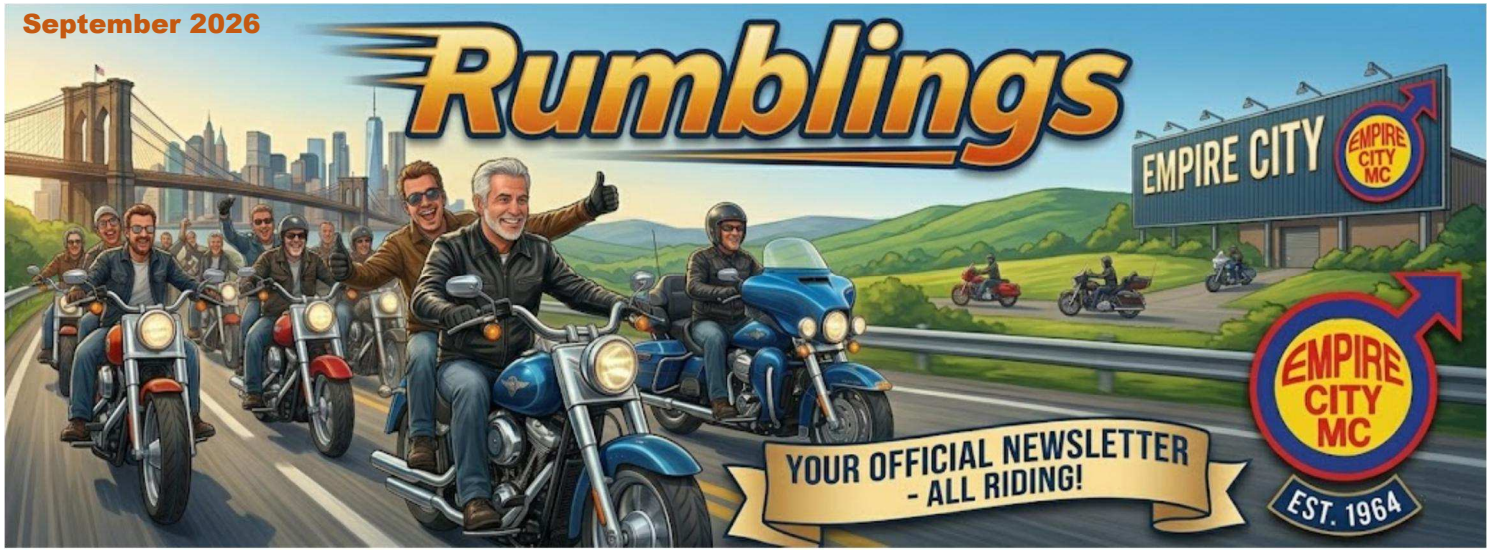


Sunflowers, Waterfalls and a Few Unexpected Detours

A ride suggestion submitted through our ride and event request website proposed the Sussex County Sunflower Maze as its centrepiece, along with stops at the Flatbrook Tap House in Sandyston, New Jersey; the Dingmans Ferry Bridge; the Marie Zimmermann Estate in Milford, Pennsylvania; Raymondskill Falls in Dingman Township; and High Point Monument in Montague, New Jersey.

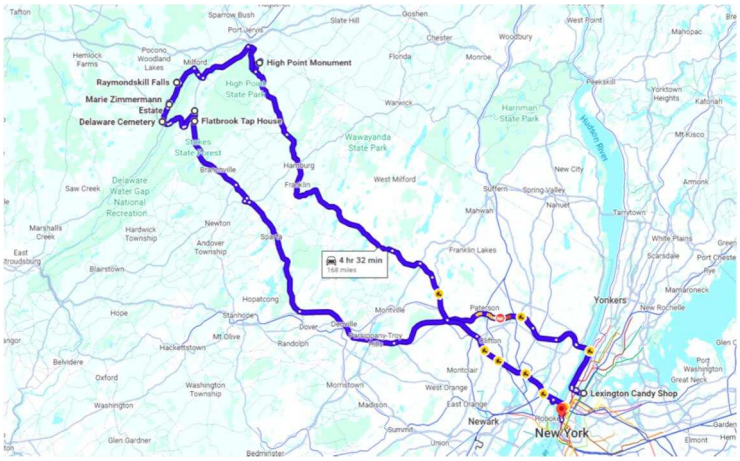
Those departing from the New York City area gathered at one of our favourite spots, the Lexington Candy Shop, for breakfast before hitting the road. We met the rest of the group at the Flatbrook Tap House and began our day's adventure.

As is often the case with motorcycle rides, not everything went according to plan—but the weather was beautiful, the scenery was spectacular and everyone remained in good spirits. We even managed to work in a short hike to Raymondskill Falls. When one member's motorcycle battery suddenly refused to start his bike, we turned the setback into a roadside lesson in the fine art of pop-starting a motorcycle!

This was our second ride planned with the assistance of artificial intelligence, and it revealed a few more wrinkles that will need to be ironed out—primarily involving timing and the verification of current information. Our rendezvous at the Flatbrook Tap House was scheduled for 11:30 AM, although the restaurant did not open until noon. The road leading to the Marie Zimmermann Estate appeared to be closed by a barricade, and its weed- and grass-covered driveway suggested that visitors had not passed through recently. Finally, we arrived at High Point Monument just 15 minutes before closing, leaving us virtually no time to explore.

The ride offered an important reminder that AI-generated itineraries must always be carefully reviewed. Business hours, road access, travel times, traffic and the amount of time needed to enjoy each stop should all be independently verified before setting out.

Despite the unexpected detours and scheduling complications, it was a terrific day of riding, hiking, problem-solving and camaraderie—and we came away with some valuable lessons for planning our next AI-assisted adventure.

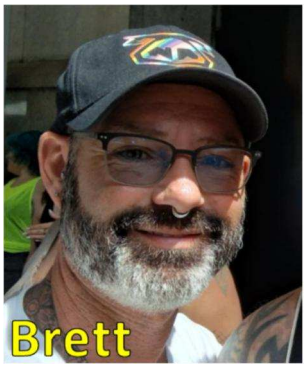


← The route

Do you have an idea for a ride or event? Submit it online at:

https://EmpireCityMC.com/ride

Empire City Keeps Growing!



If you've spent time with Empire City over the past few years, you've probably noticed a few familiar faces riding and socializing with us even though they weren't officially members. Well, that's no longer the case! Two of our longtime companions have decided to join the Empire City Motorcycle Club.

First, Alex—the husband of one of our longtime members—submitted his application and was enthusiastically accepted at our most recent meeting!

Then there's Brett. We first connected with him at this year's New York City Pride March, rode with him again on our trip to Montreal and reunited once more at Hillside Campgrounds. After all those adventures, Brett apparently decided that Empire City was the one thing missing from his life and submitted his application for membership!

Amusingly, our two newest members may live farther apart than any other pair in the club: one resides in the Adirondacks, while the other lives just outside Lexington, Kentucky. That puts roughly 850 miles of road between them—quite a ride, even by ECMC standards!

Following considerable discussion, we revised and ratified a new version of our Constitution and Bylaws this year to make it easier for people to join ECMC as Associate Members and, over time, advance to Full Membership from within our ranks. Our focus remains where it belongs: riding motorcycles, building friendships and sharing great adventures.

With Alex and Brett joining us, ECMC now has six Full Members, eleven Associate Members and three Emeritus! That's 20 members—and counting!

Meanwhile, back at The Ranch

One of the stops on last month's "Canada Loop" ride was "The Ranch", the home of our longtime friends Al and Dan and, for ten years (2012 – 2021), The Ranch served as home base for our annual Motorcycle Week. Although Al and Dan have enough room to accommodate more than a dozen guests, hosting a four-day event of that size eventually became too much work. In 2022, we opted for a change of scenery and began gathering at one of our members' homes in Coal Center, Pennsylvania. Looking ahead to 2027, we're considering a return to Deals Gap, North Carolina—home of the legendary Tail of the Dragon—alongside members of two other gay motorcycle clubs: Spartan MC of Washington, D.C., and Fair Folk MC of North Carolina.

We still occasionally visit Al and Dan at The Ranch, although these days we keep the gatherings smaller and more relaxed. This year's visit marked Bluey's first appearance in the Rochester area, so naturally I enjoyed showing off my new motorcycle. I even persuaded one of our hosts, Al, to climb aboard and ride pillion! We rode into Rochester for dinner at Delmonico's Italian Steakhouse, one of our favourite places to eat whenever we're in the area. The following day, we returned to the city to visit "Jet," the owner of Love/Hate Tattoo and the artist responsible for all of my ink. I'm considering having one of my tattoos refreshed, while two other Empire City members are contemplating some additional artwork of their own—including Hunter, who recently had a new neck piece started.

Jet has moved into his largest shop yet, and I believe he purchased the building this time—so at least he won't have to worry about the landlord raising the rent! Just a block away, we discovered a legal cannabis dispensary called Flynn Stoned, which made for an entertaining stop to pick up a few provisions for later that evening.

Just when it seemed the fun might be winding down, we stopped at a true Rochester institution: Nick Tahou Hots on West Main Street. The neighbourhood may be a little rough around the edges, but the restaurant is famous for creating the legendary Garbage Plate, which has also been featured on *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. A Garbage Plate typically begins with a bed of French fries and a helping of macaroni or potato salad, topped with cheeseburger patties or hot dogs. Onions, mustard and Rochester-style meat hot sauce complete the experience. It's delicious—but if your digestive system isn't accustomed to that much grease at once, consider yourself warned!

Pictured in the photo on the right are two of Rochester's famous Zweigle's hot dogs: a "white hot" on the left and a "Texas hot," or "red hot," on the right. Both are topped with onions, mustard and hot sauce—the local meat sauce being something like chili without the beans.

A great deal more took place after hours at The Ranch—but fortunately, no photographic evidence survives!

ECMC's 63rd Annual Toy Drive at Bucks MC Santa Saturday® again!

Help Us Fill the Van for Rising Ground!

Please join us in supporting the Bucks MC's 53rd annual Santa Saturday® celebration in New Hope, Pennsylvania, over Thanksgiving weekend! When you attend, please consider bringing several low-denomination gift cards—$5, $10 or $15—or a new, unwrapped, **non-plush** toy suitable for a child from infancy through age 18.

Empire City MC has supported the organization now known as Rising Ground. At that time, it operated under the Leake & Watts name. In 1985, it became the first social-service agency in the nation to support children living with HIV/AIDS.

In previous years, Empire City traditionally hosted a separate holiday toy drive. Last year, however, we approached the Bucks MC about holding our collection during Santa Saturday®. Combining the two events made it easier for people who wanted to support both worthwhile causes—especially at a time when household budgets have become increasingly tight.

The response was extraordinary! We received so many toys and gift cards that our rental car couldn't hold everything, and we had to enlist someone with a larger vehicle to help transport the donations back to New York City. This year, we'll be better prepared: we're bringing a van!

After entering the main Santa Saturday® event on Saturday, look for the Empire City MC Toy Drive table just outside the main room.

Many people don't realize that these donations are used throughout the following calendar year—not only during the holidays. Rising Ground distributes toys and gift cards to recognize birthdays, good grades, personal achievements and other important milestones in the lives of the children it serves.

That's why we specifically request low-denomination gift cards, preferably without holiday-themed designs. This allows Rising Ground to distribute them appropriately throughout the year and celebrate many different accomplishments and occasions.

If you would rather donate directly to Rising Ground, please do! It is an exceptionally worthwhile organization dedicated to strengthening families and helping children, parents and caregivers overcome difficult circumstances. Its services include counselling, supervised family visits and programs that help young parents develop the skills and stability needed to care successfully for their children.

Whether you bring one toy, a few gift cards or make a direct contribution, every donation can make a meaningful difference in a child's life.

Non-ECMC Events

Rumblings is happy to advertise your gay biker/leather/bear events in our newsletter mail them to newsletter@empirecitymc.org Empire City MC is not the organiser of these events and we take no responsibility. We have no further information about these events. For more information we invite you to reach out to the organisers: 2X026 & BEAR-A-CUSE rbtforbes@aol.com , EXCELSIOR BARNIGHT: Excelsior MC

ECMC Meetings, Events & Contact Information

Meetings: Empire City MC hosts two Zoom gatherings each month and everyone is welcome! The Open General Meeting is our monthly business meeting, while the Social Hour is an informal opportunity to socialize and catch up with fellow riders. Participate at https://bit.ly/ECMC-MEET

Open General Meeting
First Wednesday of each month
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM (Eastern)

Biker's Social Hour
Third Wednesday of each month
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM (Eastern)

Rides, Events and Comms: Stay up to date by visiting our official online calendar. Looking to chat with us and fellow riders? click here to enter our "Motorcyclists on Signal" group, a chat for bikers only. Stay connected with Empire City MC on these social media channels: MeWe, Facebook

Ride/Event Suggestions: You can request a ride or event at https://empirecitymc.com/ride/

Membership: Click here to learn more about membership, including: our Constitution, By-Laws, Membership Application, and information about Empire City MC.

Submissions: We welcome newsletter articles, ride reports, classified ads, club event announcements, photographs, and Letters to the Editor – just sent them to newsletter@EmpireCityMC.org

Our physical mailing address is Empire City MC, c/o Ty's Bar, 114 Christopher St, New York, NY 10014
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