



Volume IX No.1 (951) 757-9008 www.BlackSheepHDFC.org January 2007

BSHDFC Loses First Member To Motorcycle Accident

It was the December regional breakfast and 160 Black Sheep from So. Ca. were just sitting down to eat when the announcement came from the microphone, "We have just received news that Inland Empire's Vice-President, Ray "Eagle" Ramirez, was struck and killed on the way to this morning's meeting." Ray was the first member of the flock to die from a motorcycle accident since the ministry's beginning in 1999. "Stunned" does not adequately describe the crowd's response.



200+ bikes and riders, from more than a dozen ministries and clubs, gathered a week later at Skip Fordyce HD in Riverside where they staged to ride together to the memorial service at Harvest Christian Fellowship. The parade was led by the Patriot Guard, followed by the Black Sheep and then all of the other guests. As they approached the church, the Ramirez family was waiting to watch as the procession rolled up the hill. Before entering the sanctuary, the color guard presented our country's colors as the family went inside. Ray was a USMC vet.

Music was provided by friends Bryan Duncan and Denver Cooley. Person after person described Ray as a servant of God who loved and gave of himself to others, leaving behind a legacy honoring of Christ and Black Sheep HDFC. The photo collage above only begins to capture the Ray Ramirez that we all loved and

Join Slow Dog and Black Sheep at Yuma HD Jan 13-14

respected. "Eagle" was 58 years young and resides today in the presence of His Lord and Savior.

BSHDFC Begins In Atlanta

Pam and I are excited about having become a part of Black Sheep HDFC! We feel that the Lord has put it in our hearts to not only enjoy riding motorcycles with others but to turn our "hobby" into something that will help others find our Lord and Savior Jesus.

God has given us a burning desire to grow a Black Sheep Chapter in each of the 5 Major HOG chapters in the Atlanta area.

We need your prayers and encouragement as we build and do God's work one HOG member at a time. If you have any ideas or suggestions for us please feel free to call us or email us at 1-800-935-7844 / brickmason@charter.net

New Year, New Chapters, New Officers

With elections in December, many of our chapters have elected new officers including president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and chaplain. Other chapters chose to re-elect their 2006 team. In either case, many are expressing their excitement and anticipation for 2007.

The San Gabriel chapter (photo top of page) writes: "Our chapter is growing and we are very excited with what the New Year will bring. We are looking forward to what our Lord Jesus Christ has in store for us. Our objective is to minister and serve the Lord. We have 12 members and we hope to develop a close bond and ride for the Lord. We appreciate and support Laidlaw's Harley-Davidson and pray for bikers everywhere." We acknowledge and appreciate the leadership of John and Sally Salazar who had the insight and courage to start this chapter in 2006. (Photo below includes new officers from Anchorage, AK)

ATLANTA



ALASKA



New Beginnings for 2007

by Slow Dog



You've seen him before. You came into the Harley shop for a couple quarts of oil and there he was, receiving instructions from the salesman regarding his new motorcycle. With a big grin on his face and not hearing a word the salesman was saying. He was decked out in a new helmet, new boots, new leather jacket, new chaps, new gloves and a complimentary tee-shirt from the local dealership. Even though he hadn't ridden in twenty years and elected to not take the safety course, he was "good to go!" A dozen riders stood by in frozen anticipation as he straddled his new ride. He pushed the ignition, throttled it a few times and then let out the clutch. There was a roar...a squeal...a pitiful scream...and seconds later he was head first in a bush with only his new boots sticking out.

He had all the gear, but he wasn't ready to ride. New boots and a new motorcycle don't change a person except to give him a little less cash in his pocket and something to do on the weekends.

It's 2007, a brand new year (new boots, new bike...and New Year's resolutions) and you might think you are "good to go" – ready to ride the roads of life. But before you head for the bushes, let me give you one thought to ponder: "More of the same changes nothing!" What's going to be different in 2007 from 2006...2005...2004...? What is it that is going to bring you purpose and satisfaction? Let me give you a clue, "you can't buy it, smoke it, drink it or sleep with it."

In 1989 my wife and I planted a church in Temecula, Ca. – a new and exciting bedroom community for San Diego and Orange Counties. In just a few short years the town had quadrupled in size with young and middle aged couples looking for a brand new start. Before long, however, the one and two hour commutes weren't fun any more and the new house was beginning to lose its novelty and splendor. Dad was irritable from the drive and mom had to take a job to make ends meet. Marriages that were not good in San Diego were no better in Temecula and bad habits that began in Orange County still hadn't been dealt with. It's not a surprise, then, that when they came to my church they were grumpy and frustrated and on the verge of a nervous breakdown or divorce. In addition, they didn't understand why their kids had started doing drugs. It was because when they came to their new home, they brought their old selves. Did they really believe that a little brick and mortar was going to change things that much?

For many, the meltdown came between 1990 and 1992 when the economy took a dump and many people lost their jobs. Those who wanted to simplify their lives by moving BACK to San Diego or Orange County couldn't do it because their homes were now not worth as much as they had been only a few years before. They were angry and heading for the bushes! They blamed God, the church, their friends and anyone else who didn't meet their standards. When some asked me why things were falling apart I often had to answer, "Because more of the same changes nothing." They had changed the place where they slept at night but had not been changed themselves.

As you approach this New Year and are hoping to make a few improvements – i.e. lose weight, pay off credit cards, quit smoking, renew a broken relationship – you've got to ask yourself, "What will be different THIS year? Will I start exercising...get a new job...become an all new and improved person at the wave of a magic wand?" Probably not! New motorcycle clothes and gear didn't help our friend at the beginning of this story and none of these things will help us much either – until we are changed from the inside out.

Face it - life is bigger than us and we need some help! I believe that God wants for you to be the best that you can possibly be! I believe that He wants to help you reach your greatest potential and have a purpose in life. I believe He wants to

take whatever you have done with your life and turn it into something great; something you can be proud of.

If you have not yet discovered Jesus Christ and surrendered your life to Him, I want to encourage you to do so, for THAT is the greatest new beginning anyone could ever hope for! No, life won't be perfect, but you will have a right perspective, a sense of forgiveness, hope for the future and the presence of God's Holy Spirit who gives us wisdom and courage.

If you have known Christ for a long time and are looking for a new start, I want to encourage you to go back to the beginning; back to your knees and back to God's Word; surrounding yourself with godly men and women and faithfully attending a good sound church. Get one or two close friends (of the same gender) who you can meet with weekly for mutual care and accountability. (These are meant to keep you out of the bushes!)

What will be different for you this year? What's really going to change this year that you couldn't change last year? Only you know and only you can take the necessary steps to make those changes come to pass - and those steps begin in the direction of Jesus.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (1Corinthians 5:17)



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Rash Of Motorcycle Accidents Close Out 2006 in So. Ca.



Hammer and B'LoK

It's the talk at too many rallies and meetings: "Man! What's happening?" say so many. While it's not this newsletter's desire to belabor the negative, we wouldn't be too proud to say it one more time, "BE CAREFUL!" And no, you're not necessarily paranoid if you think every cage on the road is out to get you! Cuz' they are!

The Christmas season was especially dangerous and deadly in So. Ca. as driver's minds were on things other than driving. Ray Ramirez (Inland Empire BSHDFC – page 1) was on his way to a Black Sheep breakfast when a woman made an illegal turn in front of him. Ray died at the scene. What a loss for us!

Bobby "B-Lok" and wife "Hammer" (Nancy), president and wife from the Frontline Warriors (dear friends of Black Sheep) were on a toy run when they were struck. A man in an SUV was gawking at the line of bikes decorated with toys when he rear ended the car in front of him. As he spun out of control, he hit Bobby and Nancy causing compound fractures to both of their lower legs.

Larry and Sylvia Johnson are So. Ca. HOG members, well known for their love of Christ. They became entangled in a multiple car accident and were badly injured as they were crushed between two cars. Sylvia eventually lost a leg.

These are just three stories. You could match them with horror stories of your own. We take this opportunity, one more time, to ask you to please be careful. Like the helmet sticker says, "CRASHING SUCKS!"

We would like to encourage you with the following...

1. Wear the best and safest equipment you can afford.
2. If you haven't done it already, take a rider's safety course.
3. Assume that "they" don't see you because they probably don't!
4. No day-dreaming! No cell phones!
5. Keep your eyes moving! SCAN what's in front of you.
6. Watch behind you when stopped at lights and stop signs.
7. Never ride tired, angry, sick or intoxicated.
8. Keep plenty of space between you and the cages.
9. Watch for road debris.
10. Pass large trucks quickly.
11. Say a prayer before you ride; for yourself and your fellow riders.
12. Slow Down! Slow Down! Slow Down!
13. And yes! "Loud Pipes [do indeed] save lives..."
14. "...but Jesus saves souls." (Be prepared to meet your maker) ●

Two Important Dates for BSHDFC and Friends in 2007

National Leadership Summit (NLS5) March 2-3 in Lake Elsinore, CA. This event is open to anybody (members or not), but each chapter is required to be represented each year. This will be a time of special music, speakers, training and more. There will be a "Bike Night" on Friday and a So.Ca. Regional Breakfast on Saturday morning. Meet hundreds of sheep and hear what's happening from coast to coast. Those attending should plan on arriving on Thursday night the 1st in preparation for an early morning on Friday and not leave until late Saturday afternoon. (Those flying should fly in and out of Ontario or San Diego) We recommend the Quality Inn in Lake Elsinore (951) 674-9694 (\$59 for Queen or King; \$69 for two beds). Those wishing to stay with a Black Sheep family need to call Judy Kentish at (951) 698-6988 (homes are limited!). More details and registration information will be included in the January newsletter or made available by calling (951)757-9008 ●

Western States Rally (WSR 2007) We have never done this before, but the sheep will be RETURNING to last year's destination by popular demand! Join us July 13th and 14th (12th and 15th optional days) in San Luis Obispo/Los Osos for our 5th annual WSR. Save the dates for now – details coming in March! ●

Sturgis Opportunities Continue

When is the last time you went to Sturgis? Too expensive? Too much of a hassle finding a motel room within a hundred miles of the action? If you are a member of ANY Christian motorcycle organization, we have good news for you! Black Sheep member Mark Cruse (Illinois) is representing Wheaton College (Wheaton, Ill) who has opened their Rapid City campus during bike week at very reasonable rates! The bad news is that this is the third year they have made such an offer and the cat is out of the bag! Rooms are going fast! Contact "Cruizer" at (630) 668-3286 or by email at: mcruse1@msn.com ●

Photo Below: Santa Barbara Black Sheep met with "Luther the Dog" before putting him on a plane for Pennsylvania.



Photo Above: Pennsylvania's newest member, Randy Trapasso, is flanked by PA founder Darren Geesaman (left) and current president Chris "Leadsled" Armato (right). PA Black Sheep have been experiencing growth and effectiveness in ministry! **Photo Below:** Welcome to the flock Bob and Jackie Shriber (L) from Palmer, TX and Curt & Gail Melton (R) from Scranton, So. Carolina. Curt is Jim Melton's (Bakersfield, CA) brother. ●



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IN GOD WE TRUST! www.BlackSheepHDFC.org



Tommy Haddon (Mid-Cities), who thinks he is CAPTAIN Jack Sparrow, visits Sylvia Johnson in the hospital! Keep praying for downed bikers and for the safety of all who ride!

