

If you ride a motorcycle . . .

You may want to read this.

Did you know that there are organizations that fight for your motorcycle rights? Yes, there are groups out there that would like nothing better than to eliminate motorcycles altogether, or at least severely limit their freedoms. After all, isn't the reason most of us ride is for the feeling of freedom that motorcycling provides?

One of these freedoms that they have tried to suppress was keeping your children from riding with you. We hear many stories of kids who say some of the best bonding times they had were when they were on the back of their dad's or mom's bike on a trip. And there is always the issue of mandating the use of helmets.

The organizations that are out there protecting your motorcycling rights are called Motorcycle Rights Organizations, or MRO's. These include the nationwide ABATE chapters, and more local organizations like the Concerned Bikers Organization. Did you know that you have a local MRO right here in Carroll County? This is the Virginia Bikers Association, or VABA for short.

VABA, in coordination with MRO's like the Virginia chapters of ABATE, have successfully pushed legislation to eliminate motorcycle only checkpoints, allow motorcycles to ride two abreast (this had resulted in reckless driving charges just for pulling up beside another bike at a stop), allow motorcycles to use HOV lanes, and to allow a motorcycle to treat a non-changing red light as a stop sign so you can proceed when it is safe to do so. One of the first laws that we got changed was to modify the height of the handlebars on a bike. The law had originally stated that they could only be 21 inches above the saddle horn, which some production bikes did not even meet. We got it changed to where a rider must be able to use the full function of the controls. These are just a few of the initiatives that your Virginia MRO's have successfully passed through the legislative process.

The Virginia Bikers Association also contributes to charities like the local Carroll County Christmas Fund.

If these issues are important to you, please consider joining the Virginia Bikers Association. Besides, we have a great time together and plan some great group rides.

VABA is not a political organization, but one that is active with the legislative process to insure that bills do not negatively impact motorcycling in Virginia.

The Virginia Bikers Association meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 at the Quality Inn on Airport Road in Hillsville. Come on out and hear more about what is going on in the motorcycling world. Visit our web site at: www.vabikers.org.

