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INSIDE:

- The Roots of Custom Culture: Smith, Ness, & Perewitz
- Student Builders: Grooming the Next Gen • Where to Ride This Year
- Spotlight on Twin Cities Moto-Stars: House of Kolor's Jon Kos, Acme's Nolan



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The 2016 Donnie Smith Show
presented by Dennis Kirk

This year marks the 29th edition of the Donnie Smith Bike & Car Show in Saint Paul, a show that brings out the best custom vehicles in the Midwest and kicks off a new riding season for gear-heads of all stripes. At a time of year when we're all itching to hear the throaty growl of a rumbling exhaust and straining for a whiff of race fuel, the timing couldn't be better.



For almost three decades, the Donnie Smith Show has been a welcome break in the winter doldrums, heralding the coming Spring by showcasing custom motorcycles from the industry's top builders and, in recent years, opening the Roy Wilkins Auditorium to Classic Cars and Hot Rods.

There's a cohesive social vibe to the Show, too, making space for the camaraderie that's part of motorcycling. We always look forward to Saturday afternoon's Happy Hour that includes a free concert by the Lamont Cranston Blues Band and plenty of Budweiser on hand. That all continues for 2016.

You've come to expect quality vendors packing the sold-out halls, a 35-class bike show jammed with killer custom motorcycles and a season preview of innovative products. For over 10 years we've made a home for high school and tech school students to showcase their skills, meet the masters and get a feel for the motorcycle and automotive industries as a potential career. And the Show still includes the region's most massive, longest-running Swap Meet where treasure hunters find a bounty of affordable

parts and the occasional old school gem from the vaults.

If you've been to the Show before, you might think you know what to expect. But you should also know that we're keeping track of trends to make sure the Donnie Smith Show represents the cutting edge of custom. Our team works all year long to bring together the very best elements of the shows we've enjoyed over the years, including everything you count on and a few surprises, too. You'll want to be in the hall as we reveal special features for the 30th anniversary celebration next year.

We're pleased and proud that the Donnie Smith Show is a pivotal part of the Midwest motorcycle scene. But it's because of riders like you that the show has persisted and grown into a nitro-charged happening that no genuine gearhead would dare miss.

We can't wait to see you at the RiverCentre!

— Donnie Smith and Neil Ryan

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Editor

Marilyn Stemp

Contributors

Brad Schneck, Kurt Peterson, John Haack,
Patty Messenbrink, Michael Lichter

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Lon Nordbye
Paul Mitchell
Mary Raymond

Graphic Design

Amy Menerey,
Lost Cabin Photo & Design



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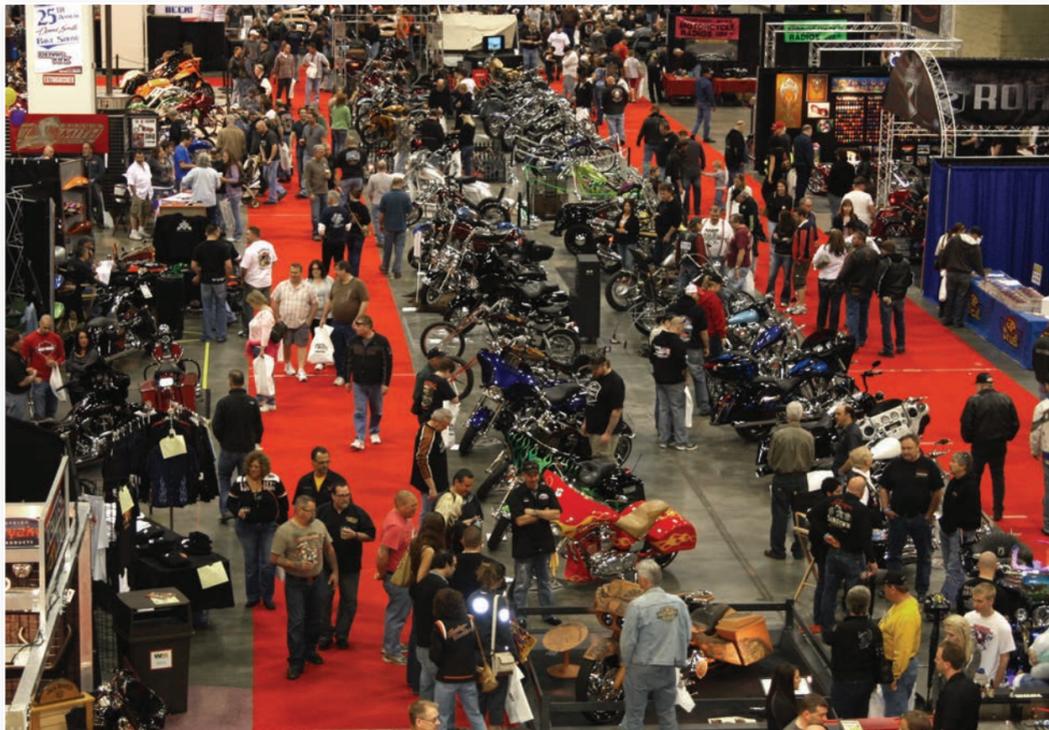
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It's the time of year when gearheads begin to yearn for a high-octane, adrenaline-infused experience. We need to shake out the cobwebs, feast our eyes on swoopy sheetmetal and tap into the gritty essence of moto madness. At the Donnie Smith Bike & Car Show you'll find killer custom motorcycles and knockout classic cars and trucks reeking with simple elegance and subversive ferocity. With 35 classes in the bike show and 22 in the car show, there's a place for every vehicle to shine, from patina'd rats to pristinely restored beauties. Literally the best in the Midwest, hands down.

"Dave Perewitz comments on it every year," said Donnie Smith. "He's always amazed at the quality of the bikes we get at our show."

Entering can be well worth the effort, too. More than \$7,500 in cash and awards is at stake in the Donnie Smith Bike Show. All makes and models are welcome to enter classes ranging from Bobber, Trike, Sportster and Softail, to Shovelhead, Pan & Knuckle, pre-'69 Antique and 10 separate bagger categories. You name it, from steampunk to slamdunk. Two pro classes, limited to 20 bikes each, gather up the cream of the custom crop in an enhanced display area to flaunt them to best effect.

The Car Show, offering more than \$5,000 in cash and awards, has both stock and modified classes for all makes of cars and trucks, plus classic, muscle and full custom. There's room for drag racers, hot rods, rat rods, imports, late model, pro street, and more, plus awards for best paint, best display, best interior, best engine... you get the idea!

Entry fee in either show starts at just \$50 with premium locations, electricity and oversized spaces also available. Entries include a T-Shirt and 2 free admission tickets for each day of the show. That totals up to greater value than the entry fee right there!

It's already past the entry deadline for both the Bike Show (March 10) and the Car Show (March 15) but it's not too late to cruise this year's entries for display tips so you're ready for the 30th Anniversary Donnie Smith Show next year. Count on even bigger and better things then!

Whether spectator or showoff, there's fuel aplenty to power your imagination among the bevy of beautiful vehicles on display at the Donnie Smith Show. So gentlemen — and gentlewomen — start your engines!



Street Rodder Alert!

Car show welcomes classic four-wheelers

For almost 30 years the Donnie Smith Bike Show has been the key in the Midwest biker's ignition, the way to welcome each year's riding season. Then three years ago, show promoter Neil Ryan rolled out the welcome mat to classic car and street rod enthusiasts. Because horsing around in mechanical circles should include fans of four-wheeled vehicles, too.

Besides, it just made sense. See, Donnie Smith actually started out as a car guy. His first business, Smith Brothers & Fetrow, was a race car and auto parts shop. With his brother Happy and friend Bob Fetrow, Smith built and raced funny cars. In fact, Smith admits that his early experiences on motorcycles were not all that positive. "Back in the day, it seemed like every time I got on one of those things they tried to hurt me," he said.

He came over to the dark side of motorcycling thanks to his Uncle Elwood who asked SB&F to raze a motorcycle frame during the 1970s, at a time when choppers were enjoying their first heyday. This led to more work of a similar nature and changed the shop's focus. So though Smith wasn't initially attracted to riding or building bikes he was eventually convinced.



In the decades since, the Donnie Smith show has been strong among motorcycle restorers, customizers and riders. And in the last couple of years the reception among hot rodders has grown bigger and better each year, too. "Minnesota is a big time street rodder area," said Smith. "The Back to the '50s event at the State Fairgrounds had almost 12,000 cars last year!" That likely makes it the second largest gathering of classic cars in the country, if not the world, and it's been a fixture in the area car culture for over

40 years. You don't find this kind of machine-driven enthusiasm just anywhere.

Maybe it's due to the historically strong industrial base in the Midwest or the pragmatism and persistence of Minnesotans, but there's no doubt about the region's prime position in automotive circles. Whether chopped and channeled, fast and furious, or sweet on the street, some of the coolest, best-restored and most singular machines roll out of Midwest garages for the Donnie Smith Show—and we're talking about



both bikes and cars.

Need proof? Come to the Donnie Smith Bike & Car Show and see for yourself.

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Show Facts & Schedule

JUST THE FACTS

29th Annual Dennis Kirk Donnie Smith Bike & Car Show & Parts Extravaganza
Saturday, April 2 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 3 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saint Paul RiverCentre

175 West Kellogg Blvd, Saint Paul, MN
651-265-4800

Admission: \$15. Kids 12 and under admitted free

Tickets: RiverCentre Box Office, all Ticketmaster locations, charge by phone at 800-745-3000 or online at ticketmaster.com. Ticketmaster accepts all major credit cards. A per ticket convenience charge is assessed.

The RiverCentre Parking Ramp on Kellogg Boulevard offers skyway access to the show. Learn more here: www.rivercentre.org/parking-directions

Keep tabs on the Donnie Smith Show at: www.donniesmithbikeshow.com/
2016-donnie-smith-bike-show/
And visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/amthunder1/



DONNIE SMITH SHOW SCHEDULE

~ what happens when & where
All events are at the Saint Paul RiverCentre complex and the Roy Wilkins Auditorium where you can immerse yourself in over 200,000 square feet of motorhead awesomeness!

Saturday, April 2

9:00 AM Doors Open
9:00 AM-7:00 PM Exhibitors Open
9:00 AM-7:00 PM Swap Meet Open
9:00 AM-7:00 PM Show Cars on Display
9:00 AM-7:00 PM Show Bikes on Display
5:00 PM-7:00 PM Happy Hour
Free Concert by the Lamont Cranston Blues Band
Budweiser at Happy Hour pricing
7:00 PM Doors Close

Sunday, April 3

10:00 AM Doors Open
10:00 AM-5:00 PM Exhibitors Open
10:00 AM-5:00 PM Swap Meet Open
10:00 AM-5:00 PM Show Cars on Display
10:00 AM-5:00 PM Show Bikes on Display
4:00 PM Car Show Awards, Upper Level Roy Wilkins
4:00 PM Bike Show Awards, Exhibit Hall Main Stage
5:00 PM Doors Close

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Riding for Righteous Reasons

Get involved, rider or not



According to reports, up to 30,000 riders joined the 50th anniversary Flood Run last year (left). Matt Brower from Hastings, MN, (center) won the Patriot Ride raffle bike last year. A great return on a \$20 investment! The Ride For Project New Hope (right) was re-christened in 2015 in honor of Ryan Jameson. The 2016 ride is June 18th.

Once the weather breaks there's no shortage of rides to take around the Midwest. Minnesota bikers know better than to waste even a minute of good—or merely decent—riding weather. One organized ride that just about everyone in the Twin Cities knows about, rider or not, is the Flood Run. It began unintentionally in 1965 when a dozen bikers rode to Winona, MN to help with sandbagging during that year's record flooding. Though there was no flooding the next year, a grateful mayor invited them back and a tradition was born. This year marks the 51st year of the now twice-yearly run: the unofficial start and end of Minnesota's riding season.

Part of the attraction of the Flood Run is the splendid scenery in the Mississippi and St. Croix river corridors. But there's also nothing comparable to the rush and rumble of thousands of motorcycles riding together for a cause. Riders buy wristbands that earn them discounts at stops along the route and proceeds benefit Gillette Children's Health Care.

Not a rider? This all-volunteer effort welcomes helpers. If you want to spend a day with dynamic people and feel great for helping the kids at Gillette, contact the organizers and join in. Register at www.floodrun.net.

An area ride of more recent renown is the Patriot Ride hosted by Dennis Kirk, 11 years old in 2016 and running strong. It's easy to forget but just a dozen years ago America was in the thick of full-on armed combat and many families were cruelly impacted by the loss of a loved one. That's why Dennis Kirk turned their annual company

open house into a benefit for the local chapters of three outstanding charities: The Patriot Guard, Tribute To The Troops, and Minnesotans' Military Appreciation Fund.

Though in the last 10 years over \$1 million has been raised, it's about *way* more than the money, says Dennis Kirk President, Bob Behan. "Something unexpected was the sense of community that has developed around the event. We remind people in the region that there's a group of patriotic people here who continue to care about our military families."

Since the first Patriot Ride, the event has moved several times to accommodate the increase in participation. Behan credits the growth to the loyal motorcycle community. This is the second year at Key Air-Anoka County Airport in Blaine where riders gather in the morning. After a 50-mile ride, participants return for special events. Vintage warplanes, music, food and the Budweiser Beer Garden add to the camaraderie. Donnie Smith leads the ride and judges the bike show. The prevalent message of the day comes through loud and clear: we will never forget!

The 11th Annual Patriot Ride is July 9. And while you're at the Donnie Smith Show find their booth where volunteers will gladly lighten your wallet of \$20 for the opportunity to win a brand spanking new 2016 Street Glide. Odds are good with only 5000 tickets sold. Odds are even better that you'll feel pretty dam great just for buying the ticket in support of those who serve, past and present, to protect our freedoms. Visit www.thepatriotride.org/ and on Facebook.

Kurt Peterson of Lil' Evil Inkorpor8ted in Perham, MN, takes a finely focused approach when it comes to helping military veter-

ans. See, as a veteran of Desert Storm, Peterson knows firsthand the hurdles that returning military personnel face as they reenter civilian life. Thanks to the immediacy of small town living Peterson has spearheaded projects with local high school kids and helps out at Project New Hope, a local veteran's organization. So when city organizers asked him to host a charity event in 2013, he agreed: if proceeds would benefit Project New Hope.

Project New Hope's mission is, "to provide veterans and their families the education, training and skills necessary to manage their lives after wartime service." They welcome vets for retreats to address PTSD, offer counseling, and more. "It's very grassroots," said Peterson. "We reach out if someone is struggling and continue to keep track."

Last year the Ride for Project New Hope became the Ryan "WFO" Jameson Ride For Project New Hope (see Facebook) in honor of a local veteran who lost his battle with PTSD. Further, Peterson is building a PTSD Awareness Bike to show in Sturgis this year.

Co-sponsored by Motorheadz Boutique in West Fargo, ND, the 2016 ride happens June 18 with a poker-run-style ride through the scenic Lakes Country and fellowship – all for a great reason. Added Peterson, "We want our veterans in the Lakes Area to know they weren't forgotten. And that we're here to help."

Rain or shine, fair or foul, riders around the state are known for turning out in robust numbers to support military charities, children's benefits and more. Though many charitable appeals often plead with donors to open their hearts to such causes, there's no need to tell riders here that. Bikers in these parts start out that way.

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TRACING THE ROOTS OF CUSTOM BIKING

Before Kustom Kulture was King

Over the decades, custom motorcycling has seen good times and bad. Motorcycle builders have been on the top of the heap and relegated to the back alley. But for the faithful, those ingrained wrenches and riders who long ago claimed biking as their life's work, custom motorcycles are as sublime and necessary as ever.

Among those few stalwarts who succeeded in the game is Donnie Smith, a man known for his custom creations not only in the Midwest but around the world. He'll be the first to tell you that his early riding experiences didn't exactly predict a happy life on two wheels; no, motorcycles were not his first choice. It was Uncle Elwood that got Donnie involved in bikes.

One day in the early '70s Elwood brought his Sportster into the drag race shop Donnie ran with his brother Happy and buddy Bob Fetrow; he wanted them to rake the bike's neck. "We were three farm kids; we thought rake was something you did with hay," said Donnie. Though they also had day jobs and were busy working on the Barracuda Funny Car they planned to race, they did their best for Elwood.

Soon Elwood's friends took notice and the shop—Smith Brothers and Fetrow—started getting more bike work. A while later, when someone wanted a Springer and there were none to be found, the guys gave that a try, too. Then girders, and tanks, and fenders and so it went. After a year or so their bookkeeper said, "You know, if you got rid of that race car you could make a living out of this motorcycle thing." So they did. Thank God for Uncle Elwood!

If you had a motorcycle business then, the way to get noticed—the only way—was to have your bikes featured in magazines. Donnie explained how SB&F first got hooked up.

"The first guy that ever shot our bikes was Randy Smith from CCE. He was doing freelance for magazines in 1974. We met him in Bowl-

ing Green and he shot the bikes we were riding there. We were on cloud nine."

Donnie also credits Bob Clark at Street Chopper for bringing attention to SB&F's work. "He kept us out in front of people and got us to be household names."

The next spring SB&F loaded some bikes in the van and headed to Detroit for a show called "It's Called Detroit." That was the first time

Donnie saw Arlen Ness, though they didn't meet till later at Tom Rudd's Drag Specialties show in Minneapolis. But Donnie and Arlen both recalled meeting east coast painter Dave Perewitz in Detroit—it wouldn't be the last time, either.

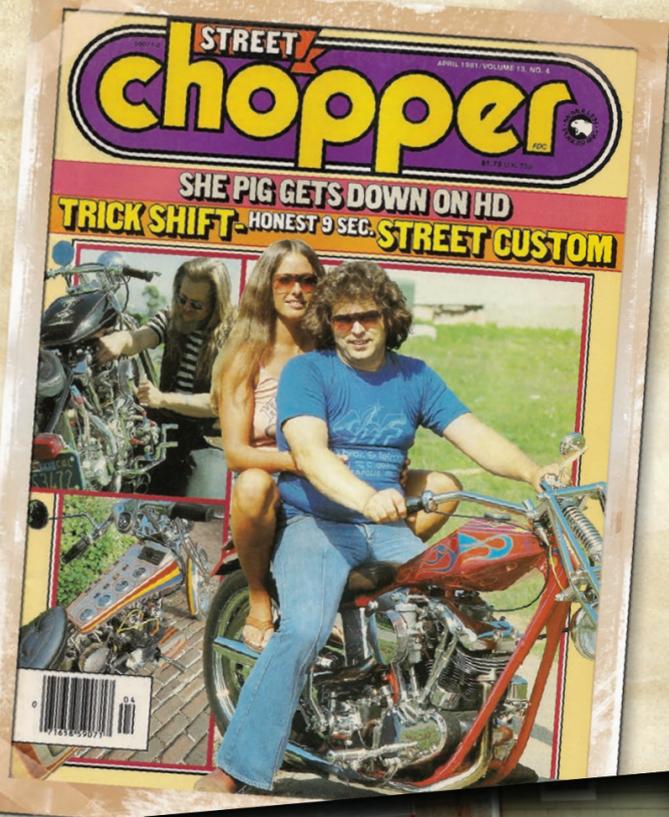
Arlen said the Detroit show was a real eye opener. He'd had bikes featured in magazines for a couple of years by then, thanks to Larry Kufnerman, editor of *Custom Bike*. And though it was the first time he actually got paid to attend a show ("It was a big deal. I got a plane ticket and a hundred bucks!") he wasn't prepared for the reception he received. "There were quite a few people that wanted to meet me. I was shocked and surprised about that!" said Arlen.

Just a few years before then, Arlen was painting bikes and had designed a few parts. In the early '70s aftermarket motorcycle parts were in demand and tough to get from the few companies making them—AEE, CJ Custom Cycle Parts, Santee, Drag Specialties.

"You couldn't get ramhorn bars," said Arlen. "So I went to a tubing bender, then I welded it and took it to the chrome shop.

That was my first product." Next was a rear fender with built-in tail-light. "I made it in steel then made a fiberglass mold and we started making rear fenders."

Feature articles in magazines got the parts noticed. "People would call after they'd seen the magazine and want to buy the part. We didn't know it then but we were building our brand," he said. How



... Custom Styling Cues circa 1975 ...

Some say everything's derivative. Read on and you might be convinced that there's still room in the world for creative genius.



Arlen Ness West Coast

"I always liked drag bikes, the racing look. Long and low and performance looking. Some people called them diggers. Then I started making those fancy diamond gas tanks and coffin tanks, that kind of stuff. Then flat bottom Sportster tanks for the Sportster diggers. In the early days we did quite a bit of stuff that nobody had ever done."



Donnie Smith Midwest

"We built a lot of bikes that had 16-over front ends, that seemed to be a thing for a couple of years. We would extend the frame but we would always slide the gas tank back,

right to the seat. Other guys like Arlen used to sit their tanks out in the middle of the tube. We'd put little wings or fins on the front of the tank to blend it into the front of the fork. That was our look for a long time.

"We were a little more practical, we needed more gas to ride further. So I designed a tank that held close to 3 gallons. It had a long prismatic look that was big in those days."



Dave Perewitz East Coast

"Arlen had started the whole digger look of styling, the Ness style, and I was pretty much the first guy who started doing that on the east coast. My stuff was rigid frame, Sportster tank mounted high, 6-over front end with a raked frame. And I paid attention to the paint, too. When I first started painting there were a couple guys around who did candy paint on cars but that was the extent of custom paint on the east coast!"



learned to continually refine the process.

Arlen also reached out to racer and builder Jim Davis. "I took a stock Sporty frame to his shop. We laid it on its side and I drew around it in chalk, extending it in the front and back and so on. He actually made the first frame for us working off the chalk marks on the cement."

Seeking out experts and learning from the best paid off. "I think that was one of my secrets," said Arlen. "I always aligned myself with quality people, smart people. I paid more than anyone else but I always had good, safe products. That had a lot to do with our success."

It took time but he ultimately developed a network that made it possible to offer a selection of cool, clever components. "The more neat stuff you made the more people wanted to do things for you," he said.

Going to the major events like Daytona and Sturgis was important then and it became common for Donnie, Arlen and Dave to hang out together. You didn't have a booth in those days, you just brought your bike, rode it around and showed people. In 1977 they were at the Rat's Hole Show in Daytona. "Dave had that thing locked down, and it was fun" said Arlen. At the time Dave had never been to Sturgis so Arlen talked him into going. "I'd already been to Sturgis several times and had met Donnie there before. So we all hooked up in Sturgis that year."

Compared to Arlen and Donnie, Dave was the youngster, the go-getter from the east coast. And it took grit and ingenuity to get noticed—the custom bike business out east was not as refined as in California. "We'd run to the book store every month to get a magazine because that was the only source you had," said Dave. "It was pretty much trial and error."

Looking at a new issue of *Custom Bike* sometime in 1974,

Dave got the idea that the bikes he was building and painting were magazine quality, so he picked up the phone, got editor Larry Kufnerman on the line and told him so. Two weeks later, Kufnerman flew to Massachusetts to photograph Dave's bikes, starting a run of publicity that continues still.

Early the next year, Dave learned about the "It's Called Detroit" show, as he explained: "We threw bikes in a van and drove thru a snowstorm in March to Detroit. When we got there Larry was shooting the show and he introduced me to Arlen." Dave met Donnie there, too. By the end of the weekend Dave had invited Arlen to Laconia that summer and Arlen accepted. "He shipped his bike and flew out, and we spent the week in Laconia. After that he said, listen, I know these guys in Detroit, why don't we go to Detroit? So we threw the bikes in my van and went to Detroit. We spent a week riding there with Yosemite Sam, Carlini, Finch and slept on the floor at Sam's house. Then Arlen invited me and Donnie out for the Oakland Roadster show and we've all been best friends ever since."

Dave recalls that first trip to Sturgis well. Arlen brought him a bike to ride, a Sportster digger, of course. "That's what we were all riding back then," said Dave. "We stayed at City Park and it was pretty crazy. We were up all night while guys were drag racing in the street and doing burnouts." He didn't need to be talked into going back.

Even among like-minded people there's no predicting the future, and this would



Twin Cities Spotlight

NOLAN of Acme Tattoo

Did you know there's an old school gem smack in the center of downtown St. Paul? That's right; if you drill down into authentic Twin Cities custom culture, you've hit pay dirt when you reach Acme Tattoo. It's here, in a bright, comfortable storefront on Arcade Street, that Don Nolan, known simply as Nolan in certain circles, practices his craft.

Truth be told, though Acme was established in 1988 and moved to the current location in 1990, it's the wisdom Nolan gained several decades before he dropped anchor in Saint Paul that informs his art today. Before he called Saint Paul home he had shops in Alaska, New Mexico and the Pacific Northwest. He spent the late '70s living on a sailboat, traveling around the world and immersing himself in the cultures he encountered. These experiences opened the door to a wide variety of tattooing methods, inks, imagery and skin types. In fact, Nolan was observing, drawing and practicing the art of tattoo simultaneously with better-known artists like Ed Hardy, Paul Rogers and Sailor Jerry. But circumspect and unpretentious by nature, Nolan chose to perfect his craft rather than seek the limelight.

"He has never received the recognition he deserves," said Jody Perewitz. Jody has known Nolan her entire life thanks to her father, custom builder Dave Perewitz, who's been a friend of Nolan's since the 1970s. Jody and Dave will both be at Acme for additional work when they're in Saint Paul for the Donnie Smith Show. "He's very well rounded, very humble, and an unbelievable artist," she added.

Said Dave, who is a veritable Nolan canvas, "Nolan is quite a character. I'd say he's probably the oldest and most experienced tattoo artist in the country today."

See Nolan began riding motorcycles in 1954, a year before he started tattooing. So he often joined Perewitz, Smith, Ness and the gang on their jaunts to Daytona Bike Week and other runs. For Nolan, motorcycles and tattooing have always gone hand in hand.

In addition to whatever art you can dream up for a new tattoo, the artists at Acme handle repairs, touch-up work, and will alter prior work that might not meet standards or to address personal security. Nolan has even been asked to tattoo racehorses for identification purposes. Acme's artists are fully licensed; in fact, Nolan helped write the health regulations governing tattoo shops for



The happy crew at Acme Tattoo love what they do—and it shows in the results.

the city and the state.

The shop itself is a delight; art inspiration is everywhere. The walls are blanketed with flash, paintings and memorabilia, plus letters from grateful clients and fellow artists. Even in the bathroom! Stacks of books feature photos of Acme's work and Nolan's illustrations.

Many of Nolan's original paintings are in the back rooms, which are like a private gallery. The walls are hung with his illustrations, oils and watercolors,

many of which reveal influences of Japanese masters, cave painting, art deco, cubism and Nolan's pervasive love of the sea.

So how do you distill six decades of experience into visible expression? It's an ephemeral notion that's perhaps best left to philosophers. But visiting Acme Tattoo and scratching the surface of Nolan's brilliant ability allows a tiny window on that concept. This man who stands at the top of his craft is still learning every day, in the true art spirit.

Fueling Careers in Internal Combustion

Igniting interest in high school can lead to a viable livelihood

"If they had let us build motorcycles when I was in high school, I would have been a *much* better student!" So said one "seasoned" visitor to the 2015 Donnie Smith Show after talking with students from technical and high schools that were doing exactly that; building motorcycles for class credit in school.

And it's a sentiment that's been repeated many times over in the decade since the show's promoters first welcomed such programs to exhibit. The goal, in part, is to help the programs gain attention and get tangible input. But giving these programs a place to showcase their work also raises awareness of such efforts, programs that can lead to careers for aspiring mechanics, fabricators and other handcraft trades.

Craftsmanship and creativity are enjoying a resurgence of respect so it's more common to encounter motorcycle-building programs at tech and high schools around the country. But that wasn't always the case, and the genesis of this gearhead rebound happened here in Minnesota, at Kennedy High School in Bloomington.

In the late '90s Kennedy's shop teacher Kevin Baas was given responsibility for the Metals Program on top of his other duties. Thinking of ways to engage students, Baas recalled that heads turned when he gunned the drag pipes on the road-weary Ironhead Sportster he often rode to school and that gave him an idea. Soon he had a group of kids hanging around after school as he worked on his bike, and when the bike became the focus of Metals Class some of the kids joined in. "I thought it could be an avenue for them to gain a skill set, to start them off on a career path," Baas said, especially the students he worried were at risk. Using "Chopper Class" as bait, Baas told kids to keep their grades up in other subjects if they wanted to work on the bike.

But parts and equipment were tough to come by so Baas reached out to *The Horse* magazine. They wrote about Chopper Class then Indian Larry and Paul Cox pitched in with a few parts. Though Baas knew Donnie Smith only as the local legend, he reached out to Smith and invited him to an open house at Kennedy. "He walked in, saw the magnitude of the program and he was sold on it," said Baas. "Donnie was such an inspiration for us when we were just getting started. His connections with S&S Cycle got us our first engine in 2004."

When show promoter Neil Ryan invited Baas to bring the class bike to the show that year, it provided the visibility that garnered more parts



Hands-on in Chopper Class at Kennedy High in Bloomington (left). The Buffalo Chip Challenge team brings together students from across South Dakota's Black Hills (above). Past student teams (below) have included: Eden Jr./Sr. High, Kennedy, La Crescent High and Mitchell Tech, among others.

and better equipment as the concept hit a chord in the motorcycle industry. That set the stage for the Kennedy High class to attend the Donnie Smith Show every year and also paved the way for other schools to participate. Sugar Bear, Spartan Frameworks, Harley-Davidson and dozens of other companies and individuals have opted in to help. Guest instructors offer input on wiring and painting while students hone life skills such as writing and public speaking.

"My goal was to help any other teacher so they could get the green light to start a program," said Baas.

St. Francis High School from Bethel, MN, came in the second year, then schools from LaCrescent, Red Wing, and Perham, MN. From further afield, Howell High in Howell, MI, Clearfield County Technology Center in Clearfield, PA, and Bernice MacNaughton High from New Brunswick, Canada stepped up. Eden, New York's Eden Jr./Sr. High School class has been a consistent presence since 2008, led by instructor Steve Jones. From South Dakota, Mitchell Technical Institute and the Buffalo Chip Challenge Team bring student builders to compete.

This year at the Donnie Smith Show all the school programs will exhibit side by side, not in competition but in camaraderie; not to promote a particular motorcycle but as advocates for technical education.

Some programs perpetuate their efforts by selling one year's project bike to finance the next. Others, like the Chip Challenge, auction the bike as part of a charity event and also award scholarships to several students. The Chip Challenge embraces students from schools across

the Black Hills and involves big name custom builders like Yaffe and Shope. Eden's class includes students as young as middle school age.

Baas, Smith and Ryan are supportive of them all. Though they operate differently they share a common goal: to inspire students to recognize and pursue the mechanical arts as a viable career. And that's the nugget of relevance here, the grooming and encouragement of the next generation of mechanically sensitive and capable people who will keep motorcycling fresh.

Do such efforts work? Baas cites two stellar successes from his own experience. A former student works in engineering at Indian Motorcycles and another graduated from MMI in Phoenix and now works at an Arizona dealership. Other program mentors cite successes, too. As Kevin Baas expressed: "People in the industry can relate to my students because *they* were the shop kids in *their* time."

He makes a good point: how many of us knew where a hobby or interest would take us when we were in our teens? It can be a very small thing, an unremarkable instant that turns a life in a different direction. So small in fact, it's often lost in the moment and only appreciated much, much later.

But if you see yourself in this scenario, know that opportunities remain to reach out, step up and lend a hand. Dozens of instructors, company owners, pro builders and regular riders are doing just that in schools all over the country. So come out to the Donnie Smith Show and meet the students and their teachers. You might be inspired to add your time, talent or treasure to the parts bin. Large or small, it really doesn't matter, because everyone knows the finished product is always greater than the sum of the parts.



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A Gearhead Treasure Hunt

The Donnie Smith Show Swap Meet

For some people, the best part of the Donnie Smith Show is the Swap Meet and that's no surprise. For one thing, the swap meet is massive; you can't see from one end of it to the other. And the time of year is perfect; it's right on the edge of a new riding season as vendors blow off the dust and pull off the tarps from a winter's worth of accumulated goodies. This bodes very well indeed for the treasure hunters among us.

See, the Donnie Smith Show claims its origins as a J&P Parts Extravaganza, —one of the off-season road shows that spanned the Midwest back in the late-'80s. So the Swap Meet has always been an integral part of the event. Said promoter Neil Ryan, "When the custom bike show aspect started to grow, people didn't understand why there was still a swap meet. But we always thought it was an important element and now they do, too!"

Better still, the presence of the swap meet maintains the show's grassroots feel. Midwesterners embrace their resourcefulness and applaud the attitude that places hand-fabrication and garage built machinery at center stage. Besides, the social aspect of the swap meet is key to the show's character. The buzz in the hall never quits, all



weekend long.

What can you expect to find? There's something for everyone. "What they bring depends on their latest purchases," said Ryan. It's unpredictable and that's part of the fun. "Some vendors focus on new parts, others used or antique. There's always a mixture of older and take off parts and the prices reflect this." That means bargains!

Sure, you can buy used parts online but the

beauty of a swap meet is being there where you can pick it up, see the dings and scratches first hand, and make an informed decision. You can't do that on eBay. And another thing: many of the vendors have been buying and selling for decades and they know their stuff. So whether you're restoring, repairing or customizing, why not tap into all the knowledge and experience that's right there in the hall?



Ryan says walking through the Swap Meet is like tracing the history of motorcycling's custom genres, following trends from one era to another. He also says it reminds him of the Johnny Cash song, *One Piece at a Time*. "Because you can literally build an entire motorcycle from the parts at this Swap Meet." And you know, he's probably right, but you best not take the pieces out one at a time in your lunch box.

It's Mad-Ness!

Taming the twin-engine beast

We're not saying anybody named this bike "Mad-Ness" but if someone did the moniker would certainly apply. See, it was built by Cory Ness and though it has the curvaceous lines, elegant details and striking finish that are hallmarks of a Ness custom, the element that stops people in their tracks is the engine—that's why we put it on the cover.

What initially looks like two V-twin powerplants is actually a V4 Peregrine Engine—basically two engines in one case—developed a decade ago by a company called Wayne R&D, Inc. Only a few were built and one of them ended up at Arlen Ness in Dublin, CA.

As Cory explained, it's a side-by-side configuration, not front to back. "One side has regular ground cams and the other is running backwards, so they had to grind the cams going in reverse." The oil tank is built into the engine case, too, and additional S&S components bring displacement of this particular monster to 248 cubic inches. "I can't take credit for the engine, I just put it in a nice package," Cory said. That he did!

One-off and heavily modified components abound. The engine is cradled in an altered Ness frame with special engine mounts. The front wheel is a one-off 26" with an inboard brake mounted to the individually machined spokes. The pieced-together exhaust system deserves a closer look, as Cory explained. "When it leaves the exhaust ports it goes toward the rear then it sneaks through the center of the two engines, goes all the way forward, then swoops up like a



top fuel car. It's definitely like no other."

And who holds the key to this brilliant machine? "I built it for my favorite customer," said Cory. "Myself!" That's one reason it sat on the back burner but Cory's real concern was the aesthetic conundrum presented by the engine, which collected dust for about seven years. "I couldn't get excited about building a project around it because it was so wide and so big."

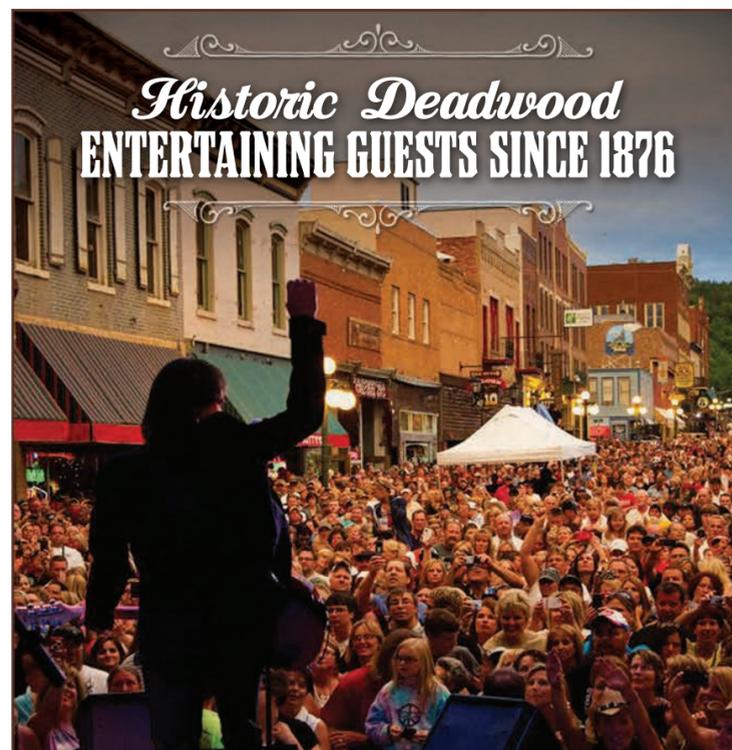
He finally decided to think "touring bike" with wide stretched saddlebags out back and an extra wide front end. "I put a fairing on it and all of a sudden it started looking fairly normal," he said. "Once I started having fun with it, it came together."

How does it handle? "The bike is quite a bit heavier but you just prepare for it. It's rubber mounted so it's smooth. Once you get up and

going it's pretty normal," he said.

If you think you caught a glimpse of this bike in Daytona during Bike Week, you might have. It was Cory's prime means of transportation there though he admits he wasn't hot-rodding. "I haven't pushed it hard, just mainly cruising. That's good enough for me with this particular project." Besides, breaking anything significant could mean another seven years in the shop.

"It was probably one of the more challenging bikes I've done because I was working with a beast of an engine but I wanted it to have nice flowing lines," he said. "Which is what we always try to do."



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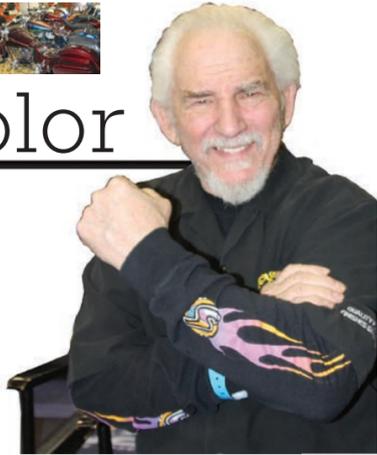
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Twin Cities Spotlight

JON KOSMOSKI

founder of House of Kolor



Some people whine about a shaky economy but not Jon Kosmoski. "With custom painting, when the economy goes down custom painting goes up because more guys are hobby painting to pay their bills. I always had growth in those times."

That's only one bit of wisdom Kosmoski has learned during a 60-year journey that's traced the world of custom vehicle painting, paint chemistry and application technique since he founded House of Kolor in 1956.

Starting in a makeshift shop in his mother's basement, he moved out when the fumes got to her. He rented a space before moving in 1964 to the building he still occupies in Minneapolis, upgrading to a professional paint booth then. Funny though: he'd been producing award-winning, show-stopping work even with his homemade equipment. "It's more about attitude than it is the place you're working," said Kosmoski. "I had the desire to do it right versus using the cheap methods. Two paint jobs might look the same but one job will live for 20 years and the other one will live for a year."

Grasping that distinction didn't come cheap or easy, either. A serendipitous meeting with a polymer chemist led him to study paint materials and formulation in an effort to develop better quality materials

than those commercially available. This effort resulted not only in groundbreaking paints but remarkable results that garnered notice. "I never went to college so I learned the hard way, by making mistakes," he said. "When a mistake hits you in the pocketbook it makes a niche in the gray matter that you don't forget."

True, but a solid work ethic and dogged persistence ultimately staked Kosmoski's reputation. He talks about "that warm fuzzy feeling you get when you know you've done something right," and it's this force that guided him as he studied and experimented on his own.

Being a rider helped too; with his artist's acuity he noticed trends and styling cues. His first bike was a BSA Golden Flash followed by two Aerial Square Fours, the second of which he rode to California in 1959.

Back at House of Kolor it was pedal to the metal for decades thereafter. In the early years Kosmoski often painted over 600 sets of motorcycle parts each season, from November to April. Harleys were prevalent but he also painted plenty of Honda choppers, too.

When House of Kolor became part of Valspar Automotive Coatings in 1997, Jon continued to develop products, conduct training classes and represent the firm. Simultaneously, Kosmoski's passion and determination took him to the top of his craft. He

is considered a legend and a master, though he's still perplexed when he's approached for a picture or an autograph. "I've always thought of myself as a working man," he said. That said, any discussion with Kosmoski can turn heady in a heartbeat, dissecting pigments and polymers or turning gently to his personal philosophy. At 78, he's as engaged as ever, still challenging himself to develop paints that exceed requirements while creating brilliant results.

Such as the '34 Ford Cabriolet Kosmoski built for Valspar's booth at the 2015 SEMA show. He designed its color using a base coat that looks like a candy but it isn't. "The execs at Valspar are so excited about it they want me to do another 15-16 colors," he said. He's also fired up about a pigmented candy made with real organic pigment that has astounding translucent qualities and won't fade like the dyes do.

You can ask Kosmoski about these cutting-edge products at the Donnie Smith Show, an event he says he wouldn't miss. "It's a good show and I think the swap meet is a big part of it. It's probably one of the biggest in the country. I've found some tremendous buys there."

Kosmoski will be at the RiverCentre in the House of Kolor booth, shaking hands, meeting friends and signing 60th anniversary posters. They'll have limited

edition 60th-year T-shirts and stickers, too. "We have a lot going on in our 60th year at House of Kolor," said Valspar's Gina Mahan. There are four new limited edition colors—including Jon's Black Forest—plus a new website chockfull of ideas and inspiration.

Teaching and speaking engagements for House of Kolor keep Kosmoski optimistic. "There's so much talent out there, I meet amazing young people, some natural born talents. It reminds me of myself when I was young, having so much fun doing what I loved."

"You have to feel good about what you're doing, appreciate the joy of a finished project that works," he said. "With a little bit of study you can do anything you put your mind to."

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Don't miss the chance to enjoy the hard-driving Minneapolis-based Lamont Cranston Blues Band in a FREE concert during Happy Hour at the 2016 Donnie Smith Show. If there's a better way to cap off a day of dazzling custom bikes, badass hot rods and swap meet rummaging we don't know what it is!

The fun begins at 5:00 PM by the main stage in the middle of the RiverCentre exhibit hall where Budweiser will flow and a good time is on tap. Enjoy special Happy Hour-only pricing until 7:00 PM at the Budweiser Bar.

Next up, jam to the red-blooded blues beat of Lamont Cranston as their soulful sound fills the River Centre. It's not just any band that gets the Elwood Blues (aka Dan Aykroyd) seal of approval. "No one infects venues with the party virus quite like Pat Hayes and the Lamont Cranston Blues Band," Aykroyd said. "They've always been my favorite!"

Donnie Smith is a fan, too. "I've listened to them for years," and it's clear the band has a strong following. "Since they've been playing at our show, more and more people come in late in the day."

The Cranstons have played with the likes of Bonnie Raitt, Johnny Lang, Robert Cray, The Kinks, Muddy Waters—they even opened for the Rolling Stones. Pat "Lamont" Hayes, who handles lead vocals, guitar



and harmonica duties, has a long list of solo credentials, too.

Hayes says the band looks forward to playing this gig. "They're a very nice crowd. They like the boogie and the blues, and that's what we play." Besides, he added, the band members appreciate the custom bikes. "They're works of art," Hayes added.

The Cranstons will play many of their old favorites but they always add new tunes to keep the show fresh. "We always do Shakedown. I never get tired of it. There's something about it that always pumps me up," said Hayes.

So be there to hear *Excusez Moi, Mon Cheri*, which was the flip side to the Blues Brothers' *Soul Man*, some new music and Lamont Cranston's biggest hit, *Upper Mississippi Shakedown*.

Hit it, Elwood!

Where to Ride

Motorcycle Rally, Ride, & Party List for 2016

Compiled and provided to you by Patty Mesebrink

Dates of events subject to change and are only as good as the sources that provided them. For additional events or updates check the Facebook page of Minnesota Ride List "It's the List." This list is done only once a year (full list is online—this is an abbreviated version due to space constraints).

RUNS, RIDES, PARTIES, BENEFITS, RALLIES

APRIL

April 2: 10th Annual Lost 202 Spring Party @ CR's 8525 Cottonwood St, Coon Rapids, Benefits Mpls Shriner's Children's Hospital. www.lost202.com

April 9: Defrost Your Nuts Run, starts at the Mallalieu Inn, 414 Wisconsin St North Hudson

April 16: Spring Flood Run - 51st annual - Leaves 10:30 am from Beach Bar on the River, 2:00 at the Harbor Bar, in Hager City, WI

April 28: Boulder Lodge Bar & Grill/Mac & Chesters Kick off Thursday Bike Night, kickstarts up at 6:30, every Thursday night to follow.

April 30: 5th Annual Bob Willard Memorial Ride, Club, St. Cloud, MN

MAY

May 7: Dirty Rotten Bikerfest, Boulder Lodge Bar & Grill/Mac & Chesters SRO, 18919 Lake George Blvd, Andover.

May 3: Cowboy Jack's Otsego-First Tuesday of the Month, 9010 Quantrelle Ave NW

May 4: Cowboy Jacks Bloomington, First

Wednesday of the Month, 2801 Southtown Dr, Bloomington MN

May 7: 3rd Annual Ride In Bike Show, American Legion, 302 E Sarnia St. Winona, MN

May 12: Cowboy-Up Bike Night, Second Thursday of the Month at Cowboy Jacks, Plymouth, Hwy 494 & Rockford Road/4120 Berkshire Ave S.

May 14: 5th Annual EMS Honor Guard Ride, Route 65 Pub & Grub, 18407 Hwy 65 NE, East Bethel

May 14: 4th Annual Cancer Sucks Ride, Pooters Sports Bar, South Main, in Altura, MN

May 15: Joint Annual Run, 913 Cedar Av. Mpls.

May 19: Jacked Up Bike Night, Third Thursday of the Month at Mad Jacks Sports Bar, 8078 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Park

May 21: Purple Heart Fun Run-Veteran Poker Run, by Military Order of The Purple Heart Winona Chap. Starts at Winona Veteran Park

May 21: 3rd Annual Joe Gillis Special Hearts Ride and Benefit, Bennett's Chop and Railhouse. Post party at Tavern on the Avenue, 825 Jefferson Ave, St Paul. Supports kids & families dealing with heart disease.

May 28: Fun Run, the Ugly Bar, Montrose, 260 Nelson Blvd. (Hwy 12, past Delano.)

June 4: Carver Fun Run, (NEW LOCATION) VFW in Chaska, Mpls. Benefits Shriners Hospital for Children and Red Knights MN 7 Firefighter Assistance Fund.

June 4: 11th Annual Ride for Wishes in Memory of Chuck Worden, South St Paul VFW 740 N Concord, S St Paul. Benefits Make a Wish Foundation.

June 4: 9th Annual 2Wheels4Heroes, Lino Lakes, American Legion Post 566, end at Route 65 Pub and Grub, 18407 Hwy 65, East Bethel. Donations go to the Polytrauma Center at the VA Medical Center.

June 4: Retina Rumble Ride, Boulder Lodge Bar & Grill/Mac & Chesters SRO, 18919 Lake George Blvd., Cedar. Proceeds go to Breast Cancer

June 4: 10th Annual Mike Popelka Memorial Bike Run, Glencoe, Register My Own Bodyshop, 912 Hennepin Ave, Glencoe

June 4: 7th Annual Ride for Boobies, Howling Dog Pub, Bock, MN, Rain or shine.

June 5: Grand Old Days, Billy's on Grand Ave at Noonish

June 6: Rodeo, Boulder Lodge Bar & Grill/Mac & Chesters 18919 Lake George Blvd, Cedar

June 7: Cowboy Jack's Otsego-First Tuesday of the Month 9010 Quantrelle Ave NW

June 8: Cowboy Jacks Bloomington, First Wednesday of the Month, 2801 Southtown Dr, Bloomington MN

June 9: Cowboy-Up Bike Night, Second Thursday of the Month at Cowboy Jacks, Plymouth, Hwy 494 & Rockford Road/4120 Berkshire Ave S

June 10-12: Antique Motorcycle Club National Meet, St. Paul, MN State Fairgrounds

June 11: Kick Cancer in the ASS 2, Harbor Bar, Red Wing

June 11: Cael's Ride for Stillbirth Run and Pig Roast, Maple Grove Hospital 9875 Hospital Dr, Maple Grove

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