

AM I A MEMBER OR A PARTICIPANT?

“Member” is a term that is used quite loosely in most Chapters. You will often hear someone say, “I am a Member of Chapter A.” Well, it’s close to the truth, but not quite.

As we all know, we pay our dues to GWRRA’s Home Office in Phoenix. No dues are paid to a local Chapter. As such, everyone who pays their dues is considered a “Member” of the Gold Wing Road Rider’s Association. GWRRA is comprised of approximately 73,000 “Members”. We are all “Members” of only one organization. And, that is GWRRA.

Where the confusion comes in is that a Member of GWRRA chooses to be a “Participant” with a Chapter. In other words, the “GWRRA Member” becomes a “Participant” with Chapter A. Now for a little twist. Since everyone is a Member of GWRRA, individuals may choose to “Participate” with as many Chapters as they wish. Everyone in Chapter A is a “Member” of GWRRA; and, so is everyone in Chapter B and Chapter C. We are all “Members” of GWRRA. As “Members,” we have the right to participate with whichever Chapters we choose. Or, we may choose to participate with more than one Chapter. We may even choose not to participate with any Chapter; but we are still Members of GWRRA.

I realize that this sounds like I am splitting hairs or being too technical. However, not understanding this concept can lead to some serious misunderstandings. I have witnessed Chapters that tend to shun individuals that are not part of “their” Chapter. I have also seen individuals not be included on a Chapter’s newsletter or phone tree because they also participate with another Chapter. To put it another way, some Chapters have become very territorial. For example, if you don’t belong to my Chapter, I am not interested in talking or riding with you.

We’re all part of the same organization. We are all trying to have fun and enjoy our hobby of riding motorcycles. Let’s not forget we are all “Friends for Fun, Safety and Knowledge.” To be honest, we all belong to every Chapter in GWRRA. However, due to time and geography, we choose to participate with only one or possibly two Chapters.

For those that either did not realize it or have not taken the opportunity, I would like to encourage you to visit other Chapters and participate with them in addition to your current Chapter. Each Chapter is unique and has a different personality. Each chapter offers a new and different set of people and activities. So, make the best of the time you have available. Be a true “Member” of GWRRA and “Participate” as much as you can.