

Run to the Rez XI

Sidekick attended this event and titled it the Most Spiritual Ride in Arizona. I went in 2010 and seconded that feeling. This year, I'm going to add another layer of feeling and try to gift you a very profound idea: The Run to the Rez is the most Spiritually Healing Ride you'll ever attend!!

If you come, you will heal. Warriors from every state and tribe come to this event to heal. There is such a peace here. The Apache are the Warriors of the Native American Tribes. Their respect for the Warriors is profound. Veterans are embraced as the Warriors they are. Everywhere I walked, I felt blessed to feel that deep honor and respect for Warriors.

The Run takes place each year about mid-October; based at the Apache Gold Casino & Resort in Globe, AZ. This one was held the weekend of October 16-19, 2014. The event organizers realized that the original 1 day celebration did not give enough time to really honor the Veteran Warriors. In the beginning it was just 1 day; but like all great rides, it grew. It has morphed into 3 days this year, starting Thursday night with a general meet & greet. Ride [or drive] in and relax. Thursday's entertainment was a DJ - Smoked Stacked Lighting from Sacaton, AZ; in front of the Casino's Convention Center. I took the opportunity to chat, rest, and bead a chain for Dr. John's wife. Beading relaxes me and the chains offer me a chance to give back some of the healing and peace I get while I'm there.

On Friday, riders streamed in all day long. Scheduled events started at 1300hrs with a Poker Run, Chili Cook-off, a Bike Blessing, and music by Greywolf.

I followed Duane Smith and his wife, Teresa (from Thatcher, AZ) to keep from getting lost. I am so glad I did. My sense of direction and my curious nature would have gotten me lost on purpose, had I not had them to follow. The Reservation is beautiful. This was their 1st time attending this ride.

While I was stopped at the 3rd stop, I accidentally dropped about \$80 out of my wallet trying to make change. I was happy when a resident followed me out to my car and asked if I'd lost something? I didn't think I had, but I checked and discovered my loss. I felt blessed. I offered to take her name, but she declined. I gave her one of my chains as a token of thanks.

We were heavily blessed Friday evening with some awesome varieties of chili and fresh cooked

Indian Fry Bread. At dusk there was a real treat prepared. A bonfire, Apache Social Dance, and a Blessing of Bikers took place at the south side of the Casino. The Apache delighted all who came with healing blessings by the very spiritual Crown Dancers. I found this quote on the Internet:

"The mountain spirits have taught the Apaches to perform the Apache Crown Dance as a means of curing. The crown headdress is be-decked with eagle feathers; the teacher that flew the highest in the Heavens. The signs of lightning are sacred symbols of the Apaches which are placed on the bodies of the Apache Crown Dancers who are instructed by the mysterious mountain spirits to perform healing rituals for the Apaches. The crown dance is authentically performed today." -Tribal Chairman Ronnie Lupe, Fort Apache Scout newspaper 10/05/79

I felt like I was a part of history, watching the Crown Dancers dance. I'm a school teacher who started teaching in 1987, just 9 years after the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed 1978, making it once again legal to perform these ritual healing ceremonies in the United States. I had assumed Native Americans had the same rights to religious freedom that all citizens enjoyed, but that wasn't true. In the early 1900's, the United States government made these tribal dances illegal. Dancers who did them ran the risk of being arrested & imprisoned for demonstrating their religion practices; a freedom granted to all [other] Americans by our Constitution. Warriors know 'Freedom Isn't Free', but not all Americans do. Knowing what I know about how precious our freedoms are, I felt deeply honored and blessed to witness this healing ritual dance presented for the Veterans in attendance.

Saturday is a full day of activities, starting with the 'Run to the Rez' Motorcycle Bike Parade to the town of San Carlos. Staging was in the Casino parking lot. Bikers were lined up for the Parade for as far as the eye could see - 1/2 mile long. I looked over the line-up and saw Warriors astride iron horses ready to go. I thought, this is the picture that needs to be broadcast far and wide to all our enemies. If they could see what I saw - they'd give up and go home. It was AWESOME!!

The parade arrived at Burdette Hall in San Carlos, where the Veterans Honoring Ceremony took place. The healing energy and deep respect for War-

riors was everywhere.

Smiles and laughter made everything feel so very peaceful and vibrant. It was a true healing. The playful kidding and jokes I've heard by raw recruits prevailed and people danced. The heaviness of old war wounds lifted and in its place walked strengthened Warriors; deeply respected and honored.

The rest of the day was icing on the cake. Everywhere the Warriors traveled they were greeted with cheers and smiling faces. Very different attitudes than what most Viet Nam Veterans received when they returned to the states at the end of their service.

At the conclusion of the Ceremony, the Poker Run departed. Stops included time to spend in Globe at the Apache Jii Day Festival; before last card back at the Casino. Here, the Bike Show also took place. For the men, a traditional Apache Sweat was hosted in the afternoon.

The evening offered music by Stillwater Band from Farmington, NM; along with headliners The Plateros & Los Lonely Boys. The raffle drawing for the 2015 Indian Scout followed the concert. Congratulations to winner Virginia Upshaw of NM!

Jim Clark [who rode in from Columbia, TN] was recognized as being this year's Longest Distance Rider. Additional winners from the weekend were... 50/50: Kevin Hale, Poker Run winners: [Friday] Duane Smith, Faith Varela, Leah Kin and [Saturday] High = Duane Smith; Low = Russ Dodd. Chili Cook-off winners: (1st) Cornelia Bush, (2nd) Perry Bylas, (3rd) Kevin Bush, (4th) Barbara Irving, & (5th) Teresa Victor. Bike Show winners: Best of Show: Andy Benally; Best Dresser: Joe Brown & Joseph Ochok; Best Custom: Alfred Baca & Wil Bitsuie; Best Sport Bike: Andy Benally & Rick Wilson; Best American: Anthony Montolla & Rick Wilson; Best Metric: Hugh Lano & Loreen Begay; and Best Trike: Ed Mazzetti & James Gus.

I spent the weekend making new friends. I had such a good time chatting with people. It was awesome. This event is open to everyone. Even if you are neither Native American nor a Veteran there is MUCH to be experienced, enjoyed, & appreciated during this weekend. I'm looking forward to 2015. I am going to do my best to take a car full of Veterans next year. Every Veteran I know would benefit from this spiritually healing ride. E*V*E*R*Y V*E*T*U*E*!!

Enjoy Life..... I am, *Lady Jewells*

