

around the bend...

The Independent Biker

Carmen Juch

WARNING

This article is based on opinion.

It can contain sarcasm, derision or incongruities. Protective clothing may be necessary when reading.

We are all different, some of us more "different" than others. Motorcycle riders have been singled out for many moons as being "out of the ordinary". We have been joined on the outskirts of society from time to time by others also singled out, but as each group is eventually accepted and enters the main-stream, we, the motorcycle rider, still remains behind on the fringes. I think we have something to be proud of in that.

"It gives me great pleasure indeed to see the stubbornness of an incorrigible nonconformist warmly acclaimed." —Albert Einstein

I think Albert would have loved the bikers of this day. He says he loved to see the incurable rebel applauded. And in that we are, incurable rebels in our own distinct way, but applauded? Not so much.

It doesn't surprise me that he would be the one to say this since he himself was a non-conformist and unafraid to speak-up against what the majority thought.

The motorcyclists' stubborn refusal to conform to public opinion has long been that which is considered unacceptable by conventional America. Most of us have strong views and we aren't afraid to speak them – I know – I'm one of them.

But throughout my life I have noted that the really great people, the ones I can admire, are the ones who speak out, have the specifics of the situation backed up with facts and they do not necessarily agree with the majority, just because it is the majority. Another important point, they seem to know the difference between an opinion and an opinion based on fact, a critical element in discussing anything.

"It is proof of a ... low mind ... to think with ...the majority, merely because the majority is the majority. Truth does not change because it is, or is not, believed by a majority of the people." - Giordano Bruno.

Okay, he uses a lot of words to say simply what I said above; the truth is the truth even if the majority of those around you don't believe it. And how ludicrous is it to agree merely to fit in? And truly, how like "totally un-biker-like" Dude!

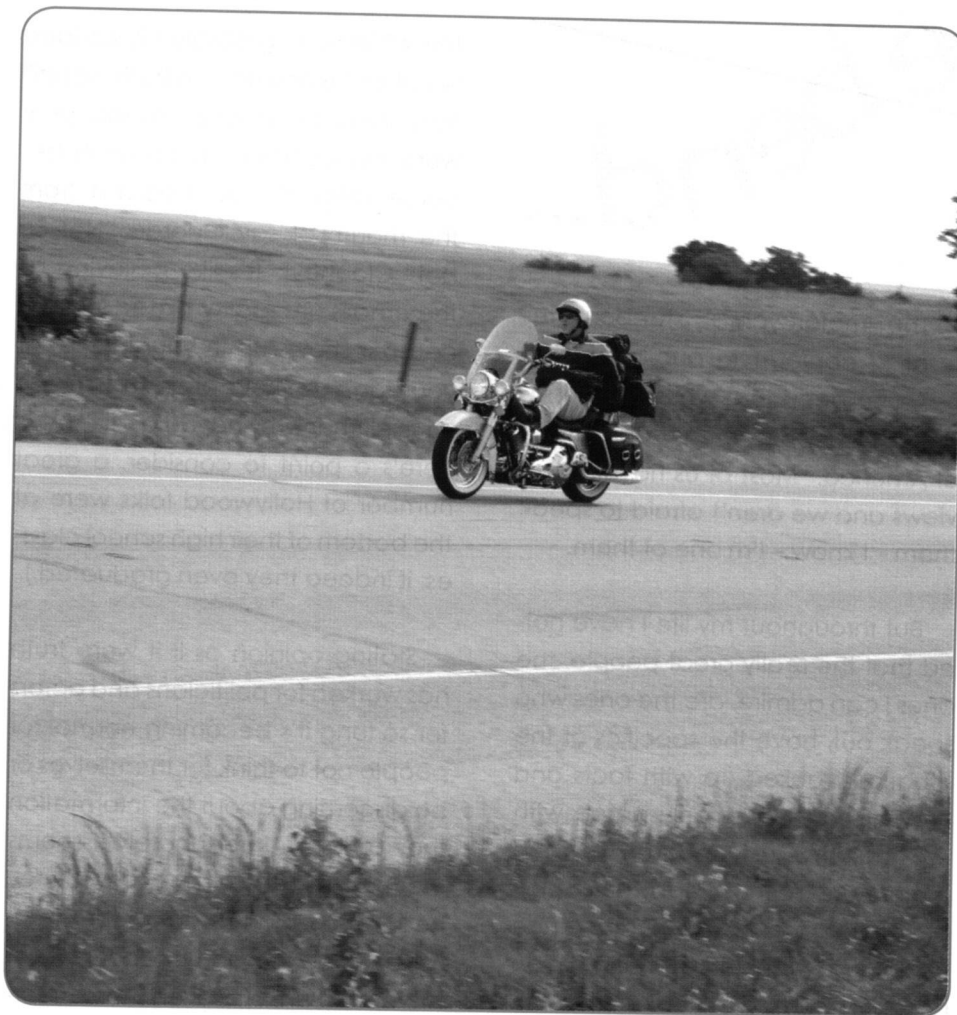
It is quite fascinating that so many folks we see will quote something they hear, see or read as a fact, all

the while having absolutely no idea whether it is or is not the truth, yet still they spread it to others as though it were the accurate information because after all they heard it from the mouth of say George "Not So Hot" Clooney! It's like believing all the emails are reality-based just because it shows up in your in box! If you don't use your brain to think for yourself then why have it at all? (And here's a point to consider, a great number of Hollywood folks were at the bottom of their high school classes, if indeed they even graduated.)

Stating opinion as if it were truth has worked for politicians and actors for so long it's becoming normal for people not to think for themselves or be discerning about the information they obtain. Unfortunately it seems they just spout forth whatever they hear rather than research for themselves what the actual accuracy of the details are. It's even more unfortunate when they teach their children to be the same, accepting of whatever they hear. I'm sure it isn't across the board, but in general it seems to me that more biker's are not just accepting of the globbert-gook they hear but are thoughtful and discerning.

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect." -Mark Twain

Isn't that the truth? I find that whenever I am beginning to agree with too many people (usually the ones on television and most of whom have no idea what it is like in my world) it is time to take a step back and review the situation in-depth. I



would say almost 95% of the time I revise my idea about what is going on once I have done a complete evaluation of the situation.

"Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but usually manages to pick himself up, walk over or around it, and carry on." -Winston Churchill

I think I learned this very early on when I wrote a real live actual Judge a scathing letter about his findings on a case. (I was 19.) It turned out I read and believed the newspaper's detailing of the events. I didn't have the true facts. When the Judge wrote me back with the details, I was

very sorry for not checking the details before placing my foot into my mouth. Quite embarrassing and a true life lesson. I wish I had that letter today but I was so embarrassed I got rid of the evidence.

I don't want to be one of those people Churchill speaks of, so, while it seems easier to agree with everyone than to step out and be different, I refuse to do it. And maybe that is what attracted me to motorcycles and the lifestyle. I think that is why being a biker is so fabulous, most time you are allowed to have your own opinion in a discussion with your fellow rider without the risk to your friendship just because your view-

point differs from theirs.

In the world outside "Bikedom" people generally become emotional then aggressive when confronted with facts regarding one of their oft-spewed out opinions (issued as fact). Feeling pinned down and then knowing a "win" over evidence cannot be had, they become irrational and angry. It's a sad thing to watch a person fight to be wrong rather than gain knowledge from the information presented to them and grow. Sad indeed.

"We want the facts to fit the preconceptions. When they don't, it is easier to ignore the facts than to change the preconceptions." -Jesamyn West

For us to survive as a race, it isn't necessary to try mold us all from the same die. On the contrary, I believe survival depends on making our differences something we can learn from and using the creativity that comes out of these diversities. But it does depend on each of us having the ability to understand and ascertain truth from a pile of poop.

So remember as Huang Po said "The foolish reject what they see and not what they think; the wise reject what they think and not what they see."

Or you might want to remember it this way.

It takes both pistons and cylinders to make a bike run and it should take both the facts and your brain to make your mouth run.