

The 2019 Run to the Rez weekend took place October 17-19, 2019, once again headquartered at the beautiful Apache Gold Casino & Resort in San Carlos AZ just outside of Globe. Officially, this is the 16th annual... But organizer Dr John Bush commented that unofficially this event has been going on about 20 years. It started small, with about 30 riders.

Kudos to the Run to the Rez volunteers! The Geronimo Riders are a small dedicated group with big hearts who spend the entire weekend working to make this event a success.

For those who were able to arrive at AGCR by Thursday evening, the organizers had a ride & dinner planned, plus there was music in the Point Bar for some evening entertainment.

Friday's schedule included the [Point of Pines Ride](#) which we shared in our November issue.

At about dusk, people gathered under the Resort's main portico for a Cultural Presentation to welcome the bikers to the weekend. There was traditional Native American music to accompany the Crown Dancers. It is an opportunity to observe & be part of a captivating, uplifting, & mysterious ritual...in this case including a Blessing of the Bikers.

Afterwards, a Rez Riders IMC member was offering a sage blessing, or smudging, for those who wished.

From here, everyone moved to the Convention Center for Friday night's Welcome Party. As always, it was a great time! New to the party this year, [Chris Kane Trio](#) BROUGHT the music ... absolutely rockin' the place. They kept the dance floor BUSY!

They play classic rock & have a good mix of titles in their playlist. These very talented musicians are from the same family as Apache Spirit, a band that has been entertaining in AZ for years. They are doing a fine job of carrying on the family tradition. It was a lot of fun... for dancing &/or just listening. At the end of the night, they were called back for 3 encores!

During the music breaks there were raffle drawings for a big selection of prizes .... Jackets, vests, & other goodies... including cold hard ca\$h being added to purses, wallets, & coffee mugs. ☺

There was a contest to see who could tell the best joke. Nacho collected the \$50 prize. Prize for the Furthest Traveled went to Charlotte from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She collected \$80. The grand prize raffle of the evening was valued at over \$600, including an HD jacket + cash. Congratulations to all the winners!

While the Run to the Rez has evolved to being much more than Saturday's Ride & Ceremony to Honor Veterans, it remains the heart of the weekend. Riders lined up in the Apache Gold parking lot for the 10am departure. The parade to Burdette Hall in San Carlos was about 3 miles long, with an estimated 400+ riders. It is always a heartwarming ride, as the parade is greeted by people gathered along the road along the way, honking horns & waving.

Residents of the community, old & young, attend this commemoration. Honoring Veterans & community Elders is a way of life here. The San Carlos Veterans Association presented the Colors, followed by a simple & beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner.

Emcee was Carol Slim, a US Army Veteran. She explained that the San Carlos Tribe is home to 900 Veterans, living & deceased. She offered the interesting and somewhat ironic information that while the United States' Indigenous Peoples were the LAST to be given Citizenship, their youth are generally the First



to sign up for military service.

Raymond Stanley, speaking on behalf of the SCVA, explained that Burdette Hall [where this event takes place] is named in honor & memory of Snyder Burdette... the first Apache to die in World War 2.

He used the song 'He Aint Heavy, He's My Brother' as a means to discuss the ongoing tragedies of PTSD among Veterans; Veteran homelessness; and the spiritual, physical, &/or mental health issues that plague Vets. There is an urgency to be aware that your Veteran Brother or Sister may need help even if they don't say so. {As the saying goes, not all scars are on the outside.}

He emphasized the importance of laughter and of prayer in these troubled times; encouraging everyone to 'Be your best' and to 'Always get back up if you fall'.

The SCVA Grand Marshal for the 2019 Veterans Day Parade was introduced ... Ernie Mead is a 91-year old Korean War Veteran who served as a Combat Medic in the Army and exemplified 'courage under fire'.

Davis Dustin, a Viet Nam Veteran member of the SCVA, mustered all the Veterans in attendance to 'front and center'. After some final remarks & the Vets being dismissed, all in the audience were invited to come down & shake hands with them.

When the Veterans Ceremony wrapped up about noon, riders signed up for the \$1000 Poker Run which would include several stops before taking them back to Apache Gold Resort. The last card was at the Drift Inn in Globe. Many riders took time to enjoy the Apache Jii Festival that was taking place in town as well.

Once all the hands were sorted & the winners announced, Jaralyn T. collected \$600 with her Flush, 3 Queens got Nate R. \$300, & Darrel H.'s 3 Jacks earned him \$100. Congratulations!!

Back at the Casino, there was music outdoors by Country Image while checking out the bikes in the Show. Vendors included [Superstition Harley-Davidson](#), local artisans offering jewelry & other items, plus merchandise to support the [Rez Riders IMC](#).

The Bike Show was also organized by the Rez Riders IMC. There were 18 entries, each beautiful in its way. I would not have wanted to be a judge! Unfortunately, the winners list was not available for this writing. Congratulations to the winners!

As it got later in the afternoon, people dispersed to get dinner before the evening's concert & grand prize drawing.

The big drawing took place after the Aerosmith cover band 'Aeromith' finished. Chances turned out to be about 650-1 to win the bike. Laverna Kniffin from San Carlos won the brand new Harley Davidson XL 1200 this year. She was thrilled! Congratulations & safe travels to you!

In case anyone is 'put off' from this event by its being described as 'Spiritual', it is very important to understand the difference between 'spirituality' & 'religion'. This ride is 'Spiritual' in the sense of being uplifting & good for the Spirit. Everyone can certainly benefit from that ☺

There were nearly 525 registered for the weekend; with a mix of Independent riders and Club members. This is a ride where everyone is welcome ~ all bikes, all riders, all Nations.

If you've been to it before, you already know ☺ If you haven't attended yet; clear your calendar for October 15-16, 2020 and come check out the [Run to the Rez](#) for yourself. We hope to see you there!

Betsy & Bruce