This Handbook is designed to introduce our members to the mindset of the 1%er and M/C members

From your friendly, neighborhood

COC/MC Relations & Liaison Committee
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**Introduction**

This Handbook is designed to introduce our members to the mind set of the 1%er and M/C members. What started out in the 1950's as a bunch of rowdy veterans, described by the AMA as "The 1% of all motor cyclists who give the rest a bad name", wanting to blow off steam and have a good time, has become a serious, devoted lifestyle with it's own rules of conduct, ideas of respect and honor, and its own form of discipline.

It is not the intent of this publication to "scare" you, or to explain everything fully, but rather educate you on the basics of interacting with people who choose to live that lifestyle. Rest assured, they take these things very seriously and this is simply a tool to help you understand how to be a member of a back patch wearing association when you encounter a 1%er or m/c member. ALWAYS REMEMBER that your actions while wearing your vest reflect on ALL of us. If you cannot abide by the guidelines of conduct set forth here, please do not try to converse with the people it describes on our behalf.

If you have any further questions, please contact a member of the COC/ MC relations committee.

**The Rebels**

The following are direct excerpts from "The Rebels. A brotherhood of outlaw bikers"

By Daniel Wolf

As far as Outlaw Bikers are concerned, ownership of a Harley is not sufficient in itself to make one a biker, but it is the necessary and only place to start.

Outlaw Bikers consider the Japanese motorcycle to be the motorcycle of the establishment. Japanese manufacturers changed forever the image of the motorcycle by making it socially respectable, mechanically dependable, and financially affordable. Respectability was achieved by an advertising campaign that whitewashed the motorcyclist's image of any predilections for crime or social deviance. The first and largest Japanese manufacturer made extensive use of the slogan 'You meet the nicest people on a Honda.' Perhaps more to the point was one of their advertisements in National Geographic that featured the middle class family barbecue, complete with green lawn, white picket fence, and a cherry red motorcycle. The caption read, 'Honda. The motorcycle for people who think they hate motorcycles.' Dependability resulted from innovative technology and engineering that made the motorcycle easy to operate and maintain, and that introduced frills and comfort features, such as computerized cruise control, push-button adjustment of the suspension system, AM/FM stereo, auto reverse cassette player and intercom, a four speaker surround sound system, an electronic travel computer for elapsed time and average speed, and automatic transmission. Affordability was brought about by a marketing strategy of selling motorcycles at rock bottom prices in order to eliminate competition - 'dumping' according to an international trade commission ruling in 1983.

Realizing that there was little future in a business that catered to social outcasts, the Japanese emasculated the motorcycle as a border marker in order to sell it to Mr. and Ms. average North American. Anyone can buy and handle one, even those who lack the mechanical skill, personal
dedication, and commitment that are the hallmarks of the true biker. The Japanese motorcycle does not allow the biker to make a statement about personal freedom or macho self reliance and daring. Such a motorcycle could not become one of life's priorities because there is no 'price' to be paid. Outlaw bikers develop a sectarian contempt for the ricer, whom they consider as different from them 'as night and day.' For the biker, his bike is a mode of personal transformation, the focal point of his identity. He sees the ricer as someone for whom the motorcycle is strictly a mode of transportation. The biker finds meaning in life through his motorcycle. It is not a casual hobby sport, but rather a cult-like dedication whose devotees 'Live to Ride. Ride to Live.' 'The life of a Biker is riding. His bike is his first obligation no matter what else is wrong. If he has ten dollars to his name and his bike needs an oil change, then his bike gets an oil change. If I need a pair of shoes and the bike needs a tire, I'll bum a pair of shoes off one of my brothers and I'll go out and buy a tire for my bike. If my bike needs five dollars worth of gas and I want a beer, I'll put five dollars worth of gas in my bike and worry about where I'm going to find the beer later. A biker is a biker. To me he lives and thinks bikes twenty-four hours a day' (Caveman, Rebels MC). For bikers, life without a Harley would be mere existence. The hog is the basis for their lifestyle. Bikers see the ricer as someone who has about as much personal regard for his motorcycle as he does for his Maytag washer.

The emblem that an outlaw club chooses for its colors emphasizes its separation from the rest of society as a powerful and elite macho group. The symbolism is bold. It might feature a skull patch (Rebels), a laughing devil's head (Satan's Choice), a skeleton holding a shotgun and handcuffs (Bounty Hunters), a shrouded skull (Grim Reapers), or a horned and grinning death's head skull wearing an old leather flye rs helmet with wings (Hells Angels). These are images of death, power freedom, and rebellion. But for the patch holder the underlying theme is that of heroism; his colors represent him as the warrior hero. Regardless of whether the colors depict the skull of the Rebels or the lion's head of the Warlords, they are symbols of heroic sentiment that promote feelings of pride. The message is that the bearer is not afraid of what his symbol stands for and that he has the 'balls' to make it his ally. To both the cop and the club member the colors are an unmistakable border that locates the identity of the patch holder outside the social mainstream. In-group solidarity is reinforced and results in definitions of all others being outsiders. However, from the perspective of the patch holder, equally as important as the social separation that comes with his colors is the provision of an aura of elitism: 'The colors separate you from anyone else on the street,' Albert said. 'The purpose of the colors is to let people know who you are. A Rebel is a cut above.'

In the sixties, seventies and early eighties it was an outlaw club tradition that colors were never washed. The long-standing tradition was based on the premise that whatever happens to a man's colors becomes part of his personal history. 'The badges and things that are on my colors mean different and individual things that I've done with my brothers ... My colors are a documentary of my life. Even the vibes coming off them that I feel, they tell a story to myself every time I look at them' (Blues, Rebels). Faded colors become a testament to the staying power of a man's intestinal fortitude and commitment to the outlaw lifestyle.

In many ways all outlaw clubs are pre-adapted as vehicles of organized crime. Paramilitary organization lies at the core of their tight knit secret society. It is a society capable of enforcing internal discipline, including an iron clad code of silence which ensures that information about club operations never goes beyond the walls of the clubhouse. Uncompromising commitments of brotherhood generate cohesion, mutual dependence, and a sense of shared common fate. The
lengthy socialization required to become a legitimate 'biker' and the two or so years of proving oneself as a prospect in order to become a member make the infiltration of a club by a police officer a virtual impossibility. The political structure of the club, the anti-Establishment attitudes and high risk nature of the individuals involved, and the marginal social environment in which they operate have the potential to produce a clubhouse of crime.

The following are contributions from the Widows Sons COC/MC Relations & Liaison Committee members

Women of any kind should be dealt with in public with an immense amount of caution whenever you are wearing your patch. Outlaw clubs have a very distinct place in their world for women. They are seen more as a tool to be utilized in living their lifestyle and much less as a life partner. They are utilized for trafficking and transporting of club gear, illegal contraband, and member’s personal weapons... basically anything a Patchholder does not want to get caught with himself. If a fight erupts in public and a weapon is used, it is not unusual for a patch holder’s woman to take the weapon after things are over, but before the police arrive, and remove it from the scene as they attract much less attention than the patch holder.

They are also used most for intelligence gathering. If you are in public and a seemingly harmless woman comes up to you and begins flirting and asking questions 'getting to know you', don't be surprised if the next place she goes is straight back to her Patchholder boyfriend to tell him everything you just told her. They will also occasionally touch and 'hug' you in their flirting. This is to find out whether or not you are carrying a weapon or a wire. They are very practiced at this and do it quite often for the club they are affiliated with. For this reason, it is best to treat every woman you encounter as a planted listening device and metal detector. The best policy is to not answer questions of any kind about the Widows Sons to anyone in a biker or bar setting. If you encounter a Mason or general citizen eager to join us, obtain his contact information and do so later on in a quiet setting where he will be easier to evaluate. Do not give any personal information to women either. If you are single and looking for a date, do it on your own time and without your vest. Even if you think you are being smart by just talking about yourself and not the Widows Sons, you could be opening yourself up to a personal attack so as to 'be made an example of' to deter problems for the 1% club later. The fact that you have done nothing wrong is irrelevant. Some times just being in the wrong place at the wrong time is all it takes and NOT wearing your colors someplace is not always a deterrent either. If you encounter a problem with your colors on, 1% clubs will 'handle' you later whether you are wearing them or not.

Always be aware of the "Golden Rule" of conduct while traveling in club circles:

If you give respect, you’ll get respect. If you act with disrespect, then you’ll be treated with the same.
General Conduct

While in public places, always conduct yourself with Masonry, The Widows Sons and your Chapter in mind. Whether you are wearing your patch or not, common courtesy and respect for ANY individual you make contact with will always leave a good impression of you, your Chapter, Masons and Motorcyclists in general. People will remember what you do, good and bad. The public perception of anyone who rides a bike should be considered and a good attitude is always the kind of perception we want to present.

Meeting new people is one of the things a Rider’s Association (RA) is about. Answer questions as you are able. If you don’t know the answer to a question, refer the questioner to someone you think might know, such as one of the Officers of your Chapter. Don’t give out personal information unless you know that the person being asked about wants it given out; that’s only common sense.

RA’s aren't normally out to hide anything. The Widows Sons is an RA and as such we really don’t have much in the way of Assn. business. If you know of sensitive private matters concerning The Widows Sons RA then it is expected that you would use good judgment in not sharing it with others who are not involved.

Protocol and Respect are primary rules when dealing with a motorcycle club Patchholder.

Out of respect, if two or more Patchholders are having a private conversation, don’t approach them within earshot, especially if they are talking with a Patchholder of another club. If you feel that you need to interrupt, put yourself in a place of visibility and wait to be acknowledged. It’s only common courtesy not to interrupt a conversation or eavesdrop.

Never lie to a member of a club or another association. If you are in a situation where you are asked about the Association or its membership, it is acceptable to say "That seems like Association business and I really can't talk about it". If this doesn't put the subject to rest, offer to put them in touch with an Officer for them to speak with.

Always show respect and courtesy to Patchholders. Don't come across like you want to be best friends. Be professional in such encounters; keep it short, then move on.

Never be quick to walk up to a Patchholder in a public setting, even if you know them well and we are on friendly terms. If you want to greet them, walk up slowly and wait for them to indicate that they want such a public display to take place. They may be on some club business and may not want to give the general public the impression that their club and The Widows Sons are on such friendly terms. If they look like they are going to ignore you accept it and keep your distance, the best approach is always to wait for them to come to you and let everyone else see that.
If you are FORMALLY introduced to a Patchholder, make sure the person doing the introduction (or you) know what Chapter you belong to, if you are an officer and/or what position you hold. Under no circumstances do you interrupt to correct a mistake while that person is introducing you or while they are talking. Wait till the introduction is done, then politely introduce yourself correctly. i.e.....

Joe Rider, Widows Sons Riding Assn., 1st Officer, Anytown Chapter.

Fred Spokes, Anystate Officer, Widows Sons Riding Assn.

(Use your name - not your nickname. Nicknames may come later.)

Greet them as you would meet anyone else. Wait until the offer is made to shake hands. DO NOT interrupt; wait for them to recognize you. DO NOT be offended or make a big deal if they do not offer to shake your hand. Many times they want to get to know about you and your Chapter a little better before they will offer to shake your hand.

A Patchholder may not, and many times will not, acknowledge your wife or girlfriend, especially upon a first meeting. Make sure your significant other is aware of this so she doesn’t get miffed and spout off.

If you need to talk to an officer of a Motorcycle Club the proper way is to go through the Sgt at Arms or one of the Patchholders.

If anyone knows a Patchholder, don't let him/her throw the Patchholders' name/nickname/club's name around like you're a great buddy of theirs (even if you are). Many clubs consider that as a major disrespect to the whole club.

Watch where you are when speaking about them (M/C members and 1%ers), and never say anything about them in public because you never know when that woman, man, or kid in regular clothes standing near you might be one of them or a "support member" (see “Contributions” above). Patchholders do not always wear their colors. By the time the story gets back to the top club in your area, it will have been changed many times over and could be blown up way out of proportion.

Anything said about them between Association members is Association business ONLY. If comments, even those said in a joking manner were to get out, problems could start. Discussion outside the privacy of the Chapter can start rumors which could cause a lot of problems for not only your Chapter, but also for other Widows Sons Chapters in and out of your state.

If for some reason you have to say something while in public about a motorcycle club, take the person you're talking to aside, alone, and say ONLY what you need to say to get your meaning across. Say as little as possible so anyone else can't overhear it and misunderstand what you're talking about.
Watch where you wear your patch and it's just common sense to stay in numbers when wearing the patch. Some motorcycle clubs can be very territorial and some clubs don't see any difference between a RIDING CLUB/ASSOCIATION and MOTORCYCLE CLUB. If you are unsure of the areas or places normally frequented by motorcycle clubs, find out from your Chapter Officers. If you are planning on traveling and are concerned about what the situation may be in regard to the relationship with the local motorcycle clubs in the areas you'll be traveling through or staying in, talk to one of your Chapter Officers and ask if they can find something out by contacting Chapters in the areas you will be in or simply “park” your patch while traveling through areas in question.

You have to decide whether or not you want to show respect by going to any of their (MC’s) functions or if you want to avoid all of them all together. If you do choose to show respect and go, you can do this in a way that may make you feel more at ease by going to one of their "support's" functions instead of the top club's function (if they have a support patch then you're still indirectly showing the top club respect). But if you do go, then you also have to go to their rival clubs' function or you'll be telling everyone that you're not a "NEUTRAL" club as you said you were. (Example: If you go to the Club A's function then YOU HAVE TO GO to the Club B's function too, etc…) You have to decide how you want to stay neutral, by going or not going. You also need to let all the other area Chapters know if you're going so they're not in the dark and we can ALL stay on top of things.

**** NOTE ***** A better way to support them and still give the appearance of being a neutral club is to attend only "open to the public" events that a motorcycle club may be sponsoring.

If you feel that you do want or need to go to a "limited event", then you'll have to go representing yourself as yourself, preferably without wearing any patches identifying your Association. Remember, if you're wearing your Association patch, you are considered by everyone to be representing your whole Association. If anything were to turn sour, then your whole Association could wind up with problems down the road. Also, once the rivals of that club you visited find out (and they will within a day or two), then those rivals will see you as no longer being neutral & you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

No Chapter Location Bars, territory rockers, or anything giving the appearance of a rocker should be worn with the RA patch. State flags, state logos may be worn in some areas and not in others. It's best to check with your state’s Grand Chapter or State Board to make sure what is ok in your area.

If someone from a motorcycle club ‘requests’ that you remove your vest/patch, don’t argue; The best reply is, "No Problem", politely take it off and immediately put it away. You normally will only get asked once. Let one of your Chapter Officers know what motorcycle club it was so they can deal with any potential problems. Never leave your vest unattended. It would make an excellent “Trophy”. Nuf said?
If an establishment has a sign indicating “No Colors”, even though your patch is not considered “colors”, the vest should be removed out of respect to the other clubs and the policy of the establishment. While we may just be a Riding Association, it’s only respectful to honor the house rules. Motorcycle clubs that honored the “house rules” would probably be deeply offended that you didn’t. Also remember many establishments choose to have this policy and it applies to all clubs that use any kind of patch; they do not distinguish between a MC and a RA. Be aware of the local motorcycle club hangouts & its best not to wear the RA patch into them without an invitation.

A Prospect (an MC initiate) can usually be identified by the back patch they are wearing. There are many different ways motorcycle clubs identify Prospects. They can have the rockers without the main patch. They can actually have a patch saying "PROSPECT". Some do not wear any patch, because all the Patchholders know who the prospects are. You want to treat a Prospect or even someone you suspect is a Prospect the same way you would treat a Patchholder - with respect and courtesy.

Be aware of the behavior and attitude of the other RA members who are with you (especially if anyone has been drinking) at events. If necessary, try to take action to avoid problems before they happen. For example, if someone appears to be getting too angry or loud and possibly disrespectful, take them aside or suggest going somewhere else until things settle down. You could also let one of the officers of the club know about the situation. If an incident should occur in spite of your efforts when no Officers are present, make sure to let your Officers know as soon afterward as you can. If no club Officers happen to be there, then ALL of the RA members that are there need to make the attempt to take that person aside, and strongly suggest that the offending RA member go somewhere else to settle down.

Have absolutely no doubt that a motorcycle club is serious and many have been known to physically educate a person who shows disrespect or displays a bad attitude.

Be aware that problems created in one part of the country by an RA member or issues with the RA in one area have the potential to affect RA members in other areas and states.

**Be prepared to answer questions about what The Widows Sons Masonic Riders Association is about.**

We are a Masonic Riding Association & not a motorcycle club and have no intention of ever trying to become a motorcycle club.

All makes and models of motorcycles are welcomed.

We are a non-territorial Association.

We are a neutral club and do not wear any M/C support patches.
What NOT to do:

Do NOT refer to the Widows Sons as a "club". Doing so can be taken just as disrespectfully as calling one of their members "brother".

Do NOT touch any part of another club member's colors, which includes the vest or jacket it's sewn on. That is considered serious disrespect, which could cause them to aggressively educate the uninformed.

Do NOT leave your vest unattended.

Do NOT offer forum links or web sites, more than likely they already know where our website is. It’s better to refer them to a Chapter officer.

Do NOT brag about how large the local or national membership is.

Do not volunteer Association info. If they ask a question about the local Chapter answer if you can. If they start asking questions about the number of members, or the National chain of organization refer them to one of the Chapter’s officers.

DO NOT touch or sit on a Patchholder's bike unless invited to do so. Do not expect the invitation.

Do not call a Patchholder Brother or Bro. The term Brother or Bro has special meaning to a Patchholder. Their Brothers are fellow Patchholders and those that have earned that term. If he is a friend and you two consider each other brothers, wait for him to address you as such in public.

Do not wear your Patch into a motorcycle club clubhouse unless you have asked if it's ok to do so or have been invited for a "sit down" with the officers of the motorcycle club, or been invited as a Riding Assn. Member, to attend a function there.

Never bring a personal friend or a stranger into the presence of Patchholders without asking permission to do so first.

Do NOT turn your back to a Patchholder at an open function. This is not so much for safety reasons, but as a show of respect.

Never let a Brother go off alone without someone keeping an eye on them, especially in this day and time.

Many Clubs are known to physically educate the ignorant as well as the disrespectful; and “I didn’t know” is not an acceptable excuse.
The following websites are also good references for M/C relations:

http://vnvmcgaa.muddywolf.net/patch.html

http://home.earthlink.net/~rcvsmc-edu/id26.html

http://forums.delphiforums.com/MC101/start

For those who require further insight into the M/C “lifestyle” this is an excellent reference source...


For assistance or clarification of items not covered in this handbook contact your Chapter/Grand Chapter officers who can then contact a member of the Widows Sons COC/MC Relations & Liaison Committee.