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ED PIERCE/CITIZEN

MORE THAN 100 bikers departed from the parking lot of the Belknap Mill in Laconia on Sunday morning to participate in 'Roger's Ride,' a Kiwanis Club event that raises money for area children's charities while honoring the memory of the late Roger Ballantyne.

'Roger's Ride' rumbles through Lakes Region

By ED PIERCE

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LACONIA — As motorcycles and riders from throughout New England roared out the parking lot of the Belknap Mill on Sunday, Betty Ballantyne was smiling.

The widow of the Kiwanis Club of Laconia's Past President Roger Ballantyne, Betty Ballantyne helped organize this year's "Roger's Ride," a Kiwanis Club fundraiser that has become a late-summer tradition in the Lakes Region.

More than 100 riders took part in

this year's event, which helps fund dozens of children's charities in the area.

"This is fabulous," Betty Ballantyne said. "I'm so thrilled to honor my husband in this way and help the youth of our community."

Roger Ballantyne died in 2008 after a battle with kidney cancer and his wife, family and friends started the annual "Roger's Ride" to pay tribute to his memory.

He devoted many years of unselfish service to the community including as a member of the Laconia

School Board and a member of Laconia Kiwanis Club over a 33-year span, including serving as Kiwanis president in 1986.

His interest in helping others also included service as a member of the Lakes Region General Hospital Board of Trustees and as a volunteer for the Laconia Police Department's Crime Line program.

Many friends who knew Roger Ballantyne have said that if he were alive today, he would have been the

See RIDE, A5



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ROGER'S RIDE participants gather for a group photograph in Laconia's Rotary Park before departing from the Belknap Mill on a 120-mile trip on Sunday.

RIDE

From Page A1

first rider to sign up for this year's "Roger's Ride" as he loved trips on his motorcycle and spending time with his family and friends.

Kelly Rouillard of North Berwick, Maine got up at 6:30 a.m. Sunday morning and traveled to Laconia as a passenger of the back of her husband Mark's Yamaha Warrior in order to participate in the ride.

"This is only the second time we've been over here for Roger's Ride," Rouil-

lard said. "I never met Roger, but I have heard he did a lot for this community and coming here this morning is our way of wanting to give back to the community as well."

The Kiwanis Club raised more than \$7,500 from Sunday's 120-mile ride.

Participants paid \$25 to join the group and it included a barbecue at Rotary Park prepared by Kevin Halligan of the Village Bakery and Laconia Local Eatery as the riders returned to the Belknap Mill from their trip.

Andy McDonough of Rochester met some friends in Maine early Sunday morning and then

they all rode together to Laconia in time to participate in Roger's Ride.

"I came here because my good friend Dan Thompson is Betty Ballantyne's brother," McDonough said. "I come up here every year for Laconia Motorcycle Week, but when I first heard about this, I decided to come up here for this event too."

McDonough rode his 2002 Suzuki Intruder 1,500-cc motorcycle in Sunday's ride.

Members of the Kiwanis Club also sold 600 raffle tickets in conjunction with the event with the grand prize being a two-

night stay in any of the four Inns at Mill Falls in Meredith.

Betty Ballantyne said that children's charities that will benefit from the proceeds of this year's Roger's Ride include Got Lunch! Laconia; the Laconia Little League; Laconia Youth Soccer; the Central New Hampshire VNA & Hospice; the Gilford Youth Center; the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation; RYSEF; Kiwanis K.A.R.E.S. (Kids And Reading Equals Success); the Circle Program; the Mayhew Program; the Laconia Anti-Bullying Program; and the DARE program.