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Bikers ride a hot hand for charity

By **Jennifer Bradshaw** Staff Writer August 21, 2008

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ADVERTISEMENT MIDDLETOWN — In order to bring as many opportunities to local kids as possible, nearly

500 bikers braved heat, traffic and gasoline prices to ride their motorcycles all over Monmouth County, raising nearly \$10,000 for Elks Lodge 2179's special children's committee during their annual Poker Run.

Member Bob Santoro said that about 404 bikes were registered to participate in the run, but about 500 ended up on the road.

During the poker run, riders rode from the Middletown Elks to the Old Bridge Elks, Freehold Elks, Long Branch Elks, and ended up back at the Middletown Elks. At each stop, riders were each given a playing card, and at the end of the run, the person with the best hand won a prize.

Todd Syrdale, chair of the special children's committee, said that he had tons of help organizing and

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executing the event.

"I got a lot of help from these guys," Syrdale said, gesturing to the crowd. "There's so much help here, it's unreal."

Syrdale said that there was support on the road as well.

"There was probably around 75 (bikes) on the road just to support us," he said.

Mike Brandine, the lodge's Inner Guard, and a resident of Middletown for over 50 years, helped with cooking and serving up trays of hamburgers, hot dogs, sausages and salads to hundreds of hungry riders.

Brandine said that much of the food for the event was donated from local businesses, such as breakfast bagels, donated from Jem's House of Bagels III in Port Monmouth and Hole Lot of Bagels in Middletown.

Bands Black Pie Funk and Rising Tide provided tunes for the afternoon, and vendors set up booths to sell their wares, keeping participants around long after their rides.

Carol Goodbody and Jon Morgan, both of Middletown, sat at the table where attendees could purchase raffle tickets to win a 2008 Harley Davidson Fat Boy motorcycle.

Both Goodbody and Morgan said they ride in the run every year, and were glad to help raise money for local kids, Goodbody said.

"When these people find out it's (the run) for kids, they come running." Syrdale said.