

Presentation is everything

Normally, when you hear that phrase, someone is talking about fine dining or sales, not motorcycling advocacy. Well, in its' own way, motorcycling advocacy is definitely dependent on our sales ability.

The obvious portion is how we present our message to legislators and staff. Presenting factual information in a calm, respectful manner goes a long way towards putting forward a professional image. We all know that, we mostly follow that maxim, and when we deviate it can be chalked up to passion for our lifestyle. The folks in Olympia fully understand constituents may not be polished. (I don't get that mulligan because I am down there way too much.)

The intangible part of presentation is how we present ourselves to the "civilian" community specifically and to the wide world in general. You never know with whom you are dealing when you are speaking with strangers or even casual acquaintances. Just like we may run in some wide circles outside of our motorcycling community, so may the random stranger in the grocery store or at the park concert. It behooves us to present ourselves as reasonable people, no matter the area of discussion. You never know when someone might be a personal friend/neighbor of some person who can shut down our issues.

"Madam Speaker, I was buttonholed by some biker in the grocery store, and I don't think that they were wrapped too tight." That can be devastating and we might not even know that it happened.

The other land mine, and it is huge, is our social media presence. For "civilians," the rules of engagement are different than they are for self-identified citizen advocates. The citizen is only bound by platform standards, with no real requirement for intelligence or social skills. As soon as you friend up any politicians the rules change. A whole bunch of the memes, attacks, unsubstantiated theories, etc. can give the wrong impression, especially in the political arena. This is not to say that people shouldn't have their personal opinions, especially on their personal media page, but I would ask that you put them forward in a respectful and reasoned manner. "The (pick a party) is nothing more than a criminal conspiracy/elitist/unamerican cabal undermining our great democracy," is off the table. Leave that to the nut-bags who are never going to be effective in the public sector. By not engaging in that nasty vice we will look smarter from the get go.

Okay, the soapbox is shoved back into the closet until next month.