

## **Glad You Asked!**

**Q. I noticed that in the Chapter M's newsletter that all the events were for everyone, except for the Christmas party which is only for GWRRA members only. Why? Which events are only for members of GWRRA, and which ones are not, and why is that?**

**A.** *GWRRA is an association that people join to share in the fun, events, rides, and in general fraternize with other people that have similar interests, typically associated with motorcycling. Chapters are a functional unit and a part of the Association that provides the **Fun, Safety, and Knowledge** as well as the plethora of member benefits, to its members. The key here is that Chapters and the activities of Chapters are intended for GWRRA members. It is common for guests to join us at Chapter Gatherings and on rides. We are open to letting guests share in the fun so that they can determine if GWRRA is an association that they would like to be a part of. If a guest returns again and again, it demonstrates that they are enjoying the people and activities, and it is fair to expect them to join GWRRA so that they can continue to participate.*

*If they do not want to join GWRRA, it is not fair to the paying members to let them continue to participate in the fun and bear none of the responsibility and cost. Those that want to continue to participate after 3 Chapter Gatherings or events and will not join the Association are essentially “mooching” off of the rest of us. These individuals are referred to as “phantom members” and this problem needs to be addressed. This is a challenge of all Chapter Directors – to welcome visitors/guests, and also discourage continued participation if they don’t join the Association.*

*Is it fair to expect phantom members to join GWRRA? Can we expect to join any club without paying dues, or can we expect to join a bowling league and not pay the weekly fees? Of course not, so why would we expect to participate in a GWRRA Chapter without being a GWRRA member? And the costs are really not prohibitive. For Goldwing and Valkyrie owners (full membership), the cost of an individual membership is \$45 per year. An Associate Membership costs \$50 per year. Any individual membership fee is under \$1 per week! Add \$10 more and a family membership can be had to include all family members living in your household. There is no excuse for someone that wants to participate not to join GWRRA.*

*Regarding the Christmas Party event listing that stated it was for GWRRA Members only, it can be said that GWRRA folks are typically very nice, even too nice. We welcome everyone, and don’t always address the issue of phantom members. There are times where a GWRRA Chapter pays for, or subsidizes a meal, ice cream, or something else associated with an event. The money being used belongs to the Chapter, and is intended to be used for Chapter purposes. Providing monetary benefits (i.e., freebies) to non-members, or letting non-members participate for free is not fair to the GWRRA members that exerted the effort to raise that money and organize the event. So if we know we have phantom members, there are times that we simply have to come out and state, “for members only.” Our hope is that the phantom members will decide to join (or re-join) GWRRA, but if not, we want to ensure that the GWRRA members receive the special treatment and benefits they deserve.*