

Arizona Bike Week Celebrates 20 Years



April 6-10, 2016 ... Mother Nature delivered a mixed bag of sunny & overcast days for riders to partake in this year's AZ Bike Week activities..... The occasional threat of showers didn't deter riders from putting on some miles, with numerous organized rides taking place. Evenings were centered around the RockYard at WestWorld in Scottsdale; with concerts by Blackberry Smoke, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts, Warrant, Blues Traveler, Reverend Horton Heat, Social Distortion, Ratt, and Buckcherry.

Additional performances took place throughout the venue. Music, precision rider exhibitions, flat track racing, vendors, and more, made for plenty of stuff to stay busy.

My thanks to Lisa Cyr, of AZ Bike Week, for her help with this report.

The 20th Anniversary gathering included familiar rides, such as...

T-Bar Trail Ride: This was the eleventh annual T-Bar Ride. It was held on Thursday April 7th. Lisa remarked, "It has been one of our most popular for years. Many of the riders that attend have been going on this ride for several years and look forward to it as one of their annual Arizona Bike Week traditions." 777 riders departed WestWorld on a self-

paced tour which included stops at Christie's Cabaret Phoenix, Christie's Cabaret Tempe, and Cheetah's Gentlemen's Club. "There were two different route maps in order to disperse the riders, so they didn't all descend on the clubs at the same time."

This year's run collected \$12,649 to benefit breast cancer charities. Lisa explained that the monies are being distributed via AZ Bike Week Charities, "We have utilized the funds from this ride to donate to a number of breast cancer charities over the years. Last year was Susan G Komen. The year before was Virginia Piper Foundation, and so on. There are so many amazing charities and we are still doing research to select this year's recipient."

Thanks go out to Hot Leathers for discounted t-shirts, M Catering for discounted breakfast, and Arizona Bike Week Charities Group for handling ride registration and prize drawings.

Hamster Run: The 6th Annual Hamsters Charity "Dry Heat" Run presented by Paul Yaffe's Bagger Nation took place on Friday April 8. The beneficiary was The Lifescape Children's Care Hospital, the primary charity of the Hamsters organization. \$7,500 was donated to the cause.

462 riders gathered at Paul Yaffe's Bagger Nation in Phoenix. The self-paced ride departed from there & headed to the Roadrunner in New River for

lunch. The ride's final destination was WestWorld, in time for the evening's concerts by Rev Horton Heat & Social Distortion.

Thanks go out to Bagger Nation and the Roadrunner Bar and Grill, as well as the Arizona Bike Week Charities Group who organized registration.

Hand in Hand Ride: The Hand in Hand Ride, sponsored Harley-Davidson of Scottsdale, was held April 9th. It is a benefit for Phoenix Children's Hospital. This is the third year for this ride. According to Lisa, in that time, it has really grown in attendance. She noted, "It's such a remarkable facility and a cause that is relatable for so many of our attendees." They registered 957 riders. It is a self-paced ride, directly from Phoenix Children's Hospital to WestWorld. Law enforcement held traffic leaving from PCH to the freeway, but once riders were on the freeway they were on their own.

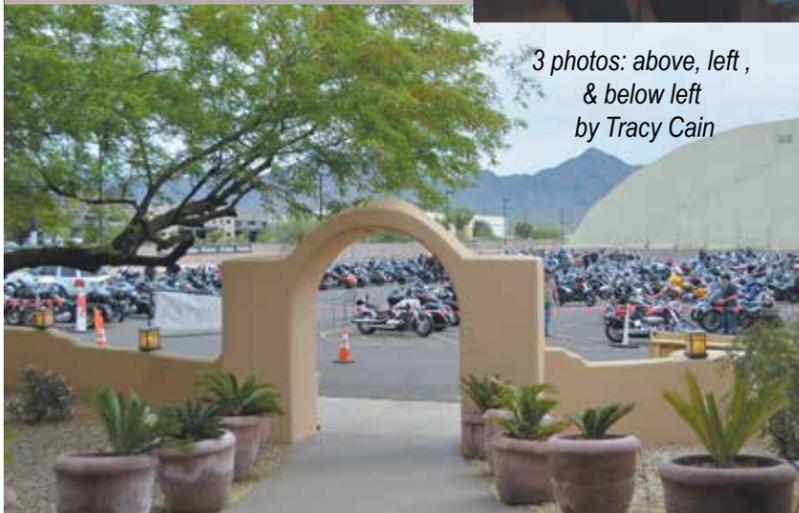
This fundraiser collected \$15,249 for PCH.

The first thing we noticed upon arrival at WestWorld... ~ Old habits die hard... I still call this weekend CycleFest {:o) was a complete change to the venue's layout. Everything was set up on the upper level... The lower, grassy level was dedicated to camping. Lisa shared that, "One of the reasons we

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photo from ABW via FB



3 photos: above, left, & below left by Tracy Cain



photo by Tracy Cain





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revised our site plan was to allow for the ever-increasing demand for more campsites. We had a total of 512 RVs and 125 tents.”

There were about 200 vendors; with more of the big trucks than in years past.

Exhibition riders: The HDOS Drill Team demonstrated precision riding. This is a group of 12 riders interacting in close quarters, each on full-sized dressers. The Busted Knuckles Stunt Show never fails to impress. TEAM AZ was demonstrating rider safety techniques such as hazard avoidance & slow-speed maneuvering. The talented {crazy?} riders of FMX Freestyle Motocross performed flips & aerials.

New this year ... We spent some time in the HellRacers Dome, watching the flat track racers. This was part of the IV League Flat Track Racing Series. Racers were accumulating points toward the racing season. The law office of Chuck Franklin {a life-long motocross rider} sponsored this 3-day event. There’s nothing like the distinctive sound of those 2-stroke motors. 23 classes were offered, allowing for beginners to experts to take their turns on the track. I must agree with Lisa’s comment that, “The ‘Brakeless’ class must be the most insane.” The ‘Run What Ya Brung’ division allowed spectators the opportunity to get out there on the track as well.

Lisa relayed, “This is definitely a sport anyone can enjoy watching, even with no previous knowledge. The races are quick and there is no lag between the action. We felt that this was a fantastic addition... and plan on bringing it back next year.”

The races were VERY cool to watch, but there was a drawback. An indoor venue such as this made for a nice place to sit out of the sun for a while to enjoy the races. And the layout of the seating provided excellent viewing of the track.... BUT ... the air circulation system was hard-pressed to keep up with the exhaust fumes. As more races commenced, it was necessary to step outside from time-to-time for fresh air.

We learned that, overall, ABW attendance maintained pace with last year. Saturday was, as usual, the busiest day. They’ve yet to break the 100k mark, but Lisa mentioned that they are “sneaking up on it”. Weather played its part as always. Sunday’s rain kept many away.

Our candidate for ‘furthest traveled’ was a gal we spoke with from Japan. She was here visiting her boyfriend & they attended the rally. We observed license plates from CA, WI, & Canada.

I asked Lisa if they attempt to determine this traveler distinction. She emphasized that ABW ticket purchases are handled through a secure website.

They store no such information. The need for credit card security being what it is, that is very understandable! She did add that ABW does track zip codes. Based upon that, she said that 56% of online tickets were purchased from out of state zip codes. Social media feedback indicated that they had visitors from many European countries.

Asked about thank-yous for us to pass along, Lisa replied, “Of course Harley-Davidson of Scottsdale ... Being our presenting sponsor is an integral part of our event. But every sponsor, supplier, vendor, and attendee helps to make this rally possible.” In closing, she added, “We made a lot of changes to Arizona Bike Week this year. We completely revised our site plan and added the Legends Classic and Vintage Motorcycle Auction and Flat Track Racing. Despite the weather challenges we had all were well received and we had rave reviews from our attendees. We look forward to tweaking all these new elements next year as Arizona Bike Week turns 21!”

The 2017 dates have been announced. Mark your calendars for April 5-9. Keep up with Arizona Bike Week news via their website www.azbikeweek.com and on [Facebook](#).

‘til then, ride safe....

Betsy & Bruce

