



Indian Motorcycle Riders Group Tucson Black Mountain Chapter Newsletter #39 Winter 2026



In This Issue

Page

New Model Reviews	2-3
Racing News	4
Industry News	5-6
Safety News Tips & Origin	7-8
Tucson Rundezvous V	9
Rides and Features	10-33
Vintage Feature	34-38
Winter Odds & Ends	39
Credits, Captions & Events	40



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Activities Director: Bonita Reiter

Road/Safety Director: Al McDonald

Newsletter Editor: Debbie Ostrom

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Editor's Note

By Debbie Ostrom

Welcome to issue #39, our 2026 Winter Newsletter. Thanks to all our contributors this quarter! You make this great!

In this 40-page edition we feature new 2026 Indian models ushering in the 125th anniversary! And the King of the Baggers Race schedule.

We present some alarming motorcycle safety statistics. Al McDonald and Mike share some preventative measures. We cover Rocky Point, Red Sleigh Toy Run and several rides and events. We wrap it up with Winter Odds & Ends, credits, upcoming rides and captions.

If you are new to our IMRG Tucson Black Mountain Family, please introduce yourself to the group through a Bio. Please share your ride experience through an article and a few photos. Your contributions continue to make this a nationally recognized publication.

Please send all submissions to: mdostrom@gmail.com

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President's Corner

By Mike Ostrom

Winter has brought some chilly mornings and glorious afternoons for riding!

Welcome to our Snowbird members. It's nice to see you this time of year!

Congratulations to the elected officers serving the 2026 term (see above). Thanks for your service.

Tucson Rundezvous V will be at Casino Del Sol, March 25-29, 2026. Please register, book your room and join us!

Indian Motorcycle kicks off its Never Finished year-long campaign to celebrate its 125th anniversary.

A special welcome to new Tucson Black Mountain members. Everyone is welcome to join us, no matter what you ride. Send an email: President@IMRGtucson.org

For rides and events see Facebook: **Indian Motorcycle Riders Group of Tucson, Black Mountain Chapter**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/448704798634482>

Or our website: <https://www.imrgtucsonbmc.org/>

Look forward to seeing you on a ride or event soon.



New Model Preview

2026 Indian Sport Scout RT Preview


By Rider Magazine Staff, November 4, 2025

For model year 2025, Indian's Scout lineup was significantly updated, with the introduction of five versions of the Scout. For 2026, the family gets a sixth member in the form of the new Indian Sport Scout RT, fitted with factory accessories for an aggressive style.

Distinguishing the Sport Scout RT from the other Scouts is the addition of locking hard saddlebags offering 10 gallons of waterproof storage (available as accessories for other Scout models) and color-matched fenders and quarter fairing. It shares all other features with the regular Sport Scout, including gloss-black 5.5-inch bar risers with machined highlights, machined triples, a sport solo seat with lower back support, bar-end mirrors, and a 19-inch front wheel.

Like the other Scouts, the Sport Scout RT is powered by the liquid-cooled SpeedPlus 1250 that debuted in the updated model family for 2025. Power is listed as 105 hp, and torque is 82 lb-ft. It also gets the new-for-2025 steel-tube frame with a 61.5-inch wheelbase, 29-degree rake, and 4.8 inches of trail. It has a 25.7-inch seat height and a wet weight of 568 lb (20 lb more than the Sport Scout).

Standard equipment includes the Limited + Tech package with ABS, a 4-inch TFT display powered by Ride Command, keyless ignition, ride modes, a USB charging port, cruise control, and traction control.

The 2026 Indian Sport Scout RT will be available in Sunset Red Metallic, Black Smoke, or Chalk starting at \$16,999. 



New Model Preview

2026 Indian Chief Vintage

By Dennis Chung, Motorcycle.com

Indian Motorcycle is kicking off its 125th anniversary year by bringing back a timeless classic, introducing a new Chief Vintage for 2026.

Drawing inspiration from Chief models from the 1940s, the 2026 Chief Vintage features arching pull-back handlebars, wire spoke wheels, large, flowing fenders, and Indian's signature illuminated headress. The classic Indian Red and Black Metallic color options both pair nicely with the air-cooled Thunderstroke 116 engine's non-machined black cylinders and silver-painted cylinder heads and pushrod tubes, a look that mirrors the look of the original Chiefs.




Mechanically, the ThunderStroke 116 engine is unchanged from the one powering the Dark Horse Chief models, producing a claimed peak output of 92 hp at 120 lb-ft. at 2,900 rpm (Indian did not provide power figures, but the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rates it at 92 hp at 4,500 rpm). The Chief Vintage offers three ride modes, Tour, Standard, and Sport, each offering a different throttle response.

The Vintage also comes with a four-inch round touchscreen display and the latest version of Indian's Ride Command software. Also available on the other Chiefs and the Scout models, Ride Command offers mo-

bile phone connectivity and navigation, while offering a 25% faster loading time compared to previous versions.

The suspension system is the same as the standard Chief, with a 46mm telescopic fork up front offering 5.2 inches of travel, and dual preload-adjustable rear shocks offering 3.0 inches of give. The braking system consists of a single four-piston caliper up front, and a single two-piston caliper for the rear, both paired with 298mm discs. An anti-lock braking system comes standard.

Indian is offering a number of accessories, including touring equipment like a 17.8-inch quick release windscreen, weather-resistant vinyl saddlebags, and passenger accommodations.

The 2026 Indian Chief Vintage will arrive in dealerships in March with a starting price of \$19,999 and a choice of either Indian Motorcycle Red or Black Metallic. 





(2 Races Each, KB = King of the Baggers)

MAR 5-7 DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY
DAYTONA, FLORIDA

MAR 27-29 MOTOGP™ AT CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS
AUSTIN, TEXAS

APR 17-19 MICHELIN RACEWAY ROAD ATLANTA
BRASELTON, GEORGIA

MAY 15-17 BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

MAY 29-31 ROAD AMERICA
ELKHART LAKE, WISCONSIN

JUN 26-28 RIDGE MOTORSPORTS PARK
SHELTON, WASHINGTON

JUL 10-12 WEATHERTECH RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA
MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

JUL 31 -AUG 2 MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE
LEXINGTON, OHIO

AUG 14-16 VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY
ALTON, VIRGINIA

SEPT 11-13 CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS
AUSTIN, TEXAS

SEPT 25-27 NEW JERSEY MOTORSPORTS PARK
MILLVILLE, NEW JERSEY

↓

SB SS TC KB SH TW

MARCH 5-7 THE 84TH DAYTONA 200

APR 17-19 GA

ROAD ATLANTA

MAY 15-17 AL

BARBER

MAY 29-31 WI

ROAD AMERICA

JUN 26-28 WA

RIDGE

JUL 10-12 CA

LAGUNA SECA

JUL 31 -AUG 2 OH

MID-OHIO

AUG 14-16 VA

VIR

SEPT 11-13 TX

COTA

SEPT 25-27 NJ

NJMP



2025 King of the Bagger Results

Mission King Of The Baggers

Season: 2025

Pos	No.	Name	Total	Diff	Gap	3/6/2025 3/6/2025 5/2/2025 5/2/2025 5/30/2025 5/30/2025 7/11/2025 7/11/2025 8/15/2025 8/15/2025 9/12/2025 9/12/2025 9/26/2025 9/26/2025															
						Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
1	33	Kyle Wyman	264	0	0	25	25	20	25	25	16	25	25	16	25	13	0	13	11		
2	76	Loris Baz	194	70	70	0	14	25	20	6	10	20	13	10	10	20	20	11	13		
3	1	Troy Herffoss	183	81	11	8	20	16	0	11	25	13	11	20	0	9	25	9	16		
4	69	Hayden Gillim	172	92	11	0	10	13	11	13	11	0	0	25	11	25	8	25	20		
5	29	Tyler O'Hara	144	120	28	10	13	11	0	16	13	7	16	8	20	8	6	7	9		
6	43	James Rispoli	130	134	14	0	0	0	13	20	20	10	0	13	13	10	11	10	10		
7	97	Rocco Landers	118	146	12	9	11	5	0	10	6	16	20	9	0	16	0	16	0		
8	45	Cameron Petersen	117	147	1	16	0	x	x	7	0	9	11	16	0	13	20	25			
9	38	Bradley Smith	115	149	2	20	6	10	16	0	5	11	8	x	x	11	16	4	8		
10	13	Cory West	80	184	35	0	7	7	10	7	0	9	10	0	9	6	10	0	5		
11	78	Kyle Ohnsorg	72	192	8	13	9	9	0	8	8	x	x	x	x	5	7	6	7		
12	85	Jake Lewis	67	197	5	11	8	0	0	9	9	x	x	x	x	7	9	8	6		
13	88	Max Flinders	47	217	20	0	0	6	9	0	0	8	0	6	0	4	5	5	4		
14	96	Brandon Paasch	8	256	39	x	x	8	0	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
15	10	Travis Wyman	7	257	1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7	0	x	x	x	x		

Legend 1st place 2nd place 3rd place

3/6/2025	Daytona 200
3/6/2025	Daytona 200
5/2/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Road Atlanta
5/2/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Road Atlanta
5/30/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Road America
5/30/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Road America
7/11/2025	MotoAmerica Speedfest at Monterey
7/11/2025	MotoAmerica Speedfest at Monterey
8/15/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Mid-Ohio
8/15/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Mid-Ohio
9/12/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Texas
9/12/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at Texas
9/26/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at New Jersey
9/26/2025	MotoAmerica Superbikes at New Jersey



Industry News

The Latest US Motorcycle Death Statistics

By Janaki Jitchotvisut RideApart.com

The US Department of Transportation recently released an analysis of its latest batch of motorcycle fatality and injury data, and there's a lot to take in. There are some things you'll probably expect (more or less), while other stats may surprise you. A few housekeeping notes before we dive in, though.

First of all, even though this data was released in 2025, it only covers the calendar year of 2023. Data analysis and reporting take time and are unfortunately not available in real time. Second of all, the geographic area covered by this reporting includes all 50 United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Ready? Let's dive into these stats, shall we?

The headline is that slightly more motorcyclists died on US roads in 2023 than in 2022, but there were also slightly fewer injuries. In total, DOT stats from 2023 show that 6,335 motorcyclists were killed that year, which is an increase of 1 % over the 6,251 killed in 2022. However, motorcycle injuries on American roads were down by just under 1 %, going from 82,690 in 2022 to 82,564 in 2023.

How did motorcycle fatalities compare with other types of vehicular fatalities? Assuming a baseline of 100 million miles traveled, the motorcycle fatality rate in 2023 was 31.39%, as compared to just 1.13% for passenger cars.

It's not just you; unexpected left turns can seriously be deadly for motorcyclists.

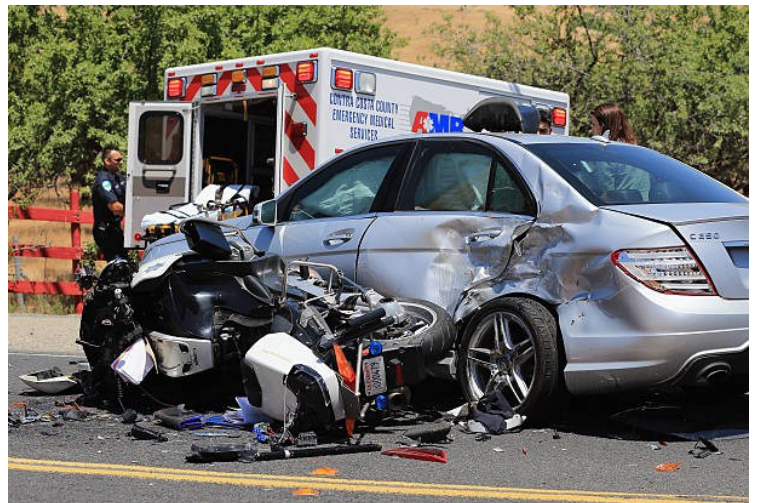
I've talked about this before, but I always like it when I can find good, solid data to answer questions I have. According to this report, a whopping 46 % of motorcycle fatalities that involved two vehicles occurred because a given vehicle decided to turn left while a motorcycle was going straight.

46%. It's not quite 50%, but that's still a pretty ginormous number, especially when you think about individual lives impacted (and the rider's loved ones, too). In 2023, the DOT reports that 3,419 fatal crashes involving a motorcycle and another vehicle occurred.

Doing a little simple math, that's 1,573 motorcyclists who were killed by left turns on US roads in 2023.

In an additional 709 fatal crashes between a motorcycle and another vehicle, both vehicles were going straight. Now, it's not clear from the report whether this means these were all head-on collisions, or whether it was a right-of-way issue and each vehicle was proceeding straight ahead perpendicularly at an intersection, but still.

Finally, regarding two-vehicle crashes, 79% of motorcycle fatalities involved frontal impacts, while just 6% involved rear impacts. There's no mention made of side impacts, which makes me question the reporting a bit, as it seems pretty unlikely that there were zero side impacts in any circumstance.



Industry News

The Latest US Motorcycle Death Statistic (continued)

Who died, statistically speaking?

Unfortunately, alcohol played a role in many motorcycle fatalities reported in 2023. In fact, 26% of riders who died were alcohol-impaired (had a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or more). In numerical terms, this represented 1,584 of the motorcycle fatalities recorded. A further 7% (or 401 riders) were recorded with BACs of between 0.01 and 0.07 g/dL; not enough to register as legally impaired, but still with some alcohol in their systems.

How does this compare to other drivers? It's actually closer than you might suspect, as 24% of car driver fatalities in 2023 were considered legally alcohol impaired by measurable BAC. Statistically, the motorcycle fatalities with alcohol impairment most likely occurred in riders aged 35 to 39 and 45 to 54.



What about single-vehicle crashes?

Alcohol plays a role here, too, which you probably expected. Of the 2,171 motorcycle fatalities resulting from single-vehicle crashes that were recorded in 2023, a full 41% featured riders who were legally alcohol-impaired. If there's any good news here, it's that the overall number went down slightly from 2022 to 2023, as 2,267 single-vehicle motorcycle fatalities were recorded in 2022.

Where are motorcycle helmets in the crash fatality data?

In 2023, the DOT reports that 73.8% of motorcyclists were riding with DOT-compliant helmets. However, the report also correlates alcohol impairment with a lower tendency to wear a helmet, and states that only 55% of alcohol-impaired riders killed wore helmets, as compared to 70% of those killed who did not have alcohol in their bloodstreams.

Unsurprisingly, in states with either partial or no helmet laws, larger percentages of motorcycle fatalities were recorded by the DOT with riders who weren't wearing helmets. As I've noted before, I live in Illinois. While I may personally be ATGATT to the point where I won't ride to the gas station without a helmet, there are plenty of riders whom I see when I'm out that make different choices.

In 2023, the US DOT recorded a total of 60% of Illinois motorcycle fatalities as not having worn helmets at the time of their crashes. Next door in Indiana, it's even higher; 70% of riders killed there in 2023 weren't wearing helmets.

Approximately 35% of motorcyclists who died in 2023 weren't wearing helmets. But that also means that the other 65% were. A good-quality motorcycle helmet may have been scientifically shown to help lessen or prevent certain head injuries, but statistically speaking, they aren't the golden ticket to cheating death. There is no such magic potion, talisman, or other item that will prevent all motorcycle deaths ever.



It is, after all, a motorcycle; we know there are risks, which we accept every time we ride.



Safety Tips

The Most Dangerous Moment on Two Wheels and How to Beat It!



by Al McDonald, Road/Safety Director and Indian Motorcycle

Ask seasoned riders what the biggest danger on the road is, and you might hear answers like speed, gravel, or distracted drivers. But year after year, the data tells a different story.

The number one cause of serious motorcycle accidents is another vehicle turning left in front of the motorcycle—usually at an intersection. It's not reckless riding. It's not bad judgment on your part. It's a driver who didn't see you or misjudged your speed.

Why This Happens So Often

Motorcycles don't register in a driver's brain the same way cars and trucks do. At intersections, drivers are scanning for large shapes and familiar movement patterns. A motorcycle—especially one coming straight through—can be overlooked even when it's clearly visible. Add distractions, impatience, or the false belief that "I've got time," and you have the most common setup for a serious crash.

The Indian Rider Advantage: Experience + Awareness

Indian riders tend to log serious miles. Touring bikes, cruisers, long days on the road. That experience matters—but it doesn't make you immune.

The good news? This risk is highly manageable if you ride with intention.

How to Avoid—or Minimize—the Danger

1. Treat Every Intersection as a Threat Zone

Even when you have the right of way. Especially when you have the right of way. Roll off the throttle slightly, Cover your brakes and Scan left-turn lanes aggressively

2. Watch the Front Wheels, Not the Driver

A car's wheels will move before the vehicle does. Eye contact is unreliable. A smile and a wave won't stop 3,000 pounds of steel.

3. Use Lane Position for Visibility

Position yourself where you're most visible to oncoming traffic—not where it's most comfortable.

Left portion of the lane when approaching intersections

Adjust as needed to create space and escape routes

4. Make Yourself Seen—On Your Terms

Daytime running lights, auxiliary lighting, and strategic lane movement help you stand out in traffic clutter. Subtle weaving (within your lane) can draw attention without being aggressive.

5. Ride Like You're Invisible— Because sometimes, you are.

This mindset doesn't mean riding scared—it means riding smart. Calm, alert, and ready.

Confidence Comes From Control

Indian Motorcycles are built for power, stability, and long-haul comfort. That confidence is earned—but it should never turn into complacency.

The most dangerous moment on the road isn't the open highway.

It's the quiet intersection where someone thinks they have time.

Ride proud. Ride aware.

And make it home every time.

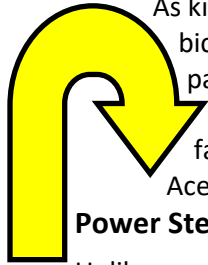
Indian Motorcycle — Respect the Ride.



Safety Tips

Power Steering on Motorcycles

By Mike Ostrom



As kids, we all learned intuitively to lean on our bicycles going around a curve. And for the most part that intuition guides us around curves on our heavier and faster motorcycles. But on faster and tighter curves it's nice to have an Ace up your sleeve for an extra measure of safety

Power Steering!


Unlike a car where you simply turn the steering wheel more in the direction you want to go when a curve tightens up, on a motorcycle the key is to push the inside handle bar forward slightly in the opposite direction you are turning.

This technique is aptly named counter steering. And it is counterintuitive at first, but doing it helps lean the motorcycle over farther, which is required to turn tighter.

If you haven't consciously done this before, I recommend slowly experimenting with this technique in a slow curve with plenty of safety margin, at first. Approach a known curve slowly and near the centerline. As you begin leaning like normal, gently push the inside handle bar grip forward. You will feel the bike begin to lean more and turn tighter.




As you become comfortable leaning more, you can gradually increase your speed and lean angle. This is the same technique professional racers use to initiate severe lean angles going around curves on a racetrack with their knees and elbows fractions of an inch above the tarmac. So, it's a way to go faster around a curve, but more importantly, it's a great safety technique when you find yourself going too hot into an unfamiliar curve!

Applying the front brake gently before the curve not only helps scrub off speed, it transfers weight to the front wheel for better traction. Practicing these techniques will not only make you a safer rider, they will make you a more confident rider, increasing your enjoyment when you hit the twisties! 

The Origin of Our Tucson Black Mountain Chapter Name

Reprinted from Arizona Daily Star, Oct 21, 2021

Lying just west of Interstate 10 near the far west end of Congress Street, "A" Mountain, more formally known as Sentinel Peak, stands as one of Tucson's most well-known natural landmarks. (It's the peak with the famous white "A" on its side.) In the valley below the 2,900-foot peak, the Hohokam people lived along the Santa Cruz River as far back as 1,220 years ago, according to the City of Tucson.

One Native American settlement was named Stjuk-shon, pronounced "shook-son," which roughly translates to "village at the foot of the black mountain." The mountain they were referring to is Sentinel Peak. When Spanish soldiers and explorers came to the region, they began pronouncing the settlement's name as "Took-son," leaving us with what is now Tucson, although the pronunciation has clearly changed since then. 



Tucson Rundezvous V

March 25-29, 2026 Casino Del Sol Resort
5655 W. Valencia RD. Tucson, AZ 855.765.7829
Rooms \$109-\$129

Registration \$15 includes TR Patch and '26 Rocker
Banquet Buffet \$64 Shirts \$25 Sizes Small - 3XL

Order online: <https://imrgtucson.org/rundezvous.php>



INDIAN MOTORCYCLE
TUCSON



Rides and Events

25th Rocky Point Rally

By Mike Ostrom



Debbie informed me she sent \$102 to Tim Crandell to reserve a room at the Vina Del Mar hotel in Puerto Penasco for the 25th Rocky Point Rally, November 6-9th. I guess she figured I'd be good with that. The Vina has one great thing going for it and that is its location. It is at the south end of the Malecon main drag, within walking or rollator distance from the main drag of shops, restaurants and endless bike parade. Jumping on the bike after a day of partying to navigate crowded and dark streets back to your

quiet condo on Sandy Beach can be challenging at the least. Tim reserves a block of ten rooms at Vina every year and many of our friends are regulars there. We hadn't been there since November 2021, after Covid.

This year we agreed to meet at the QT on Ajo and Kinney at 8:30 AM on Thursday. Tim rolled in around 9:15 on his Harley, followed by Jesse on Tim's Goldwing. Torey was driving the truck packed to the gills with luggage, weekend supplies and Debbie's rollator. This year she was towing JJ's motorcycle trailer behind it, just in case. By 9:45 we were westward bound on AZ 86 on a cool morning.



We always stop in Sells for a break, which is about half way to Why, AZ our next stop. Jewels was on her Indian Scout with about a 100 mile range before the low fuel light comes on, so she topped off the tank in Sells. Bonita gets about 240 miles on her Chief Vintage, but would rather top off than stand on the side of the road waiting for Phil to return with a can of gas. This is the first year we weren't on our Chief Vintage. Debbie has found she is most comfortable on our new Can-Am Spyder F3 Limited, so I rode that while she kept Torey company in the truck. As an added bonus, her rollator straps nicely to the luggage rack on the trunk of the F3, which came in handy in Rocky Point.

Rides and Events

25th Rocky Point Rally (continued)

There was a little back up crossing the border at Lukeville, AZ into Mexico, but we all gathered on the other side for the short ride to the taco stand in Sonoyta, Sonora. I bought a six-pack of Corona for \$6 to share with friends, before the final 60 miles south to Puerto Penasco on the northern shores of the Gulf of California. We stopped at the outskirts of town to officially register for the rally and checked in at the hotel around 4 PM.

Things were already jumping on Thursday afternoon on the Malecon. This would be a record year before it was all said and done. We all met for dinner at Mariscos El Malecon, which was excellent, featuring fresh seafood. Some of the gang hit some other spots on the way back. Debbie and I had a night cap back at the hotel.

Friday morning we met at Maria Bonita's Restaurant at the hotel for coffee and then rode to Manny's Beach Club for breakfast around 10 AM. We were among the first to hit Manny's, where we ran into Don LaVetter and Jackie Mills. We have fond memories of Lupita and Mike getting married on the beach there at sunset. Phil Reiter was their fill-in official wedding photographer for the ceremony.

Afterwards, most of the gang headed to Wrecked at the Reef for some live music and cocktails. Debbie and I made a run to Sam's Club for some domestic Kahlua, crème de whisky and wine. We were also on a mission of mercy to find some effective muscle relaxers at a Farmacia for a buddy back in Tucson who had thrown out his back. From there we rode up the hill to La Casa Del Capitan to make reservations for a sunset dinner that evening at 5 PM.

Torey tried to talk everyone (12 of us) into piling into the truck for the short ride up the hill, but only Jesse and Gabby were up for riding in the bed. We had primo outdoor seats on the west side of the restaurant and were serenaded by the resident Mariachi band as we enjoyed pre-dinner drinks. The fresh seafood is amazing and they mix a mean Margarita too!



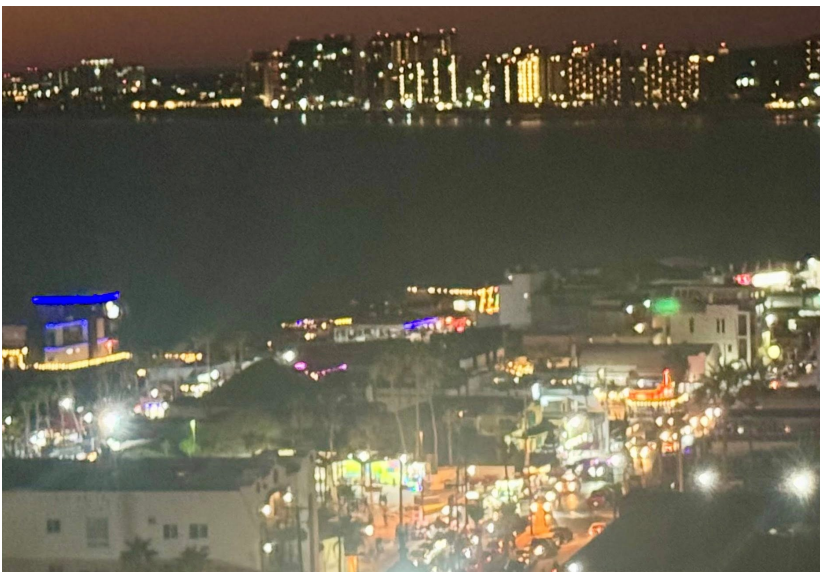
Rides and Events

25th Rocky Point Rally (continued)

Saturday is the main event on the Malecon. Tim went down early to make sure we had the appropriate section of the second-floor balcony at the Shark Bite Restaurant cordoned off for our gang. Everyone chipped in \$10/head for the cat-bird seats overlooking the action. Most of the gang had breakfast at Maria Bonita's at the hotel, but



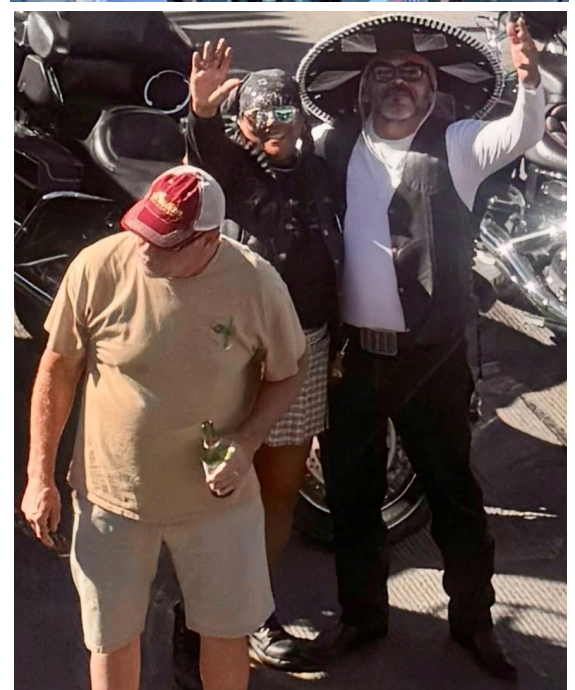
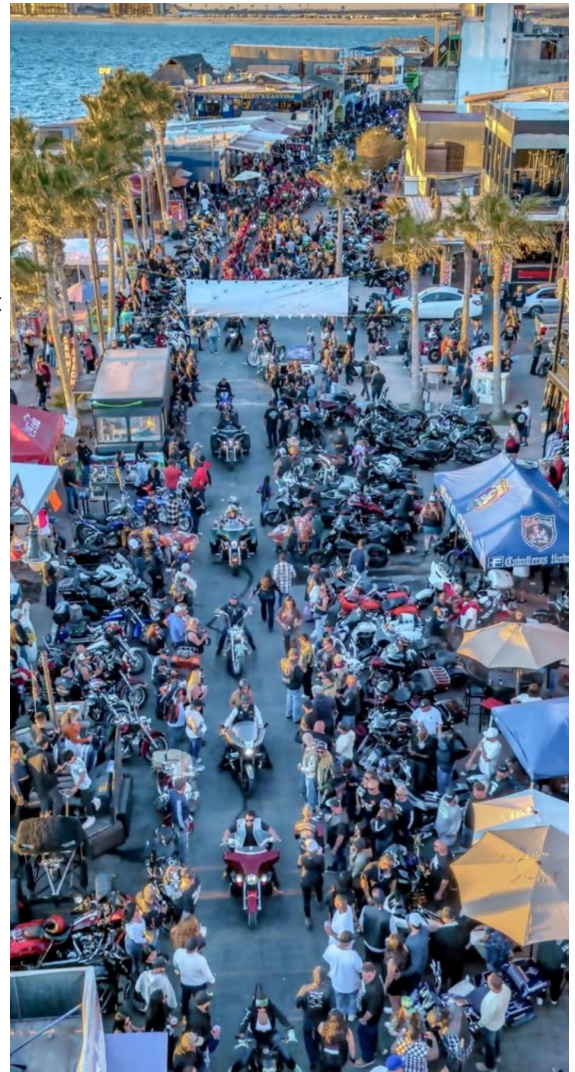
Jewels joined Debbie and me for breakfast at our favorite, Kaffee-Haus. We beat the rush and sat in the newly-remodeled front "porch". The girls both had the fresh strudel while I enjoyed the Mexican Farmers breakfast featuring fresh chorizo hash. Yumm! All three of us over indulged for just \$20. Best deal in town!



Rides and Events

25th Rocky Point Rally (continued)

The sensory overload that is the main event features blasting music, the rumble of a non-ending stream of motorcycles of every brand and model and the ring-a-ding-ding of crotch rockets bouncing off their rev-limiters as their rear tires spin clouds of blue smoke into the air! I walked among the crowd in the street smoking a nice Cuban cigar and it was the least offensive smell around! Wow! Phil wears ear plugs, which says a lot about the constant high-decibel din. How much can you stand? Well, in our case about 3 hours or so, which is about half of what we used to do.



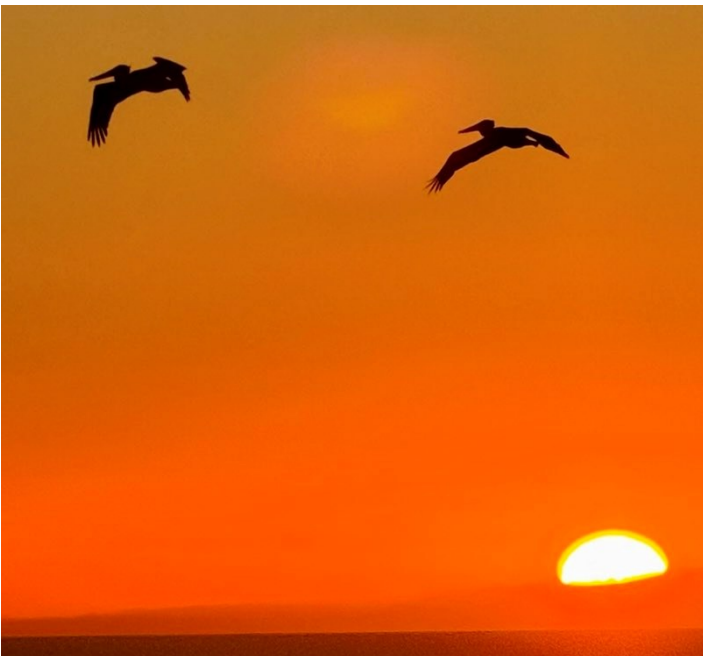
Rides and Events

25th Rocky Point Rally (continued)

Debbie and I made our way back to the hotel, where the din was more tolerable and actually ordered dinner to go from Maria Bonita's and called it an early night. Most of the rest of the gang joined Kris from the Margarita Mermaids for dinner at the Saludos Restaurant, near Manny's.



About half of us planned to leave Sunday morning at 8 AM for home. We were rolling by 8:15. JJ waved me to the lead and after stopping to top off small tanks, we broke into two groups. I locked cruise in at about 67 MPH with



Dawn keeping pace, while JJ held back below 65 with the rest of the group behind him. There was only a slight delay crossing back into the USA. Instead of waiting for everyone to top off tanks and take a comfort break in Lukeville, I just took off by myself, arriving home in Oro Valley around 1 PM.

Debbie was still shopping in Rocky Point for a beautiful angel statue and pedestal that Tim managed to find room for in the crowded truck bed. We finally met at Ajo and I-19 at 6:45 PM. Tim's Harley threw the final drive belt and he had to load it on JJ's trailer that Torey was towing. Thanks for thinking of that JJ! 🍀

Rides and Events

Moose Toy Run

By Mike Ostrom

The Renegade Classics and Sun Riders Toy Runs are no more. They claimed to be Tucson's biggest and oldest toy runs, respectively, but they're gone, at least for 2025. That leaves quite a gap in making sure all Tucson-area kids find something under the tree on Christmas morning. Three area Moose Lodges and the Roadrunner District 1 Moose Riders stepped up to help fill that void with the Moose Toy Run on Saturday, November 15th. Toys will go to More Than a Bed Family Resource Center, supporting children in foster care, kinship and adoptive families, and youth in congregate care settings.

We all gathered at the NW Moose Lodge on Ruthrauff to



register and drop off toys. There were many Moose Riders and Members of the Moose present, as well as other charitable folks from our greater biker community. Santa and Mrs. Claus (aka Moose and Squirrel) were there and along for the ride on their decorated Indian Red Sleigh! NW Moose Rider President, Scott Natvman Riggan was still recovering from major shoulder surgery and had to miss the event, so former president, Mitch Busby, gathered the riders for a pre-ride talk.



Rides and Events

Moose Toy Run (continued)



Bill Mooney estimated there were about 60 bikes in the procession that took the back way to La Cholla, Orange Grove, Sunrise and eventually down Harrison to the Thunder Mountain Moose Lodge for our first stop. Along the way horns beeped and families waved as Santa and the bikes rolled by with teddy bears strapped to the back.

Inside the lodge, a Grandma brought a couple of her grandkids over to see Santa. The little girl's face lit

up as she saw Santa and she ran over to give him a big hug! Santa asked if they had been good and both said yes as grandma nodded in agreement. They sat on Santa's lap and got a candy cane after he ran out to the



sleigh for his bag of goodies! They both gave Mrs. Claus a big hug too. It was what the toy run was all about; seeing smiles on kids' faces.

The next and final stop was the San Xavier Moose Lodge on S Nogales Road, where the Brad Harris Band provided live music. There was food and a 50-50 drawing and raffle prizes. It was a great ride and had all the makings of a seasonal celebration of giving for kids in our community.



Rides and Events

520MotoAlliance.org

MOTORCYCLE SHOW-OFF

Presented by **LAW TIGERS** MOTORCYCLE LAWYERS

Enter your bike, or just come enjoy the bikes, friends, food and fun!

- free admission • espresso bar
- food & drink • give-aways
- fun • awesome bikes

Hosted by **BEAR SWIFTERS**

1045 N. Catalina Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85711

Sunday
Nov. 2, 2025
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

520 Moto Show Off

By Mike Ostrom

Twice a year 520 Moto has been hosting a Motorcycle Show of some sorts. They even experimented with a curated show with Iron Horse Motorcycle hosting. Last spring and most recently, the first Saturday of November, it was just a old fashioned show with a wide variety of entries and one grand People's Choice award. And that seemed to please most attendees. I think Jamie McCracken, from 520 Moto said he had a mix of 25 bikes entered, most preregistered and a few walk/ride-ins the day of the show. Road Byrd entered his Harley with a big For Sale sign on it. It doesn't hurt to advertise!

Originally scheduled for 8 AM—2 PM, it was trimmed back to 8-noon when a few said they didn't want to hang around that long. I had been requested to enter some of my more unusual bikes in the past, like the 3-wheeled leaning Niken GT, but declined due to the length of the show. Jamie made it clear that I could take off when ever I wanted this year as he requested that I showcase the world's first production hybrid motorcycle, The Kawasaki Ninja 7 Hybrid.

Other participants had to choose which bike or bikes to Show-Off from their



collection, including Parish Traweek, who owns JWW Motorcycle Museum in San Manuel and co-sponsors the event. He brought his 1971 Hodaka Super Rat desert racer this go around.



Rides and Events

520 Moto Show Off (continued)

Another co-sponsor of this fall's show was Jeremy of MotoSonora Brewing Company, who brought Gabby Gifford's 1972 BMW R75/5 "Toaster Tank" Bike.

Often times the people's choice award is not what an informed concours judge would select, but that's the beauty of the award. This time the award went to Derrick's Yamaha RZ500 V4 2-stroke road racer, a fine specimen and well deserved. Peter didn't enter his HRD Vincent this time, because many folks in the past didn't know they were looking at an Icon.



Every half hour 520 Moto drew a raffle ticket and awarded some nice prizes, as people came and went. Some were there for the duration, but I packed up my Hybrid and headed out around 11:30 AM. It had warmed up at the top of Mt. Lemmon by then and the fall colors were in full display. I hadn't had the bike up there since after break-in and was anxious to feel full e-boost electric and gas motor torque on the hill. 🏍️



Rides and Events

Porter's Saloon

By Al McDonald

If there was ever a perfect day to put miles under Indian Motorcycle tires, Saturday, 12/ 6 was it. Tucson greeted our group with crisp, invigorating morning air—the kind that reminds you it's winter in the desert, even if the sun insists on shining like it's spring.

Nine riders rolled out, layered up, throttles humming, spirits high. Our lineup included: Mike Ostrom, Phil Reiter, Jim Frost, Genaro "Poblaro" Moreno, Bob Britton, Troy Guffy, Scott Carter, and Mark Grosvenor—a solid crew representing the best of IMRG Tucson camaraderie.



The Ride Up

We headed north, carving through the desert terrain as the morning light cast long shadows across the saguaro-studded landscape. The air stayed cool, but not cold enough to bite—just enough to keep everyone awake and grateful for good gear.

And we weren't the only ones who thought today was prime riding weather. It seemed like every motorcyclist in Arizona had the same idea. We passed clusters of Harleys, sport bikes,



and more than a few fellow Indian riders. Helmet nods were exchanged like highway handshakes—one of the great unwritten rules of the road.

Lunch at Porter's Saloon – Superior, AZ

Porter's Saloon did not disappoint. Superi-

or is a town with character, and Porter's is its beating heart. The group rolled in like a pack of well-mannered thunder, parked in front of and across the street from the bar, and settled in for lunch. Nearly everyone ordered the "Superior Burger" based on Mike's recommendation and why wouldn't you order a burger so good, they named the town after it!



Rides and Events

Porter's Saloon (continued)

Mike missed out on the last Kilt Lifter in the keg. That honor went to Mark. Undeterred, Mike ended up buying lunch for Scott as it was his first long distance ride on a Vintage motorcycle and he handled the challenge with flying colors. Conversation was loud, laughter was frequent, and the



food was exactly what a hungry rider hopes for after a morning in the wind.



Return Through Globe

After lunch we pointed the bikes North and looped through Globe, letting the curves and mountain scenery cap off the day. The rugged terrain, winter desert colors, and clear skies made the return leg every bit as enjoyable as the ride up.

By the time we descended back toward Tucson, the temperature had warmed, the pace relaxed, and everyone looked like they had gotten exactly what they came for—a great ride with great friends.

Final Thoughts

Today checked all the boxes: good weather, good food, good miles, and great company. Thanks to Mike, Phil, Jim, Genaro, Bob, Troy, Scott, and Mark for making it a memorable ride.



Until the next one—keep the rubber side down, and we'll see you on the road. 🍷



Rides and Events

San Tan Flat: Eight Riders, One Lunch, Zero Regrets

By eD King

On December 8, 2025 Steve Colton and I rolled out of Green Valley around 9:30 a.m., heading north toward San Tan with no firm idea who—if anyone—might join us. As usual, optimism and caffeine carried the day. By 10:30 we reached the official rally point, the Valero station on North Oracle, and were greeted by a familiar and welcome sight: Jim Frost, Phil Reiter, Road Byrd, and Shaun Pierce, all clearly of the same mind—ride first, eat well later.

And off we went to San Tan Flat. The route followed the tried-and-true path: Highway 77 to 79 and into Florence, our first stop. Fuel was acquired by those who needed it, and—thanks to some quiet advance planning by Road Byrd—we picked up Willie and Nancy Webster. Nicely done.



With that, the group grew to eight, all of whom were now officially hungry. From Florence we headed out via Arizona Farms Road and Hunt Highway, making a direct run into Queen Creek and San Tan Flat. For anyone unfamiliar with San Tan Flat, it's best described as unapologetically western and proudly unique. The photos tell most of the story, but words help too.

The place offers a generous supply of signs—some humorous, some educational, some likely to offend thin skin, but all clearly meant in good fun. The décor ranges from buffalo heads to covered wagons, and in the evening you're treated to open fire



pits scattered around the grounds. Subtle it is not, and that's the point.

Rides and Events

San Tan Flat: Eight Riders, One Lunch, Zero Regrets (continued)



Once food and drinks were ordered, we briefly experimented with sitting in two or three different locations before finally settling on a configuration that allowed us all to be together. Why this took as long as it did remains unclear. Fresh air confusion seems the most reasonable explanation. Conversation was lively, punctuated by the unmistakable sounds of people who had waited just long enough to eat. Between bites, beverages, and storytelling, we all agreed it was exactly the kind of day you hope for—a good ride, good company, and western fare enjoyed outdoors.



As always, someone suggested we do it again soon, which is generally the sign of a successful outing. Eventually, we rounded ourselves up and returned to the bikes. Some retraced the route home, others chose alternatives better suited to their own ride back. Adios, San Tan Flat—for now. 🍷



Rides and Events

Tombstone

By Mike Ostrom



Mark and I ride with the SEAT group, which posts a ride for just about every Friday. On a warm mid-December Friday Lewie posted a breakfast ride to Gathering Grounds in Patagonia, meeting at the Road Runner Market on Sahuarita and Houghton with KSU at 8:30 AM. Our illustrious VP, eD King chose the same meetup location for a ride to Tombstone with KSU 10:30 AM. Hmm. It's about 45 minutes to from Road Runner to Patagonia on Google Maps for a round trip of 1.5 hours. Theoretically, that would leave time for a cup of coffee at Gathering Grounds before riding back to Road Runner for the Tombstone ride.

So much for theory. After riding the twisties on AZ 83 on the way to Sonoita, Larry pulled up next to me and said one of my bags had popped off and he had to dodge it as it tumbled down the road disintegrating along the way, about 10 miles back. I did an about face and went in search of it. No luck. So I did another U-turn and rode to Patagonia. Craig, who was sweeping in his Porsche swept it up and threw it in his trunk. It was almost a total loss except for the lock that was keyed to my ignition and the other bag. He agreed to save that for me. I decided to still have that cup of coffee and just meet the Tombstone crew at the corner in Sonoita.

Well, the crew turned out to be eD and Mark. With only 13 shopping days 'til Christmas, everyone else had higher priorities I guess. It had warmed up nicely by the time the guys hit Sonoita. We had a brief pow-wow on the route, but ultimately left it up to eD. He locked in cruise at 65 and headed to Mustang Corner at AZ 90. We turned south toward Huachuca City and Sierra Vista.

There is a little traffic and a few lights going through town, but you are rewarded with some nice turns once



you hit the hills on Charleston Road, south of Tombstone's back door. It had been a while since I rode that route and was happy I did. It was a welcome change of landscape on a day that begged for the scenic route.



Rides and Events

Tombstone (continued)



Tombstone looked like a Ghost Town...almost. Our fellow riders weren't the only ones running seasonal errands. There seemed to be more locals dressed in historic costumes than tourists, even for a Friday. We decided that a cold beer would wet our whistle after a ride on the dusty trail and stopped at the Four Duces Saloon. We were the first customers of the day and the bored barmaid looked happy to see us. It hit the spot.

We continued down Allen Street to Big Nose Kate's, which is one of our favorites. The place was about half full and old Mick was sitting behind his keyboard banging out BNK favorites. After skipping breakfast in Patagonia, I was ready for a Boothill burger. It's no Superior burger, but still good.

Mark and eD picked up some six shooters and had some fun reenacting their version of the OK Coral shootout. I still remem-

ber one cowboy actor actually getting shot, when live rounds were loaded in a similar six-shooter instead of blanks!

Mark did a little Christmas shopping of his own as eD and I sat on a bench across the street and somehow he missed us when he was done. We all gathered back at the bikes for the ride home across AZ 82 to AZ 83. Mark blew past us on 83 and I gave chase. We made good time until we hit I-10 construction and the beginning of rush hour. It had been a good day overall, so we weren't complaining about a little traffic. 🇺🇸



Rides and Events

Holiday Party Pictures



Rides and Events

Holiday Party Pictures



Rides and Events

Red Sleigh Toy Run

By Mike Ostrom



A Community Collaboration to Bring Christmas to Tucson Children

19th Annual Toy Run Event

Saturday December 20, 2025

Benefiting:

Lineweaver Elementary School

Begin@ American Legion Post 36 - 5845 E. 22nd St. Tucson, AZ 85711

Registration: 8:00 a.m.

Kickstands Up: 9:05 a.m

Single Rider \$25

Double Rider \$30

50/50 Raffles, Door Prizes (Lunch Not Included)

Some say it is the most rewarding toy run of them all. You follow Santa's Red Sleigh, towed behind his Harley to several neighborhoods that are home to disadvantaged kids on the southeast side of town. Santa and about 50 bikes form a long procession and we personally hand kids the toys at each stop.



This year there were nine stops and Debbie managed to make six of them before we headed home on the other side of town. Not bad. We had brought a bag full of toys and the ones we didn't



give to kids ourselves we left in Santa's sleigh for the later stops. On the way to one stop we saw a little girl on the side of the road, but not at the stop. Debbie happened to have the perfect gift in hand so I tossed it over to her! Her eyes lit right up!

This year there seemed to be more bikers than kids. As a matter of fact, the stops are at individual family addresses, even though the brochure claims to benefit Lineweaver Elementary school. We actually rode by a couple other schools but unfortunately, the word hadn't reached all the kids in the neighborhoods we visited.



Rides and Events

Red Sleigh Toy Run (continued)



We did announce our arrival at each stop and even along the way with engines roaring and horns beeping. One little girl was behind a fence jumping up and down with an excited smile on her face as we rolled down her street gunning engines! Scenes like that made our day. We just wished more kids could have experienced it.



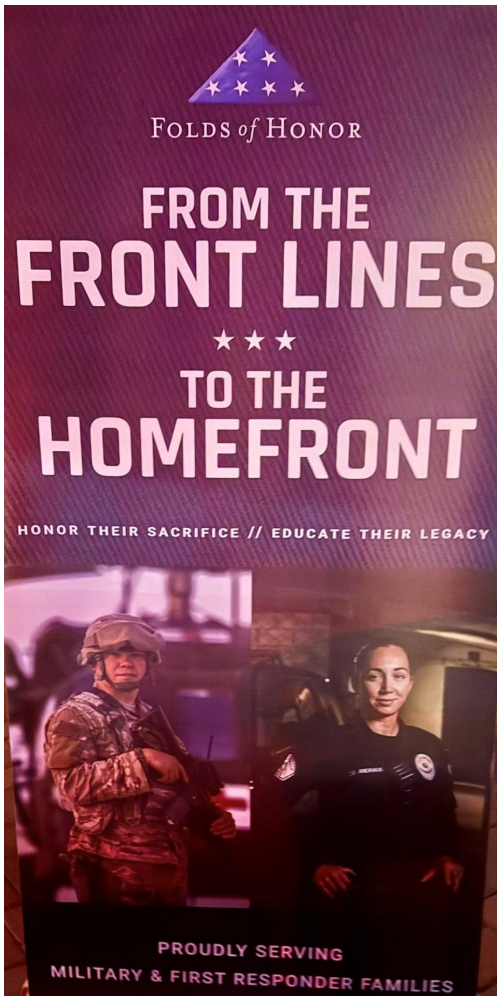
Santa's sleigh and support trailers had a surplus of toys, including bicycles, when Debbie and I peeled off. Hopefully they will find their way into the hands of grateful kids by Christmas. 🎅



Rides and Events

Charity Bike Auction at Barrett-Jackson and After Party

By Mike Ostrom



Ed King and I had never been to the Barrett-Jackson auction at WestWorld in Scottsdale, although we both love classic cars. Watching it on TV just isn't the same as being there. We added motivation to get out of our easy chairs and experience it in person this January.

Indian Motorcycle offered up a new Sport Chief RT for customization by Motocross legend Jeremy "Twitch" Stenberg, who turned out a beautiful bike! Through a special arrangement with Barrett-Jackson, the bike was auctioned off with 100% of the hammer price going to the Folds Of Honor charity benefiting families of fallen and disabled service members and first responders.



IMRG members across the country, including Black Mountain members, had already contributed over \$200k, through the National Charity Rides, to the worthwhile organization. Our Southwest Regional coordinators, Mark Thomsen and Randy Seavy encouraged all IMRG members to attend the mid-week auction as a show of support for our favorite charity. There were rumors circulating that some members might be buying bidder's passes to take a shot at winning the one-off collectable.

We posted an overnight ride to WestWorld in Scottsdale for the auction, then after party at the Roadhouse in Cave Creek and hotel a mile away. Ed King and I were the only members able to make it from our chapter, but other AZ chapters were represented as well as California, Florida and even Canada IMRG members attended the event.

Rides and Events

Charity Bike Auction at Barrett-Jackson and After Party (continued)

Barrett-Jackson is a sprawling complex of several connected structures. It's huge! Ed suggested you'd have to spend three days there to see everything with more than a passing glance. Collectible cars are mostly grouped together by model. The Corvettes are in one section, the Mustangs in another and so on. Most of the classic cars are custom builds, with fewer factory originals than I expected. Although some later model cars looked like they came right off of Craig's List or Auto Trader.

We walked for a couple of hours checking them out. It was like eye-candy overload! Eventually, we came upon the charity bike and some fellow IMRG friends. After some chit chat and a few



photos we found our way to the ongoing auction.

Things move pretty quickly, once a vehicle is pushed up to the auction block. In less than 2 minutes the gavel falls and bidding opens on the next one. The quick pace lends to the excitement in the air and satisfies most people's need for instant gratification, and their increasingly shorter attention spans.

As advertised, the charity bike was rolled up to the block at promptly at 5:30 PM amid some unusual fanfare. Representatives of Indian Motorcycle and Folds of Honor had flown in for the event. A short video was shown on the big screens about the charity and its mission, followed by an impassioned speech by Alec Robinson, FoH Media



Director, about how the funds raised at the auction would support families who had lost a loved one in the line of duty.

Rides and Events

Charity Bike Auction at Barrett-Jackson and After Party (continued)



After a short celebration on stage the bike was quickly rolled to the back for pictures with the proud new owner, as Ed and I made our way to the exit and our bikes parked maybe a quarter mile away.

Bidding opened up and quickly rose to \$100K for only the third time that afternoon. The bidding quickly took \$10k jumps to \$170k and just before the hammer fell, Sean Kelly, a 10-Year Marine Corps Veteran, offered the winning bid of \$180K! I shot some video of the final bidding, here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1YNKgkH5/>



IMRG/Indian had arranged an after party at The Roadhouse in Cave Creek about a half hour away. We had a great ride at dusk and were the first to arrive. We had time for a Modelo before they brought out complementary salad, wings and pizza. It hit the spot! Most of the guys on stage at the auction eventually made their way to the Roadhouse for the after party, even though they had flights home the next day. We enjoyed talking to some of them and other IMRG folks.

Ed and I didn't have a flight the next day and our Hampton Inn was only 1.2 miles away in Carefree. So we mounted up and checked in at the hotel and decided to have a Tequila night cap or two at the bar next door!

The next morning, we felt pretty good, had a nice breakfast at 9 AM and hit the road at 10, when it was already 60 degrees and sunny. Perfect riding weather! We are already looking forward to the charity ride in September! 🇺🇸

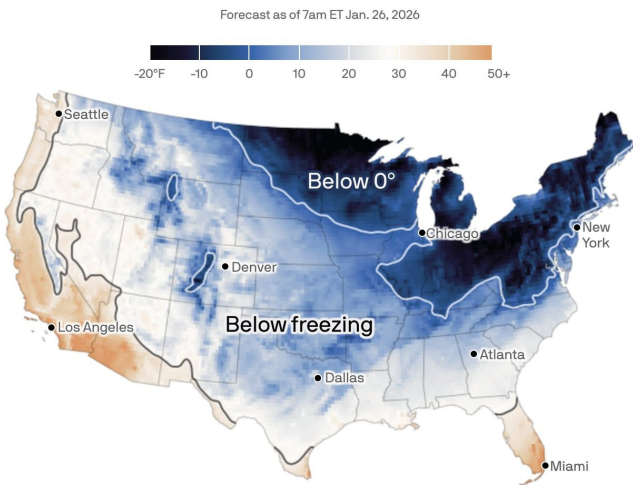


Rides and Events

Colossal Cave to Saguaro Corners and Indian Dealer

By Mike Ostrom

Lowest forecast temperature, Jan. 27-30, 2026



While the rest of the country was in a deep freeze at the end of January, we were riding in relatively mild temperatures in the mid-fifties! Ed King posted a ride for the Quail Creek Riders of Green Valley fame, and I decided to ride down from Oro Valley to join them. They didn't know I was coming and left a few minutes early. Luckily I was arriving a few minutes early and caught them just as they were pulling out. Larry and Steve are regular Quail Creek riders and made the headcount 4 for the journey.

I wasn't exactly sure how Ed was going to get us to Colossal Cave Road, but I didn't really care. It was a nice day for a ride. We managed to avoid freeway the whole way, so even better! We took Sahuarita Rd across town to Road Runner, where Larry got gas, and then turned on Wentworth to cross I-10 and catch Colossal Cave Rd about 5 miles before the park entrance. Nice route!

It was sunny and a bit breezy at the top where we ran into another rider on a new Triumph Bonneville T120. The guy was 80 years old and just started riding for the first time last April! I think that's a new record. Most guys are hanging up their riding gloves at the age this guy is breaking in his first pair. Amazing! I wished him many more decades of riding enjoyment as we headed for the cave.

There were a few people visiting the gift shop and grabbing a refreshment at the open outdoor stand while we were there. We pretty much enjoyed the view and Ed's new Indian jacket. After each of us thoroughly poked and prodded it, I think Ed was having buyer's remorse.



Rides and Events

Colossal Cave to Saguaro Corners and Indian Dealer (continued)



Saguaro Corners is maybe 10 minutes from the park on Old Spanish Trail and Escalante. We were able to roll right up and find a parking spot. That's not always the case at this place, especially on the weekends. It was such a gorgeous day we sat out on the half-empty patio. On my last visit, I was not impressed with the Corner's Cuban sandwich so I tried the Mac-n-Cheese with Carnitas and Green Chilis. To quote Debbie, it was "to die for". There was so much, I actually brought her home some. Everyone else enjoyed their lunch as well.

We parted company after lunch. The Three Amigos made tracks back to Quail Creek and I continued into Tucson on my favorite stretch of Old Spanish Trail. Because I was in the neighborhood, I stopped in the new Indian dealer location at RideNow on 22nd Street. They were just hanging the new Indian Motorcycle sign out front while I was there. Things were still in process inside as well.



I wanted to present GM, Brandon Bailey with our 2025 rocker for the Appreciation Plaque we presented Chris Chesnut over a decade ago, but the plaque hadn't been hung yet. Brandon said he would dig it out of the remaining boxes



in the back. They seem to have crammed the rest of what was at the original store on Oracle Road into one section of the huge 22nd Street store, just to the right when you walk in. Definitely not the same vibe as the old dedicated store, but maybe it will grow on me. I talked with the former Sales Manager, Anthony while I was there as well. He said to say hi to everyone. 🇺🇸

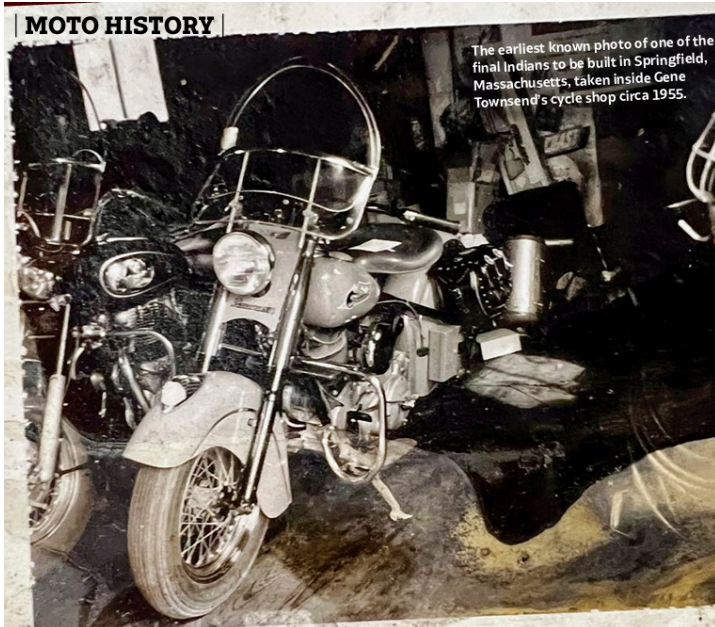


Vintage Feature

The Last of the Mohicans

Story by Eric Trow

The odd and enduring story of one of the final Indian motorcycles ever produced



At the far end of the parts counter of Indian Sales & Service in New Salem, Pennsylvania, an old Bakelite rotary phone rang.

It may have been mid-1953, or later that year. Or even 1954. By at least two accounts, it was as late as 1955. But by all accounts, a call came in from Springfield, Massachusetts, to longtime Indian motorcycle dealer Eugene “Gene” Townsend after regular production of Indian motorcycles had ceased. The familiar voice on the other end of the line was a friend from the Indian factory, likely Erle “Pop” Armstrong, who knew Gene and was responsible for Indian Assembly at the time. As the story was always told, the caller presented Gene with an unexpected opportunity: “Gene, we have enough parts left to assemble a handful of Chiefs. Do you think you might want one of them?”

Founded in 1901, Indian was once the largest motorcycle manufacturer in the world. The Indian Motorcycle (no “r”)

Company survived The Great War and the Great Depression when dozens of other motorcycle brands did not, but the years after WWII proved to be more daunting. A perfect storm of misfortune, miscalculations, and missteps put the legendary company on the rocks. Consumer confidence waned, and dealers began to jump ship in droves. Production of Indian motorcycles in America came to a halt in 1953, ending more than a half century of continuous motorcycle manufacture. Only the most loyal dealers held on to the bitter end – guys like Gene Townsend (my grandfather) and his Indian Sales & Service agency in rural southwestern Pennsylvania.

Gene had been associated with the Indian brand as far back as the 1920s. As a motorcycle flat-track racer and devoted Indian dealer for the ensuing decades, he had developed strong bonds with “the factory boys”, as he called them. He would regularly drive his shop truck to the Springfield factory, known as the Wigwam, to pick up new bikes and parts, attend events, and participate in dealer service schools. He even provided input when asked, and his engineering ideas were listened to and often applied.

He knew the factory folks, dealers, and racers on a first-name basis. Names like Pop, Jimmy, Fritzie, Sammy, and Ed (Kretz, the legendary Indian factory racer) popped up regularly in his stories. He had a special reverence for Pop Armstrong, a man several years his senior who had been with the Indian factory for many years. Like Gene, he had been a racer, was a diehard Indian man and a critical thinker, and even had red hair like his (before he matured to “Pop” status, Armstrong was known as “Red”). Despite their age difference, the respect was mutual. I have little doubt that Pop helped make the end-of-the-line Chief available to Gene.



Vintage Feature

The Last of the Mohicans (continued)

I was fortunate enough to spend much of my youth in the shop under Gene Townsend's tutelage. He fueled my passion for motorcycles and for the Indian brand. Although the factory was no longer producing American motorcycles by the time I was born in 1961 (they were pushing rebadged Royal Enfields by that point), I was hooked. More than anything, I established a lifelong fascination with one particular – and peculiar – Indian: the end-of-the-line Blackhawk Chief "Eighty," the product of that telephone call from Springfield.

Upon accepting the offer to obtain one of the parts-bin Chiefs, Gene was informed that he would have few options. Like it or not, the bike's bodywork would be painted orange, and it would be assembled from a hodge-podge of standard civilian model parts and police-spec components (likely left over after completion of an order of bikes for the New York City Police Department).

The machine was, essentially, a police Chief in civilian clothing. It was equipped with a large high-output generator and an oversized police-duty battery. It was fitted with the traditional Linkert carburetor and left-hand throttle/right-hand shift configuration as specified by the NYPD (civilian '52 and '53 Chiefs had English Amal carburetors and right-hand throttle/left-hand shift as standard equipment). Chrome handlebars were no longer available, so the bike was fitted with the earlier-style handlebar in black. The Chief had a police-style solo saddle instead of the civilian "bread loaf" bench seat. The rear fender had the distinct knock-out hole on the left side for siren fitment (thank you Robin Markey for pointing that out to me) and three drilled holes on the right-side fender skirt per police-equipped bikes. It also had the "telltale" speedometer with an additional indicator hand that would capture top speed traveled and mark the position as evidence.



Although it was mostly built to police specifications, this Chief was painted a very un-police color the factory called "Tangerine." It sported Roadmaster badging, a factory touring windshield, and premium civilian-model leather saddlebags – complete with leather fringe and conchos (the right-side bag conceals the three drilled holes). While the powerplant in the Chief is the standard, lower-compression mill, Gene was also sent a spare engine directly from Indian's engineering department that was, as Gene put it, "a hot one." The performance-tuned spare engine remained on its wooden factory crate in a backroom of the shop for many years.

Until his passing in 1998 at the age of 90, Gene shared the story of the tangerine Chief time and again with trusted enthusiasts. Being a witness to many of those engagements throughout the first 37 years of my life, I can attest that his telling of this bike's origins never changed. Even so, I didn't want to rely solely on my own memory for this documentation.

Vintage Feature

The Last of the Mohicans (continued)

Unfortunately, many of the folks who knew the story firsthand are long gone, and I didn't have the forethought to record interviews while they were alive. But there are still a few people who were around the shop back then or knew Gene in his later years, had seen the Chief, and had heard the account firsthand. I reached out to my remaining family members. I reached out to Bob Nelson Jr., now in his 90s, who worked at Gene's shop in the 1950s when he was in high school (his father, Bob Nelson Sr., was one of Gene's closest friends and riding buddies). I talked with several highly respected and knowledgeable Indian motorcycle experts, including those who knew Gene well and visited with him regularly through the years. During these conversations, I never shared what I knew until late in our discussion, making certain not to influence their recall.

The consistency across the independent interviews was stunning. Each recalled that the bike was one of the final ones assembled by the factory from remaining parts. Several shared that they understood it was assembled after a run of police bikes were produced and that it had many police-spec



parts. All recalled that the bike was always kept in the back of the shop and that it appears today as it did back then. The experts confirmed it is among the last Chiefs produced by Indian.

Gene actively rode the Chief for a time, accumulating about 2,600 miles. Nearly all the bike's total mileage was clocked within the first year or two of Gene's ownership. He stopped riding it after stepping out of a local hardware store and finding a stranger sitting on the bike. When Gene told him to get off, the man lazily dragged the heel of his boot across the top of the painted rear fender, leaving a deep scratch. Furious, Gene decided to park it permanently, knowing the bike could never be replaced. That likely occurred in 1955 or '56. The Chief was relegated to a spot in a dark corner of the shop, chained to a post and hidden under a cover.



For the most part, the bike remained in that dark corner for decades. As a kid, I was always anxious to pull off the cover and climb on the Chief. Eventually I was permitted to do so with supervision. As I grew, Gene encouraged me to stand on the wide black pedal and give it my all to swing the kicker arm through. He would laugh as I threw what weight I had into it but was barely able to budge the lever. As encouragement, he promised he would wheel the Chief out into the main part of the shop and we would fire it up once I demonstrated the ability to kick it all the way through.



Vintage Feature

The Last of the Mohicans (continued)



During every visit to the shop, which was quite often back then, I worked on my technique and found ways to distribute my weight enough to move the lever a little farther through its arc. Finally, when I was about 12 years old, I had it nailed, and Gene gladly showed me the starting procedure. From that point on, I regularly gave the Chief a few assertive kicks to spin the internal engine parts and move the oil around. Occasionally, when he wasn't too busy with customers, I talked Gene into letting me start it. Each time the bike emerged from the dark corner, we'd roll it out into the sun for pictures. A few of those photos are included here and go far in documenting the bike's consistent state through its 45 or so years at the old shop.

When my grandfather passed away, the tangerine Chief was put in Gene's daughter's name (my mother) and moved to her home near Pittsburgh, where I continued to maintain it. Shortly after, it was transferred to me, and I've cared for it ever since. The Chief has remained in our family for more than 70 years. A mere 100 miles or so have been added since those initial miles were logged by Gene in the 1950s.

Today, the Roadmaster remains unmolested and unchanged from the day Gene parked it. It is not perfect, but it is all original and has never been apart. New spark plugs and wires were installed a few years back (we have the original set), and a shinier OEM header from Gene's shop was swapped out about 30 years ago to replace the rusty one (again, we have the original). It still wears its original-equipment Dunlop Gold Cup tires that hold air faithfully.

The Chief is a time capsule – even down to the items in the saddlebags. Inside the right bag, where Gene left them when he last rode it, are a fresh set of points, a condenser, a pair of spark plugs, a new distributor cap, and a couple chain links. Most are in their original packaging or wrapped in newspaper (The Springfield Union, no less). A leather helmet, aviation goggles, a petrified canvas rainsuit, and period road maps live in the left bag. The complete toolkit, in its cloth bag, still lives in the toolbox, along with the original owners' manual. The shop decal adorns the toolbox lid, and the ignition key is attached to a leather key fob promoting Gene's Indian agency



Vintage Feature

The Last of the Mohicans (continued)



The only significant wear and tear is found on the kick pedal and on the right edge of the solo seat. Although it has very few miles, the bike has experienced more than seven decades of kicking the starter lever to churn the oil as part of its regular maintenance routine. Oh, and the bottom of the low-slung muffler is well ground thanks to Gene's assertive cornering technique back in the day.


As has always been the case, upon adding fluids and connecting a



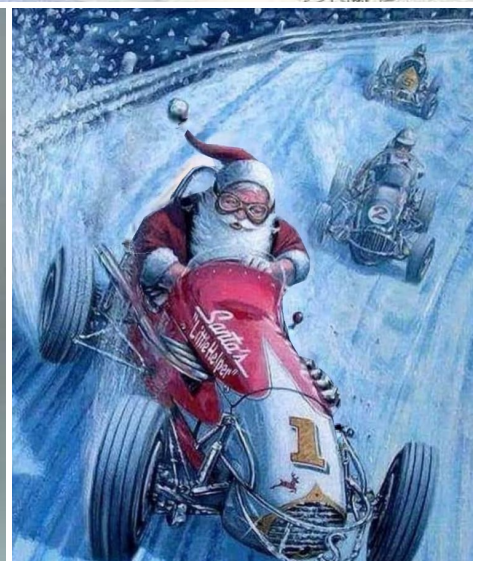
battery, the bike is eager to start. With the ignition switched off, give it two kicks of the lever to prime the carburetor, turn the ignition on, then give it a good kick. Even after years of dormancy, the Indian never fails to come to life on the second or third kick. Never more (in true Indian fashion, according to Gene).

When we hauled the tangerine Chief back to the New Salem shop to shoot photos for this story, it was its first time back there since 1998. I



paused to stare at the bike in front of the long-quiet building. I thought about how so much of its life – and mine – was spent in this place. It struck me that the way this oddball Chief arrived at this moment could be traced back to an old rotary phone that rang 70 years earlier, just beyond that well-weathered front door. That single call began the story of one of the final Indian motorcycles ever produced by the Springfield factory. As Gene might have called it, the last of the Mohicans.* 

Winter Odds & Ends



Credits Captions & Events

Thanks to our contributing authors and photographers:

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Amusing captions submitted for this picture:

- "I get 70 miles per gallon from this Hog"
- "Great wind protection for a scooter"!
- "My fairing doubled the scooter's weight"
- "That fairing is a perfect match for the bike, but I'm color blind"!



Just for Fun—Caption Contest

Please email your amusing captions for this picture to:

mdestrom@gmail.com

The best will be featured in the next newsletter!



Upcoming Events:

- ◇ Oracle ride to Ore House - Jan 31, 2026
- ◇ TR5 March 25-29, 2026
- ◇ AZ Bike Week April 8-12, 2026
- ◇ International Female Ride (IFR) to Tombstone, May 2, 2026
- ◇ National Charity Ride, September 19, 2026
- ◇ Hope Rally, Golden Nugget, Lake Tahoe, Sep 2026



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