



Empire City Motorcycle Club Newsletter



May 2017

RUMBLINGS

Motorcycle Weekend 2017

The magic words for any event planner are “sold out”, and as of early May 2017, ECMC’s Annual Motorcycle Weekend in the Fingerlakes region of Upstate New York has done just that!

In the not-too-distant-past, Empire City MC hosted a “Biker Weekend” on Memorial Day Weekend (sometimes the weekend before or after), which was held at Valinor Farm* near Quakertown, PA – the event would begin in New York City on Friday night where bikes were blessed or christened, then we’d meet up at The Spike on Saturday morning on our bikes for coffee and donuts, then the mysterious ride to the “secret undisclosed location” – it nearly always rained on us on the way there, but the weekend would be sunny and nice – until it was time to go home! *I still remember the “Biker Picnic” being the way I met ECMC back in the 80s. I was a lone rider taking a big scary chance by coming to New York City by myself to hang out with people I’d never met before – it was so frightening and exciting at the same time!*

The Biker Picnic was typically from Saturday afternoon thru Monday morning. All food and lodging was provided by ECMC and friends and only bikers and their buddies were allowed. There were always lots of sexy leather-clad men on the event and the play-space was hopping. The bonfire would easily be 30 feet high at times! The Biker Weekend was a combination of the ECMC Bike Blessing and the ECMC Biker’s Picnic, events we still hold today, but we now hold them at the kick-off for Gay Pride Month in New York City; however, nowadays the Biker Picnic is now just the afternoon and there’s no over-night accommodations as in the past.

We moved the Blessing and Biker Picnic and created “Motorcycle Weekend” about six years ago, and although we can’t keep the event a completely free event, we’ve kept the price very low (only \$40 this year) with help and thanks to Al Rizzo and Dan Marty for the use of their beautiful home in the Fingerlakes as well as our very frugal chef and TFL, K.K. who makes some of the most amazing meals on a shoe-string budget. While it’s great to have traditions, it’s also important to understand that things change and to be open to them. Who knows how much longer we’ll be able to hold this event? Who knows what other events will eventually replace it. Live in the moment and take a chance like I did in the 80s and come ride with us to the Motorcycle Weekend while you still can – you won’t regret it!

Chaz A, President



* Other locations, including ECMC member homes, were used prior to Valinor’s opening. Valinor was originally created as an AIDS hospice for men, but due to the unforeseen advancement of HIV medications only saw one patient in its existence.

CanAm Weekend 2017

Being a couple hours from the Canadian border, The Rochester Rams MC have had a long-held tradition of inviting Canadian clubs like Spearhead, Golden Horseshoe Leather Association, the Ottawa Knights and others to come down to Rochester over Victoria Day Weekend (a long weekend for them and typically the weekend before Memorial Day which also falls on the 3rd Saturday of May, which is the Rams' barnight!).

The Rams welcome their Canadian guests on Friday with a hot buffet in their club-house, then introduce them to their host for the weekend – Canadians and Rams members are paired up to provide each Canadian with housing (billeting) as well as their own personal guide to the city! On Saturday night, the Rams turn over the reins of their bar-night to a single host club to execute. Afterwards, there's traditionally an after-hours party followed by a BBQ at The Ranch on Sunday. Monday morning everyone heads home.

(Over the past few years, CanAm Weekend had been scaled back due to the fact that there were only four members of the Rochester Rams plus their pup – but now there are six members and a pledge in the works, so I'm sure we'll be seeing some exciting things coming from them again soon!)

This year I was on duty at The Ranch to make sure things ran smoothly and lend a hand from bartending to the running the AV system as well as background music during the entire event (yes, even in the country-side where there is no broad-band, I managed to set up a WiFi network and on Saturday afternoon was doing a viewing of the new episode of Dr Who!)

CanAm weekend is a closed, invite-only event. It's worth chatting with Dan and Al if you'd like to go next year. It'll be coming up these dates: May 18- 21, 2018; May 17-20, 2019; May 15-18, 2020.

Chaz A, President



Hog-4-Hope 2017

The Rally had a great turn out as usual despite being overcast and rather coolish in the low 60's. There were a number of other clubs in attendance all flying their colors as did yours truly in representation of our awesome club. The route was a little different this year as we rode into and through Yorktown Heights on route 35 over to route 100 on down to Sawmill River Parkway to Yonkers turn off.



As usual, the police did a fantastic job guiding us all there safely. There seemed to be a lot of angry faces of people in their cars as they were held up as we rode by, but in contrast there were a lot of folks standing watching and waving as we passed. The party at the Yonkers Marina was well done as always, lots of volunteers working their butts off to cook food and entertain the crowds. Hopefully, more of us will attend next year, the cause is worth it!



Brian V, Road-Captain

The Last Word



There's an uncomfortable question often asked by club members, which always stirs up debate: "In today's culture, how can gay leather/motorcycle clubs maintain sustainability and relevance?" It seems like a hard question to answer, but as silly as it sounds, members of clubs have repeated the sentiment since the early 70s! Trident International coined the expression "Give a Damn!" as their creed in the 70s because getting/retaining membership was proving to be difficult following the gay revolution (stonewall riots) and gays were starting to become somewhat accepted.

Every time there's been a life-changing event or technology (i.e. the personal computer, bulletin board systems, AIDS, the internet, smart phones, apps, etc.) some of us decry that "this is the end!" "the sky is falling!", "the gay club scene is dying!"

Think about it: Why would anyone in their right mind pay money to be a member of a club in where you have to attend meetings and work when you could be a GDI reaping all the benefits without the commitment? What's the deal with that? Simply answered: In the same vein that some people tithe and attend religious services, there's a strong driving force behind many of the long-term club members you see – this is our family, our religion and our give-back to the community. Our clubs have existed long before any of the contest circuits existed, and although in the 60s, 70s and 80s we were secret societies out of necessity, being gay no longer means you're going to lose your job, apartment or biological family like it used to and we're still here!

In this modern day of "swipe right / swipe left" and Donald Trump it's more important than ever to have close friends (read: brothers) to have your back, and that's something you won't get from recon.com or IML. That's why clubs are still needed. As for as sustainability (the other side of the coin), I appeal to club members who've been in a club more than five years to remember that part of your job is to teach the importance of brotherhood, honesty and loyalty to your younger members and pledges. While doing this it's also important to listen to their needs. Every new generation has different wants and needs, which need to be addressed as well. If you ignore this, they won't stay members for as long as they will feel marginalized.



I'll step off my soapbox now and let you digest that a bit. As always, ride safe!

Chaz A, President

UPCOMING ECMC RIDES & EVENTS

26 th -29 th May	ECMC Motorcycle Weekend 2017!!! - 872 Blank Rd, Hemlock, NY.
4 th June	New Jersey Pride Parade – Asbury Park, NJ.
9 th -11 th June	ECMC at the National Pride March Weekend – Washington DC.
10 th June	ECMC Barnight at the DC Eagle during National Pride March Weekend
16 th June	ECMC Bike Blessing at Ty's Bar NYC – 114 Christopher Street, New York NY.
17 th June	ECMC Biker Picnic at Eddie M's Shack – Quakertown, PA.
25 th June	ECMC at the NYC Gay Pride Parade – New York NY.

REMEMBER: There are plenty of other events and rides added to our official calendar on a regular basis! Bookmark our official calendar at calendar.EmpireCityMC.com and plan come along with us on some great rides! The riding season is fast approaching!