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2026 WSMB

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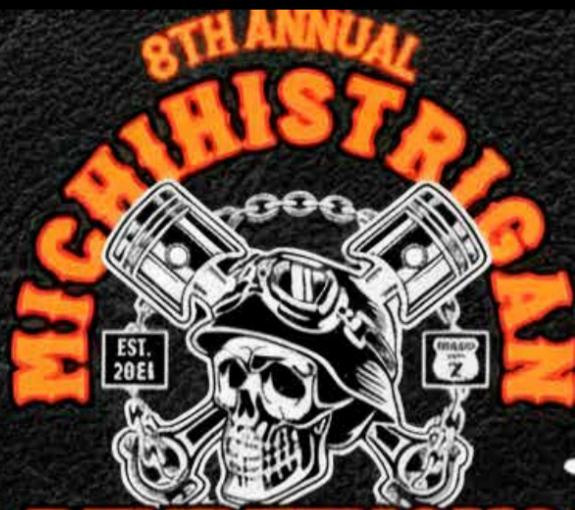


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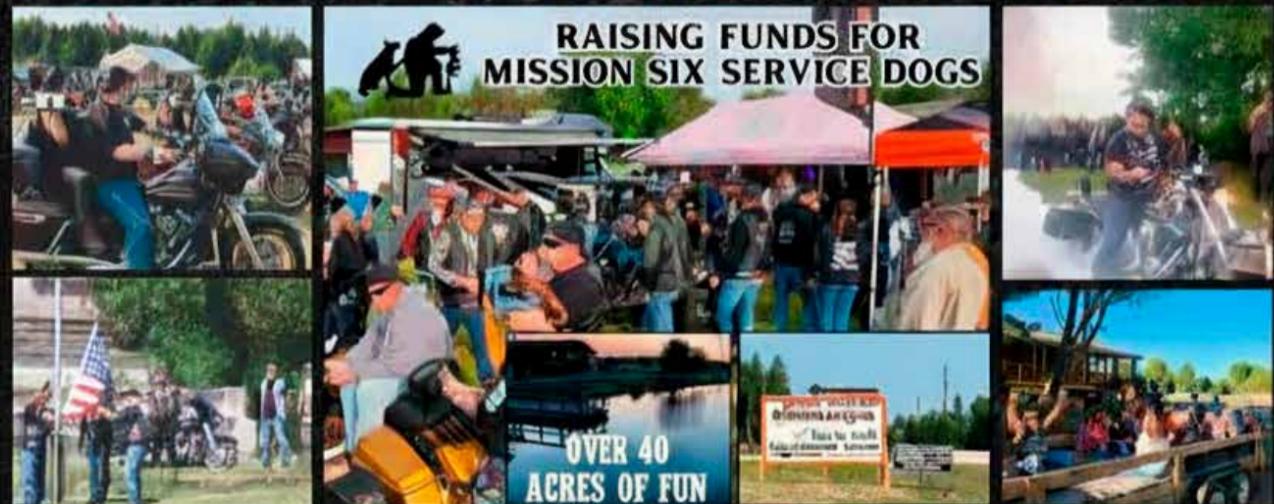
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2026 WYLD STALLIONS

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LETTER FROM THE OWNERS

GARAGE NIGHTS AND DAYTONA DREAMS!

If you live in the Mitten or in the U.P., you know the feeling. It's that specific, hollow silence that sits in the garage during late January and early February. You walk past your bike, plugged into the trickle charger like a patient on life support, and you trace a finger through the dust on the seat. Outside, the wind chill is sub-zero, the roads are white with salt, and the sky is flat, unmoving gray.

Being a motorcyclist in Michigan in February requires a special kind of patience. Winter is a season of waiting. But there is a shift in the air that we can look forward to, right? We are halfway through the dark tunnel, and we can finally see the light as the days get longer.

That light can look a lot like Daytona Bike Week. Who's lucky enough to say they are going?!

Not to get ahead of ourselves, but March isn't just a month on the calendar; it's the spiritual beginning of the riding season. It not only brings us Michigander's the first day of spring, but also the prospect of heading south, feeling that first blast of warm Atlantic air, and hearing the collective roar of thousands of V-twins is what keeps us sane until "our time" comes. If we are lucky, we are packing our bags and prepping our minds for the sunshine, the Main Street chaos, and the road. It can be the reset button we all desperately need. We hope you get the chance to go if the opportunity arises.

While the bikes may be parked, the engine at Thunder Roads Michigan Magazine has been revving higher than ever. We aren't just hibernating; we are evolving.

We are incredibly excited to share that new opportunities continue to present themselves to us and we can't wait to share them with you. We are expanding our reach, connecting with new partners, and finding fresh ways to bring back staples that hold the stories of Michigan's motorcycle culture. The magazine is growing, and the pavement ahead has some hills to climb, but has never looked smoother. We are grateful to every reader and advertiser who fuels this ride.

Wyld Stallions Season 4

There is magic in the garage once again for the WSMB competition and you can follow along with Thunder Roads® Michigan Magazine. It's about introducing the new competitors and some familiar ones to what busted knuckles, cold concrete floors, and the vision that a machine *can* become a dream come true. This season, the WSMB creator, Derek Long is raising the bar again. He'll be pouring his heart and soul into his own build along with everyone else, and we can't wait to show you the progress as we turn metal and imagination into a rolling piece of art in the magazine. Also, check out their social media platforms and give them a like or follow. Stay tuned—this is going to be the best build yet.

A Closing Thought: The Temperature of the World

Before I sign off, I want to address something weighing heavy on a lot of us. When you look at the news or scroll through social media, the temperature of the world feels feverish right now. Tensions are high, patience is short, and people seem quicker to divide than to unite. I'm no different.

As riders, we know something the rest of the world sometimes forgets. When you are on two wheels, passing another rider on a back country road, you throw "the wave." You don't ask who they voted for, where they come from, or what they believe. You acknowledge them simply because they are on the road with you. You respect the journey.

Let's try to bring that energy into the rest of our lives this spring. The world is cold enough right now; let's not make it colder for each other.

See you on the road.

- RJ & Aly



SAM TALBOT INTRO



Hey everyone! My name is Sam, and you may have seen me around at events, handing out magazines, selling 50/50 tickets, or hanging out under the tent. I've been involved to some extent with Thunder Roads® Magazine of Michigan pretty much since Aly & RJ took it over in 2023, and it's been amazing to be part of its growth and community.

I didn't get into riding until I met my husband, Shane, but once I did, I was hooked. Nothing excites me more than hopping on the back of the bike and just going. We've traveled all over together on the bike and have many more big trips planned.

We currently belong to the Sanford American Legion Riders group, where my husband serves as the director. You can usually find us involved in community events, charities, and anything dedicated to supporting our veterans. Serving others is something we're truly passionate about.

My favorite part of this life is the community. Motorcyclists are an incredible group of people, kind-hearted, welcoming, and full of amazing stories. You never really feel alone out on the road. Sometimes we head out on a solo ride and end up meeting people along the way, and sometimes those riders roll with us until one of us reaches a destination. That connection is what makes this lifestyle so special to me.

I'm always around if you have any questions, and if you're interested in advertising within the magazine, I'd be more than happy to help. If you see us out at an event, be sure to stop by and say hi!

- Sam

CHAPLAIN CHARLIE'S CORNER: RIDING THROUGH THE WINTER OF THE SOUL

BY CHAPLAIN CHARLIE

February has a way of testing us, especially here in Mid-Michigan.

The bikes are still tucked away in barns and garages from Sanford to St. Charles. The roads between Midland and Mount Pleasant are quiet, salted, and unforgiving. The days are short, the nights are long, and cabin fever settles in like an unwanted riding buddy. Winter has a way of slowing everything down.

And if we're honest, it's not just the riding that feels stalled.

Riders understand seasons better than most. We know there's a time to roll hard and a time to wait it out. A time to feel the wind in our face and a time to keep the battery tender plugged in and trust that spring will come again. But there's another season we don't always talk about, the winter of the soul.

That's the season when motivation runs low. When faith feels quiet. When prayers feel like they're bouncing off the garage walls. It's the season when progress feels stalled and hope idles a little rough.

Let me say this clearly: winter does not mean failure.

Winter means preparation.

The Garage Season

No experienced rider would pull a bike out of storage in February and expect it to perform like it did last July without some work. Oil gets changed. Fluids get checked. Bolts get tightened. Worn parts get replaced. We don't call that quitting, we call it maintenance.

Yet when our spirits hit a slow season, we tend to beat ourselves up. We think faith should always feel strong, purpose should always feel clear, and God should always feel close. But faith, like riding, has seasons, and some of the most important work happens when the wheels aren't turning.

In winter, God often does His best work beneath the surface.

Roots grow deeper when the ground is frozen solid. Strength is built when movement is limited. Character is shaped when momentum is taken away. Just because nothing looks like it's happening doesn't mean nothing is happening.

Silence on the Back Roads

One of the hardest parts of winter, on the road and in life, is the quiet. No engine noise echoing off trees. No long solo rides down M-20 or M-30 to clear your head. Just stillness.

Silence can be uncomfortable. It forces us to listen.

But silence doesn't mean God has stepped away. More often, it means He's inviting us to slow down long enough to hear Him. Not in thunder. Not in spectacle. But in a steady reassurance that He's still present, still working, still faithful.

If you've been praying and feel like nothing's happening, take heart. Some answers take time. Some lessons can only be learned when we're forced to sit still.

Winter Isn't Punishment

There's a lie that creeps in during tough seasons: If things were right, this wouldn't be happening. That lie tells us hardship is punishment, delay is disapproval, and struggle is evidence of failure.

That's just not true.

Every seasoned rider around here has dealt with breakdowns, detours, and weather delays. Not because they were careless, but because riding real roads means encountering real conditions. Faith works the same way. Following God doesn't mean smooth pavement all the time. It means trusting Him when the road gets rough or temporarily impassable.

Winter is not God pushing you away. It's often God drawing you deeper.

Staying Ride-Ready

Even when the bike's parked, a good rider stays ready. Manuals get read. Tools get organized. Routes get planned for when the thaw finally comes.

Spiritually, winter is the perfect time to do the same.

This is the season for honest prayer instead of polished words. For checking your spiritual bolts, your priorities, your habits, your relationships. It's a time to ask not just what am I doing? but who am I becoming?

Spring will come. It always does. And when it does, the riders who used winter well are the ones who roll out steady, confident, and prepared.

Hope on the Horizon

If you're reading this in February and feeling stuck, worn down, or restless, know this: you are not broken. You are not behind. You are not forgotten.

You are in a season.

God is still tuning the engine. Still strengthening the frame. Still preparing you for the miles ahead. What feels like waiting now may be setting the stage for something greater than you imagined.

One day soon, the ice will melt. The roads will open. The covers will come off. And when that happens, may we ride out not just eager, but ready.

Until then, stay faithful in the quiet. Trust the process. And remember, no winter lasts forever.

Until our next journey in Chaplain's Corner, ride safe, and may God's blessings guide you on every road you choose.

Yours in faith and fellowship,

Chaplain Charlie



Chaplain Charlie
Chaplain Dean Titus (Charlie)
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The Wait is Over

For the past few months, the garage lights have stayed off a little longer than usual, and the YouTube refresh button has seen more action than a throttle on the open highway. Like thousands of you, I've been glued to my screen, counting down the days to January. We knew Harley-Davidson had something up their sleeve for the second chapter of the 2026 model year reveal but knowing it and seeing it are two very different things.

While the first wave of 2026 updates brought some stunning new colors and that crisp lighting we've all come to appreciate, the real electricity in the H-D community was reserved for something deeper. We were waiting for a

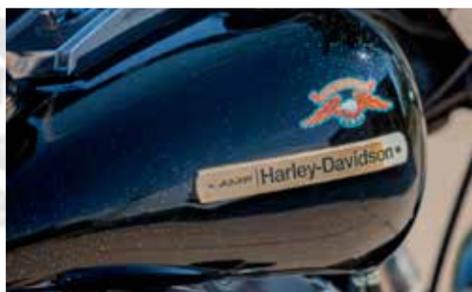
possible nod to the MoCo's history as they have in the past few years. We were waiting for a statement.

And in mid-January, when the curtain finally pulled back on the Enthusiast Collection: Liberty Edition, the wait instantly felt justified.

A Tribute 250 Years in the Making

The timing couldn't be more perfect. As the United States gears up to celebrate its Semiquincentennial—our 250th anniversary—Harley-Davidson has stepped up to the plate with a design that feels less like a paint set and more like a rolling monument.

For those of us who enjoy the Motor Company's history, the connection was immediate. The new Liberty Edition is



a direct, soulful homage to the legendary 1976 Bicentennial Liberty Editions. Those bikes, released during the nation's 200th birthday, have become collectors' unicorns. Seeing that DNA revived for the 250th year feels like closing a fifty-year circle of American history.



What really grabbed me, and judging by the comments during the video release, all of you too, was the execution of the graphics.

Harley didn't just slap a flag on a tank and call it a day. They went with a base paint called **Midnight Ember**. It's a deep, heavy metallic black that changes character under the light, providing the perfect dark canvas for the star of the show: the Eagle.



The eagle graphics on the fairing and tank are undeniably inspired by the '76 originals, but they aren't just a copy-paste job. They look modernized yet retro, aggressive yet regal. It's that perfect balance of 1970s "AMF-era" mixed with modern precision.

The Details Matter: It's not just the big bird on the tank. The blue-tinted windshields on the Street Glide and Heritage Classic models are a subtle, classy touch that sets these bikes apart from the standard showroom floor.

Stitched in History: The seat stitching—red, white, and blue—is the kind of detail you only notice when you're up close, the kind of thing that makes an owner proud every time they throw a leg over the saddle.

CONTINUED...

It's fitting that this trim is limited to three specific models that represent the breadth of the touring experience:

The Street Glide: The modern bagger standard bearer.

The Street Glide 3 Limited: For those who want the stability of three wheels without sacrificing the custom heritage.

The Heritage Classic: Perhaps the most fitting canvas of all, given its vintage lines that hark back to the era of the original Liberty Editions. We waited because we know that sometimes, Harley-Davidson gets it exactly right. In a world of fast-moving tech and plastic fairings, we crave connection. We crave machines that tell a story before you even fire up the Milwaukee-Eight.



The 2026 Liberty Edition isn't just a motorcycle, it's a timestamp. It marks the moment we celebrated 250 years of American independence and the freedom of the open road. For those of us lucky enough to secure one of the limited 2,500 units, we aren't just buying a bike; we're stewarding a piece of future history.

To the rest of the enthusiasts who rode out the winter months on YouTube with me waiting for this moment: I think we can all agree. The eagle has landed, and she is beautiful.

Photos courtesy in part by [harleydavidson.com](https://www.harleydavidson.com)

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A Message to Michigan Veterans Who Ride

February in Michigan isn't always kind to motorcyclists. Snowbanks linger, salt coats the roads, and cold winds test both machines and riders. For many Michigan veterans who ride, this month becomes less about miles logged and more about preparation, reflection, and brotherhood.

The Veteran Rider Mindset

Veterans understand discipline, patience, and readiness better than most. Riding a motorcycle—especially in Michigan—demands the same traits. February is a reminder that knowing when not to ride can be just as important as knowing how to ride. Icy roads, hidden black ice, and reduced visibility make winter riding risky even for experienced riders.

That doesn't mean February is an off-month—it's a mission prep month.

Winter: Time to Prepare the Machine

Use February to give your bike the attention it deserves:

- Inspect and maintain: Check the battery, fluids, tires, and brake lines. Cold weather is hard on components.
- Clean off salt residue: Road salt accelerates corrosion. A thorough wash and protective coating can add years to your bike.
- Plan upgrades: New tires, riding gear, or safety accessories are best handled before spring crowds hit dealerships.

A well-maintained bike is a safer bike—and safety is always priority one.

Gear Check: Protect the Rider

Cold-weather riding gear isn't just about comfort; it's about survival. If you do ride on warmer February days:

- Layer properly and protect extremities
- Wear high-visibility or reflective gear—winter light is unforgiving
- Never assume drivers see you; winter distractions are real

Even if the bike stays parked, February is the time to evaluate whether your gear still meets your needs.

Brotherhood Doesn't Hibernate

For many veterans, riding isn't just transportation, its therapy, connection, and purpose. While group rides may pause, the veteran motorcycle community doesn't.

February is a great time to:

- Attend veteran organization meetings
- Plan spring and summer charity rides
- Check in on fellow riders, especially those struggling during winter months

Isolation can hit hard this time of year. A call, a coffee, or a wrench turned together in a garage can make a difference.

Looking Ahead to Spring

Michigan riding season always returns. February reminds us to be patient and prepared. The roads will clear, engines will roar, and the miles will come, but only if we make it there safely.



SHARON K. HARVEY
(RET) TSGT, USA/USAF
"RED"

To Michigan's veteran riders: your service didn't end when you hung up the uniform, and your riding season isn't over, it's just regrouping.

Stay sharp. Stay connected. Ride safe.

Sharon K Harvey, USAF
(Retired)



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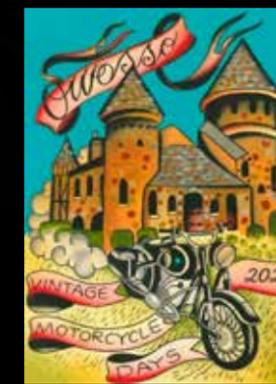


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WYLD STALLIONS MOTORCYCLE BUILD 2026 SEASON 4

BY RJ, PUBLISHER OF THUNDER ROADS® MICHIGAN

Welcome to the 2026 Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build Competition! Season four of the WSMB began late last fall. Derek Long, the creator of the Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build, put his 2026 plan in motion by gathering this season's competitors, who were eagerly awaiting their official announcement. Now, the wait is over!

Building on last year's excitement, the 2026 competition features twelve new talented builders. Seven new challengers join five returning builders, including two past champions. Among them, Jaybird from Lost Souls Customz in Pittsburgh, PA returns after his impressive victory in 2025. His masterful work on a 1947 Knucklehead earned him the trophy, which begs to be lifted, but weighs as much as an anvil. This coveted prize isn't just heavy, it's a symbol of the grit, determination, and passion each builder brings to the competition. Jaybird is aiming to make history as the first back-to-back winner. Will he pull it off?

In addition to welcoming new faces, this season introduces the competition's first official team, pairing a novice builder with an experienced mentor. It's an ideal dynamic sure to inspire. Continuing the spirit of competition, previous winner Frank Grimes is surrounded by family members from Defiance, OH joining in to battle not only their fellow competitors but also each other for ultimate bragging rights!

Be sure to check out this season's builder introductions for a closer look at these remarkable teams and individuals. All eyes are now on Owosso, MI, where the winner will be crowned during the Owosso Vintage Motorcycle Days on August 29, 2026. The competition promises fresh challenges and fierce camaraderie, but only one will claim the winner's circle. Who will it be? Your support, cheers, and enthusiasm will help decide! The winner will be chosen by YOU, the public, by open vote.

Best of luck to all, Godspeed, and we can't wait to welcome you to Owosso for another unforgettable season of the Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build Competition! ~ RJ

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- #2 BRYCE STEWART, FENTON, MI. INSTAGRAM: @FARMINGBIKER
- #3 CHARLES STEPHENS, NEWCASTLE, IN. INSTAGRAM: @CHALRES838I
- #4 JEFF HITTLE, SWARTZ CREEK, MI. INSTAGRAM: @JEFF.HITTLE
- #5 (TEAM) OF JAY HETFIELD & BRETT PICKETT, HOLT MI. INSTAGRAM: @JUMPSTREETCUSTOMS
- #6 BRIAN (SALTY) BADGER, BATTLE CREEK MI. INSTAGRAM: @OASALTYBADGER
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- #11 FRANK GRIMES, DEFIANCE, OH. INSTAGRAM: @GRIMESCUSTOMSTYLEDICYCLES
- #12 DEREK LONG, OWOSSO, MI. INSTAGRAM: @LONGS_SPEED
- #13 COUL'DVE BEEN YOU, MAYBE NEXT SEASON !!!!



FARMING BIKER RETURNING BUILDER FENTON MI

MORNIN! My name is Bryce Stewart AKA Farming Biker on all social media platforms. I am a cash crop farmer in the Fenton, MI. area. This will be my second year as a builder in the Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build competition. Last year I built your typical chopper, like most people do. This year I wanted to shake things up bit. So, I decided to do a bagger build, yes you read that right... A BAGGER! A 1991 Harley-Davidson Electra Glide. I am not going to do the typical stretched big wheel bagger... I want to keep it a classic with a twist. It will have a very loud paint job with custom powder coating. I'm planning to have the wheels, and frame powder coated by Pirate Powder Coating. As well as some of the other parts. They did a great job on last year's build for me, and I'll be using them again this time around. I will also be changing the stereo to a more modern one. The cassette deck in it now SUCKS. I will be stepping out of my comfort zone on this build and trying to do a fair amount of fiberglass work on it. I have never messed with fiberglass before. So just as soon I become YouTube Certified I can start fiber glassing my butt off. We have another tough year of talented competitors participating and I will be giving it my all in hopes of bringing home the big W.



CHARLES STEPHENS NEWCASTLE IN

I'm Charles Stephens, a custom motorcycle builder based in Newcastle, Indiana. I've been building bikes for over five years, specializing in hand-built choppers and custom metal fabrication. There's nothing better than watching raw metal transform into a running, living machine. Over the years I've built XS650, KZ440, and KZ400 choppers, along with Harley Sportsters and Honda Shadow baggers — but choppers are where my heart truly is. I'm drawn to their raw lines, minimalist style, and the freedom they represent. 2026 marks my first-year building for Wyld Stallions, and I'm excited to push my work to a higher, more professional level and bring my vision to a bigger stage. This year's build will be an Evolution-powered chopper with a bright, bold color palette and a skinny, old-school stance. I love the sound and character of the Evo motor — it delivers modern reliability while keeping that classic chopper soul. My goal is simple: build a bike that is clean, honest, and full of personality — a build that looks good, sounds right, and feels alive.very loud paint job with custom powder coating. I'm planning to have the wheels, and frame powder coated by Pirate Powder Coating. As well as some of the other parts. They did a great job on last year's build for me, and I'll be using them again this time around. I will also be changing the stereo to a more modern one. The cassette deck in it now SUCKS. I will be stepping out of my comfort zone on this build and trying to do a fair amount of fiberglass work on it. I have never messed with fiberglass before. So just as soon I become YouTube Certified I can start fiber glassing my butt off. We have another tough year of talented competitors participating and I will be giving it my all in hopes of bringing home the big W.



JEFF HITTLE SWARTZ CREEK MI

Hello Everyone! My name is Jeff Hittle, I am a 47-year-old native to Swartz Creek MI. I am a retired Army Infantry soldier and have had a love for motorcycles since my teenage years. It's when I first got that itch that only 2 wheels and wind in your face can scratch. I am married, 22 years now, and have an 18-year-old daughter that is the light of my world. I am a member of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, where we ride and raise money to help out veterans in need. Over the last few years, I have got into rebuilding motorcycle engines and self-learning about the mechanics of motorcycles. Last year I attended the Wyld Stallions Season 3 finale, and it lit a fire in me to enter the season 4 build. I was able to pick up a 1995 Harley Sportster 1200XL to begin my journey. Of course, the motor needs work, all electrical wiring is bad, but I can see what it can be. It's going to be a challenge of labor and sweat turning it into the unique one-of-a-kind motorcycle I'm envisioning. My build is going to be a bobber style. Starting with the fenders chopped or removed, engine is going to need to be rebuilt to stop all those pesky leaks. I will be doing a suicide shift with foot clutch and converting to a chain drive and rewiring entire bike. At this time, I am undetermined about the paint scheme, but I believe it will come to me as the build progresses and the bike reveals her name to me! I look forward to forming new friendships and knowledge through this build competition and look forward to seeing everyone's build in August! Keep the rubber side down and stay safe!



JAYBIRD RETURNING 2025 WSMB WINNER LOST SOULS CUSTOMZ PITTSBURGH PA

I'm jay bird winner of last year's Wyld stallions motorcycle build 2025! The bike was a 1947 Knucklehead and this year I'm building a 1942 WLA flat track racer to bring to Owosso Vintage Motorcycle Days. My son and I had a lot of fun working together for last year's build and we are looking forward to it again this round. I'm from Pittsburgh, PA where I own and operate a small motorcycle restoration and fabrication shop called Lost Souls Customz. I'll be giving my best to present a build that can help me hold on to the WSMB trophy a little bit longer.





BRETT PICKETT JACKSON MI W/ JAY HETFIELD HOLT MI

Brett Pickett - I am 37 years old and from Jackson, MI. Occupation: Alro Steel Metals Outlet. 2026 WSMB Bike: 1200cc Classic Sportster Chopper. Hand built, four up single loop hardtail frame. One off narrow tree, spoolie 21" up front, and alien tank I grew up skateboarding and motorcycles became a natural

progression for seeking the same outlets for self-expression, comradery, and most importantly, fun...a lot easier on the body! After becoming a father and leaving my job in the beer industry, I landed in an entirely new career at Alro Steel. I had two objectives: learn about metal and build my own chopper. Luckily, it's where I met Jay who's a 15-year veteran Alro customer. When he stopped in, I realized he was indeed "THE GUY" from JumpStreet Customs! I would hassle him with questions every chance I got. Before long, he offered to walk me through my first frame build. Then, he offered to donate a shelf full of extra parts, and on Xmas eve, a complete Sportster motor! Then came the INSANE idea of entering my bike into the WSMB with my vision under his fabrication guidance. That is just the type of dude Jason is. This is the first thing I've truly built from scratch, and I couldn't be more excited and grateful for this opportunity to be a part of this awesome builder community.

Jay Hetfield - My name is Jay Hetfield, and I live in Holt Michigan. I've been building bikes and parts for them for 20 years. I run JumpStreet Customs and specialize in XS650 and Harley parts as well as complete builds. I'm super stoked to be part of this show. I'm originally from Owosso and can't wait to be back there to show off what Brett Pickett and I are building. Meeting Brett at Alro Steel and chatting with him about wanting to build a bike inspired me to help him out, and to donate the extra Sporty I had laying around to him. I'm all for bringing more people into the chopper game and this seemed like a good opportunity to work with a great dude. I'm honored to be showing Brett how to build and fabricate and can't wait to see him ripping down the road on his new chopper. butt off. We have another tough year of talented competitors participating and I will be giving it my all in hopes of bringing home the big W.



NIC CARLIN RETURNING BUILDER CO-HOST WYLDSTALLIONSMB PODCAST ANGOLA IN

What's up? I'm Nic and I'm back again for season 4 of the WSMB. Since its beginning, I've entered and have been able to present a bike each year up until last. I entered, but unfortunately, I wasn't able to finish my build due to some family issues beyond my control. With things now sorted out, I'm ready to jump back into it again. This year I am bringing a 1981 Kawasaki KZ1000. I found this bike for \$600 on FB marketplace and couldn't pass it up. The Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build is quickly becoming a familiar staple in the bike building community and I'm excited to

be back and a part of the comp again. This year is shaping up to be one of the best yet. kind motorcycle I'm envisioning. My build is going to be a bobber style. Starting with the fenders chopped or removed, engine is going to need to be rebuilt to stop all those pesky leaks. I will be doing a suicide shift with foot clutch and converting to a chain drive and rewiring entire bike. At this time, I am undetermined about the paint scheme, but I believe it will come to me as the build progresses and the bike reveals her name to me! I look forward to forming new friendships and knowledge through this build competition and look forward to seeing everyone's build in August! Keep the rubber side down and stay safe!



BRIAN "SALTY" BADGER BATTLE CREEK MI

My Legal Name is Brian Badger, I'm a Us Navy Veteran and have the Nickname "Salty" in which I incorporated into my social media channels.

I'm a 3rd generation motorcycle enthusiast. Both of my grandfathers were motorcycle enthusiasts; one was a machinist and would make parts to customize his motorcycles long before the internet and even mail order and my dad was building choppers in the 70's. There's rumors that a '74 Super Glide was traded for me in a divorce, so I guess you could say it's in my DNA. I was a late bloomer, not really into motorcycles and choppers until after I got out of the service but even in those years, I didn't choose to ride things that were easy. I was a horse and bull roughstock rider in rodeos at one time. Still, after earning a bruised and broken body, I chose motorcycles and that suspensions were overrated. I'm in no way a professional bike builder. I prefer to call myself a hobbyist and have never had the desire to work on motorcycles as a trade. As an automotive technician, I don't want it to draw away the enjoyment I have from motorcycles. Also, having a family full of motorcyclists gives me a fleet of bikes to maintain. Working on bikes brings my son and grandchildren into the shop, which I consider find the true enjoyment sharing my passion for motorcycles.

After a stroke in October of '23, my motorcycle lifestyle shifted gears into more of a builder than a rider. Building bikes has become my therapy and has helped me tune my motor skills. This build for the Wyld Stallions will be my personal 5th build I've done, and I'm really looking forward to it. In my case, the invitation alone and to be a part of the different shows I have attended is always the win for me. The people I meet, sharing 2 wheeled works of art, and the lifestyle with generations to come is the award. Thanks for the opportunity!



MATT LARUE DEFIANCE OH

Hi, I am Matt LaRue. I have been riding motorcycles for about 11 years. I started on rockets and switched over to cruisers about 7 years ago. While most of the family makes fun of the bagger life, my wife and I enjoy grocery shopping on the bike and people sure do ask for us to carry their stuff quite often! My father-in-law started the building bug about 4 years ago with his first build and my brother-in-law followed shortly after. The WSMB is giving me the opportunity and motivation to make an idea that's been in my head for the last 9 years to finally become a reality. I am going to be entering a 2001 Road King chopper

for my build. Yes, you read that right I am doing the unheard of and unthinkable. So, stay tuned for the ride of lessons learned and dreams come true.



SHELLEY GRIMES DEFIANCE OH

Hi everyone, my name is Shelley Grimes. I have been around motorcycles most of my life. I raced dirt bikes in my younger years in Southern California and although I'm very familiar with riding, I've never really done anything mechanical to them. Putting gas in the tank was probably the most mechanical thing I did. Lately, you'll find me on a Harley. I have been watching my husband and son build motorcycles and thought, why not? When asking my family if they thought I could get

into the hobby and if they thought I could do it, they said don't see why not. So, here I go! I am starting with a 1979 FLH that I am planning on giving a "girls" twist to and learning waay more than how to put gas in it.





MARTY GRIMES DEFIANCE OH

Marty Grimes, Defiance, Ohio: I have always liked choppers and have rode something most of my life, but it wasn't until about 2020 when I decided to build my first chopper. I plan to use a '76 Super Glide pile that I picked up a few years ago to build a long springer 70's style chop. I have some ideas for frame design and look forward to having a good time with it. Here is a picture of me on my first chopper on Spearfish Canyon Rd, S.D., and the other is what I am starting the WSMB with this year.



FRANK GRIMES RETURNING 2024 WSMB WINNER DEFIANCE OH

My name is Frank Grimes, I'm from Defiance, Ohio, and I'm really excited to be back for season 4 of the Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build. I started building bikes about 3 years ago,



and every year I try to add something new to my skill set. This year is going to be exceptionally fun because I get to go head-to-head with my dad. Dad and I have worked on things together, and have helped each other, but this year it's for all the marbles! In all reality we are going to have fun and enjoy the journey. This year I will be building a hard tail chopper. I'm going to run an old school fury girder front end. I have a pair of original Ron Finch taillights I'm planning to incorporate into this build as well. My goal is a crazy narrow wild 70's style chopper. At the moment, I'm still undecided on what to use for an engine. I'm in between building a hot rod shovelhead engine or using a 1950 panhead engine. I also want to play around with new ideas and try to learn a few new things as well for this year's WSMB. One of them being challenging myself to do the paint work on my own this year. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone's ideas come to life and meeting new friends along the way to Owosso Vintage Motorcycle Days in August.



DEREK LONG RETURNING BUILDER - WSMB CREATOR LONGS SPEED CO. - OWOSSO VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE DAYS OWOSSO MI

Hello my name is Derek Long and if this your first time joining us for the Wyld Stallions Motorcycle Build, thank you and welcome! The Season 4 stage of the WSMB has been set. I've said it once; I'll say it again, I'm out to make the 2026 season spectacular with the original fire and the will to get things done. All eyes on the prize!



After going through some changes in life, I feel I'm giving myself the room to grow with those changes. It's allowed me to stop and recalibrate my focus toward new direction in following a dream. If you are new to the WSMB you may not know that I am the founder of this shindig, and I have yet to walk out with the trophy and the bag goodies over my shoulder. I've been happy to give them to the past winners because they were well deserved, but I look forward to a new year of competition and going all in again with everyone else that is participating. Who knows, this could be my year to hoist that trophy! Coming into season 4, I'm in for a ride again as I try to figure out the design, the mechanicals, and how to finish while balancing life and the unknowns. This year I will be building a 1982 Shovel FXR which I plan on making more "mechanical" over excessive. Hoping it will mold into a flowing design that continues to grow as the angles start to develop. Thank you for following and remember "Be excellent to each other."



SPECIAL BULLETIN FROM A.B.A.T.E. OF MICHIGAN

MRF PRIORITIES CENTER STAGE

Just two weeks into 2026, the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) is already seeing key priorities move into the spotlight on Capitol Hill. On Tuesday, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade will hold a hearing titled "American Automotive Safety, Affordability, and Leadership." This is a critically important venue for addressing issues that impact motorcyclists, as it brings together lawmakers who shape federal policy on vehicle standards, consumer protections, and emerging transportation technologies.



The MRF has been in active contact with our champions on Capitol Hill, as well as congressional committee staff, regarding the hearing and the bills under review. These conversations are essential to ensure the unique needs and safety concerns of America's motorcyclists are understood as lawmakers debate affordability, safety, and innovation in the automotive space.

The message is clear: even at the very start of the year, MRF priorities are at the forefront in the halls of Congress. We will closely track the hearing and keep our members informed about the discussions, outcomes, and next steps as they unfold.

JOIN THE MRF at MRF.ORG



Thanks again,
Merry S. Garrett
Proud lifetime member of ABATE
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2025 WYLD STALLIONS WINNING BUILD

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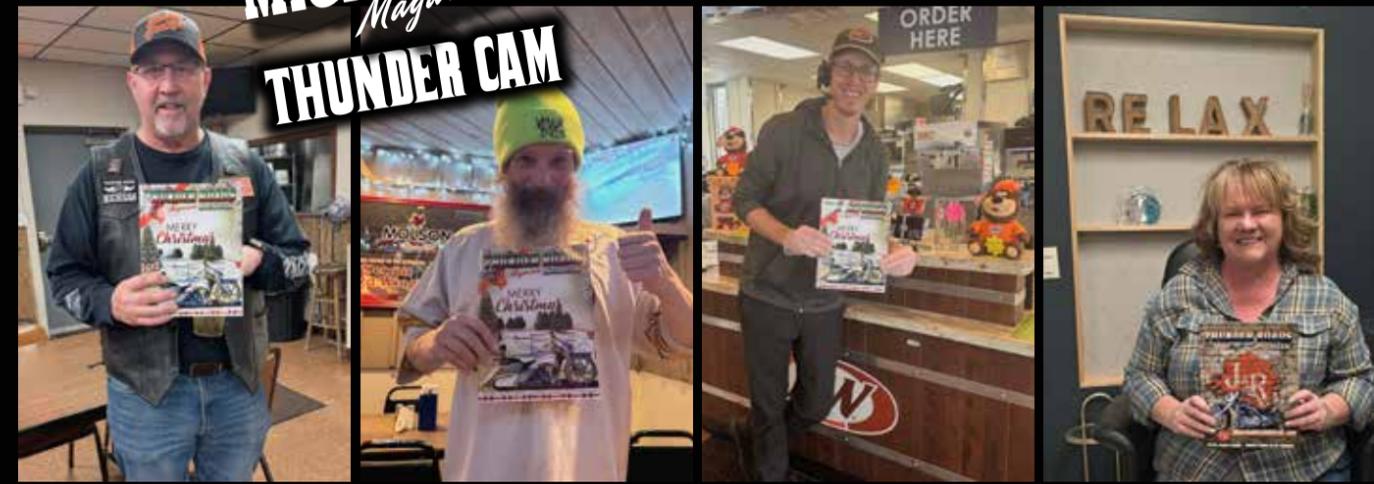
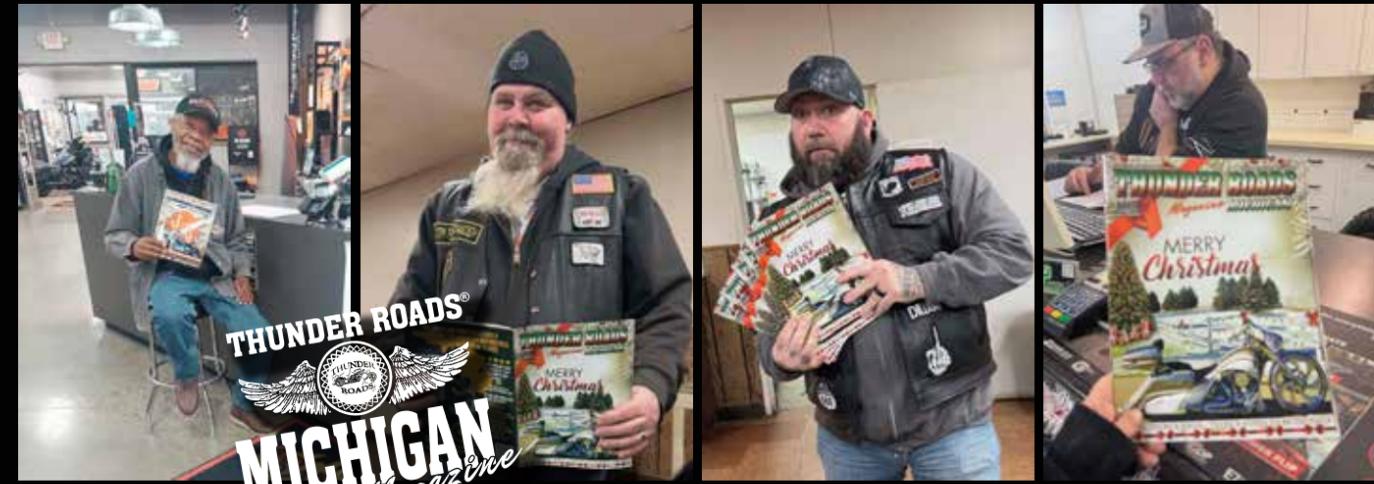
BUILDER: JAYBIRD, LOST SOULS CUSTOMZ - PITTSBURGH, PA

PHOTO CREDIT: LARJES PHOTOGRAPHY



FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Super Bowl 8 Watch Party Iron Horse Bar & Grill Beeter's Super Bowl Bash	9	10	11	12	13	14
45th Annual Motorcycle Swap Meet Allen County Fairgrounds D14 State Championship Series Round 6 Port Huron M/C	16	17	18	19	20	21
Valentines Day Bash Iron Horse Bar & Grill VALENTINES DAY	23	24	25	26	27	28
Annual Flint Motorcycle Swap Meet Dort Financial Center						



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2026



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MORE INFORMATION: 260-223-1409



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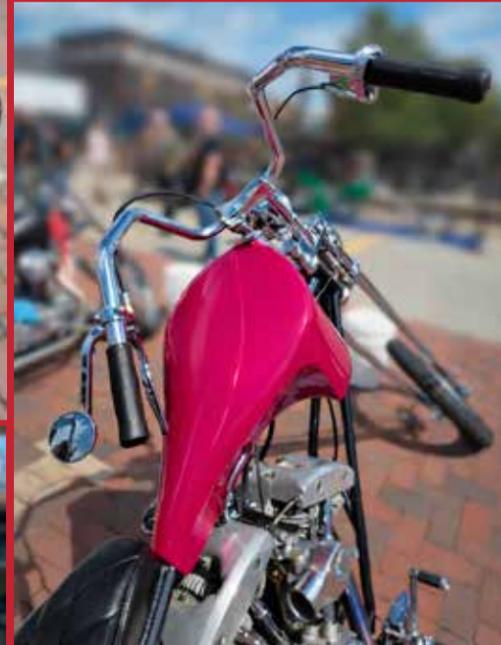
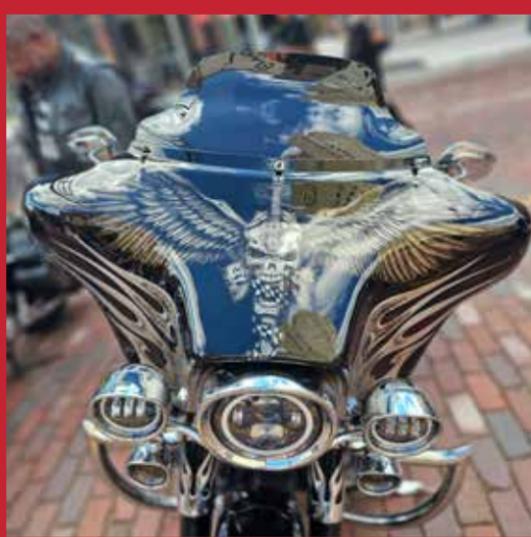


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YEAH, OR MEH?

Saddlemen Roadsofa Extended Reach Seat Long Miles, Long Legs, and Long-Term Comfort

BY BIG E - MID MICHIGAN BIKER PODCAST

Rating: ★★★★★ (5 out of 5 Stars)

Most riders will tell you that when they buy a new bike, the first thing they do is start chasing performance, pipes, intake, tuner, cams. Horsepower sells. In my case, that box was already checked.

When I bought my bike, the performance work was already done, so instead of throwing money at things I didn't need, I decided to go a different direction. I went after comfort. And the very first thing I upgraded was the seat.

I'm a tall rider, and if you're built anything like me, you already know the struggle, knees too bent, hips cramped, and after a couple hundred miles you're constantly shifting around trying to get comfortable. That's why I went with the Saddlemen Roadsofa Extended Reach seat. I needed to be pushed back in the cockpit, plain and simple.

Right out of the gate, I was told the same thing most Saddlemen owners hear:

"Give it about 300 miles to really break in."

Here's the thing - I thought the seat was comfortable from day one.

At the time I installed it, the bike had around 25,000 miles on it. Fast forward to today and I'm pushing 60,000 miles, so yeah... I've had plenty of seat time to form a real opinion. Not a parking-lot opinion. Not a weekend-only opinion. Real miles.

And after all that riding, I can confidently say this is the most comfortable seat I've ever had on a motorcycle.

Real-World Comfort That Holds Up

The Roadsofa's design isn't just about padding, it's about support. Saddlemen uses a combination of their proprietary foam and gel technology that distributes weight evenly and eliminates pressure points. That means less fatigue in your lower back, hips, and tailbone on long rides.

The extended reach version was a game changer for me. Being set back just that extra bit opened up my leg room



and completely changed my riding position. It made the bike feel like it was actually built for my size instead of me trying to adapt to it.

Long days? No problem. Multi-state trips? Bring it on. This seat doesn't break down, flatten out, or turn into a brick halfway through the ride. Even after tens of thousands of miles, it's still doing exactly what it's supposed to do.

Comparing Seats - A Quick Reality Check

I've owned other aftermarket seats. My Softail had a Mustang seat, and I'll be honest, it may or may not have been a "great" seat for someone else, but it wasn't for me. I didn't care for it at all. In fact, I ended up ditching it and going back to the stock seat, which says everything you need to know.

This time around? Totally different story.

I pulled the stock seat off immediately, installed the Saddlemen, and never once thought about switching back. Not after 300 miles. Not after 3,000. Not after 30,000.

That's saying something.

Final Thoughts - Yeah or Meh?

This one's an easy YEAH.

The Saddlemen Roadsofa Extended Reach seat isn't cheap—but neither is riding uncomfortable for years. Comfort upgrades are some of the smartest money you can spend on a motorcycle, and this seat has proven itself mile after mile, year after year.

If you're tall, if you ride long distances, or if you're just tired of shifting around trying to stay comfortable, do yourself a favor and look at the Roadsofa. Hands down, it's one of the best purchases I've ever made for a bike.

Life is short, bikers... so get after it.



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HOT RODS TOPICS

We recently gathered for one of our annual celebrations, providing an excellent opportunity to reflect on the results of our fundraising initiatives for 2025. It was truly gratifying to see the positive impact these efforts have made on local organizations, food pantries, and Veterans. The commitment shown by our members continues to inspire and motivate our ongoing support of these important causes.

Looking ahead, we have several upcoming events focused on raising awareness for motorcycle safety and suicide prevention, with plans to further expand our outreach and support even more individuals in need. Our suicide prevention benches are now placed in 17 schools, with additional locations planned as part of our continued efforts. Amos, our Awareness Champion, has already reached more than 1,000 students through his lessons and has a full schedule planned for the coming year, including schools in the Ann Arbor, Belleville, Ida, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti districts.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge a true legend who deeply cared about bikers and their right to live authentically—Russell Cockerman, Vice Chairman of the Michigan Confederation of Clubs and a respected member of the Oakland County Scorpions. Russell was respected by me and by countless bikers across the community. He personally took care of me at the National Confederation of Clubs in Florida when Hollywood Macarie was unable to attend and asked me to step in for him during a difficult family loss. Russell will always be remembered as a true-to-heart biker!

I would also like to recognize RJ & Aly, along with Thunder Roads Michigan magazine, for their exceptional support and dedication to assisting advertisers and vendors. Their continued partnership is truly appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge RJ & Aly, and Thunder Roads magazine for their exceptional support and dedication in assisting advertisers and vendors – their partnership is appreciated.

God bless you all and good health and prosperity to you and your families.

Stay safe,

HOT ROD BEATON

President / Hot Rods Motorcycle Awareness and Suicide Prevention Foundation

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- DASH VANILLA EXTRACT
- WHITE CHOCOLATE SHAVINGS OR WHITE CHOCOLATE STRAWBERRY FOR GARNISH

Directions:

- 1.Fill a cocktail shaker with ice.
- 2.Add the white chocolate liqueur, vanilla vodka, heavy cream, white crème de cacao, and vanilla extract.
- 3.Shake until chilled.
- 4.Strain the cocktail into a chilled martini glass.
- 5.Garnish with white chocolate shavings or chocolate covered Strawberry.



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JOKER'S WILD



Last night, my neighbor came home drunk and banged on his own door for like 5 minutes. Problem is, he lives alone, so I went outside and told him he wasn't there, so then he left.

You can walk around WallyWorld carrying a bag of grapes and literally nobody will bother you or even give a damn, but as soon as you grab a rotisserie chicken in the bag, Yup! here comes Security. Swarm! Swarm!

With the rise of self-driving vehicles, it's only a matter of time before we hear a country song where a guy's truck leaves him too.

Old people at weddings always poke me and say, "You're next." So, I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.

At my last colonoscopy I had the Doctor write a note to my wife stating that my head was definitely Not up there!

When I was six months pregnant with my third child, my four-year-old came into the room when I was getting ready to get into the shower. She said, "Mommy, you are getting fat!" I replied, "Yes, honey, remember Mommy has a baby growing in her tummy." "I know Mommy," she replied, "what is growing in your butt though?"

I think my neighbor is stalking me. He's been Googling my name on his computer. I saw it all through my telescope last night.

If you are arguing loudly on your phone in public, please put it on speaker, I need to hear both sides of the story.

My bank has a new service where they will text you your balance. It's cool, I just don't think they should add "LOL" at the end.

Me: I'm not very hungry, just want something easy. Server: Maybe the chicken strips for \$6 bucks?

Me: Maybe it does, but that doesn't really help with my hunger issue now does it?

There are 2 things in a woman's life that are for certain:

1. Death
2. If you fall asleep in a tube top, you will wake up with one boob hanging out.

When 3 people have sex, it's called a threesome. When 2 people have sex, it's called a twosome. Now, I understand why they call you handsome.

Got called into a meeting with HR today, cause apparently telling your coworker that you knew he was a C-section baby by the way he avoids labor is not acceptable.

Good Moms let you lick the mixer beaters. Thoughtful Moms turn them off first.

A lady walked past me at the Clinic and said, "No Mask?" and I replied, "No panties either". That shut her up. Don't play with me Karen.

I got pulled over by some Cop last night. He asked me if I had a police record. Apparently "Roxanne" was not the answer he was wanting to hear.

Don't believe what you see in the cartoons. No matter how hard you throw a toilet plunger, it will not actually stick to someone's face. Don't ask me how I know this, just know it is the truth.

Remember when we had to smack the t.v. because the channel wasn't coming in clearly? I feel that way about far too many people nowadays.

Isn't it weird that Star Trek goes where no one has ever gone before and yet, they always find someone there.

I so dislike it when people say, "Bite Me", and then act all surprised.

Flowers, bottle of Jack Daniels and strip silly for her to her fave sexy song that will make her laugh till she grabs you. That's all we really want., just to have some FUN! It's never overrated.

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Joker's Wild composed by: Toni McCoy Shearon | thunderroadsfounder@gmail.com

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EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2026

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Valley Trail Riders M/C
4957 Brown Rd.
Bently, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

February 7

- 2026 AMA Ice Race Oval National Championship & State Championship Series Round 5
Leisure Lake Family Campground
505 S. Warner Rd.
Sumner, MI
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February 8

- 2026 AMA Ice Race Oval National Championship & State Championship Series Round 5
Leisure Lake Family Campground
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- Beeter's Super Bowl Bash

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Check out Facebook for details

- Super Bowl Watch Party

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Check out Facebook for details

February 14

- Ice Racing on Crystal Lake High Point Series
Crystal Lake
202 N. Shore Dr.
Crystal, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

- Valentines Day Bash

Iron Horse Bar & Grill
3592 Main St.
Akron, MI
Check out Facebook for details

February 15

- 45th Annual Motorcycle Swap Meet
Allen County Fairgrounds
2750 Harding Highway Lima
Lima, OH
More info www.hugeswapmeets.com

- D14 State Championship Series

Round 6
Port Huron M/C
3376 Griswold Rd.
Port Huron, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

February 22

- Annual Flint Motorcycle Swap Meet
Dort Financial Center
3501 Lapeer Rd.
Flint, MI
More info www.hugeswapmeets.com

- D14 State Championship Series

Round 7
Valley Trail Riders M/C
4957 Brown Rd.
Bently, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

February 28

- Ice Racing on Crystal Lake High Point Series
Crystal Lake
202 N. Shore Dr.
Crystal, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

MARCH 2026

March 1

- D14 State Championship Series Round 8
Leisure Lake Family Campground
505 S. Warner Rd.
Sumner, MI
More info www.d14ice.com

March 22

- 53rd Annual Motorcycle Swap Meet
Wings Event Center
3600 Vanrick Drive
Kalamazoo, MI
More info www.hugeswapmeets.com

March 29

- Rev it Up Motorcycle Show
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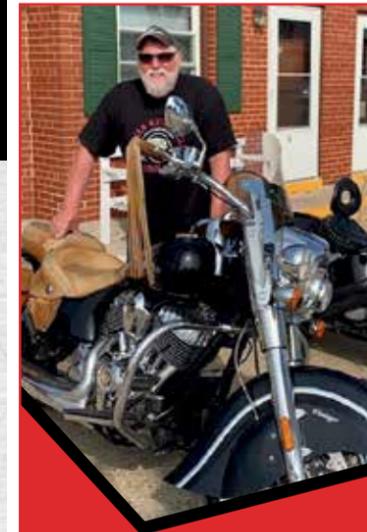
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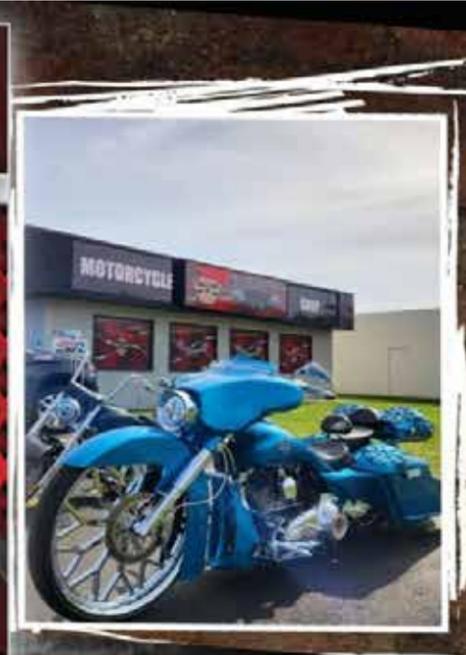
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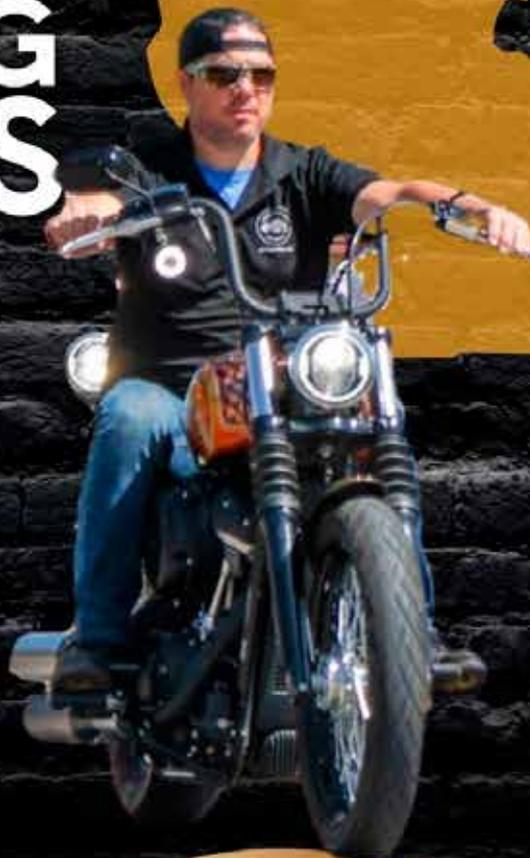
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