

THE GILROY DISPATCH

Christian motorcycle club not an oxymoron

May 1, 2008

By [Chuck Flagg](#)

Our minds tend to use stereotypes to identify members of unfamiliar groups. For example, if we've never known a motorcyclist personally, it might be easy to assume they are all burly, rowdy men given to hard drinking and other questionable habits.

But, of course, not all motorcycle enthusiasts fit this generalization. A case in point is the membership of a club known as Cross Motorcycle Ministries whose members are dedicated to doing good in the community while serving God.

Founded in 1999 by Lupe and Yolanda Gomez in Los Banos, this interdenominational organization has grown to some 150 members and established chapters throughout California; local branches are located in Gilroy, San Jose, Morgan Hill and Salinas.

CROSS (an acronym for "Christ Rescues Our Sinful Souls") proclaims the following mission:

- Reach the lost through street ministry;
- Outreach through sponsoring motorcycle events;
- Serve the Body of Christ, which is the church;
- Serve our community;
- Serve each other;
- and ride.

Members come from all walks of life: attorneys, carpenters, businessmen, housewives. What they all share is "enjoyment of bike riding, gentle hearts and a love for Jesus Christ."

Motorcycles are a tool for outreach. Last summer the local chapter gathered at Morgan Hill's Snow White Drive-In on Thursday evenings for fellowship. Guest bands played music, awards were given for bikes and riders, and motorists passing by on busy Monterey Street stopped to see what was going on and to hear the cyclists' stories.

CROSS's membership represents about 20 different Christian congregations, and any Christian is welcome to join. Surprisingly, owning a motorcycle isn't a requirement for membership. They refer to non-cyclists as "foot soldiers."

Last Christmas, CROSS sponsored a dozen needy families by raising money to help them have a happier holiday. Families received gifts like toys, food, Christmas trees and decorations.



CROSS - an acronym for Christ Rescues Our Sinful Souls - meets Thursday evenings during the summer months at Morgan Hill's Snow White Drive-In.
Photo by: Special to The Dispatch



Members of CROSS participate in the 2007 Cross MC Poker Run.
Photo by: Special to The Dispatch

Last month, CROSS held the second annual CROSS MC Poker Run. Members traveled from one motorcycle store to another drawing cards in an extended game of poker on wheels. More than \$1,200 was raised and donated to the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital to aid injured troops from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The day ended at a festival held on a Gilroy ranch. More than 600 members and guests attended a picnic featuring music from five bands. Several pastors addressed the gathering.

Morgan Hill resident Keith Wander is national secretary of CROSS. The Michigan native has enjoyed riding Harley-Davidson motorcycles since the 1980s and joined the organization about a year and a half ago.

Wander enjoys the fellowship of the group, the recreational rides they take together and the community service activities like Patriot Guard (when members provide motorcycle escorts for fallen soldiers).

He invites residents to learn more about CROSS. "This is a family-oriented organization where wives ride with their husbands and often bring their kids along."

For more information write to k-wander@crossmcmministries.com or log on to www.crossmcmministries.com.



Chuck Flagg

Chuck Flagg is a retired teacher with a passion for religion. Write him c/o *The Dispatch*, P.O. Box 22365 Gilroy, CA 95021.