

Run to the Rez 14



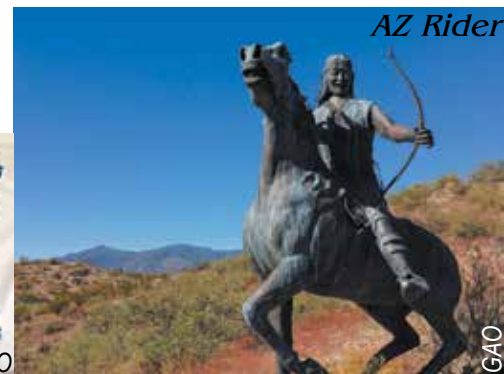
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A Motorcycle Gathering for All Nations

October 2017... Before this year's Run to the Rez, I was talking with my friends at Superstition Harley Davidson in Apache Junction, and heard their enthusiasm about the Run. I regretted that I couldn't go because my son was coming for a visit from Michigan. But at the last minute he cancelled the flight; so I decided to check out the 14th annual, held October 6-7 at the Apache Gold Casino Resort, just outside of Globe, AZ.

My last-minute plan was to ride up from Apache Junction for Friday afternoon until early evening and then ride home. But I was having such a great time, and felt so comfortable when there, that I decided to stay overnight.

This spur of the moment behavior isn't like me. Most of the time, I plan my moves and stick to them. But there was something in the wind that caught me and held me tight. As riders, we're used to putting our faces into the wind and paying attention. I did, and while I can't identify exactly what it was, I had a comfortable sense that everyone at the run caught the same welcome wind. The wind whispered, "We are all the same, brother and sister bikers and riders."

On Friday afternoon, riders enjoyed a Casino to Casino Poker Run. The round-trip of about 90 miles left from Apache Gold Casino, traveled through beautiful, scenic Arizona to the new Apache Sky Casino in Dudleyville AZ & then back. Congrats to Bernadette Bernetta Begay for winning \$500 on the Poker Run.

Friday night's welcoming presentations on the south side of the Casino, under the portico, truly put flesh on the community spirit. We heard chanting and songs by the California Bird Singers which were accompanied by the steady rhythm of gourds. The Crown Dancers also shared a part of their history with dance and a blessing for bikers. I was struck by

the rich symbolism in the dance wear – even though much of it remained a mystery - for example, of the four dancers, three wore black hoods and one wore a white hood; fully covering their heads and faces.

Lady Jewells, in a previous issue of *Arizona Rider Motorcycle News*, described the dancers with a quote from the *Fort Apache Scout* newspaper, "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."

Following the cultural presentations and welcoming ceremony, bikers, friends, and family met in the Casino's ballroom to hear music by Greywolf and dance their sox off. With a generous collection of raffle items valued at over \$4000 dollars, everyone was looking at their tickets to win prizes and money.

On the dance floor, everyone mixed and had fun. When it was time for a drawing, Dr. John teased the crowd, telling them to put on their glasses so they could read the tickets. Many people did put on their glasses, and left the ballroom with gifts. I was not surprised by this generosity. The Native people are now, and have always been, a giving people and I honor that.

Just by signing up for the ride, each registrant received a Run to the Rez long sleeve tee shirt with original artwork, entertainment by 4 bands, tickets for raffles, tickets for Casino play, a barbecue dinner Saturday night, the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends, and a chance to win the HD 750 provided by Superstition Harley-Davidson of Apache Junction.

But what I most liked about Run to the Rez

was the spirit of community. This was not a run for one racial group over another, but for All. I felt welcomed, and I respected and enjoyed what I witnessed of Native culture.

Saturday's arrival of the motorcycle parade to Burdette Hall was captured by a drone camera. Nice! The footage is posted at www.runtotherez.net/ There were many positive comments about the Honor Ceremony for Veterans. Respect for the Military ~ Veterans and GIs alike ~ runs deep here. The bleachers in the auditorium were filled with riders and local townspeople. Dr. John explained, "The ceremony was and always has been very spiritual. An Apache warrior named Ernest Stanley was honored. He made the ultimate sacrifice for his country and people, dying at the Battle of the Bulge during WWII. In his memory, two of his nephews will be the Grand Marshals of this year's San Carlos Veterans Day Parade. Another Apache Warrior honored was Wheeler Grimes Sr. He served during the Korean War and is still a very active member of the San Carlos Apache Veterans Association."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, bikers opting for Saturday's "Around the Mountain" Poker Run through the Arizona desert enjoyed the best of what the Arizona desert offers. On each corner, the mountains created a foreground to the blue sky as the sunlight danced from the peaks like the spirits of the ancestors. The ride ended back at Apache Gold. The winners information was not available at the time of this writing.

After the poker run, folks hung around the Casino, played games, visited vendors, or just enjoyed the company of friends.

The Bike Show, hosted by Independent Riders of Globe Arizona, was set up in front of Apache Gold Casino. There were 19 entries in the Show. People were wandering through the bikes checking them out and listening to live music by the band

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Categories were American, Metric, Trike, Vintage, & Custom, plus Best of Show. 1st place winners got \$100 & 2nd places got \$50. The winners were:

- Custom class: 1st place = Jerry (Fester) Foster,
2nd place = Dana Merino;
- American: 1st place = Steve (Blue) Saiz,
2nd place = Ed (dirty rat) Zaragoza;
- Trike: 1st place = Scottie (Native Man) Rigger,
2nd = Ed Mazzetti;
- Metric: 1st place = Louis Mcintosh;
- Vintage: 1st place = Jerry Garlinghouse; and
- Best of show: Dana Merino.

Congratulations to each of you.

I couldn't help but affirm the Rez Riders IMC by purchasing a tee shirt. Their mission statement reads, in part: "to foster a family environment of Native people devoted to motorcycle riding and to support Native people through charitable acts."

One cultural offering for men was the invitation to partake in a "sweat." I did; and while I clearly understood that the sweat I attended was neither ceremonial nor tribal, I felt the spiritual importance of this ritual. I was comfortable and welcomed. I listened to stories and regular chit-chat while the rocks (Grandfathers) for the sweat heated up in a big fire. When the sweat lodge was set, I found my place and heard respectful voices offering prayers and chants in the steam created by the Grandfathers.

I was glad to participate in the sweat and would encourage others to try it in the future. It's not something everyone would do, and I am hesitant to speak much about it - out of cultural respect - but you can

trust that nothing bad will happen when you enter in the same spirit with which the lodge is offered.

On Saturday night, bike contest winners were announced and the two tribute bands kept the night rocking: 'Jumping Jack Flash' Rolling Stones Re creation from LA and 'Noise Pollution' the AC/DC Experience from San Diego. After the concerts, everyone waited to see if they held the winning ticket for the Harley-Davidson X-GR 750 motorcycle. Congratulations to Sherry Pete from Rio Rancho, NM for holding the lucky ticket.

My hope at Run to the Rez was to show my respect by the way I treated others, by the way I spoke and acted, and by the way I listened and kept patience. This was easy to do because it was only a reflection of what I experienced from the hands and tongues of others. Respect for tradition is important on the Rez; manners, courtesy, and giving is part of this tradition. Maybe that's what I felt in the wind and why I stayed.

On Saturday night for example, the barbeque (included with admission) line up was very long and a long wait. But the spirit at Run to the Rez - the true brother/sisterhood of bikers - induced calm and peace even in the midst of waiting in a long line. At Run to the Rez, we can put our Type A behavior on the shelf for a while. At this run, the people are not slaves to time, but live and enjoy community with others - all Nations.

Thanks & appreciation go out to this event's sponsors: San Carlos Apache Tribe, Apache Gold Casino and Resort, Superstition Harley Davidson,

Apache Sky Casino, Peridot District Office, American Indian Insurance Services, Carol Hudson, Dr. John Bush, and the Run to the Rez Committee.

Organizer Dr. John reported that 625 people participated during the weekend. He noted that almost a third of the riders were from out of state, with many from Southern Cal and from New Mexico. The furthest traveler came in from Minnesota. He commented that he "saw a lot of new faces this year." He also shared, "I felt like we might have turned the corner on it being a 'Native run'." It's good to hear from him that attendance *and* diversity are rising. \$5000 in proceeds from the Run were donated to the San Carlos Apache Veterans Association.

Next year's event is tentatively scheduled for October 18-20, 2018; in conjunction with the Apache Days Native American Street Fair in Globe AZ. You'll find information in the AZ Rider calendar as it becomes available.

Ride On!

Greg Ormson

Editor's note: Thank you to Henrietta Stands-Nelson of Oklahoma for sharing her pix with us. She enjoys long-distance riding, and is aiming her sights on the Hoka Hey next July. This was her first trip to Run to the Rez. She shared that she had a wonderful time and is already planning to attend next year & bring friends © "Dr. John and his associates put on an amazing Run." She is pictured here on her king, Thunder.

