



Scribes Legislative Voice



JANUARY, 2010 VOLUME 001, ISSUE 7

ABATE OF FLORIDA, INC.

Happy New Year! I heard a scientist state that as we get older our perception of time is skewed; hence time actually does seem to go faster as we age. Therefore I stand firmly on science when I say, "Wow, 2009 just flew by!" It is a tradition to reflect on the past year and then make a New Year's Resolution to help us in the coming year. I feel that it is apropos for all of us to reflect and think how we can improve our ability to help in this cause that we have all joined. In this edition, I hope to give you a start on your own contemplation and goal setting. **DARRIN "SCRIBE" BROOKS, State Legislative Trustee, ABATE of Florida, Inc.**

"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every New Year find you a better man." ~ Benjamin Franklin

Here we are standing at the dawning of a new year. You can not help but wonder what 2010 will have in store for each one of us and for ABATE of Florida, Inc. Will we be wearing helmets? Will we have a stiffer penalties Bill in place? Will our organization be stronger? What will happen that we have not even thought about? Some people believe that what will be, will be, and there is nothing that we can do to alter the future. I for one firmly believe that we can influence our future by what we do and do not do. Therefore, we do have some sway over what the legislative session has for us. We just need to make the effort to have our voices heard. We need to stop relying on others to do our work. Let's all make a resolution, a commitment to step up and do at least one thing to help our legislative cause. Just one call, one e-mail, just do something. We have too many people who can "talk the talk" of ABATE, but they have never "walked the walk". I heard that someone in my home chapter told people that "We need to forget about all this political stuff and go back to when we just talked about poker runs and parties." To our members that agree with that person, I say that you are in the wrong organization. There are many social motorcycle groups that would love to take your money. We need those of you that "walk

the walk" to help me reach the others and encourage them to do just one thing to help ABATE reach out to our Legislator's. You are the leaders in your Chapter, and we need you to do everything that you can to motivate our members to fight for our rights. You have received the tools about how to communicate to your Legislators; soon it will be time to put words into actions. No one wants to look back at 2010 and say that was the year we lost our freedom to choose how we ride. Worse yet, we do not want 2010 to be remembered as the year we spend too much time fighting amongst ourselves that we could not fight for ourselves. Let us choose right now to do something to make an effort to protect our freedom and our rights as motorcyclist. The observant readers have noticed that I love quotes; so let me leave you with one of my favorites. This quote sums up exactly where we are right now and what may happen if we decide to do nothing. "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." ~ Ronald Reagan

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past." Thomas Jefferson

2009, it was neither the Best of times, nor the Worst of times (my apologies Mr. Dickens). We took our lumps with the stiffer penalties bill and the last minute change in the safety awareness money allocation. But we picked ourselves up and are working to make the stiffer penalties Bill better and we made due with the safety supplies that we received. Was everyone happy? Of course not, after all is everyone EVER happy? I know members of ABATE that perfectly fit the saying "I'm not happy until you're not happy."

The worst part was that some of the lumps we received in 2009 were caused from within our own membership, our own family! We had problems within Chapters and between Chapters. Our State Board had some issues that some people are still to this day trying to keep the wound open. The Board with the help of the membership has also picked itself up and got back to work.

2009 saw the end of Flashback, our State party and not to forget the passing of too many friends and family. But 2009 also saw the birth of a new Chapter and many new members who are willing to take up the torch of motorcycle rights. We also saw an infusion of new blood into the State Board and a bigger and better State Office in Deland. We look back on 2009 we have witnessed some good and bad moments. We made it to 2010 and wonder what it will hold in store for us?

LEGISLATOR'S CORNER

This month I welcome Rep. Denise Grimsley from District 77 to our Legislator's Corner. Rep. Grimsley was first elected to the Florida House in 2004. She still works as an RN in the ER at Florida Heartland Hospital. She currently chairs the Health Care Appropriations Committee. She is very happy to call Lake Placid home.



Rep. Denise Grimsley
R - District 77

LV - The economy has affected everyone and will be a huge issue this coming session in Tallahassee. How can concerned citizens help our Legislators deal with tough issues like the economy?

DW - The only constitutional responsibility the Florida Legislature has each year is to pass a balanced budget. This year will be extremely challenging because of the continuing downturn of the economy. The 2010-2011 budget is facing a potential gap of \$923 million. While last year's gap was substantially larger, the shortfall in the coming year means tough budget decisions must be made yet again.

Equally important is the impact of the federal stimulus dollars that will begin to disappear over the next two years. For the 2011-2012 budget year, the budget gap could be as much as \$2.3 billion. This should not come as a surprise to us. In fact, we began planning for the impending end to stimulus funds this year by reducing current spending and not using federal stimulus dollars for new government programs while planning for the future. However, this anticipated budget gap means that we continue to have our work cut out for us to balance our state budget and get our economy moving again. It is essential for the legislature to focus on doing what it can to get the economy

moving and it's equally important for the residents of this state to communicate to their legislators any ideas that they have to create jobs.

LV - The members of ABATE like to give back to our community, what is your opinion on citizens volunteering for county advisory boards and do you suggest other ways that we can help our communities?

DW - Absolutely. Involvement in the community is essential for continuous improvement. There are also numerous appointments to boards and councils made by the Governor. The list of vacancies is published quarterly and can be found at http://www.flgov.com/2007_boards_commissions

LV - What is your opinion on motorcyclist, 21 years and older, having the right and freedom to decide for themselves whether to wear a helmet or not to wear one?

DW - To be honest I have conflicting feelings on the issue. As a nurse who spent many years working in the emergency room I have seen many lives lost from head injuries that would have been prevented with a helmet. Recently, one of my patients, a 30 year old, was brought in with a head injury that rendered him brain dead. My heart went out to his Mother who had to make the decision to end his life support. The next week a young Father came in with multiple gouges in his helmet following an accident. For him he was able to walk out of the ER with his wife and 2 young children.

Over the years all of my patients have told me the same thing and that is "We are not the problem, the people driving cars are". That is my nurse side. As a legislator I voted against primary seatbelt enforcement because I don't believe government should tell us what to do or how to live our lives. You are adults and I believe you are capable of making your own choice.