

5th Gypsy Rendezvous / AHDRA

By Dennis Martin

There couldn't have been a better weekend considering the weeks prior were nothing but rain. On Friday the Surdyke Family of Dealerships hosted the AHDRA Kick Start Parties at each dealership. Being able to get up close and personal with Kendall Johnson and Valerie Thompson got everyone excited for the weekend.

This year the Rendezvous was an official "HOG PIT STOP". If you presented your membership card, you received a free HOG pin. The HOG representative said that they gave out more than they expected. But they didn't run out because they always bring extra.

This was the 5th year for the Gypsy Rendezvous and it keeps getting larger every year. The main goal of this event is to raise money for the James S. McDonnell USO. The USO provides services to more than 120,000 military personnel and their families annually. So events like this can really make a difference. The ride started at all three dealerships (Surdyke, Gateway and Dale's), with a rendezvous point at the Historic Fort Kaskaskia, IL, and ended at Gateway International Raceway, in Madison, IL with a concert, a bike show, and of course some of the fastest motorcycle races. Total number of participants was not available when this article was written. I could tell by the way the grandstand filled up when they got there, that it was a great number in attendance.

The Top Fuel win went to Larry Brancaccio with a 213 mph pass and his opponent, Bob Malloy, blew the engine when he launched off the line. Malloy was unchallenged throughout all of the eliminations so of course I was cheering for him. My other favorite was of course Valerie Thompson in the V-Rod Destroyer Class. She was the number 2 qualifier and beat her team mate, Bailey Whitaker in first round eliminations. Unfortunately she had a bad reaction time and was out after the second round. Tonglet went on to win the VRD class with a 142 mph run. Another local favorite was in the Pro Gas class, Mike Lozanoin. He had his misfortune in the second round eliminations. In the Street Pro class, Zach Johnson, son of Kendall Johnson, placed second after the final round.

In the closing ceremony a check, signed by Gary Surdyke, for \$10,000 was donated to the USO by Matthew Will of the Surdyke Family of Dealerships. Also, like last year there was a motorcycle raffle sponsored by Budweiser with the donations going to the James S. McDonnell U.S.O. The winner is.... (drum roll please)...Cindy Thompson from Texas.

If you did not attend the races this year, I will repeat what I said last year, "Why not try going to one? You might like it."



Kendall, Valerie and John at the Kick Start Party



Some waited til the last minute to buy a raffle ticket



Go Valerie



Most of the Surdyke employees (some were still working)



Great weather and a Great crowd

