



THE WAY I SEE IT by Genevieve Schmitt

Answering The Call Of Your Heart

This is the story of how the Diamond Posse was born.

IT'S ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE how motorcyclists rally for a cause. The passion that goes with riding so easily transfers into raising money for charity. Motorcyclists love to ride, and it's free once you buy the

equipment. So, it seems okay to pay a few bucks every now and again to donate to a worthy cause.

Over the years I've watched as riders have fulfilled their dreams of creating an event for charity. It's truly a labor of love. I witnessed this dedication and passion in action over the last year as a small group of women organized a charitable run simply because they love to ride, and they had a destination. This is the story of how the Diamond Posse was born. It's a great lesson about learning how to answer the call of your heart by making your ride time count for others.

Vicki Roberts-Sanfelipo is a registered nurse and owner of Accident Scene Management and Road Guardians — two worthwhile motorcycle-related companies. Amy "Diva" Skaling is the owner of Team Diva and rider of a sparkly Road Glide. Both women met at the AMA Women & Motorcycling Conference in Keystone, Colorado, in August of 2009. They chatted about riding to the Harley-Davidson Museum the following May for the Motor Company's Celebrate Women Riders event. Both had a yearning to do something more with their riding life. "I've always wanted to take a cross-country ride," Diva says. "But I didn't want the ride to be just about me. I wanted to make a difference, make people happy, shine a light on a dull situation, and perhaps even ride in honor of someone or a group, really giving the ride a purpose."

Vicki felt the same way, and with her

savvy organizational skills and Diva's over-the-top enthusiasm, they set about defining the mission and goal of their ride. First, they invited three other women to join them: Cat Hammes, Eldonna Lewis, and Roberta Carlson. They then named themselves the Diamond Posse. The next item was deciding which charity would benefit from their efforts. On a recent ride, Vicky pondered how lucky she was to be able to ride across the country, free to do whatever she likes because she lives in a society that treats women as equals. Who has protected that freedom? She suggested that Diamond Posse ride in honor of the veterans who have served our country and sacrificed so much for our freedom. The group decided on the Fallen Heroes Fund that benefits The Center for the Intrepid in San Antonio, Texas.

You can't be shy doing this kind of thing. Diva says, "Vicki was our road captain, charged with figuring out the actual route. Then we all got on the phone and started calling Harley-Davidson dealerships, women's riding groups, HOG chapters, bars, restaurants, and hotels in order to get our schedule together. Our goal was to ride as much as possible in eight days, visit veterans along the way, and fund raise every chance we got. We rode 250 to 350 miles a day, visited four VA hospitals, attended five fund-raising parties, and were welcomed by seven H-D dealerships."

In the end, their motorcycles were their biggest marketing tools. When these five women pulled into a gas station, bystanders were curious. Diva says, "We took contributions at these stops; we even had a preacher pray for us on that first Sunday while we all held hands around our bikes. Now we had a higher power watching over us — and we got \$20 from the preacher!"

Diamond Posse raised \$5,000 over the eight days, including online donations generated by the publicity it received. Not bad for a first-year event! The girls had so much fun, they're doing it again in 2011. This year the beneficiary is NEADS and its Canines for Combat program, a nonprofit organization that trains service dogs for disabled veterans and others in need. Dogs and veterans, gotta love it! Diamond Posse core riders now consist of Vicky, Diva, and Cat, and they've invited Betsy "Gypsy" Lister, a recent Sturgis Hall of Fame inductee, to join them as a guest rider this year. They're leaving from four cities: Milwaukee; Park City, Utah; Boston; and Dallas, heading to Gail's Harley-Davidson just outside of Kansas City, Kansas, to participate in the dealership's September 11 Tribute Rally. Riders are invited to join the Diamond Posse at any point along the way, as well as help in the fund-raising by organizing their own local rides. Visit www.DiamondPosse.US to learn more or be inspired and answer the call of your heart. **AIM**

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