

Mustachioed Deer Hunters

Being from Wisconsin, I often have to turn a blind eye to how my native people are portrayed in the media. The stereotypical Wisconsinite—and the one they *always* show on TV during Badger, Packer, and Brewer games—is the obese, beer-guzzling, cheese and brat shoveling mustachioed deer hunter clad in blaze orange.

Recently, when digging for interesting video content for *IMPO* Insider's Thursday video newsletter, I stumbled across a couple of unique clips highlighting my Wisconsin brethren in some unlikely (or likely?) scenarios:

1. "[Crash for Clunkers](#) [1]": Disengaged by the Cash for Clunkers program, this group of self-proclaimed 'Rednecks' in Turtle Lake, WI decided to use their old vehicles for sporting purposes. The results are a don't-try-this-at-home type demolition derby that brings the community together for some free entertainment. The ringleader of the event has designed a steering mechanism to help in the launching process.
2. [The 10-Seater Harley](#) [2]: What's better than one Harley? A bunch of them mottled together, and all of your friends aboard. Steve "Doc" Hopkins, owner of Doc's Harley Davidson in Shawano County, WI, takes the first V-Twin Harley model, and creates one giant bike (with training wheels). It's certainly something to see, just hopefully not next to you on the highway.

Seeing these videos evoked a strange sense of pride in my fellow Wisconsin dwellers. These collaborative, albeit strange, efforts were a great reminder of the ways Americans have continued to bring their special brand of intelligence, ingenuity, and sense of humor to the table—specifically in a time period where innovation means everything—with characteristic creativity based on how or where they were raised.

One of the things I heard over and over throughout my education process as a writer is the weathered phrase "Write about what you know." As much as this phrase is about keeping it simple, I think it is also to emphasize that your experience base is more interesting and valuable than you might realize.

It's sometimes easy to forget that "what you know" is potentially something that others don't know. What you bring to the table—whether it be your knowledge of Harleys or your interest in seeing cars destroyed from a lawn chair vantage point—can almost always translate into other tasks, ideas, product development, or process improvement.

So despite where you think your knowledge lies, don't ever take yourself, or

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anybody else, out of the equation. Perhaps your design team could use some fresh perspectives. Try opening up the process a bit and bring in shop floor employees or even customers. It's not always about the nuts and bolts of product or process development; sometimes it's just about good old-fashioned problem-solving with its roots in a brainstorm.

Speaking from my own perspective, I'm a Wisconsin native vegetarian who's never held a rifle or driven a pick-up truck or milked a cow... but I still love my beer. And I know a fair bit about Wisconsin sports and sailboats, how to drive in a snowstorm, and to ALWAYS wear ear plugs at a monster truck rally. That's gotta be worth something, right?

Questions or comments? Send them to me at anna.wells@advantagemedia.com [3].

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[1] <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/offbeat/2009/08/15/dnt.wi.crash.for.clunkers.kare?iref=videosearch>

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