

Run to the Rez ~ 10th Annual

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October 18-20, 2013..... So this was our first trip to Run to the Rez. As it turns out, most all of our writers have been there over the years..... Sidekick, Beaux, Lady Jewells.... But this was our first.

The morning of Friday October 18 found us on the 60 heading east toward Globe and the nearby community of San Carlos, in the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. It was a wonderful weekend for this gathering... a beautiful blue sky above, ideal temperatures, and fall colors in the trees. The ride up was awesome; smooth, scenic, & no hitches.... which can be said of all the miles we rode during this trip.

We arrived at the host property, Apache Gold Casino Resort, located on Hwy 70, 5 miles east of Globe, in the early afternoon. This is a beautiful facility. So as to stay on topic here, we have shared our review in a separate article.

Event registration took place all day on Friday. For those who arrived in time, there was an afternoon ride to San Carlos for a chili cook-off.

Back at the Resort that evening, there was a Cultural Event from 6-8pm. It was the first year for this presentation; and included a bonfire under the full moon, with traditional Native American music & dance to welcome the bikers to the weekend. The night was cool with a light breeze, the fire warm; perfect for being outdoors. I was fortunate to meet a lady who was able to share some insight into the dances & traditions. But even if that had not been

the case, it would still have been a fascinating & enjoyable performance. I heard numerous comments hoping that this gathering will be back next year.

The Welcome Party started at 9pm in the Convention Center. What a great time! We met even more new people, plus visited with some we haven't seen in years. The band, Apache Spirit, was outstanding. They pretty much covered all the bases; providing an excellent mix of tunes for whatever type of dancing you prefer. The floor stayed busy.

During the breaks, there were raffles; with lots of good stuff. Superstition HD of Apache Junction was a very generous donor. There were also custom embroidered event jackets. There was even a big screen LED TV to be won.

Saturday morning was clear, cool, & picture perfect. The Geronimo Riders were busy getting everyone registered & emcee Buz kept directing everyone to their bikes, to keep the 10a departure on schedule.

The escorted ride took us through some beautiful country. Many people were waiting for us along the road, waving & cheering. We heard honking horns from cars held at intersections. Our destination was Burdette Memorial Hall in San Carlos.

The bleachers were filled with a mix of riders and locals. It was very cool to see children of all ages there; learning to respect the service of our GIs and Veterans. It was shared that when this event began 10 years ago, there were less than 30 riders. Today,

there were about 400 participating. Outstanding!

There were numerous local dignitaries whose remarks were welcoming & interesting. With no disrespect intended, there is too little space here to reflect on them each individually; but I'll single some out.

Two elders, each Veterans, Ronnie Lupe and Raymus Edwards, were both very moving speakers... These examples of living history were so eloquent, sharing their memories & thoughts, all from the heart; no notes.

The Princesses were poised & captivating. Family is so very important here. As they addressed the audience, their introduction included the listing of their heritage through their grandparents. These young ladies are active in their communities, accomplished students, and studied in the history & traditions of their people. Their lives represent the future & protect the past at the same time.

As would be expected; at one point, all the Veterans were called to come forward. Unexpected was the call for their wives to come forward to be recognized. Mike Touchin offered poignant remarks about the importance of the support that GIs & Vets get from their wives. The Veterans were then given roses to present to their wives. After that these men were mustered for a salute.

The program closed with traditional drumming,

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singing, & dancing. This gathering is a touching affirmation that our Veterans will never be forgotten. There were so many young people & children here to hear the stories that the history will live on.

A bbq lunch, including deep pit beef, was served up in the cafeteria of the school next door. The room echoed with good cheer & laughter. This was also the sign-in & 1st draw for the afternoon's poker run.

From there, the riders headed out on a run which included stops in Globe. There, a local celebration called Apache Jii [Day] was in full swing. There were vendors displaying all kinds of Native American art. Music, dance, & demonstrations were also taking place. It was really neat. The short route allowed for time to stay in town for a while & still get back to the Casino in time for the bike show & to turn in your cards timely. For those men who were interested, there was a traditional Apache Sweat taking place during this afternoon as well.

Things got going at the Apache Gold Pavilion at about 4:30p. Music by Grey Wolf got the place rockin'. Thanks for the shout-out, Buz! There were several vendors there, including our friends Mark & Theresa Ann of HogWear | Purple Slice and our newest advertiser First Shot Cycle Parts.

During a band break, announcements were made. Congratulations to the day's winners. Bike Show winners received plaques & cash prizes of \$50/1st & \$25/2nd place. Best Metric: 1st = Miguel;

Best Custom: 1st = Hugh Lano, 2nd = Al Nader; Best Trike: Scottie Rigan; Best Dresser: 1st = Harold Benally, 2nd = Many Roads; Best American: 1st = Johnny Billie, 2nd = Seraphine Bille. Best of Show went to Scottie Rigan & his trike. Corey Johnson was the 2nd place winner in the Poker Run, receiving \$200. Adam Peru of Safford collected \$400 for his 1st place win.

Even more people gathered at the Pavilion as it became time for the Kentucky Headhunters to take the main stage. Before their first song, an Honor Guard presented the Colors. Then it was all about the music for the next couple hours. They had some great music to keep you moving & toe-tapping.

After the Kentucky Headhunters wrapped, Grey Wolf fired up again; gathering everyone for the big drawing & giving the Geronimo Riders a chance to set things up ~ because there were even MORE raffle items to hand out! There were event tees & HogWear tees thrown out to the crowd s well.

Apache Gold's GM Gary Murray came forward to pull the winning ticket for the 2013 Victory Hi-Ball. No one answered to the first name drawn, and you had to be there to win. So that made it a very lucky night for Benedict Victor, who claimed the Grand Prize. Congratulations!!

We highly recommend people to attend this event. The organizers are striking a fine balance between offering riders a fun time and fulfilling their intent to honor all Veterans. And all while sharing

the richness of their culture with those who are interested in opening their minds & hearts to a new experience.

Kudos go to the Geronimo Riders. This event staff put in some long hours putting this run together & keeping things going smoothly. Attendees can come & go as they please, but staffers are on the job late into the night and then again first thing in the morning. Well done!

Thank you to event organizer John Bush for the invitation to attend Run to the Rez, and the hospitality extended to us. We are very happy to have been there & to be able to share our experience with others. There is so much more that could be said about this run. I have pages of notes. But trying to encapsulate it here is like trying to describe a song or a color. You truly need to experience it, to get it.

There has already been a tentative date set for next year, October 17- 19th, 2014. Once that is confirmed, we will add it to our calendar. You can also follow this event via their website <http://runtotherez.com...> or on Facebook.

One of our goals is to emphasize that this gathering is indeed for ALL bikes; and for ALL riders, rather than only Native Americans. From the moment we arrived, we were taken with how welcoming and gracious everyone was. We look forward to returning; and to watching this event continue to grow, as it deserves. See you next year.....

Bruce & Betsy

