

# Phoenix BikeFest

## No Colors, No Comment

Well, in this space we thought we'd be sharing news of how the second year of the breakaway Phoenix BikeFest gathering went, during Bike Week in AriZona.

But over the years we have maintained a policy of not attending events that we learn are using restrictive practices toward their attendance; such as 'No Colors' restrictions, or mandatory helmet requirements in our 'Freedom of Choice' state.

Despite that, I did have some questions regarding BikeFest. So I sent an inquiry, via their website, for a rep to contact me... to which I got no response.

Apparently, this fledgling event, while hoping to build its attendance numbers, still has the self-confidence to alienate a significant population of the motorcycling community... especially when you count not only the patch holders themselves but their friends & supporters too.

In preparation for some of her Sisters visiting for Bike Week festivities; Kat, President of the Medieval Maidens MC's AZ Charter, sent this question to event organizers from AZ Bike Week & Phoenix BikeFest, "Is there going to be any refusing of Motorcycle Clubs into events this year? I am a President of Medieval Maidens MC and wanted to know this before having sisters travel in from out of state. Thank you." Correspondence with Arizona Bike Week garnered this response, "We do not have a 'no colors' policy. Look forward to seeing you at the event." To my knowledge, she received no answer from BikeFest.

Correspondence via the ACMC {AZ Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs} email list revealed that a representative from another riding organization also attempted to contact Phoenix BikeFest. "I just received a reply from the organizers of Bikefest and they confirmed that colors will not be allowed into the venue at all."

That simple word, 'organizers'... it allows a noisome policy to be handed down with no spe-

cific person's name attached. It's a generic umbrella that provides no one to contact for comment & no one to take personal responsibility for it. How 'comfortable' for them.

Ah yes.... and then there's the ugly specter of 'selective enforcement'... In reviewing the BikeFest 2015 photo gallery, I saw an MC patch out of Antarctica. Other online galleries showed patches worn by members of BACA [Bikers Against Child Abuse], ALR [American Legion Riders], HOG [Harley Owners Group ~ of course], and the Buffalo Soldiers MC. A bone of contention here? Aside from the onerous policy itself, that is ... is Equal Enforcement. Either everyone should be restricted from wearing their colors or no one should be.

Now elsewhere during Bike Week, everyone was welcome. Kathy McKenzie, GM at Chester's Harley-Davidson, made it clear at their Backstage Biker Bash that Chester's is patch-friendly. Her comment to me on the topic? "Chester's H-D is like Switzerland ~ neutral territory. Everyone is welcome. Just leave any issues you may have outside the gate."

A no-colors policy for motorcyclists is akin to banning cowboys from the rodeo if they're wearing a hat. 'Cause that cowboy hat is a sure giveaway that trouble is a brewin'. The restrictions are equally idiotic & ineffective.

We would like to believe that any policy restricting who could attend their event falls at the feet of Westgate, and the Phoenix BikeFest people were caught between a rock & a hard place... Such as, they needed a venue large enough to hold the size event they hoped would take place & Westgate management was unwilling to negotiate their policy. That is likely the case, as everyone was welcome at last year's BikeFest, at Wild Horse Pass.

Will Phoenix BikeFest 2016 take place at the same venue next year? Dunno ~ Can't say. None of the 'organizers' responded to my inquiry for comment.

*Fallout*