

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER

Antique Motorcycle Club of America

May, 2018



SUNFLOWER CHAPTER
of the
Antique Motorcycle Club of America

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Jim Wellemeyer

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER MEETINGS

Monthly meetings of the Sunflower Chapter are held at 6:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month. The meeting site is Spears Restaurant at 4323 West Maple Street, Wichita, Kansas.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

The Sunflower Chapter Newsletter is published quarterly and distributed to Sunflower Chapter members, AMCA Chapters, AMCA Officers, Sunflower Sponsors, and Sunflower commercial advertisers.

SUNFLOWER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Antique Motorcycle Club of America is required to be eligible for membership in the Sunflower Chapter of the AMCA. Dues are \$20.00 per calendar year, and membership is open to any member of the AMCA. Members of the Sunflower Chapter will receive four issues of the club newsletter, and a membership card,

SUNFLOWER SPONSORS

Sponsors will receive four issues of the Sunflower Chapter Newsletter in return for a \$20.00 annual donation.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Crazy Kansas weather, its 70 degrees one day and 18 the next. This has been an interesting start to the year. Just this week I finally got bikes out of the garage and fired up for check rides.

Back in February on a day that could typically have winter weather, Wichita streets were coated with ice. That Wednesday I was helping Larry Burke get his 1928 Indian 4 ready for the Fremont Meet. By early afternoon we had everything reassembled and ready for an engine run. Just a few kicks and the 4 fired right up. The sun had been out and started thawing things out. I had finished shoveling off the area outside of Larry's shop and we were ready to move the bike out. Larry went around to unlock the trailer and I was headed out to my truck for something, I don't remember now. I had taken two steps down his neighbors drive and found myself airborne. I came to an abrupt landing with a loud "snap". That little fall broke my ankle and sidelined me for eight weeks with a plate and 8 screws holding my bones together. Terry Sawyer helped Larry load up while I went to the hospital. The next day in typical Fremont fashion, freezing rain and sleet followed them out of Wichita, but they made it safely to the meet. Six weeks later "old man winter" made another visit to Wichita to try and freeze out the Twisted Oz meet.

So I am back on both feet now and maybe some of the craziness is over with. In a couple of weeks I will see the doctor one last time, he should give me the OK to kick the Chief. I am anxious for the good weather to last more than a day at a time. We already have activities planned so check the calendar of events. I look forward to riding and fellowship with you all.

See-ya on the road,

Jim Wellemeyer

The Wall of Death

The “Wall of Death” an ominous sounding name which has been applied to various activities and venues over the years. Most motorcycle enthusiasts associate the phrase with a carnival style side show that they have heard of or witnessed. This feat of motorcycle trick riding takes place inside wood planked silo that is 25 – 35 feet in diameter. The rider circles the base of the cylinder. As he picks up speed he begins to climb to the top of the wall, being suspended by centrifugal force. Spectators stand outside the top of the wall peering over the edge and cheering on the rider. These “silodromes” were soon known as the “Wall of Death”



The Wall of Death dates back to the days of motordrome racing. The Los Angeles board track motordrome was built in 1910. The first carnival motordrome, “Wall of Death” appeared at Coney Island in 1911. These portable motordromes became popular with carnivals and spread across the country. There were many riders, men and women and even some acts that included animals. Motorcycles were not the only mode of circling the motordrome, some of the larger walls of death included cars. These acts became popular in the United Kingdom also.

The Wall of Death

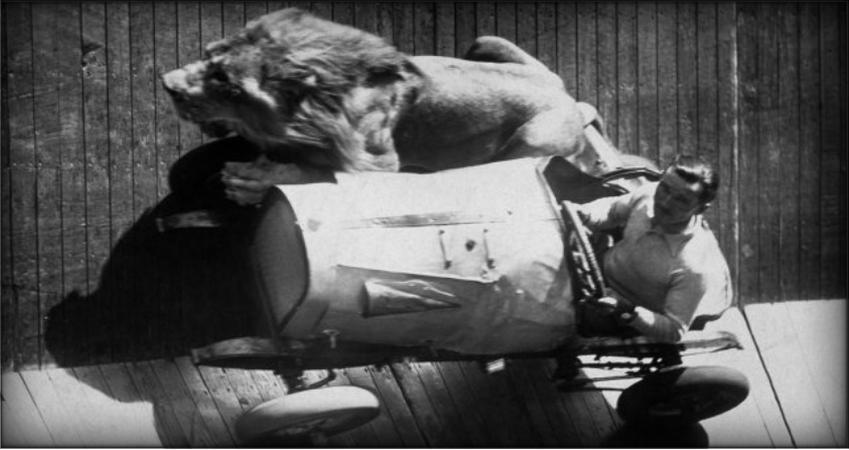


Hazel Eaton (2nd from right) inside the motordrome on her 1912 Indian motorcycle. Ira Watkins pictured far right.



Tommy Messham riding the 1927 Indian Scout. At the Messham Wall of Death show.

The Wall of Death



These shows still exist and I have seen a couple of them, most recently at an AMCA event at Barber Motorsports Park two years ago. Originally the most preferred vehicle for spinning themselves around the cylinder was the early Indian Scouts, (pre-1928). One of these original show bikes can be seen locally. Sunflower member Dick Chance owns the 1927 Indian Scout which was part of the Tommy Messham “Wall of Death” show in England.

Dick Chance’s Messham bike is not the only Sunflower connection to the “Wall of Death”. Sunflower founding member



The restored Scout clinging to the wall at Twisted Oz Too

The Wall of Death



Harold and Dick Chance at the Rhett Rotten Wall of Death

Herb Ottaway had a close encounter with the hard wood. His tale is told here by Jeff Roth in the Spring 1988 edition of the Sunflower Newsletter.

Editor's Note: During the videotape we watched at the Christmas Banquet, we saw a clip from "Roustabout" where the action involved a rider in a motordrome. Herb Ottaway graciously consented to the following interview.

THE WALL OF DEATH STORY

HERB: Well, I was about eighteen years old then, brainless of course, and I lived up on a farm north of Wichita but I usually went to town on Saturday night. I had a new Indian Scout (a 1930, this was in 1930). I went to the motorcycle shop on North Main Street, the Indian Motorcycle Shop, Gerald Chance run it then. There was always a bunch of motorcycle riders hung out there and Morrison-Castle Shows was showing out at Matthewson's pasture. It was a big show. They had this motordrome in there and we was watching the guys ride the motorcycle in that motordrome.

The Wall of Death

- JEFF: The motordrome was basically a big cylinder?
- HERB: Big barrell one, yeah, didn't you ever see one?
- JEFF: I have seen pictures of 'em.
- HERB: Oh I've seen 'em, lots of 'em, many of 'em. They used to be quite an attraction. I don't know why they don't use 'em anymore. Some of these guys there . . . I'd been racing around the country too and I felt like I was a pretty sharp rider. . .
- JEFF: (Laughter)
- HERB: And I had won a few races and lost a few, and uh some of the fellows said "Well, Herb you could do that" and I said "You think so?", "Oh, yeah", of course they all chimed in "Yeah, get in there, let's go see if they would let you in there". So we asked the fellow down there who was out in front, balleying up about the motordrome and the riding and all of that, and we asked him if we could get in there and if I could ride in that motordrome. He said, "Why sure, but you have to ride your own machine."
- We went and got it and we hoisted it up there in this motordrome. So, boy he got out there and he just balleyed up a storm about an 'ol local boy who was going to ride in the motordrome and he just packed that place.
- JEFF: (Laughter)
- HERB: Clear around up at the top.
- JEFF: How high was the top part?
- HERB: Oh, it was probably 15-20 foot.
- JEFF: And people could ring it and look in?

The Wall of Death

HERB: Oh, yeah, see the railing went all around the top of the platform up there and that is where you went to watch the show. You climbed these stairs and went up and went all around this thing and looked down you know, inside, and he just had that thing packed full. So, I got in there and, you see the starting track is 45° angle on the inside and it's about 2-3 foot wide and I run around on that starting track for a few laps and I thought well boy there's nothin to that, then I give it more speed and got up on the wall and I really did ride the wall but every time I'd give it some throttle the thing'd climb up, it'd climb up the wall and I was clear up at the top riding that thing around and around and around I was going you know and so I thought well I've got to get down from here some way or another . . . but I made a mistake. I slacked off too much on the throttle and, uh, then you were riding on about a 45° angle around that thing and I was trying to get down and get out of there and all at once the thing slid out from under me and my front fender just cut a spiral about half way around that motordrome, it was a wood motordrome and I come sliding down behind it and just burnt my right arm and leg somethin terrible on the boards . . . and tore my clothes up, but the motorcycle and me hit the floor and went clear through the floor!

JEFF: (Laughter)

HERB: Clear to the grass, Heh, Heh, Heh, Heh. Terrible crash! Rubber and splinters just flew. Of course the crowd, they clapped, they thought it was a great show.

JEFF: (Laughter)

HERB: And they got me up and got me out of there and then they had to call the show carpenter and he brought a lot of 2 by 6's and it held the show up about thirty minutes.

The Wall of Death

They had 3-4 guys in there fixing the floor and nailing everything back together again, and dragging the Indian out. Yeah, so then we went back up to the motorcycle shop and I was feeling burnt on account of my arm and leg you know were burnt on that wall and I got on my motorcycle and went home and next morning, why, Dad said "What did you do last night?". I said, "Well I went down to the motorcycle shop." "Well what did you do down there?" "Oh", I said, "we went over to the carnival." "Well, what did you do at the carnival?" "Oh, I said, we just looked all over and rode a ride or two." "Is that all you did?"

JEFF: (Laughter)

HERB: I commenced to suspect that maybe he knew something . . . and he sure enough did. The neighbor had been down there and had seen all this and, well, then he asked me, he said, "What did you do to your arm and leg?" and I said, "Oh, I took a flop", I said, "it don't amount to anything," you know. Heh, Heh.

JEFF: (Laughter)

HERB: Heh, Heh, so he finally said "Well, did you learn anything?" and I said, "I sure did." My ride on the motordrome, there was two of 'em, the first and last. Heh, Heh

JEFF: (Laughter)

*** POSTSCRIPT ***

HERB: But I never told anybody about that, I don't know how come that story got out but it did 5 or 10 years ago, it got out, heh, heh.

JEFF: (Laughter) That was one of your finer moments, Herb.

HERB: It was terrible . . . It was a wonder it didn't kill me.

JEFF: (Laughter)

Thanks to Jeff Roth for capturing this moment years ago.

2018 Twisted Oz Swap Meet & Bike Show

I am out in the Twisted Oz Museum parking lot and it is a bright sunny afternoon, 70 degrees and light wind in Augusta Kansas, a great day for the Sunflower Swap Meet and Bike Show! Oh wait a minute, that was Thursday, fast forward two days to Saturday April 7th. Its 5 AM, I look at the outside thermometer, its 18 degrees. I look out the back door and there is 2 inches of snow across the deck and back yard. It's a great day for the Twisted Oz meet!! We knew for about a week that the forecast was pretty crappy, but Mother Nature outdid herself with a record low temp, snow, sleet, and ice. The clouds were already broken and the sun was rising when we left the house.

Its about 30 miles from west Wichita to the Twisted Oz museum in Augusta and the roads were not snow packed but had patches of snow and black ice. Robbie, my wife, was white knuckling it all the way. She was driving my truck since I was still hobbled with a broken ankle, sustained in the February icy weather. When we arrived in the parking lot there were a few out of town vehicles and trailer scattered in the icy lots. In the days



A frigid Saturday in April for a Bike Show and Swap Meet

2018 Twisted Oz Swap Meet & Bike Show

before we had answered a lot of calls, emails, and texts, from people wanting to know if the meet was still on. The weather did not deter some folks. The work started early with the kitchen crew preparing biscuits and gravy which was ready to serve by 8:00. Soon people were coming in for coffee and biscuits.

Registration for the bike show and swap meet were not what we had hoped for but considering the weather, it was good. We had more vendors than last year but fewer bikes. Those swap meet vendors are a hardy bunch. By lunch time it had warmed up to 32 degrees, but the sun was out and melting the snow.

The bike show awards were presented after folks had time to have lunch and enjoy the museum and show bikes. We had a good crowd all afternoon long with many staying for the bike auction which wrapped up the meet.



The swap meet vendors setup early

2018 Twisted Oz Swap Meet & Bike Show



I want to thank Kelly Modlin for providing a tremendous venue for us to sponsor this event. Thanks to the Colorado Chapter, the Omaha Chapter, the Santa Fe Chapter and the Cherokee Chapter, who all had members who came to support the meet. Most importantly I want to thank all the Sunflower members who volunteered and worked to make it a success on very cold day April day.



Rocky Mountain Chapter members were not discouraged

2018 Twisted Oz Swap Meet & Bike Show



**Mike Carson Best in Show
1921 Royal Enfield**

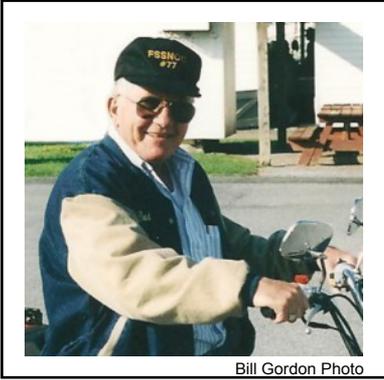


**Brandon Belt, Competition Class
2017 Homebuilt Huffy**

2018 Twisted Oz Swap Meet & Bike Show



The Old Sage 1924-2016



Bill Gordon Photo

This saga by the Old Sage is reprinted with the kind permission of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America. We thank them for allowing us to reprint these stories, because many of our Chapter members have never had a chance to read these entertaining articles

Bud Cox was one of the founding members of the Sunflower Chapter and an Honorary Member of the AMCA. He penned the "Old Sage" articles for more than thirteen years, with the first episode appearing in the 1994 Winter issue of the AMCA magazine. This "Old Sage" episode originally appeared in the 2001 Spring issue of "The Antique Motorcycle"

the
the
Old
Sage

In the late eighties my friend Jerry and I were en route to a Wauseon meet. We were pulling a trailer with an old Indian Chief that had a side car attached. As we were speeding through Indianapolis on the interstate highway, we noticed a motorcycle that had drawn abreast of us whose rider was looking the old Indian over. More interesting to us was the passenger on this motorcycle. This passenger had the most ugly face in the world. We were spellbound by this awesome appearance. The motorcycle pulled ahead leaving us wondering what we had seen. Very soon the traffic pattern changed a bit and we overtook the same motorcycle. This time we were really going to get a

Double Ugly

good look. At exactly the same moment we both realized that what we were looking at was a monkey! Now this was no ordinary monkey, this animal was wearing a flying type helmet, with goggles that covered his eyes. The torso was nearly human in size, covered with a black leather jacket and the long arms encircled the rider quite easily. The legs were somewhat short and resting on the cycle frame under the seat. But it was the face that really grabbed us. These big lips and full cheeks were really a sight to see.

This passenger had the most ugly face in the world.

The wind was getting inside its mouth and playing tricks with those lips. They would open, shut, vibrate fast then slow and it gave the appearance of talking and chatting and cussing and whatever else lips can do. The rider kept his eyes straight ahead and never knew how much entertainment we were getting from his passenger.

I wonder now if just maybe that monkey wanted our sidecar to ride in?



Ellis Brady Biography

By Bart Grelinger

Ellis was born and raised on the family farm outside Kingman, Kansas. As a young boy he remembers owning a tricycle that he learned to ride around on 2 wheels, which is exactly how he road it most of the time. "I guess it was just a little more challenging." He does not remember learning to ride a bicycle, stating it just seems natural once it became available. At a very young age he and his father were given to ride in a local farmers airplane. "I never will forget the experience." The excitement of freedom and motion was planted early and deeply.

In 1946 at age 9 his father brought him his first motorbike, a new Whizzer Pacemaker complete with rear disc brake. A couple of years later his father obtained a Cushman which quickly became the more powerful option and his favorite mode of transportation. He recalls riding it to a nearby airport which had a circular grass and dirt strip he used as a "racetrack". With practice he got to the point he could lay his Cushman over on the frame, unloading both wheels and sliding his machine through the corners. "I thought I was really racing." At age 12 he was given permission by the local sheriff to ride his Cushman to school providing he stayed on two wheels.

By this time, he was working closely with his father on the farm and was being paid with a portion of the crops they raised. He had plans to buy a new Mustang, and at that time he believes a new Mustang was a little over \$400. With his crop proceeds, he only raised approximately \$125. Unfortunately, he was not able to purchase the Mustang he had hoped for however, he was able to pick up a beautiful slightly used . He recalls his father purchased him a 1941 Ford to go back and forth to high school with, but when possible, he preferred to ride his Cushman Sport. At that time only one other kid in his class who rode a scooter/motorcycle to school.

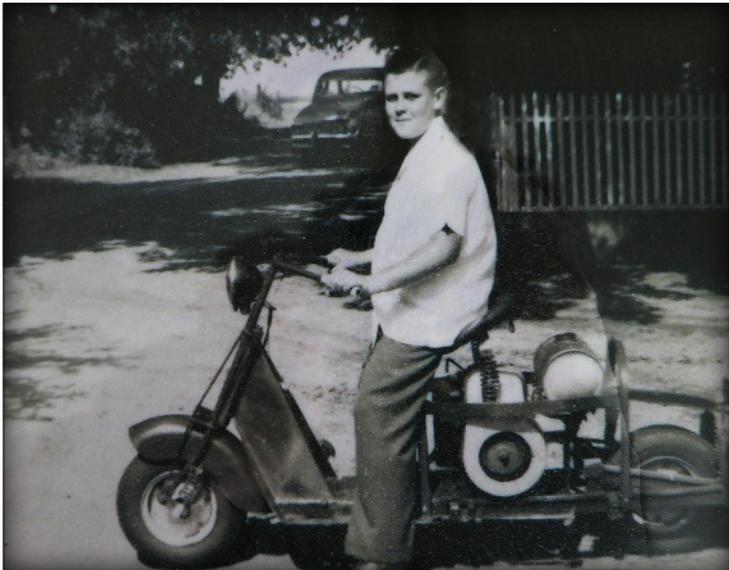
His next purchase was a 1952 BSA 650cc A10 Golden Flash from a neighbor. "My passion for motorcycles was continuing to grow." At the time he recalls being unaware of a sense of how

Ellis Brady Biography

many other motorcycles were available, thinking at the time this was the perfect bike for him. It would not be long before his eyes and pocket book would be more open to the vast variety of motorcycling choices ahead of him.

Ellis went into Air Force he was trained as a flight navigator with plans of going on to flight school. At that time however, navigators were in high demand and he was not able earn his pilot's license through the Airforce as he had hoped. After he left the service he took up flight training with the Cessna Flight Club and became a flight test engineer with Cessna. 2 years later he had earned enough flight time and experience to become a test pilot for Cessna. He continued in this role for the next 35 years!

Throughout his life Ellis's interest in motorcycles also continued to grow and expand. In retrospect he honestly does not remember how many motorcycles he has owned. He has owned several Harley-Davidson's and Indian's through the years, but it was the European makers that really captured his eye. At one time while collecting Ducati's and had 24 of them. "The Ducati is an



Ellis Brady and his Cushman

Ellis Brady Biography

absolutely wonderful and beautiful machine.” He recalls feeling the American machines seemed too big and clumsy and what he described as a ‘lead sled’. The engineer in him found the European machines to be smaller, more powerful, more agile and “flickable”. European manufacturers like Ducati’s, Moto Guzzi’s and BSA’s just seemed to fit his riding style better. “And then the European styling didn’t hurt anything either!”

In the early 1990’s, he and a good friend from college began to participate in Pridmore racing schools. These were run by Jason Pridmore a professional motorcycle racer who offered instruction for professional and club level riders. He recalls taking several weekend courses at Heartland Park in Topeka, Kansas. Each improving his sense of control with increasing speeds. At that time one of his favorite motorcycles was his 1994 Ducati 916. For those who are unfamiliar with the Ducati 916, it was a ground-braking full-tilt race bike, available to the public from 1994-1998. This machine just oozes a combination of aggressive attitude and testosterone, making it perfect for the race track. It is frequently cited as the most beautiful motorcycle ever built. At Heartland Park he recalls there was a long straightaway allowing him to easily get the bike up over 100 miles an hour. Then while breaking hard before a series of "corkscrew curves”, he would frequently raise the back wheel of the motorcycle off the ground, all while feeling he was under perfect control. Accelerating out of the curves the front wheel would frequently leave the ground under hard acceleration. With a huge smile he stated, “that bike would really fly.” Ellis enjoyed racing for several years.

In 1998 Ellis was racing the Ducati 916 at the Hallett Motor Racing Circuit in Jennings, Oklahoma. He recalls the first day of racing was very successful. On the second day while on the course, he came up over a small rise to find a rider in front of him having trouble controlling his motorcycle. Ellis jumped on the front brakes too hard, inadvertently flipping the Ducati end over end. He was subsequently hospitalized in Tulsa Oklahoma spending the first couple of weeks in a coma. He was ultimately released to return home to Kansas over a month later. His family all but forbid him to get back on a racetrack. There was no doubt

Ellis Brady Biography

however, that he would be back on one of his many motorcycles as soon as he was able.

Some might think that Ellis like living on the edge or even over the edge, but sitting with him this afternoon as he recounts these stories, I get the sense that was not the case. Ellis prided himself on appropriate training, honing the appropriate skill sets, and attention to detail. He was an engineer after all and thought and road rode like one. Always meticulous and efficient! I feel we could all learn a lot from his persistent dedication to the sport. It is no surprise that his fondest motorcycles include his Ducati 916 racer, but there was also a 1996 Moto Guzzi Lemans and a 2003 Harley-Davidson FXDXT Dyna Superglide Anniversary Edition which he still owns. Yes, Ellis still has several Harley-Davidson's in his stable. I guess with time we all slow down a little.

Motorcycling was just one of several hobbies enjoyed by Ellis Brady, each owning a special part of him yet today. Ellis feels everyone needs to find what makes them passionate and then immerse themselves in it. He has never turned away from a challenge and was rewarded with a lifetime full of precious memories and experiences.



Upcoming Events



Vintage Bike Night Thursday May 10th



In Delano at the Clock Tower
6 pm to 8 pm

Bring out your vintage motorcycle
for a street show
Or just show up to see antique bikes
Presented by the

Sunflower Antique Motorcycle Club



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Fourth Annual Rocky Mountain Chapter Antique Motorcycle Show and Swap Meet



Saturday, June 2nd 2018

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This is an antique motorcycle event.

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303-941-6336 or ken@harbertcastingrepair.com

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The Cannonball day off is Sept 17 in Sturgis. The Black Hills Chapter has a Road Run Sept 12-15 in Dead Wood SD. Combine these events in one trip. This is a great opportunity to show support for our **five** Chapter members

when they arrive in Sturgis on the 16th. Make your vacation plans and reservations now.



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Remember that this ad not only goes out to all the Sunflower Chapter, but our news letter is also posted on the National web site.



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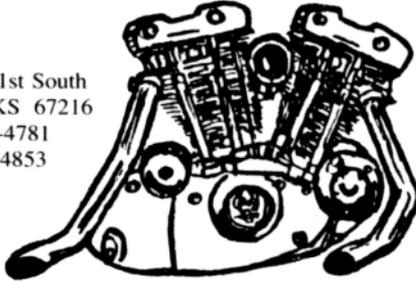


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SUNFLOWER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday May 10th ~ Sunflower Vintage Bike Night.

At the Delano Clock Tower 6-8 PM.

May 30th ~ Sunflower Chapter monthly meeting at Spears Restaurant, 4323 West Maple (6:30 PM)

Saturday June 2nd ~ Rocky Mountain Chapter Swap Meet. In Denver, see ad page 22.

Sunday June 10th ~ Mystery Tour. Depart from Spears Restaurant at 10 AM.

June 27th ~ Sunflower Chapter monthly meeting at Spears Restaurant, 4323 West Maple (6:30 PM)

Thursday June 28th ~ Supper Ride. Depart from Twisted Oz 5:30 PM

July 25th ~ Sunflower Chapter monthly meeting at Spears Restaurant, 4323 West Maple (6:30 PM)

August 29th ~ Sunflower Chapter monthly meeting at Spears Restaurant, 4323 West Maple (6:30 PM)

October 6th ~ Sunflower Chapter Fall Ride, location TBA

Sunflower Website ~www.sunfloweramca.org



The Sunflower Chapter Newsletter will be published in February, May, August, and November. The deadline date for each issue will be the last day of the month preceding the month of publication. Please send articles, tips, humor, event dates, notices, personal ads, etc. to the editor as early as possible. Material submitted after the deadline will be published if page space is available.

AMCA 2018 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

NATIONAL ROAD RUNS

March 5-7	Sunshine Chapter Road Run, DeLand, FL
June 10-13	Hudson Valley Chapter Road Run, Round Top, NY
July 26-28	Oregon Trail Chapter Road Run, Cottage Grove, OR
Sept 4-6	Driftless Chapter Road Run, Onalaska, WI
Sept 12-14	Black Hills Chapter Road Run Deadwood, SD



NATIONAL MEETS

Feb 23-24	Omaha Chapter	Fremont, NE
Mar 9-10	Sunshine Chapter	New Smyrna Beach, FL
Apr 27-28	Perkiomen Chapter	Oley, PA
May 18-20	Southern National	Denton, NC
May 25-26	European Chapter	Raalte, Netherlands
June 15-16	Viking Chapter	St. Paul, MN
June 15-16	Fort Sutter Chapter	Dixon, CA
July 20-22	Wauseon Meet	Wauseon, OH
Aug 3-4	Yankee Chapter	Hebron, CT
Aug 24-26	Australia Chapter	Bulli Show Grounds
Sept 28-29	Chesapeake Chapter	Jefferson, PA