

Run to the Rez 13

The 2016 Run to the Rez took place October 7 & 8th. The host property & main party is at Apache Gold Resort in Globe; with Saturday's Honor Run For Veterans to San Carlos on Saturday. This weekend is organized by the Geronimo Riders.

The gathering used to be held later in the month, but organizer Dr John Bush noted that the prior date always put this event up against two other large weekend runs, the SAHR Rodeo & the Riot on the River. This adjustment allows some riders to attend more than one party. Choosing the long Columbus Day weekend also makes it easier on the many longer-distance riders. They can have Monday at home before going back to work.

For those who arrived in time, the Geronimo Riders presented an escorted ride into the Reservation, to Point of Pines. About 60 bikes participated, departing about 11am or so. The run was about a 120-mile round trip. We arrived after their departure, but heard from riders who went that it was a beautiful ride. I spoke with Connie from Queen Creek, one of the participants. It is a paved road, but kind of rough; not a main road. ~ you definitely need the escort. She shared that there was nearly no traffic, just a couple of pickup trucks along the way. Horses would be running alongside the road with the bikes. The ride included stops along the way to share explanations, descriptions, and history of the area. This was the first time for this activity and it was well-received. Hopefully, they will continue to offer it.

Everyone starts gathering Friday afternoon. People signing in, vendors setting up... There was a 'calm before the storm' feeling ☺ Vendors set up in front of the Casino included Native American jewelers {beautiful}, shoes & boots (Aching Tired Footwear), photographer RideScapes, sewn soft goods {aprons, etc in motorcycling & sports team themes}. Motorcycle raffle sponsor Superstition HD had a booth set up as well. In addition to goods for sale they were doing a raffle throughout

the weekend. You wrote your cell # on your tickets & they called you if you were a winner. {Clever.} Additional vendors M&M Cycles and Riderz Gear set up later.

It was a windy afternoon, but nothing compared to last year. There were 2 chili cooks for Friday's contest. They were working against the breeze / wind to get everything cooked up. Everything smelled delicious. Congratulations to the winners. First place winner Cornelia Bush collected \$150. Second place winner Barbara won \$100.

There was no Friday bonfire for the Welcome Ceremony. Instead, it took place under the portico. This included Native American drumming & singing, social dancing, and Crown Dancers. There was a blessing of the riders. While the former format ~ out in the desert clearing with the bonfire, added to the atmosphere & mystery of the ceremony, being in a smaller setting gave the opportunity to watch the dancers more closely. There are pros & cons to both presentations, but each offers a very uplifting experience.

After this Ceremony was the Welcome Party, with music by the popular band 'Grey Wolf'. There was a full house for this party. The room filled nicely, with riders greeting old friends & making new ones. There was the pleasant rumble of conversation & laughter as people settled in & waited for the band to begin. We shared a table with a fun-loving group including Regina & Charles & some of their friends who'd ridden in from Shiprock, NM.

We've always been impressed with Grey Wolf. They have such a good interaction with their audience & each performer is quite talented. From the first song to the last, they have people on the dance floor for every number. Dr John's 96-year old Aunt was even out dancing ~ for 2 songs! GreyWolf performed 'Free Bird' as a request from a group of friends in memory of their friend Bruce who died when he hit a bear while riding home from Sturgis. He was a regular visitor to Run to the Rez. They

also premiered their performance of CCR's 'Run Through the Jungle' and did an outstanding job.

Run to the Rez is one of the most generous events in the state, with lots of opportunities to win ca\$h. There are cash prizes for 4 places in the poker run, 1st & 2nd in the chili cook-off, cash prizes in the Friday night raffles and cash prizes for 1st & 2nd places in the bike show. In addition, there is always an abundance of raffle items. Friday is the night when those items get distributed, during the band breaks. This year's collection was valued at \$3000+.... H-D & Indian Motorcycle jackets, beautiful custom lamps (in themes of H-D, military, POW-MIA, R2R), a handmade black & flames quilt with matching pillow covers, collectibles, shirts, & more... not to mention that good old, cold hard cash... The 1st win of the night was Rob from Gilbert, collecting \$50. Donors included Superstition HD, H-D of Scottsdale, Tucson Indian, and artist Patrick Arthur.

Saturday morning was warm, sunny, and breezy. Clouds were wispy... a good day for a ride. During parade staging, Veterans were encouraged to ride up front. The parade route went through Bylas and Peridot on the way to San Carlos.

Reaching the town of San Carlos is such a heartwarming experience. It feels like the entire town comes out to greet the bikers! Vehicles park along the road ... People wave as they watch the bikes go by. It was mentioned to us that this is one of the biggest events this town has.

Inside Burdett Hall, the ceremony began with the Honor Guard presenting the Colors, a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, and a Prayer.

If you've never been to the Run to the Rez, be prepared to observe one of the most patriotic communities you will ever experience. It is a beautiful thing. People of all generations attend this gathering, the Youth & the Elders.

Several Tribes were represented. While the

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Hopi, Navajo, and Apache Nations were among those represented.... There were also many attendees who were not Native Americans. This event welcomes EVERYONE.

This service includes speakers, music, and presentations. It is a joyful occasion, with much love and respect.

Members of the Tribal Council were introduced, along with other speakers.

This year's theme was to honor families of GIs Killed in Action. There were special presentations to the parents of US Marine Corps PFC Michael Angelo Noline, {KIA 1991 ~ Persian Gulf War} and to the parents of Army Specialist Lori Piestawa {KIA 2003 ~ Operation Iraqi Freedom}.

Another topic spoken on was the escalation of Veterans suicide.

One of the day's speakers was a Korean War Veteran. He is the oldest member of the San Carlos Veterans Organization; he's been a member for 65 years. He was in Korea at 17 years old!

At the end of the presentations, Big Mike mustered all the Vets front & center. A Native American blessing song was performed. Thanks were expressed to all of the Veteran Supporters in attendance. People were invited to come down from their seats to greet & shake hands with the Vets, to thank them for their service. Then the Vets were dismissed.

The poker ride departed from the Auditorium. It cost \$5 to play. Stops were at Liquor Stable, the Drift Inn and the Huddle {in Globe}, 2 Lanes (next to Fast Stop), and the Casino Steakhouse. You had to go to all the stops to complete your hand. The winners were: 4th place (\$50 prize) = Darrel Manulito, RezRidersIMC ~ pair of 2's & Jack; 3rd (\$100) = Vera Begay ~ 3-of-a-kind [3 3's]; 2nd (\$200) = Chris Aster ~ Flush; and 1st place - high hand (\$400 prize) = Donald Zentz ~ Full House. Congratulations to each of you!

Saturday afternoon's Bike Show took place under the portico outside the Casino; with music by the band Eagleheart. Everyone started lining up their bikes about 2pm, with judging @ 4:30. There

were Indians, Harleys, an Umz, a lot of Sidecar rigs, and several beautiful customs. There were about 30 bikes in the show. There were 8 judges, independently selected. Congratulations to the winners: Vintage #25 Adam Peru | Indian (1st) #6 & (2nd) #8 Spencer | Trike (1st) #19 Jimmy Niffin & (2nd) #9 Patricia - from NM | American (1st) #7 John Sanchez & (2nd) #27 Thomas | Metric (1st) #1 Santa Ted & (2nd) #2 Jerry Garlinghaus | Custom (1st) #16 Sonny - from Safford & (2nd) #26 Chris Peru. Best of Show, voted on by the show participants, was #3 Louis Martinez.

Saturday night's concert was presented on a stage set up outside the Casino. The evening started with a Color Guard & the National Anthem.

It started off as a beautiful night to be outdoors. There was a gentle breeze and lightning in the distance. The wind from earlier in the day had calmed considerably. The outdoor beer garden was a popular vantage point for the show, as it was right next to the stage.

All 3 bands were 'cover' bands. The Peace Frogs - out of Venice Beach - did good job of representing The Doors. Memory Lane is an Alice in Chains tribute. While we are unfamiliar with either the primary band or the tribute, we observed that their fans appreciated the performance.

As the night went on, the gathering storm started getting closer. Lightning was creating silent silhouettes of the surrounding mountains. Any thunder there might have been was being drowned out by the music.

Two bands done ~ one to go.... Then the sky opened about 8:30pm... The last set was delayed. Everyone either gathered under the portico or went into the Casino ~ which reported a nice 'bump' in business thanks to Mother Nature ☺

The Metallica tribute band 'Damaged, Inc' took to the stage for the final set after the rain stopped, about 9:30... This band ended around 10:45, with the drawing held afterwards.

We respect the intensity & talent of these bands as they faithfully portrayed the originals. There were lots of fans attending and they were definite-

ly enjoying the show. This night offered less of a dance setting & more of a concert presentation.

Before the big drawing, the Run to the Rez team threw tee shirts to the crowd.

You had to be there to win the bike & you had three minutes to make your way to the stage & claim the prize. Odds were 1 in 700 of winning. Justin of Superstition H-D extended greetings to the waiting crowd before he pulled the winning ticket....

Perhaps due to the rain delay and/or the lateness of the hour, it took FOUR tries to give the bike away..... 1st ticket: Marylyn LeBrown, Kirkland, NM; 2nd ticket: Adam Peru, Safford, AZ; and 3rd ticket: Sheldon Haus, Farmington, NM were not there. The 4th ticket holder, Everett Yazzi of Rock Point, AZ became the WINNER of the Harley-Davidson Street-750. Congratulations!

Sunday morning is all about everyone packing up & heading home. While in the parking lot, we met some of the Rez Riders IMC out of California. RRIMC members Leland & Bear were offering a pre-ride blessing before rolling out & we appreciate them inviting us to participate.

We learned from Dr John that there were 500+ riders registered ~ making this a well-supported weekend. Riders came in from CA, CO, NM, NV, UT, TX, and Germany. It was a good mix of new visitors & returnees. \$2,000 was donated to the San Carlos Veterans Organization.

We love this event It's in a beautiful setting, there is great riding, and wonderful people. We always get a chance to meet new people as well as catch up with old acquaintances. And it's supportive of Veterans, so it's an excellent cause.

Planning is already under way for the 2017 Run to the Rez. It will take place October 6-7, once again during the long Columbus Day Weekend. If you want to get a room at Apache Gold we suggest that you start looking into it as soon as you know you are going, as the rooms fill up fast.

For updates, follow R2R on Facebook at [/runtotherez/](https://www.facebook.com/runtotherez/)

Betsy & Bruce