

pride2011

Vroom Va-Va Vroom!

Dykes on Bikes revels in resurgence

BY RYAN J. PRADO

They were tough to miss during the 2011 Portland Pride Parade: a veritable legion of leathered-up lesbians rumbling a horde of Harley Davidsons down the road. The volume of the motors was no accident. The size of the group was no accident. Dykes on Bikes was back, in bigger numbers—and they're ready to bring the noise to Pride all over the state.

Now led by Melanie Davis, longtime Portland Latino Gay Pride Chicas Celebration organizer and publisher of *El Hispanic News*, and her partner Gabriela Kandziora, Dykes on Bikes has witnessed a resurgence in participation and visibility—especially during Portland's Pride Parade, when 38 bikes putted in unison to the delight of onlookers.

"I think motorcycling for women in general is becoming more popular," Kandziora explains. "People are attracted to the track record we've set with our riding in the past."

The couple launched a Facebook page called "Pride Rides" in order to better connect Dykes on Bikes with the larger Oregon Pride community. The exposure has helped generate networking opportunities with other organizations such as Eugene Pride and Lincoln City's Iris Pride Festival; Davis and Kandziora hope to organize rides for both events.

In addition, the couple spearheaded this year's pre-parade Dykes on Bikes breakfast at Dingos—a Mexican grill located on Southeast Hawthorne—to coordinate with riders while spurring momentum for the upcoming event. The breakfast is now slated to be a Dykes on Bikes tradition before the group rides in future Portland Pride parades.

"In the general motorcycling market, they have [the 70-year-old] Sturgis annual ride,"



Davis explains, "but as part of the queer community, we have so many pride celebrations throughout the summer and throughout the year that we can hop on our bikes and go to a 100,000-people gathering at any time."

Dykes on Bikes hope to hear from the larger community about other destinations where the group can show their spirit. Yes, those hogs could get even louder come 2012.

"We thought if we could get more camaraderie in Dykes on Bikes to other parades around the state, it would be a lot more fun for everyone," Davis says. "We won't be surprised if our numbers have doubled next year." ☐

For more information about Dykes on Bikes, search for "Pride Rides" on Facebook.



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