for the Mongols M/C has been nothing but negative. The growing criminal activity that this club and a large number of its members engaged in has allowed for a precedent to be set in the federal courts for confiscating and granting injunctions against the use or display of Motorcycle Clubs'

symbols and patches. This injunction against the use or display of the Mongols insignia was granted in the interest of stopping the use of these symbols and patches in furthering criminal activity:

The plea deal between Cavazos and the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles was made in January but sealed until June 29, when the government filed for forfeiture of the gang's registered trademarks under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Practices Act. (Los Angeles Times 2009)

This invocation of the RICO act has further encouraged law enforcement profiling of Bikers, Motorcycle Clubs (M/Cs), Riding Clubs (R/Cs), their members, and Motorcycle Enthusiasts in general. Members of the Biker culture and their associates are more concerned now than ever before that they are at risk of losing their civil liberties and their right of free speech. This legal precedent has set in motion a mounting legal and political battle between Bikers, Motorcycle Enthusiasts, and Law Enforcement Officials.

The Politics of It All

Through this research study I have become aware of the current political and legal struggles of the American Biker in ways I was not privileged to before. I came into possession of a poster recently used in the training of local Law Enforcement Officers here in Washington State. This poster is clear and current evidence, from a 2010 Law Enforcement "Gang" training session that Washington State Law Enforcement Officers are being predisposed to unjustly classify Motorcycle Clubs as "Gangs" and the patch holders of these clubs as "Gang Members". (Please see appendices B:1, B:2, and B:3 for poster and its contents.)

The first of two titles in "Washington State Bill: S. 132: Gang Abatement and Prevention Act of 2009", include the statements that this bill's purpose is to create, "... a new criminal offense, "Street Gang Crime," consisting of knowingly committing gang crimes for purposes of furthering the activities of a criminal street gang." (Overcriminalized.com/The Heritage Foundation 2010.) To this date, no organized Motorcycle Club in the State of Washington has been officially or legally classified as a "Criminal Street Gang" by any sanctioned legal body or jurisdiction.

This previously mentioned poster is further evidence of the need for House Bill 2511- Motorcycle Profiling, or "The ANTI-Motorcycle Profiling Bill." I feel the members of the Biker culture and the victims of the confirmed motorcycle profiling are best suited to explain the specifics of House Bill 2511. Please view a short video I have prepared "bikerswhoarethesepeople" at the following link:
<http://soundideas.pugetsound.edu> under the video files associated with Summer Research, Coleman, J.

Some Confusion Within

The Biker culture is a very high context culture, especially concerning methods of communication. Many older members of the Biker culture stated that they use the following website to help train prospective members in order to help them avoid many misunderstandings commonly experienced by newcomers to the culture. Please visit this site for more information

at: <http://www.revsmc.net/id13.html> This site does a thorough job of discussing the meanings and methods of use of the many symbols, colloquialisms and gestures specific to the Biker culture.

Confusion surrounding communication styles generates animosity within the Biker culture and fear of the Biker culture from an outsider's perspective. One of the interesting findings of my research, I discovered while collecting hard copies of the survey is that there seems to be quite a bit of confusion within the Biker culture as to what a Motorcycle Club (M/C) is and exactly what a Riding Club (R/C) is. This explains quite a bit of the animosity I have noticed between some of the bigger and/or better established M/Cs and some of the not so well informed R/Cs. I collected fifteen hard copy surveys for which I had to conduct manual data entry. Within the group of people I collected them from there was only one person who could claim he belonged to an M/C, and even he was only a Prospect (not a fully patched member.) With this said, at least half of the survey respondents reported being a patch holding member of an M/C. This is not something that a Biker hides from his fellow Bikers. Therefore, this was a misunderstanding on the part of the survey respondents.

It has to be assumed that if there were this many respondents within such a small group who did not truly understand what membership in an M/C entails as apposed to an R/C, that this is a wide spread issue in the Biker culture and Motorcycle Enthusiast community. I could go into the specifics of the differences in membership in these clubs, but the website associated with the previously noted link will explain the major differences to anyone who is interested. What I do have to say about these differences between these groups and the aggravation I have noticed from some M/C patch holders when they have interactions with members of motorcycle riding clubs (R/Cs) is that it is the general consensus of M/C patch holders that the process of acquiring a patch for these clubs is much more arduous than the process of becoming a member of an R/C. M/C patch holders hold the part of their club title that reads "M/C" as somewhat sacred. They feel they worked extremely hard to deserve that M/C patch and to deserve to keep it and that they should be respected as a person who has earned the right to wear it. Some riding clubs (R/Cs) sell their patches on the internet and the only requirement for membership is application to the club and the purchase of a patch. Some R/Cs have an initiation process that very closely resembles that of an M/C. It is up the members of the Biker culture and of the Motorcycle Enthusiast community to educate themselves and each other on the differences in these types of clubs to ensure a cooperative and harmonious climate in the environments in which they co-exist. If both subsections of this American sub-culture take the time to communicate openly with each other, the cooperative nature of the clubs that The State of Washington is quickly becoming nationally renowned for will continue to thrive.

Gender Relations

Gender relations is another dimension of the Biker culture that will need to be fully analyzed by contrasting and comparing the survey results with how I have observed male and female members of the Biker culture and Motorcycle Enthusiasts community interact with each other face-to-face. One male interview subject, who self identified as a Biker, had this to say, "Us Bikers may be a little old-fashioned and chauvinist, but we will be the first people to put our coats down over a puddle for you girls to walk across." (June 2010) I have noticed quite a bit of cultural lag in the Biker culture where it concerns the male opinion of females and their place and purpose in the culture. However, the female members of the Biker culture, are members of this culture, at least as far as I have observed, completely of their own choice. These women, me included, find alternative

methods to exercise their social power within this historically patriarchal society. Deniz Kandiyoti describes the system of gender relations at work within the Biker culture, when she describes how women function successfully within other patriarchal cultures in her article “Bargaining With Patriarchy” (1988) She states that...

Women strategize within a set of concrete constraints, which I identify as patriarchal bargains. Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct “rules of the game” and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with the varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression.

In other words, women in the Biker culture have a measurable amount of influence, but often times approach situations indirectly. Unfortunately, this can sometimes give more power to the rumor mill in a negative manner than it normally would in cultures where men and women have more open lines of communication established. Nowhere was this more evident for me than in my research.

Biker Chick!

Nurse Navigator
Providing education, guidance
and support for breast cancer
patients

A diagnosis of breast cancer can be overwhelming. The nurse navigator at the Providence Regional Cancer System can help ensure that your medical and emotional needs are met through a variety of supportive offerings.



Services include:

- Guidance through the medical maze, including help in understanding diagnosis and treatment options
- Assistance in interpreting a variety of medical information
- Consultations with you and your family to assess medical and emotional needs
- Help in accessing resources for educational and support needs (counselors, peer, group and spiritual support)
- Continued contact with you and your family throughout the cancer experience

All services are designed to enhance your care and quality of life during treatment as well as help your loved ones navigate through this challenging time. To schedule an appointment or learn more about the Nurse Navigator Program,

When I was speaking to male study subjects who I would not normally have spoken to in such a familiar manner, women who did not know me, did not know my purpose for speaking to these men, and were not informed of the social steps I had to take to make my introduction to these men, became alarmed and the rumors started to fly. I had to take steps to perform damage control which I had not prepared for. I was under the false assumption that my research and my motives had been well publicized enough throughout the Biker culture because of the electronic survey publicity that I did not need to introduce myself or explain my purpose to anyone but the study subjects I intended to interview. This was a big mistake on my part, and unfortunately, caused enough discomfort with some of the members of the Biker culture that it started to negatively affect my ability to obtain interviews, and retain consents given for interviews previously conducted. This threatened to derail my research.

I am not holding that females of the Biker culture solely responsible for these unforeseen obstacles. However, it is a clear example of how much influence females can have in this culture. Fortunately, this influence can direct members of the Biker culture in very positive ways as well. I believe that many of the social networking skills this culture has developed as a whole, have come from the examples of strong female members of the Biker culture.

I have to admit, that even I had some preconceived notions about females in the Biker culture, the kind of people they were, and the demographic they might fit. Of the three scheduled interviews I conducted with females who self identified as Bikers, all of them were mothers, all

of them were employed at least part-time, and all of them had education past a high school diploma. The one female I interviewed who did not already have her degree was raising a young child, working part-time, and attending college classes. I picked these female study subjects based on information I already had knew about them.

I assumed that when I spoke to other female members of the Biker culture, outside my immediate chosen family, I would find women that had very different demographics from mine. To my surprise, without question, every single female study subject I spoke with at any length had some sort of education and training past high school. I spoke to one female, who self identified as a Biker, while I was at a major Biker/Motorcycle Enthusiast social function, who I prejudged to be uneducated and possibly have a less than favorable past history. To my shock, and private embarrassment, when I started to detail my research she started to tell me the process she went through when she was developing her thesis for her psychology degree. This interaction taught me a valuable lesson about how even I, as a female who self identifies as a biker, can subscribe to the same negative stereotypes I am attempting to prove incorrect. What I found out through my research is that the only thing unusual about me is that I waited until I was in my 30s to go back to college. I am proud to say, that as a well educated, intelligent, independent, self-sufficient, female, who self identifies as a biker; I am not the exception. I am the rule.

After all these months of research, I still cannot say why or how I know who is and is not a Biker. However, I can say that I know better now who the people I know to be bikers are as people. I have learned how this culture is continually working cooperatively, at least as it concerns The State of Washington, to improve and grow. I now realize the positive potential of the Biker culture. I also recognize my own shortcomings as they relate to the culture I call my own.

I hope to be able to learn even more through the further development of my research and the data I have gathered through the survey which was administered during the study. The dimensions of this culture I hope to further develop through research include, but are not limited to; the concept of family (biological vs. chosen), trust of law enforcement, and gender relations. I hope to have comparisons and contrasts completed, as well as correlations and regressions run on the different variables, and have a report compiled to attach as an amendment to this research report in the near future. For now I consider this report a living document.



Stonehenge Replica near Goldendale, Washington and some Biker Chick named "Stash."

(Appendix,A:1)

Vol. 32, Issue 6

June 2010

ABATE of Washington

A
Brotherhood
Against
Totalitarian
Enactments



“Dedicated to Freedom of the Road”
www.ABATE-WA.org

Freedom

Spring Opener
June 17-20
Goldendale
Details on Page 12

**Ride Safe!
Set an example!**

Legislative information - Events - Cycle Tech - and More

ABATE is an organization dedicated to the Freedom of the Road, raising public awareness through education, political and community action and charitable deeds. Membership is open to anyone, 18 years or older, interested in promoting freedom, whether or not you own or ride a motorcycle.

(Appendix A:2)

Bikers; Who Are These People?

Hello all my Biker brothers and sisters and my extended Motorcycle Enthusiast family. My name is Julie. I also go by 'Stash'. I am a full time student studying Comparative Sociology and also work at The University of Puget Sound in historic Northern Tacoma, WA. I am a person who has ridden (as a passenger and behind bars myself) most of my life and, of course, an ABATE member. I would be grateful for your assistance in taking advantage of what is, for all of us, a once in a lifetime opportunity.

I have been awarded a research grant with the specific purpose of studying Bikers, Motorcycle Enthusiasts, and people who associate with them. I will be investigating the concepts of; family (biological vs. chosen), gender relations, socialization, communication, trust of law enforcement, dedication to riding, and anything else that presents itself as significant throughout the research process. I will be conducting research through participation (going on rides and to events), one on one interviews, and gathering data through an electronic survey to be taken online.

Protecting the study participants from any issues which could arise from their participation in the study is of the utmost importance to me. With this said, the survey is

through a third party, electronic service, and completely anonymous. No IP addresses will be saved or tracked.

This is where I would like your participation. ABATE of Washington is in full support of my research and the Web Master has graciously agreed to post a link to the survey so anyone who wishes to participate may do so through the ABATE of Washington Website at:

<http://www.abate-wa.org>

My research will be published in an electronic repository sponsored by the university. I will also be presenting my findings at a symposium at the university sometime in the fall of 2010. This will be a very small venue. If I can get enough interest in the results of the study, which by the positive response I have already received, I will; I will be negotiating with university officials to schedule a larger venue in order for study participants and community members to attend an in-depth presentation of the results. This is OUR chance to tell people who might otherwise unfairly judge us WHO WE (as Bikers and Motorcycle Enthusiasts) ACTUALLY ARE in OUR OWN WORDS! Please, get on board with me and let the public know you are not a stereotype. If you would like to contact me personally to offer suggestions or schedule an interview, all of my contact information is on the survey, as well as contact info for my academic advisor at the university. Thank you for your support!



**Saturday
June, 12th**

The Ronnie Run

All Proceeds Benefit the ALS Association, Evergreen Chapter

All Bikes Welcome!
\$10 donation per person.
Registration: 8am-10am • First Bike Out: 10am

Enjoy a 100 mile scenic 5-Stop Ride throughout
Thurston, Grays Harbor & Mason County.
Ride begins at the Shipwreck Cafe
244 Madrona Beach Rd. NW, Olympia, WA
Located off of Hwy 101: Take Mud Bay/2nd Ave SW Exit.
Turn left onto Madrona Beach Rd.

Ride ENDS @ Taylor Station Rest & Lounge!
Complimentary Spaghetti Feed!
Prizes! Outdoor Seating!

In Support of a rider battling ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease
For more info contact: Diana@QuickThrottle.com



ALS Association
Fighting Lou Gehrig's Disease

**Evergreen
Chapter**

(Appendix A:3)

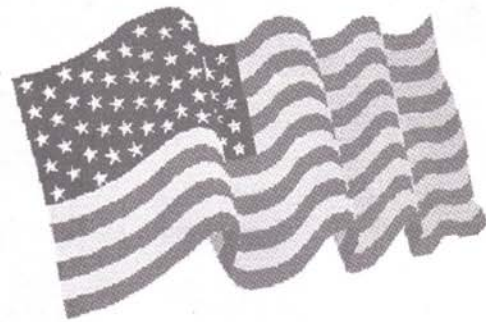
Dedicated to Freedom of the Road



A.B.A.T.E. of Washington
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Tacoma, WA 98419-0369

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Let Your
Voice
Be Heard...
Everyone
Counts!

Freedom

The ABATE of Washington Newsletter

www.ABATE-WA.org

Let Those Who Ride Decide

(Appendix B:1)

Motorcycle Clubs in the Pacific Northwest

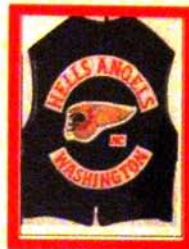
Not all motorcycle clubs are Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMG). The FBI has designated five clubs as OMGs; Hells Angels, Pagans, Outlaws, Bandidos, and Mongols. Some OMGs have smaller "support clubs" or independent motorcycle clubs that at times will claim allegiance to OMGs.

As a general rule, motorcycle groups and supporters will have three-piece patches. The three-piece patch consists of the top rocker with the gang name, the center patch with the gang logo, and the bottom rocker with the chapter location. A small rectangular "MC" patch is usually included at the bottom right of the logo to indicate that the organization is a motorcycle group. Three-piece patches, when worn on a leather jacket, are called "colors". When worn on a denim vest, they are often referred to as "cuts". The following are three-piece patches commonly seen in Washington State and Oregon:

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs



Bandidos



Hells Angels



Mongols



Outlaws

Support/Independent Clubs



Gypsy Joker



Outsiders



Amigos



Destralos



Guerreros



Hermanos



Hombres



Canyon Riders



Brother Speed



Free Souls



Ghost Riders



Iron Horsemen



Vagos



Resurrection



American Steel

Officers in contact with an individual that is suspected of being involved in OMG activity should take careful note of his affiliation. Please check the "Homeland Security block" and report any contact with an OMG member or prospect to the (Organization name removed)

(Appendix B:2)

Motorcycle Clubs in the Pacific Northwest

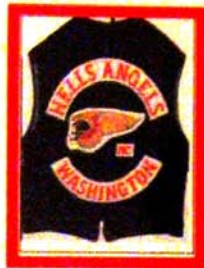
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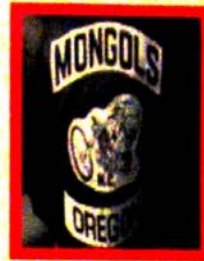
Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs



Bandidos



Hells Angels



Mongols



Outlaws

Credible, long time Bikers saw the Outlaw patch on the right and confirmed it to be a fictitious patch. The Outlaws are a real M/C, but this is not their patch. This is what law enforcement is being trained with as recently as 2010.

(Appendix B:3)

Officers in contact with an individual that is suspected of being involved in OMG activity should take careful note of his affiliation. Please check the "Homeland Security block" and report any contact with an OMG member or prospect to the (Name of organization removed)

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