

MEN WHO RIDE

Steve Schapiro,

REAL OLD SCHOOL

BY LISA DALGAARD

Quick Throttle was proud to be one of the first publications to feature "Women who Ride" and to recognize their growing contributions to our community. But sometimes we forget about the guys, especially the ones who have just always "been there," and who have really been around.

One such man deserves a title we rarely bestow on an individual - he's the REAL DEAL. His name is Steve Schapiro, and he's a man who rides his Harley to work every day, one who rides to every major motorcycling event, and one who actually knows what "Old School" means, and embodies it in his words and actions every day.

If you've been to any event in Cali, you know who I'm talking about. Look in your back pocket and check out your wallet. Is it one of the 400,000 wallets that Schapiro and Leventhal have given out to bikers over the last 30 years of being in this community?

If you don't have one of their American-made wallets, then you probably know someone who has been helped by Steve and Stan because that's what they're all about. Just like their wallets they are authentic.

"I'm in this business to help people," Steve says. He tells me a story about biker Jeff Heaslett who recently approached him at Cooks Corner. Steve had written a letter pro bono (no charge) for Jeff a few years ago and Jeff received a settlement. Steve had forgotten all about it, but Jeff hadn't. Steve had helped him through a difficult situation and he was grateful.

Steve Schapiro is a San Bernardino native, born to a family of Masons. His passion for motorcycles started in 1963 with his 250 Honda Scrambler which he bought for \$75 and it burned more oil than a car. When he graduated Law School at Laverne University, the Supreme Court Justice Marcus Kaufman paid Steve a great compliment, and issued a challenge, "I know what you're made of, and you're entering a career where you can make a difference." Those words echo in Steve's mind everyday and it makes him who he is.

Steve met Stan Leventhal 17 years ago on a case. They immediately developed a respect for each other and saw the potential to make a great team. Stan would do all the litigation and Steve the marketing. After years of trial, litigation and case work, Steve decided that he wanted to be in the field with the Bikers and now relies on Stan to run the office and to litigate. Stan is "the suit" and Steve the Biker, but Stan is a great guy and is just as committed to this community.

Steve believes in personally showing up to consultations and he's never charged for one. He doesn't send a law clerk or someone else that works for the company. He's personally there for his clients. His moto is: "if you're important enough for me to represent, you're important enough for me to come and see."

Schapiro and Leventhal have represented injured motorcyclists against Insurance Companies and their attorneys. They have secured major verdicts and settlements in cases where police reports and insurance companies felt their clients' claims were without merit.

And Steve and Stan don't have a limit to their pro bono cases. They do everything they can to help people. Steve likes to tell the story of his Assistant Dean in Law School who said "I wish one of you were honest enough to say that you're in this for the money." Steve says that if he was in it just for the money, he would just join the family business - Del Taco!

He tells me today that he appreciates the opportunity to meet the most diverse people from all walks of life.

Steve and Stan work hard to make a difference in people's lives and it shows. But Steve's favorite place to be is out riding. He rides to every event he goes to and the bike that you see in his booth is probably his favorite a

2006 Street Glide - He saw it being washed at Anaheim Fullerton H-D and fell in love with it. He's had a 2001 Road King which he sold to one of the Fryed Brothers, Allen. He has also had a 1990 ElectraGlide and a Softail Custom which was stolen in 2001. He admits that his real passion is for his 1966 Red Vespa which he bought at Bartels Harley-Davidson. "The tag fell off in my hand, Steve says, "I took that as a sign that I had to have it."

It's obvious WE like these guys, but don't take our word for it. Here's what a few friends and colleges have to say about Steve and Stan:

"Those guys are worth their weight in gold," says Joseph Gramoglia of Orange, CA. who tells us that when he found himself a victim in an accident and was thrown 44 feet in the air, Stan and Steve were there for him. Joseph usually rides with Anaheim Fullerton HOG and has been riding since 1957.

Brian Scott Kent of Lone, CA tells us when he got hit on his 2002 Fat Boy in Lodi, Stan Leventhal worked so hard on that case that Scott can't ever repay them for what they've done. Even though he has pins holding his body together, he is now able to ride again due to the medical treatment he received. All thanks to Steve and Stan.

Nicky, a young girl who is a double amputee, says her life is wonderful thanks to these guys. She has no hands, and yet is grateful for their help in getting her the settlement that has made her life far easier than it might have been.

One of Steve's greatest personal accomplishments is Rips Bad Ride. Rip and Steve were friends for a long time and Rip had the idea of a "Biker Nation," who would serve each other, and raise money for ADA. Allison Hickey, Executive Director for American Diabetes Association, says "Steve has been an integral part of Rip's BAD ride for all 12 years. He did it with his good friend, Rip Rose not knowing that Rip would only see two of the events. In Rip's last days, he made Steve promise to carry on the legacy of Rip's BAD Ride (Bikers Against Diabetes). Steve has done just that. Today there are nine Rip's BAD rides across the nation, each raising money to support the American Diabetes Association and those affected by diabetes. Steve is a man with a vision, persistence and a passion for fighting diabetes which he demonstrates over and over each year. Rip's BAD Ride has raised over \$4 million dollars, and Steve has been a driving force in this success.

When we started this piece on Steve, there was no shortage in Bikers who wanted to talk about him. Here's Bill Hayes from the Boozefighters MC: "It's interesting when someone who was a business associate winds up becoming a friend. But then again, that sort of thing happens a lot within the tight-knit ranks of this biker brotherhood. I thought about that as I looked out into the audience as my band played at the legendary Coach House in San Juan Capistrano. There, in the crowd, was indeed my friend, Steve Schapiro. It made me feel pretty damn good to see that there truly is a brotherhood here.

The environment that night was very different from the environment in which Steve's path originally crossed mine. Our first introduction came not long after I was scraped off the pavement out on I-40 and Steve and his partner, Stan, helped me to put things back together. Over time, those settings of court rooms and law offices gave way to friendlier things like the bar, stage and blues of the Coach House—and to another perfect example of just what this lifestyle is all about."

Don't ever hesitate to walk up and talk to Steve or Stan or just call them up. They've never charged for a consultation in 30 years and won't start now. They truly want to help. After all, Steve is a Biker, and that means something to him.

