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Edited by Jesse Oxfeld
with Michael Idov

INTEL@NYMAG.COM

5/7/07

Intel

12:42 pm

Biker Boychiks



Photo: Ben Lerman

If he was wearing a black leather yarmulke, Gil Paul, a fortysomething Jewish biker dad in black leather chaps and a black leather jacket, kept it under his stocking cap. Paul rode his tricked-out Harley Road Glide into town to participate in the Israel Day Parade with a dozen of his fellow Hillel's Angels, a Jewish motorcycle club from Wyckoff, New Jersey. They rendezvoused at Temple Beth Rishon early Sunday and parked their kosher hogs at the marshaling point on East Broadway and Clinton Street, opposite the Young Israel orthodox shul on the Lower East Side. Then the Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance — a contingent of 150 motorcycles made up of Jewish biker clubs from all over North America — kept on truckin' to 57th Street, to join the parade down Fifth Avenue.

The Sabra Riders biked all the way from Atlanta, the Jews that Cruise from Pittsburgh, Yidden on Wheels (the YOWhees) from Toronto, the Chaiway Riders from Chicago, and the Tribe from DC. What does it take to be a member of the Tribe? According to member Betsy Ahrens, an electrical engineer from Manassas, Virginia, only three things: (1) Be Jewish, (2) ride a motorcycle, and (3) pay the \$18 annual fee (that's a Chai). Rabbi Zachery Betesh, who rides with the Lions of Judea, from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and led Shabbat services for JMA attendees staying at the Marriot in midtown, was eager to show off the detailing on his own Harley Ultra Classic, including the Hebrew stenciling for "Harley Ben Dovid" ("Harley, son of David"), a Lions of Judea decal, and a silver mezuzah grafted to the tank. He was mum, though, on the Torah's take on motorcycles. —Ben Lerman

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