

ELMS Productions Blog

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Bag Lady Sue's Bike Rally~2009 Operation Troop Appreciation

Bag Lady Sue presents...

Motorcycles, Metal, and Mayhem Rally ~ 2009

On a cooler than normal Pennsylvania day in early June, Greensburg's Westmoreland Fairgrounds would host the first bike rally organized by "Bag Lady Sue," Suzanne Austin and Clyde, AKA, "Bonnie & Clyde."

An idea sparked within their eighteen year relationship to help raise funds for the Operation Troop Appreciation Foundation and soon came to fruition the first week in June. The fairgrounds are located off the winding and curvy roads Pennsylvania is known for and approximately twenty miles southeast of Pittsburgh, home now to NHL's Stanley Cup Champions, the Pittsburgh Penguins. (Congrats!)

Operation Troop Appreciation, OTA, supplies the troops overseas with a variety of basic resources needed to make life a little easier while away and far from their family life on the home front. OTA's mission here is a simple one, but one of great merit. To boost the morale of our troops overseas while maintaining an elevated and focused spirit though their selfless service and daily sacrifices.

By providing a "Wish List," to the thousands of deployed troops, all branches of our Armed Forces receive from many sources, big business, small business, and anyone wishing to donate everyday items we sometimes take for granted. From books to stationary, phone cards to personal written letters of appreciation, and prayers, this diversity shipped thousands of miles away ensures a little peace while instilling a confidence that we true Americans still care.

Kristen Holloway, founder and President of OTA, along with the strong support of SFC Robert Moser, Career Counselor and 20 year veteran of the Pennsylvania National Guard, worked the entire weekend educating those who stopped by their booth while gaining support in many ways. One of the many highlights this weekend, not only the impressive display of a military Hummer and amphibious unit on each side of their tent, was when they were both fired up after a tear jerking ceremony on stage. The OTA presented Sue with an encased American Flag along with a special "Thank you speech" by SFC Moser. As the engines were rolling over within a low toned deep thunder and the bag pipers of the Western Pennsylvania Firefighters

Memorial Honor Guard marched away from the stage area, Sue and Clyde were invited to ride along in the rather large, tan amphibious military tank! What an impressive way to make a departure!

The three day rally included a poker run, lead by personally by Sue, a variety of affairs to participate in and witness throughout the fairgrounds. Mechanical bull riding was a crowd favorite, along with a dunk tank, bike games, a bike show, bikini bike wash, as live bands performed continuously complimenting the weekend and its non-stop schedule of events. This uninterrupted line-up of top performers included the Kentucky Headhunters, Jasmine Cain, Rebel Son, Navasota-Rio, Big House Pete, Camshaft, Land Mynd, Trapline, The Motorpsychos, As Fate Burns, with a special appearance by Project Morbid. Wandering around the grounds each day entertaining all within reach and ear shot were the world famous Scally Wags Pirate Comedy Show. At the top of the weekend's entertainments, comedy with the "Cajun Queen" Caroline Picard, the American Motor Drome Company's-America's Original Extreme Motorcycle Thrillshow & the famous Wall of Death along with the Daredevil Duo, all female, Circus Una high wire motorcycle balancing act.

Bar none and hands down here, the highlight, the biggest crowd tear jerker and most touching moment of the weekend came to light on stage and at the end of "Bag Lady Sue's" act. A completely caught off guard, wordless, "Deer-in-the-headlights-look" award was earned by Clyde as the woman of his 18 years stood before him with a trembling, heartfelt speech of love. The crowd now in total silence, Sue on bended knee, proposed to her man on stage! The mic dropped to the floor as they embraced, tears from Sue and a very big "YES!" from Clyde ensued.

Attending more poker runs than I can remember, participating in the various memorial events over the years, blasting through to the next bike rally, one after another, while adding the hundreds of thousands of miles driven on two wheels and a variety of motorcycles, this "first time rally" presented by Sue, Clyde, and their many loyal "Minions," was a first class, top notch rally boasting the quality of a seasoned ten year bike week.

Ed Spicuzza

Thunder Roads Motorcycle Magazine Michigan

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