



A manual for your Poker Run
By Bylinda Foster
Co-Chapter Leader in Dallas, GA

Prepared March 2013

NCCC Note (3/2013): Ashley Altman and Bylinda Foster hosted their first Poker Run, dubbing it the Save the Cooch Ride for Cervical Cancer. Their first attempt had revenue totaling \$xxx with expenses totaling \$xxx. After the 70/30 split their chapter had \$xxx to spend to educate others about HPV and cervical cancer.

This manual was prepared to help others considering this type of event. It will be updated periodically. If someone thinks of something helpful to add, let the NCCC staff know as we'll be happy to add it to this manual.

Benefit Ride/ Poker Run Manual

When spring and summer seasons arrive the world becomes alive with the sounds of motorcycles. Another thing that comes alive is the passion for doing charitable rides. These benefit rides can range anywhere from major non-profit organizations that people feel passionate about, to individuals who have lost a loved one or perhaps have a loved one who is ill and needs help with medical bills. Whatever the reasons for a charity ride, it is a good one.

If new at this, besides the manual, you could also contact a local motorcycle club or a group of people who are familiar with planning and organizing rides. These individuals can provide you with a plethora of information that could help you!

POKER RUN: What is a Poker Run? A traditional Poker Run is an event that has been organized as a fundraiser. On the day of the event all bikers, and other motorcycle enthusiasts, meet up and pay the entrance fee in order to participate. Everyone receives a map of the route to be taken. The poker part comes in because traditionally there are five stops where all registered participants draw one playing card each.

At the last stop, food, drinks, music and prizes are ready. The rider with the winning poker hand will receive a prize, often cash. The prize amount has been set from the start.

A poker run is not a race, it's a different way to play poker while riding a motorcycle, although it can be done without motorcycles and replace them with cars or actual bicycles. You'll need a total of 5 stops; each stop should be a good ride in between, not one right after the other. Organizers might consider using different businesses in the community to participate. It's free well, almost free advertisement for them, I'm comfortable using local bars and shops.

Your start & end place can be the same, or different it's up to you. Riders draw their first card at the first stop, not at the starting place and your last place or ending place is where you would draw your 5th card. You'll need plenty of volunteers for this, at least 2 at every stop. It needs to be clear how many decks of cards will be used, and whether the participants can draw their own cards, or whether they will be dealt a hand, or passed an envelope with a card in it. Different runs choose to deal the cards in different ways - some prefer to place single cards in envelopes, which the participants then select. Some have multiple decks of cards which players can select a card from; some have a single deck, which the organizers deal from at each checkpoint.

There needs to be clear guidance on what happens if a player draws a card they already have. This is a situation, which never occurs in "real life" poker, and **it should not be**

allowed to happen on any poker run either. The reason is simple - poker hand rankings are based on the likelihood of each hand occurring, and if duplicate cards are allowed the probabilities of a given hand change. It becomes easier to get four of a kind if you are allowed to have two examples of the King of Hearts in your hand for example. The easiest and fairest solution is to have players re-draw any cards that are duplicates. Once riders draw a card, the volunteers then record their card on the poker/score sheets and give it back. All poker/score sheets will be turned in at the end and tallied. Make sure riders names are on the sheets. The winning hand is determined by **standard poker hand rankings**. It should be clear whether five or seven cards can be used to build the winning hand, whether there are any "wild cards" allowed, and whether players are allowed to buy extra cards at any point. If there were a tie, another draw of a card would determine the winner.

Prizes are normally given to the high and low score/hand and are announced at the end of the ride. Money or gift certificates to local motorcycle dealerships are often the prize. Everyone can use a little more chrome somewhere!

The object of the game is to have the best/worst poker hand. For Poker Runs it is not necessary to establish SAFE rides since they are stopping frequently. Although you still want to keep your riders safe.

SET A DATE: Planning rides do take some time, I like to be very organized and plan a year in advance, but it can be done in as little as 3 months, that's the time I had to work with for our first ride, I DON'T recommend trying that! Six months to one year is good and gives you plenty of time to procure donations, distribute promotional materials, book entertainment and recruit volunteers. Make sure to check event calendars to see if there are any conflicts such as other benefit rides, and so on.

Set a date with weather in mind. Make sure the weather should be good, not too cold, no rain, snow, etc. This

ROUTE: Establish a route--where you want to start and end. Start scouting out locations on where to start and end your ride. Large parking lots, shopping centers, motorcycle dealerships, parks or area casinos are a few suggestions; your local bars are also great. Of course, you would need permission to use any of the above, but most businesses will cooperate if they know it is for charity.

Riders like to RIDE, try choosing a route with less traffic, maybe some curves in the roads, great views! A good route is at least 50 miles or more. Last year ours was about 50 miles, we had five stops for our Poker Run, this year it's 68 miles.

REGISTRATION: You'll need to set up a place to register, and this is where your money comes in. Your starting place is generally the best place to register. Allow a good 2-2 ½ hours for registration, and it's best to start at the beginning of the day, registration could start at 8am end at 10am with ride leaving out at 11am.

You'll need 4-5 volunteers just for registration.

- One to pass out forms
- one to collect and check for signatures on the forms
- one to collect money
- one to pass out route map & 1 poker sheet per registrant
- one to pass out shirts.

Set it up like an assembly line.

THE RIDE: Make sure to give the riders an end time, you don't want them gone all day. So if the ride leaves out at 11 am, then be at the end stop at 3pm to start the festivities. It's hard to determine the amount of people who will show up, you don't want to under do it. If it's your 1st ride stick with a good number, like 100. This way if you have that many riders at least you'll have enough shirts (insert laugh here).

Fees -- check online for registration fees for other rides and make your event comparable in price. I don't recommend accepting checks, I did last year and thank goodness, none bounced! This year will be cash only! If you are doing that, make sure to put CASH ONLY on all advertising pieces and on registration forms. For example, a good rate is \$25-30 for the rider and additional \$10 for the passenger.

Preregistration is helpful and will bring in extra riders. **The night before the ride**, have a time slot for preregistration and give a discounted price. For example \$15-20 for the rider and \$5 for the passenger. Make sure to mark registration sheets preregistered or make separate registration forms, that way when you go to count money it doesn't mess you up!

T-shirts are wanted for rides, that way they can promote your event and remember it every time they wear the shirts. Allow the first 100 RIDERS a shirt; the passengers will have to buy theirs. You'll have to note that on the registration form and flyers. For example: "One Free T-shirt to the first 100 riders *Additional shirts may be purchased". You can discount the shirts a little for the passengers. If you do first 100, I'd split it, 50 on preregistration night and whatever is left over can be added to registration day. Make sure to have more shirts to sell, if they look cool then they will sell fast! We had to place a second order for shirts even days after the event was over! I've attached a sample registration form; you can use it as a template or create your own.

Once that hectic part is over (registration), make an announcement before everyone rides out. Introduce yourselves, the reason for the ride, and make sure to THANK THEM for coming and to be safe! Once the ride leaves out, you and the volunteers can take a

breather!

RELEASE FORM: MAKE SURE EVERY RIDER AND PASSENGER SIGNS A RELEASE FORM!!!!

This form is **VERY IMPORTANT**; it will protect you, the NCCC / ASHA, and all the stops -- everyone involved with your event from any and all liability in the event the rider are in any form of accident or traffic violation. I **STRONGLY** advise you have this and it's a **must** that they sign it!!! I have attached a template for you to use, all you have to do is fill in your event information and replace with your chapter.

VOLUNTEERS: I can't emphasize how important they are going to be for you! These are people whom you trust and are very energetic and want to help make your event a success! You'll need a few of them! At registration, it's good to have at least 5. For the entire event, if you're doing a poker run I'd suggest 15-20. I know that seems like a lot, it's actually a small amount. They will also need shirts, take that into consideration when ordering shirts. You can give them away or sell them to your volunteers at the cost to you, just remember they are volunteering their time for you. When they are done at their stops they can always meet up with you and help some more!

SPONSORS: They are very important. For a benefit ride, you'd ask you're starting and ending places to sponsor you by donating a certain amount of money, this is usually \$100 for the starting place and \$200 or more for the ending place. If they are the same then you can say \$200. If you are having a poker run, each stop will need to donate a minimum of \$100, except the ending place. That needs to be more, you are bringing business to them, and they will make up that money. Their donations need to be cash/check.

Start by making a list of local businesses and contacts that you'll approach about supporting your event. Give each a sponsor packet that spells out what they get for their sponsorship. Sponsors can choose to donate more than the minimum and get better advertisement, same with the ending place.

Talk to prospective sponsors face to face. You can ask for money or items, but try to subsidize all your expenses from donations. If you are providing food, ask for donations like hot dogs, buns, chips, soft drinks and paper supplies.

Make sure you advertise your sponsors on all your promotional materials, such as flyers, banners, newspaper ads, radio announcements, web sites, and acknowledge them on the day of the event. Contact local radio stations for sponsorship. If some of your stops are bars ask them to get some give away items from their beer/liquor vendors. Your volunteers will feel like professional beggars when it's over, but its great experience for next year's event. You can set up a vendor table and the businesses can bring their own promotional materials for handouts.

Have a Chapter member present and introduce them. Give them the opportunity to thank everyone and tell the history of the organization.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Pens, calculator, poker sheets*, registration forms, liability release forms, playing cards for poker run, you'll need 5 packs, markers (to mark poker sheets) raffle tickets (2 different colors- one for raffles and the other color for 50/50 drawings -which is explained in the Games section), 2 separate buckets for tickets, one for raffle tickets and the other for 50/50 drawing tickets, cash box (make sure you have change) and shirts.

*An example of a poker sheet is attached; these are sheets of paper with the numbers down one side and the suits over top and check boxes in between. The volunteers at each stop will mark these by using their initials in the box of the card the rider has drawn.

PROMOTE: Begin designing your promotional materials as soon as you establish a route; flyers, banners, letter to sponsors, sponsor packets and so on. Begin distributing your promotional material early, two months before your event and keep up with it. Check in with sponsors to make sure they have enough flyers and your materials are still intact. Leave flyers at all the motorcycle shops, bike night locations, and submit your ride to motorcycle events such as www.lets-ride.com/ridesevents or <http://www.motorcycleevents.com/>. Make sure you have a contact name and telephone number on all your materials.

Radio stations are another great way to get free publicity for your event.

If you are selling raffle tickets, start procuring gifts to give away, you can sell tickets in advance, the day of the event at the registration site and at the ending location. Your event should be open to the public. If you are offering entertainment at the end of the ride, you might check out disc jockeys or local bands who will donate their time. That could get complicated if you are in a park or shopping area due to electrical hookups. Some events just have a boom box with upbeat music playing and a portable microphone for announcements.

SHIRTS: You might want to talk to your local t-shirt shop, ask them to be a sponsor but instead of a cash donation, give you a discount off the shirts and put their logo on the shirt. All of your sponsors will need to go on the shirts. Ask your sponsors for their logo and email it to the t-shirt company. When you sell your t-shirts, you want to get back what you've spent and make a profit. Remember, it's a t-shirt. It's not made of gold, so don't go crazy with the price. Price breaks are good; 1 shirt for \$15 or 2 for \$25, something like that!

GAMES/CONTEST/RAFFLES: For both a Benefit ride and Poker run, it's good to have

something for the riders to look forward to after their ride. This is the part where your creativity comes into effect!

As soon as the riders fall in they will be eager to hand you their poker sheets, this is good to have someone (not a rider) that is good at poker to help tally the cards up. There are different types of poker, but because you are having 5 stops then your game is 5 card stud. Don't wait around too long to start the festivities, you gave a time to be back, make sure you start shortly after that say 15-20 minutes after.

Within an hour, all your riders should be in and all the poker sheets should be tallied and ready to announce the winner. Please do this in a timely manner; the riders may get tired and want to go home. Other entertainment or games can include raffles; you'd sell the tickets for \$1 each, you can give price breaks like 1 ticket = \$1, 5 for \$4 or 10 for \$7.

I suggest having a silent auction for your big ticket items, like if bars donated glasses, neon signs, and things like that. You can raise more money that way. You could have a bike contest, 1st, 2nd & 3rd place or peoples favorite and have 1 trophy, depending on your budget.

Have a 50/50 drawing. This is where the other colored raffle tickets come into play. You'd sell tickets just like a raffle; this is what the 2nd bucket is used for. Once you can't sell any more tickets, you count the money raised and split it 50/50. You'd only announce 1 winner. Fifty percent of the money goes to the winner and the other 50% goes to your event. Many winners give a portion if not all the winnings back to the event.

BENEFIT RIDE: There are many different ways to have a benefit ride, you could use pledge sheets, so much money per mile, however that's not something I'm very familiar with so I will not try to explain. There are plenty of resources for that on the internet if that's something you are interested in. The Benefit rides I am familiar with have a starting place & ending place, no stops in between. The ending place should be different then the starting place. Map your course to include scenic back roads and a safe ride. Riders can depart in groups of 10-15 or on their own. If you have extra volunteers you can assign road captains to lead the groups. At the end stop, that's where you should have games*, raffle drawings and so on.

With these rides it's a good idea to establish SAFE rides. SAFE rides include a police escort. Once you have your route laid out then you need to look at where your ride goes through. Does it cross over county lines or city lines? If not then the local police department can accommodate your needs. You may be expected to pay a fee for off duty officers to escort your ride so take that into account when you are planning a

budget for your ride. This may not always be the case but it will be up to you to work that out with the officers who are helping. If your ride does cross over city or county lines there will be a form that the other departments will have to sign off on to give your escorts temporary “rights” to ride through their jurisdiction. It is not a big deal and the police departments themselves handle the paperwork for it. They just need to be fully aware of your ride route so they can get the paperwork to all the other departments. It’s not mandatory that you have SAFE rides, but still, it’s a good idea.

* Suggested games listed in the manual.

THE PARTY: When everyone has assembled at the ending location, stay organized, keep the food lines moving, have plenty of spaces for people to sit. Volunteers can mingle with the crowd to make sure everyone is having a good time and are happy when they leave! You want them back next year and you want them to tell ten other riders about your ride. IN ADDITION, thank your volunteers who diligently worked so hard to make this a success! Enthusiasm is contagious, so it is your job to get everyone excited about the cause! Do not forget to thank everyone for coming and making your event a success!

My best advice for planning any event is to be “organized” and “delegate” to your committee members. It will make your job much easier as the organizer.