

Crown Royals Resist 'Gang' Label

Bikers Say They're Giving Motorcycle Clubs A New Image

Story by Betsy Buck
Photo by J.B. Lester

The deafening sounds of 40 motorcycles echo throughout Meacham Park as the Crown Royals prepare to head for the highway. A seemingly endless line of bikers, with jackets bearing the club's name, fall into place and they're off.

The Crown Royals, however, are not typical of the image conjured by many people when they think of a gang-like procession of bikers. As a matter of fact, the Crown Royals are trying to change the negative image tagged to bikers.

The club is headquartered in Meacham Park, an unincorporated community on the southeast border of Kirkwood. Members are exclusively males, predominately blacks, and range from 34 to 50-years old.

John Ewing, president of the organization, said the club was originated nine years ago by a group of friends for the purposes of promoting a better image of motorcycling and aiding in community development.

"We're not a motorcycle 'gang' and we don't like to be considered one," Ewing said. "We don't associate with gangs and we don't like gangs to visit us. We're a well-structured organization with good intentions."

The Crown Royals good intentions have been realized in areas like

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CROWN ROYAL MEMBERS (left to right) Judge, Danny, Gas Parker, Georgia and Windy Poo.

Crown Royals Motorcycle Club from page 3

Meacham Park, Kirkwood, and University City where they've been involved in a variety of community activities.

"Part of the money we collect from members in monthly dues is used to help people out," said Sylvester Redmon, business manager for the Crown Royals. "We do things like sponsor Khoury League baseball teams and provide dinners for senior citizens. Last month we had an Easter egg hunt for the kids around the area."

Monthly dues are also used to pay for rent and gas bills for their clubhouse and for motorcycle events. Each year the Crown Royals go on one major road trip to visit a motorcycle club in another city. The rest of the year is spent taking shorter trips in the Missouri-Illinois area.

Annually, the Crown Royals host a weekend motorcycle event in which clubs from all over the region come to participate in drag races and dance parties. The races are held at St. Louis

International Raceway and this year will take place the weekend of June 23.

"This is just our way of having fun," Redmon said. "We enjoy motorcycles and traveling around the United States. Plus we enjoy helping people who are having a hard time."

Not just anyone can belong to the Crown Royals, according to Redmon. "We have specifications prospects must

meet," he said. "We conduct an investigation and then the club members vote. If a candidate is approved then he is placed on probation for 90 days to prove that he is qualified to be a member.

"We're trying to set a good example, to show it's not how bad or tough you can be on a motorcycle," Redmon said. "We're here to have good, clean fun."

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