

BIKERS RIDE FOR AUDREY

BY J. BRIGHTSTAR
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Motorcycle riders around the country go on runs and raise money to support different causes and charities; they even get involved in political issues. Unfortunately, this is not the image portrayed on the nightly newscast, as the media is obsessed with its stereotype of bikers as hell on two wheels, and often ignores bikers' kind doings.

In a small community in upstate New York, something happened not long ago that would forever intertwine bikers and non-riding area residents. For some, their lives would be forever changed.

On August 29, 2002, Audrey Herron left her job as an LPN to go home. It was about 11pm, and she only had a 12-mile ride back to her house in

Freehold, but she never made it. The next morning, when her husband saw that she had not returned from work, he called the police. They searched the area with dogs, helicopters, light aircraft and ATVs, but discovered nothing – both Audrey and her 1994 black Jeep Grand Cherokee had vanished, the case labeled as “missing under suspicious circumstances.”

In addition to the police and Audrey's community, family, and friends, bikers from all over the area came and helped with the search. On the first anniversary of her disappearance, a 90-mile run was organized to raise money for her three young children. The planning was not done far enough in advance, and the turnout was small.

In 2004, however, 150 bikers took part in the run and raised money for a fund that will be used as a reward for her return or for someone's arrest and conviction in relation to her disappearance. In the event that Herron is never found, the money will go into a trust fund for her children.

I have been on a lot of runs during my 35 years of riding, and I have to say, this was one of the best. The mission was to keep Herron's name in the forefront of everyone's mind, and everything ran smoothly. There was no attitude among riders, and every type of bike was there: Harleys old and new, every Japanese cruiser model imaginable, German and British bikes, and many others. We made a total of five pre-planned stops, and at the last minute, Herron's brother decided to lead the pack past her house and show people she hasn't been forgotten. We then made the ride to Brennan's, where DVDs played, telling people all about Herron, her life, and her family.

Mingling with those that came to show support, I met Jim Viola, of Bogata, NJ, whose wife Patricia disappeared almost four years ago and has not been heard from since. Like many of Herron's family and friends, he couldn't thank those present without getting choked up.

I also got a chance to speak to Marie Parker, who, along with local ABATE members, was instrumental in organizing this run; she was overwhelmed by the turnout.

One thing is for sure: those that many in society fear and brand as anti-social renegades because they ride motorcycles and look different from nine-to-fivers stepped up to the plate for Herron and her family. They came to show support and raise money for a woman most didn't even know and for her children, who still await her return.

Police are still investigating all leads. If anyone has any information regarding Audrey May Turk Herron, please contact New York State Police at (518) 622-8600. For more information, visit: www.audreymayherron.expage.com ☉



Nearly three years after her disappearance, Audrey Herron is still missing.



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Family pictures and articles from local newspapers tell Audrey's story.