

*Gold Wing Road Riders
Association, Inc.*



**New Member
Orientation Guide**

Updated: February 2008

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Rev. 6/99

Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Inc.



WELCOME to GWRRA!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the *Gold Wing Road Riders Association*. You may acknowledge with pride that you not only ride the finest motorcycle on the road today, but you also belong to the largest single marquee motorcycle association in the world with over 78,000 members represented in all 50 states, as well as in 58 countries.

GWRRA is proud of its leadership role in pioneering membership benefits and setting standards for other motorcycle organizations to follow. Of all the benefits, the local Chapter is the greatest single benefit of GWRRA. Through the “Chapter concept,” we offer a non-political environment to meet new friends; to enhance your motorcycle skills and knowledge; and an opportunity for you to join us in improving the image of motorcycling. GWRRA welcomes you as a partner in our efforts to promote motorcycling through “*Friends for Fun, Safety, and Knowledge.*”

Please take a few minutes to read through this guide, which we are sure you will find worth your time. Once again, welcome!

HISTORY

Founded in 1977, with a group of seven people, GWRRA has grown to more than 78,000 U.S., Canadian, and International members. Over 850 active Chapters, managed by 4,000 volunteer officers work with members to foster safe, enjoyable riding while also working to improve the public image of motorcycling. The Association is built on 4 simple ideals:

1. Promote “safety” for enjoyable riding.
2. Promote “friendship” among all motorcyclists.
3. Promote the “positive image” of motorcycling.
4. Promote “fun” which is the common thread that runs through the Association.

BENEFITS

There are many benefits to GWRRA membership. Our members enjoy the camaraderie, fellowship and prestige of belonging to the largest “family” of Gold Wing owners.

The individual and family members are guaranteed to receive:

- ***Wing World*** monthly magazine full of colorful stories, photos, articles and tips.
- **(1) Gold Book** service directory, which is a traveling companion that includes member, officer and dealer listings and helpful traveling features.
- **“Rescue Plan”** Emergency Roadside Assistance
- Membership card, four-inch full-color embroidered Association logo insignia and one inch full-color membership pin.
- GWRRA exclusive satisfaction guaranteed or your money back.

Additional benefits available to all members are:

- Chapter Life full of friendship, fun, safety and knowledge.
- Officer Program with unequalled opportunities and leadership training.
- Rider Education (Safety) Program with award-winning graduated skill enhancement courses for Riders and Co-riders. Safe Rider Program celebrating the accumulation of accident-free miles.
- Group Motorcycle Insurance programs especially for GWRRA members available in most locations.
- GWRRA Official Products for your Gold Wing pleasure.
- GWRRA Web Site on the Internet at: **<http://www.gwrro.org>**
- Honda Dealer, Campground, Motel/Hotel, and Travel Agency Discounts.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The organization's support structure is shown below.

The more than 78,000 Members of the GWRRA receive support and direction from:

- * More than 850 GWRRA Chapter Directors & their support staffs
- * More than 60 GWRRA District Directors & their support staffs
- * 12 GWRRA Region Directors & their support staffs
- * 4 GWRRA Division Directors & their support staffs
- * GWRRA's Executive Director
- * GWRRA's Chairman of the Board

The GWRRA's support structure is almost entirely made up of appointed, volunteer leaders. At the Association's Home Office, in Phoenix, Arizona, there is a small, paid staff; the Executive Director; Chairman of the Board, and office personnel. The Home Office takes care of the day-to-day business activities, prepares the monthly *Wing World* magazine, publishes the *Gold Book* service directory, fills orders for the GWRRA *Official Products* and plans, manages and promotes Wing Ding, GWRRA's annual gathering.

Reporting to the Executive Director are four divisions headed by a Director, who is an appointed, volunteer leader.

1. **Operations Division** – There are more than 850 Chapters, 60 Districts, and 12 Regions throughout the U.S., Canada, and 58 other countries. Each of these are led by appointed, volunteer Directors and Assistant Directors, who make up the Operations Division. In addition each of the Chapters, Districts, and Regions have additional, appointed, volunteer staff-members.
2. **Membership Enhancement Division (MED)** – The Membership Enhancement Division focuses on the “*Friends for Fun*” aspect of our motto. It oversees various programs including: Public Relations, Couple of the Year, Fun Activities, Recruiting/Retention, Membership Enhancement, and the Special Interest Groups.
3. **Rider Education Division (RED)** – The purpose of the Rider Education Division is to make the motorcycle environment safer by increasing skills and awareness. It focuses on the “*Friends for Safety*” aspect of our motto. This Division provides rider education seminars, courses and maintains a close working relationship with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. It provides a “Rider Education Program,” whereby Members can achieve advancing levels of rider safety and education. Motorist Awareness and Drill Teams are apart of the Rider Education Division.
4. **Leadership Training Division (LTD)** – The Leadership Training Division provides formalized training programs that provide opportunities for new learning experiences and personal growth to any of our officers and Members who wish to take advantage. This Division is responsible for the “*Friends for Knowledge*” aspect of our motto.

“Officer” – refers to the **Region, District and Chapter Directors and Assistant Directors** in the *Operations Division*; to **Educators** in the *Rider Education Division*; and to each of the **Division Directors** on the **National Staff**.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association includes 2 membership categories. Refer to the *Wing World* magazine under “GWRRA Application” for annual membership fees for each category.

Individual or Family (Full) Membership

- An individual or family who owns a Gold Wing or Valkyrie motorcycle and pays the annual membership fee. The Family Membership applies to all persons living within the same household, who desire membership within the Association and are registered with GWRRA.

Individual or Family Associate Membership

- Any individual or family that does not own a Gold Wing or Valkyrie but is interested in GWRRA Membership and pays the appropriate membership fees. The Family Associate Membership applies to all persons living within the same household who desire membership within the Association. Associate Members are welcomed and encouraged to hold staff positions, but are not eligible to hold line officer (operations division) position or compete in the Couple of the Year Program. An Associate Member may serve as Rider Educator if properly qualified and with the approval of the appropriate leaders.

Life Membership

- Effective January 1, 2008. This program is available to all Members who have been a part of our Family for 20 or more consecutive years. (Those who took part in the original Life Membership Program will continue to do so without any changes). Full and Associate Members will receive discounts on Membership rates, GWRRA Official Products and Rescue Plus. When you join the New Life Membership Program for the first time, you will receive a Life Member Pin, 4” Patch and a 10” Rocker.

*****Family Life Members who move from the primary Member’s household will be required to obtain their own membership to maintain membership status in the Association. The Member’s join date will remain intact provided any lapse in membership is less than six months.*

CHAPTER LIFE

Many Members feel the Chapter is the single, most important benefit of belonging to GWRRA and for many reasons such as:

- Countless *new friends* are made with a common interest.
- Lots of *events* to ride our Gold Wings with friends.
- *Safe riding* emphasis to make our riding experience even more enjoyable.
- *Training* experience to improve riding skills and safety techniques.
- An opportunity to *live* the motto of “*Friends for Fun, Safety and Knowledge.*”

When you receive your first issue of *Wing World*, look for the “Officer Listing” that shows locations of all Chapters. Take your first step to fun by attending a nearby Chapter Gathering. The monthly gatherings are really social events designed to inform, educate and to just plain have fun. When you first attend, you will be introduced as a “guest.” This allows the Chapter to recognize you as a first-time guest and to introduce you to the Chapter Members. During subsequent visits you will simply be welcomed as one of the Chapter’s “**extended family.**”

During your first Chapter gathering, you may have several questions, some of which we will try to address here. We want your first visit to be as much **FUN** as possible.

First of all, you don’t “join” a Chapter. You are a *Member* of GWRRA and a *participant* of any and all Chapters. You can participate in as many or as few activities and Chapters as you wish! There are no applications or fees needed to participate in a GWRRA Chapter. With over 850 Chapters, you are never far from “home” when you travel.

What’s a “CD” or “ACD”? Each Chapter has someone who has volunteered to facilitate the Chapter and they are known as the “Chapter Director” or “CD.” Their assistant is called the “Assistant Chapter Director” or “ACD” for short. These are the individuals who can answer most of your questions. They help organize and run the Chapter. Their primary function is to make sure the Members have FUN.

GWRRA Chapters publish a Chapter Newsletter, usually on a monthly basis. When you attend your first meeting, you will probably be asked to sign in so you can be added to the newsletter mailing list. In it you’ll find everything from upcoming rides, recipes, motorcycle items for sale and information about other Chapter events.

You may see or hear someone selling “50/50” tickets at the Chapter gathering. First and foremost, you are under no obligation to purchase these tickets or anything else at a Chapter gathering. Your attendance does not cost you a cent. These tickets are sold (where legal) to help the Chapter cover some expenses, such as printing and mailing newsletters.

Chapters are self-supporting and do not receive any portion of your annual GWRRA membership dues. Because most Chapters incur expenses (e.g., printing newsletters, annual ride schedules, event flyers, etc.), various methods of raising funds are found. In addition to “50/50” tickets, other events, such as craft and bake sales and raffles are conducted by the Chapter and there is no obligation to buy anything in order to participate.

During the non-riding season, there are numerous Chapter events, such as bowling parties, roller skating parties, potluck suppers, chili dumps, and many others. After all, this is a social/fraternal organization where its Members like to be with other Members when not riding their motorcycles.

VESTS, PINS AND PATCHES

One thing you will notice is the number of Members wearing leather or fabric vests with pins and patches. Most of those represent a fond memory of a “ride” or “event” the Member participated in. Others represent a volunteer leader position the Member holds or has held, while others signify the achievement level in the Rider Education Program or a Leadership Training course. These pins and patches are basically souvenirs that are fun to look back on for the memories each represents. There is not a right or wrong way to display your pins or patches on your vest.

When you begin to participate, you too will soon have a host of pins and patches to remind you of the fun times! However...wearing a vest is certainly not required.

RALLIES

Each year GWRRA rallies are held at the District, Region and National levels. They all have one express purpose in mind: to provide a fun, social environment for the participants. District rallies are normally 2 days; Region rallies are normally 3 days and the National rally (Wing Ding) is usually 4 days. Depending upon the size of the rally, they are held at convention centers, hotels, fairgrounds, schools or other locations. Wing Ding is the largest GWRRA rally of the year, drawing over 10,000 participants and about 150 vendors. The Gold Wingers fill a convention center and the surrounding town in late June or early July for 4 days of clean, wholesome family fun. Over the past 30 years, Wing Dings have been held in places such as: Tulsa, Oklahoma; Madison, Wisconsin; Louisville, Kentucky; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Greenville, South Carolina; Billings, Montana; Huntsville, Alabama; Springfield, Missouri; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Grapevine, Texas; and Nashville, Tennessee.

Regardless of which rallies you attend, they typically have several things in common. For those who like to compete, there are bike shows, field events and talent shows. In addition, seminars, poker or observation runs and many other fun-filled things are provided. The rally vendors sell most everything: leather, chrome, polish, pinstriping, cargo trailers, campers, tires, tune-ups, oil changes, helmets and a multitude of other “must have” accessories.

When the weather turns colder and the Gold Wing has gone into hibernation, many Districts also hold “winter rallies” to give our Members an opportunity to socialize during the off-season months. These rallies go by various names, such as “Wingless Weekend” and “Cabin Fever.” They offer many of the same activities as the warmer weather rallies, with the exception of activities requiring a Gold Wing.

TERMINOLOGY

As with any organization, there are terms you will hear which may be new to you or may have some unique meaning within GWRRA. We've attempted to identify and define some of these. However, if you hear something not described in this Handbook, feel free to ask your Chapter Director.

- **Bug Run:** Same as a “poker run” or “observation run” except you have a target on your bike. The bike that returns with the bug closest to the bullseye or with the most bugs on the target wins. For more details, see the “Fun Activities Guide” available from your Chapter Director or on the Membership Enhancement Division Web site: <http://med.gwrra.org>.
- **Charity or Toy Run:** You will find that people in this Association have a big heart and like to help the less fortunate. Many times a “charity” or “toy” run is held where you will meet at a pre-arranged point with a new stuffed toy. With the assistance of the local law enforcement you are “escorted” to a children’s hospital or ward to deliver toys to children with critical and even terminal illnesses. Visits are also made to nursing homes, homeless shelters and other similar places to share some joy and happiness.
- **Couple of the Year (COY)** The Couple of the Year program was started in 1988 as a way to recognize couples that best represent the qualities and ideals of GWRRA and its Members. The program starts with the “Chapter Couple of the Year” and proceeds to “District Couple of the Year”, “Region Couple of the Year”, and finally “International Couple of the Year.” All are based on a friendly selection process and the Couples of the Year serve for one year. At the National level, the term “International Couple of the Year” is used because the competition at that level includes Region Couples of the Year from both the United States and Canada. For more information, please see the “Couple of the Year Manual” available from your Chapter Director, or go to the Membership Enhancement website at: <http://med.gwrra.org>. (Select: Guides and References; Heading: Couple of the Year; Select: Couple of the Year Manual.)
- **Dessert or Ice Cream Ride:** This is similar to a “dinner ride” except, as the name implies, a stop is made for some sort of dessert like ice cream since most GWRRA members *love* ice cream!
- **Dinner Ride:** Most Chapters schedule dinner rides (year around by bike or, in bad weather, by car) to their favorite restaurants. Normally these rides will be published in the Chapter Newsletter or in the “Annual Ride/Activity Schedule.” These rides will start from a designated point and may be a short ride or a longer ride with a final stop for dinner.

- **Field Events:** These events can be either on-bike or off-bike. On-bike events are done at low speed (usually first gear) within a designated area and are designed for fun! One event requires a co-rider to take a bite out of a hot dog dangling from a string overhead as they slowly ride by! Off-bike events are similar to on-bike events except they are done off the bike. Plaques, trophies and other similar forms of recognition are normally given to recognize the winners within each event.
- **Fifty-fifty (50/50):** To help fund expenses, tickets are sold (where legal) and are based on a random drawing. Half the money (50%) is given away, typically in increments of 25%, 15% and 10% and the other half (50%) is deposited into the treasury. 50/50 tickets are sold at Chapter gatherings, rallies, and other events.
- **Mall Show:** This is a pre-scheduled “bike show” set up at a local shopping mall. By displaying our beautiful machines, we have the opportunity to recruit new Members who may not have heard about GWRRA. For more information on Mall Shows, go to the Membership Enhancement Division website at: <http://med.gwrro.org>. (Select: Guides and References; Heading: Public Relations; Select: Mall Shows.)
- **Poker or Observation Run:** A poker or observation run normally serves as a fundraiser for the Chapter, District or Region. There are many formats, but these are basically conducted as follows: You sign in, pay a nominal fee and receive a set of directions for a scenic ride. During the “poker run,” you may be required to stop at certain checkpoints and draw a card or draw all your cards at the end of the ride when you check in. As in poker, the best hand wins a plaque, trophy or fixed cash prize. An “observation run” is similar, but requires that you answer questions about sites along the route. The person who answers the most questions correctly wins.

CLOSING

We hope you have found this Guide useful. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact your Chapter or District Director whose names and phone numbers are listed in the Officer Listing in *Wing World* magazine. You may also contact any of the Directors throughout the Association or Customer Service at:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Carl and Judy Williams

June and Derrell Agee
Membership Enhancement Division Directors

Clara and Fred Boldt
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Administrative Assistants

