



More Than A Jolly Roger Poker Run

Hap Poneleit

Celebrates 61 Years in the Industry!



Hap's Cycle Sales in Sarasota is a dealer for Honda Motorcycles, Honda ATVs, Honda Scooters, Honda Generators, BMW Motorcycles, Triumph Motorcycles, E-ton ATVs, and Motor Trike Conversions. Hap's Cycle is also the birthplace of the Jolly Roger Poker Run. (Trivia note: Hap's Cycle Sales were the first Harley-Davidson dealership in Sarasota.)

The Jolly Roger Poker Run in Sarasota, FL has a storied history dating back to 1949 ... initially it was an enduro race. The Jolly Roger Off-Road Enduro Race was started by the Sand Slingers MC, the first motorcycle club in Sarasota. The club consisted of road-riders who liked to take their motorcycles off-road. Hap Poneleit (Founder of Hap's Cycle Sales), and club members wanted to create a race that was fun but difficult. The Jolly Roger Off-Road Enduro Race was a timed off-road race; each rider had to average 24 mph. (Easy you say, try muddin' and dirtin' on a 900 lb rigid frame springer!) The winner of the race earned his place on the Jolly Roger flag displayed at Hap's Cycle Sales, which Hap's wife Bunny sewed their name on the

flag. Two of the winners were Dick O'Brien from Orlando, who went on to help Harley-Davidson develop the Evolution motor, and Don Huffman, owner of Lakeland Harley-Davidson. Hap's Cycle Sales General Manager Bob Poneleit said, "The guys who rode in these races were my heroes, many went on to do big things in the motorcycle industry." Eventually developers began to buy the land where the event took place and the riders ran out of land to race. Officially the Jolly Roger Off-Road Enduro Race ended in 1971, and the Jolly Roger flag was retired.

Fast-forward to 1997, Bob Poneleit wanted to raise the Jolly Roger flag again ... but how? Bob's sister Alice Bixler suggested they have a poker run - also volunteering to carry the torch for her mom Bunny, and assume Jolly Roger flag duty. Bob and the Hap's Gulf Coast Riders (HGCR) thought this was a great idea ... and as they say, the rest is history.

We caught up with Hap's Cycle Sales GM Bob Poneleit and he summarized this year's event.

This year the 11th Annual Jolly Roger Poker Run raised \$6,000 which goes to

the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. The poker run was a nice scenic ride that ended at Ellington Suds Bar & Grill, we had an outside deck for the awards ceremony; 237 motorcycle enthusiasts came to support the event, last year it was 212. Unfortunately we got the word out late, but people showed up because they saw our ad in the magazine ... probably the best thing we did. Running our ad in BTR really helped promote the event, it was money well spent. Our club was proud of the ad; it was a very smart move.

The Jolly Roger Poker Run is one of many charity events that (HGCR) organizes to support the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. It is also a forerunner to the Ride for Kids run, which is a major event that happens throughout the year across America. This year Hap's Gulf Coast Riders raised \$20,231 for the charity. Although we had bad weather this year area riders still raised \$53,000 for the Sarasota Ride for Kids to send to Ashville, home of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. The money is then distributed to medical research; 25 years ago survival rates for kids with brain tumors was zero percent,





now survival rate is 60 - 70%. The only money the Pediatric Foundation receives is from motorcycle riders; last year they received 5.3 million dollars! If you want learn more about the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation go to their web site <http://www.pbtfus.org/>.

It takes industry vision, attention to detail, and great quality service to stay in business for 61 years. Hap's Cycle Sales have had their eyes on the motorcycle industry since 1948. Hap's motto is, "People come to Hap's Cycle Sales because they know there is nothing made that we

don't work on!" Stop by Hap's Cycle Sales located 2530 17th Street, Sarasota, FL 34234; and while you're there ask to see Hap's Vintage Motorcycle Museum. Give them a call at 941-365-3443 or visit their website www.hapcycle.com. Check out at Born To Ride.com News for more event(s) coverage.



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