

Covered Bridge Poker Run

By Carolee Longley
Longhair's Poker Run

September 30 marked a very successful Longhair's 9th Covered Bridge Motorcycle Ride and Poker Run. The ride raises money and awareness for child abuse prevention. The event drew close to 600 riders from all over New England, who participated in the 125-mile route that took them on some twisty scenic roads throughout mid-western New Hampshire.

Riders registered in the morning at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Tilton, then rode to checkpoints at five New Hampshire covered bridges. The first stop was in Andover, featuring the Cilleyville-Bog Bridge. The second stop was in Newport. The third stop was in Meriden, the fourth stop was in Lebanon, and the fifth stop and ending ceremonies were in Campton.

Ride organizer Stephen Longley of Northfield said, "There's nothing like fall riding, we had great weather. This was a real nice scenic route, with the leaves changing color and that fall crispness in the air. It was an awesome ride and a great turnout!"

The theme of this year's ride was "Bruised and battered...discouraged but not defeated." The ride raised \$7,600 for the Plymouth-based, statewide agency Prevention and Empowerment, whose mission is child abuse prevention through education and awareness.

Agency co-founders Gail Sharpe and Elizabeth Norris were on hand to extend a big heartfelt thanks to the bikers at the ending ceremonies. "We are just thrilled with the turnout and the success of this event, and thanks to you and your support, we will be able to get out there and reach more and more people to help keep kids safe."

Another \$650 was raised during the ride for the New Hampshire Child Advocacy Centers from raffle ticket sales and donations. Ride co-organizer and child advocate Carolee Longley notes, "The Child Advocacy Centers in New Hampshire are a great collaboration for children, based on a national model to help abused kids and reduce further trauma when the allegations are inves-



Scott Doucette of Franklin draws the nine of spades. Photo: Bob Bussey

tigated and the child is interviewed. We are very fortunate to have them in New Hampshire."

The top three prize-winning poker hands were all full houses, with Bernie Hoyt of Northfield taking first place, winning \$200 for his hand of Kings over 3s. Rudy Dion won the best bike trophy, "Staff Choice Award," for his custom green 2000 Harley-Davidson Softail, which beat out 24 other entries for the trophy. "Mello Mike" won the oldest bike trophy for his antique 1979 Harley-Davidson Police Special.

The Longleys give their sincerest thanks to their 40 dedicated volunteers, who put in hundreds of volunteer hours year-round to make the event a success. Jim and Kristin Cunningham of Hill and the Dube Family of Newport received five-year volunteer service awards at the event.

The Longleys also want to thank their sponsors: Heritage Harley-Davidson of Concord, Cullen Concrete, Venture Print, and Meredith Harley-Davidson Buell. They also extend their thanks to Tilton Wal-Mart, Andover Town Manager Mark Stetson, the Andover Police Department (especially Officer Shaw), and Brian Perry of Andover for their support.

To learn more about the programs, trainings, workshops, and consultations offered by Prevention and Empowerment, visit PreventionAndEmpowerment.com.

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