Wild in the Weeds 12th annual Weekend

ABATE of AZ's High Country Chapter hosted their 12th Annual Wild in the Weeds event from May 6-8, 2016 at Punkin Center Bar & Grill. That's located near Roosevelt Lake, at Mile Post 262 on State Route 188 in Tonto Basin, AZ.

Having only time to make it a day ride, we planned to roll up there on Saturday. We'd been watching the weather reports all week to see how it would go. Reports were for rain all weekend. Fortunately, they were wrong. Rain overnight on Friday washed the sky clear of dirt and chemtrails. The desert was fresh'd up from its dusty veil. It was a beautiful ride; including a treat of striking colors, with a chill to the air that was offset by the warmth of the sun. Saguaros, congregated alongside the road with their upstretched arms, appeared to wave greetings to passersby. Crosswinds could make things a bit squirrelly from time, but no troubles.

We arrived at Punkin Center just in time for the games to start. They included the Tire Toss, Helmet Toss, Road Kill, & Joust. Their twist on "Honey I'm Home" used a bicycle as the getaway ride. This opened the game up to more players. The Old Bastards MC brothers paired up their prospects to compete in Pole in the Hole. They have a great sense of humor. Plank Walk was won by the women of the OBMC. The names of all the winners were unavailable at the time of this writing, but we were able to learn that the Old Bastards MC won 8 of the 12 games. Leather Lady Joy created the custom trophies ... Beautiful handcrafted riding whips.

Seven vendors were set up. There was jewelry from Coyote Rose and by NaNa. MMA-AZ had tickets for a gun raffle fundraiser at their booth. You could buy knives [and get them sharpened]. There was some creative metal sculpture & wall art on display. Wolfskin Tattoo's mobile studio was in the parking lot. Happy birthday to Nathan Riddle, celebrating #26 with some new ink by artist Jubel Dean.

DJ music spinner & game emcee was 'Mr. Music' Royce Kincanon. We learned that this was his first biker event. He had a great time. Royce also partnered with MotorcycleSafari.com to sponsor the 'Remember When' photo booth, which offered attendees a clever memento of the day.

Motorcyclesafari.com also co-sponsored a taxi service with Absolute Limousine of Payson. Want to party after dark? Bikers in the high country know that wildlife can cut a good time short in an instant. Those going back & forth to their rooms in Payson & Star Valley could stay after dusk with no worries of getting t-boned on a late-night ride.

For those who were there at night, entertainment was provided by the Plum Krazy Band on Friday night and Band Rx (formerly Band X) on Saturday.

We learned from Event Coordinator CC that attendance was about 200; similar to last year but greater than years past. They prepared for more people, but heard afterward that the threat of rain kept them away. We got a photo of Joy Opie, who has attended EVERY Wild in the Weeds. She was wearing the tee from the very first event. Cool {:o) According to CC, the majority of people stayed over. She commented, "The motel had been completely booked well before year end 2015! Those who stayed were in the motel, RVs, or tents. There was also a good-sized contingent of folks who came and went on a daily basis." Organizations coming out in support included Loners MC, MMA-AZ, and Old Bastards MC.

CC explained, "This is ABATE-AZ High Country Chapter's annual fundraiser. Proceeds from this event allow The Chapter to do the things it does in and for the community for the remainder of the year. [Their community includes Strawberry to Tonto Basin]. These activities include sponsoring a Safety Awareness booth Memorial weekend, partnering w/ MMA to deliver complete Thanksgiving dinners to 21 families, as well as working with the Moose Lodge and MMA to bring Christmas to children who wouldn't otherwise have one. Last year we were able to provide Christmas for a record 120 children, as well as lunch for them and their families!"

She shared, "As a first-time coordinator for this event, I owe thanks to everyone who helped make this event the success it was: Chapter folks who helped plan it, assembled registration bags for attendees, and took turns at Registration, selling raffle tickets and merchandise; sponsors who donated monies and time; our trophy maker, Leather Lady Joy (she completely outdid herself this year!); our DJ and photo booth! One of our sponsors, Motorcycle Safari, went out of its way to provide limo rides to day trip folks so they could all travel safely back and forth by partnering with a local taxi company. Punkin Center is a great venue for this event: good food, liquor drinks (or not) as needed, room for both bike and people games and the best people you could hope to work with to pull off something like this. It couldn't have been done without all of you. Thank you."

CC's already looking forward to 2017! But before that, the High Country Chapter has a couple of other gatherings coming up this year… Oct 15 is a Chili Cookoff at the Spur Bar & the Barbie Hensler Memorial Toy Run on Dec 10. Details are in our calendar.

The feel of this event is similar to a miniature 'Too Broke'; good people in a casual relaxed setting having fun. It was a great way to spend the day & we were very happy to be there.

Betsy & Bruce

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