



From the
President's
Desk

Red Knights

Mass Chapter 2 — Summer '05

<http://www.rk-mass2.org>

Loyal to Our Duty

Hi Everyone,

I remember, many years ago, that I took a personality test in school. I don't remember what the outcome was or what the answers meant; but I remember one question was – “how many close friends do you have?” Take a moment and think of those few very close friends that hold a special place in your heart. I bet there are fellow Red Knights on that short list. I look at the Red Knights as our extended family and I know that some of you have become my close friends.

When you are away from home, be it a convention, Americade, or just out on your bike alone, and you come across another Red Knight, there is already a bond of friendship. Our chapter has a special relationship not only with others from home but elsewhere as well. One of those bonds is with our friends in Ontario-7. Cliff and Marty and Diona and I went to their Winter Frolic this year – our eighth I believe – and had a great time with our friends. When we were getting ready to leave for home, their president, Lorne Cornell presented us with Honorary Memberships to their chapter and said that we were special friends to them as well.

Another one of those special friendships within our own chapter is with Cliff and Marty Eldridge. You may or may not know that Cliff has served as treasurer for our chapter since the inception of our club in 1983 – He is the longest serving chapter officer in all the Red Knights. Cliff has said that with his pending retirement from the fire department he will be stepping down as treasurer at the annual elections in October. We all owe Cliff a big thank you for all his work and know that his shoes will be hard to fill.

We also congratulate Donna Moreau. Donna's book “Waiting Wives; the Story of Shilling Manor,” was published this spring and a number of us had the honor of attending her book signing. Buy your copy online today!

Our MSF Scholarship program will continue again this year with the generous cooperation of the Central Mass Safety Council. If you know of riders that would benefit from either the beginner's or experienced rider training, talk the scholarship up with them. The information will be available on-line shortly so the application can be downloaded.

Mother Nature must have been in a bad mood in recent months because not only was it a long, tough winter with record setting snow levels – we also had to endure weekend after weekend of rain, fog, drizzle, and a general lack of warm and sun! But we all know that as the summer progresses we will all get more chances to gather on two wheels and enjoy our bikes and each other's company.

I'll close my notes by sharing a quote with you from an editorial that appeared in a recent issue of Roadrunner magazine: *“Don't let the summer get away from you. There's something out there for everyone to enjoy. Take advantage of the opportunities to see new places, meet new people, and maybe learn a thing or two. RIDE! And don't worry about the lawn, you need the break.”*

Ride safe.

Join us for a
Chapter
Pig
Roast



Saturday, July 9
Rain or Shine

Meet at the Westminster FD at 9:00 a.m. and we will have a ride that lands us in Nashua at Steve's property where we will enjoy an afternoon of fresh pork, picnic fixins, fun and games, and good friends.

So we know how much pork to have turning on the spit **we need definite RSVPs!**

We also need to charge \$10 a person to pay for the pig.

Please call Bob Laford at 978-724-3270 by June 24 to RSVP

If you RSVP but then cannot come we will still have to collect your \$10

Mass-2 Fundraiser

Thank you to everyone who bought and sold 2005 raffle tickets. Our drawing will be at our Ice Cream Ride on June 28. **(Get any stubs and money you have to Marty ASAP!)**

The change in format looks like it is a success as most of the tickets have been sold. The funds raised will help our chapter to provide continued support to area charities and others needing a hand.

At the October business meeting of our chapter, the officer positions of President, Secretary, and because of his announced retirement, Treasurer will be up for election/re-election. Any active member interested in running for the posts should contact this year's nomination chairman Kevin Martin.

Breakfasts and Riding Buddies

We're into prime riding weather now, but the past winter was a season that seemed to not let go! Our monthly breakfast clubs have stopped for the summer, but they were very well attended right through the winter and early spring. Our final one (April 16) those that showed up were all on two wheels even though it was 28 degrees when Diona and I left Petersham! I think we were all in the mindset throughout the cold weather months that it is always a good time with good friends! Join us in October when we begin this breakfast tradition again.

Chapter Brochures

A great idea came from our members at the spring meeting — an informational brochure about our chapter.

At our last breakfast ride the group was approached by a family and as the young kids were looking over our bikes the parents were asking about the Red Knights. Although we all enjoy telling people about the club, it would be nice to offer a handout that talks about the Red Knights, our chapter, and what we do as an organization.

So we have done that! We now have a chapter brochure. The officers all have a handful of copies and there are many more still available — so if you would like to carry a few Mass-2 brochures with you on your bike, mention it to Bob Laford and he will get you some.

Thanks for the idea Kevin... and thanks for all the input from everyone!

2007 Anniversary Convention

The Officers of all the Mass Chapters have been called to a July meeting with Mass-1 to discuss the anniversary convention in 2007. Mass-1 is looking for help to plan and run the convention.

If you have any ideas on how Mass-2 can best support the convention, please let Bob know your ideas.

Membership News Briefs...

Welcome to Kevin Kaczmarczyk and Mark Vitale both of the Orange Fire Department and to Tom Lozier and Eric Jack of the Athol Fire Department. These four new members were sponsored by Bill Curtis. Sponsored by Kevin Martin are three new members from the Ashburnham FD; Jeff Swenson and Bill & Megan Nolan.

Congratulations to Cliff and Marty on the purchase of their new “park model” trailer in Wells. Soon they will be snow birds with a place for us to visit outside of Ft. Lauderdale and another for us to visit in Wells, Maine!

Also congratulations to Bill Curtis, Lori Hembrow, and Corey Feeley (Bob's son) for completing the MSF courses this Spring.



Come join us for the New England Ride for Kids on Sunday, August 21.



We'll meet at the Petersham Common at 7:30 am and head to Oxford for the beginning of the RFK. If you cannot come with us, please consider making a donation that the riders will bring on behalf of the Red Knights.

What have you learned that is new about your bike and your riding skills that is new recently?

Our friend Fred Rau, who has put on over 1.1 million motorcycle miles was in a minor traffic crash on a bike recently. It was his first street crash in his riding career.

In his May column in Motorcycle Consumer News, Fred admits to the incident being his fault. Coming down an off ramp he saw the bike ahead of him start to pull away from the red light. He turned to look at traffic and when he looked back ahead he realized the other rider had decided not to pull into traffic. He could not stop in time and caused damage to both bikes and injured the other rider.

In the column Fred states that *“[I have] signed up for two new riding schools, and have already attended one of them. I can't say for sure, but I have to admit that before this happened, I might have passed on spending money for riding schools, arguing that someone with my experience and track record really didn't need such a thing. So if this incident had any good come out of it, it was to teach me that I am still human, and as prone to error and bad judgment as anyone else.”*

If rider education can benefit Fred, think what it can do for us as well. If you have not taken an MSF rider course, either *Beginner* or *Experienced*, please consider taking the training. It will make you a better rider helping to improve not only your skills but also your rider judgment.

Oh, and to show that Fred and his riding buddies would fit right in with us — a few weeks after the crash was Fred's birthday. One of his friends hand-crafted a wind chime out of all the broken parts taken from the two bikes. Fred says that he hears them clinking and clanking when he puts on his riding boots in the morning and they remind him to be careful!

At Americade one of our members mentioned that they thought it would be nice if the chapter had a **Chapter Chaplain**. I said that we would bring that idea to the membership. So... what do you think? If you have an opinion that you would like heard, please talk to a chapter officer.

If we have a chaplain, what would their role or “job description” be for the chapter? Is there someone in the chapter that could fulfill that role or is there a local clergy that *rides* and may be interested? The International allows us to appoint a clergy as a member for such an opportunity.

We visited Boston back in March... and had great weather and a fun time!

We had fifteen people join up with us for the train ride and day in Boston. The weather was just ideal for walking around the city. Our first stop was at Quincy Market for window shopping and snacks. We wandered over to the waterfront by the Aquarium and bought tickets for the historic trolley tours around the city.

The trolley is a unique experience as we dodged traffic and pedestrians around the city and heard a high-speed history lesson about Boston's revolutionary times.

One of the stops the trolley made was in the North End where we disembarked and walked through the neighborhood heading for Mother Anna's. John was waiting for us with our table ready. As always it was a great meal. A stop at Mike's Pastry shop for some dessert and we strolled back to the trolley stop to complete our tour.

By the time we were dropped off at the Aquarium our time was clicking away and we headed back to the North Station. On the way we headed through Hay Market Square where the hawkers were pushing everything from fish to figs. It was nearing the end of their day too, so the crowds (and some of the Red Knights) got pretty good deals on fruits, cheese, and other culinary commodities.

The conductor on the way home was the same one that rode with the guys on their February trip. When he saw us he remarked, "you're on my train, aren't you?" Then he put us in the car furthest to the head of the train. As always we were all tired after having another fun day together.

Come join us next year!



Heading through the crowd at Hay Market Square

Pulling Trailers

(I saw this in another club's newsletter. We talk about what to check on our bikes frequently but we don't give a lot of thought to the trailers that we are pulling!)

Check the trailer coupler ball or pin hook-up, make sure it is tight on the mount. Look for signs of wear in any one spot. This could be an early sign you need to lubricate. When you lubricate it, use the recommended grease. You need to use proper trailer ball lube. If you have a swivel hitch, be sure it is free to move 360 degrees. Check it for play in the swivel bearing. Check the shoe under the trailer connector for wear. Hook your trailer up and check for play, by lifting your trailer tongue up and down. There is usually a nut under the lock down lever to adjust the shoe. Feel the shoe with your finger very carefully. If it has a sharp edge it may need replacement due to wear.

Chains need to be proper length to be able to cross and form an X when they are attached. The hooks on the chains should be easy to remove, but not able to fall off while towing.

Your light plug and lights need to be checked often because the pins and sockets will corrode. There are various products on the market to help stop corrosion.

Pack the wheel bearings with high-speed water resistant grease. Think of this, if a 16-inch motorcycle tire is moving 4 feet in one revolution then an 8-inch must make two revolutions to go 4 feet. The incorrect lubrication will cause premature bearing failure.

Check the trailer tire air pressure and tread before each trip.

And last but certainly not least, when hooked to the bike, remember to give the tongue a "tug" before you start and when you stop for a break. That little tug might help prevent a disaster if something has loosened up or not hooked up right.

Killington Classic — September

The place to be the weekend after Labor Day is the Killington Classic in Vermont. September 7-11 is a great new rally that is getting bigger and better each and every year.

Come join many of your Red Knight friends from around the northeast and beyond.

The Inn at Six Mountains, Killington, Vermont has a block of roomed set aside for the RKMC.

To RSVP, \$69.00 PP Single or Double, Call 1-800-228-4676 tell them you are with the Red Knights!

If you are not riding with us for our chapter "Pig Roast" there is another ride in the area that day:

Charity Motorcycle Ride Benefiting Child & Family Service /North Quabbin and the Athol Lions Club

Saturday, July 9th – 8-10 am Registration

Escorted ride through all nine scenic towns of North Quabbin concluding at the Child & Family Service Office in Orange with FOOD, FUN, PRIZES, LIVE MUSIC!

\$20 for riders before June 15th

\$25 for riders after June 15th

\$10 for passengers (sidecar passengers are free!)

For information or to volunteer, please call Robert Paas of the Athol Lions Club at (978) 575-0069 robertpaas@aol.com or Eve Bogdanove of Child & Family Service at (978) 544-2148 ebogdanove@cfs.org

Registration at "Lord Pond Plaza", Route 2A in Athol across from the Athol Post Office.



Ice Cream! It's that time of year again. Come join us for our monthly ice cream rides. This year we are meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month (through September) and will ride for ice cream.

Meet us at the Westminster FD for 6:30 pm on June 28 (we'll have our raffle drawing), July 26, August 23, and September 27.

Our first "official" ride of the season was to Athol to participate in the River Rat Race festivities. The Red Knights led the division of the parade with all the emergency vehicles. We had nine bikes (a dozen members) as we squeezed among the crowds along Athol's Main Street. Joining us for the parade was one of our newest members, Tom Lozier, and also George and Sandy from Mass-3.

After the parade we stopped for a late breakfast at Johnson's Sugar House in Orange, then out for a ride under picture perfect blue skies!

It was a great feeling to be back on two wheels with each other.

Have you bought or sold the 50/50 tickets you received with the International Newsletter?

Please support the RKMC International. The 50/50 tickets help cover the costs of "doing business" as an organization and help keep the International dues down.

After Sept. 11th, one company invited the remaining members of other companies who had been decimated by the attack on the Twin Towers to share their available office space.

At a morning meeting, the head of security told stories of why these people were alive; and all these stories were just – LITTLE things.

The head of the company survived that day because his son started kindergarten. Another fellow was alive because it was his turn to bring donuts.

One woman was late because her alarm clock didn't go off in time. One was late because of being stuck on the NJ Turnpike because of an auto accident.

One of them missed his bus.

One spilled food on her clothes and had to take time to change. One's car wouldn't start. One went back to answer the telephone.

One had a child that dawdled and didn't get ready as soon as he should have. One couldn't get a taxi.

The one that struck me was the man who put on a new pair of shoes that morning, took the various means to get to work but before he got there, he developed a blister on his foot. He stopped at a drugstore to buy a Band-Aid. That is why he is alive today.

Now when I am stuck in traffic, miss an elevator, turn back to answer a ringing telephone – all the little things that annoy me – I think to myself, this is exactly where God wants me to be at this very moment.

Next time your morning seems to be going wrong, the children are slow getting dressed, you can't seem to find the car keys, you hit every traffic light, don't get mad or frustrated; God is at work watching over you.

April Pot-luck and Chapter Meeting

It was a beautiful spring day when we had our April meeting and pot luck in Petersham this year.

We made our way through an agenda of club business and two tables full of food during the afternoon.

The members voted to continue the MSF scholarship that we started last year – so pass the word to young (and not so young) riders that may want to take either the Beginner's Course or the Experienced Course to improve their skills. We'll post more info on the web page.

Bob Shakarian has agreed to be our Assistant Road Captain for the year to give the chapter another set of eyes while we are on the road. Also thanks to Bob for the page of hand signals that is included in this newsletter.

We'll have another brief business meeting at our Pig Roast in July.

Safety and Riding Skill thoughts...

Here are some useful tips to help ensure your safety from the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

Be visible:

- Remember that motorists often have trouble seeing motorcycles and reacting in time.
- Make sure your headlight works and is on day and night.
- Use reflective strips or decals on your clothing and on your motorcycle.
- Be aware of the blind spots cars and trucks have.
- Flash your brake light when you are slowing down and before stopping.
- If a motorist doesn't see you, don't be afraid to use your horn.

Dress for safety:

- Wear a quality helmet and eye protection.
- Wear bright clothing and a light-colored helmet.
- Wear leather or other thick, protective clothing.
- Choose long sleeves and pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves.
- Remember – the only thing between you and the road is your protective gear.

Apply effective mental strategies:

- Constantly search the road for changing conditions.
- Give yourself space and time to respond to other motorists' actions.
- Give other motorists time and space to respond to you.
- Use lane positioning to be seen; ride in the part of a lane where you are most visible.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Signal your next move in advance.
- Avoid weaving between lanes.
- Don't ride when you are tired or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Know and follow the rules of the road.
- Stick to the speed limit.

Know your bike and how to use it:

- Get formal training and take refresher courses.
- Practice. Develop your riding techniques before going into heavy traffic. Know how to handle your bike in conditions such as wet or sandy roads, high winds, and uneven surfaces.

Remember: Give yourself space. People driving cars often just don't see motorcycles. Even when drivers do see you, chances are they've never been on a motorcycle and can't properly judge your speed.

www.msf-usa.org

A bad habit is good to break!
(from the June issue of Road Bike Magazine)

Suggestions on what not to do on the road... Habits to Break:

1. Going to fast into a corner, forcing yourself to break deep into a turn.
2. Putting your feet out before coming to a complete stop.
3. Not squaring the handlebars to the chassis when you come to a stop.
4. Having low eyes (you need to look further ahead)
5. Not using the front brake enough.
6. Using the "two-finger" method of front braking (instead of squeezing with all your fingers).
7. Using poor lane position when you're on a group ride.

If you find that you notice these (or other) bad habits take some time to consciously practice the skills you learned in your rider course... or consider taking a rider safety course to polish up your riding skills.

Group Formation. Our chapter rides in a Staggered Formation. Behind the lead bike we form two columns using the left and right sides of the traffic lane. The ride leader manages the ride. The Road Captain may be the leader, the tail, or even somewhere in between.

All riders should try to maintain their position in the group for the entire ride. This will allow you and the riders around you to become comfortable with each other's riding style.

Within the group, a safe distance is defined as a MINIMUM OF TWO SECONDS between you and the motorcycle directly in front of you. You should also maintain a ONE SECOND interval with the rider in the column to your left or right. This spacing will allow those around you to safely maneuver to the left or right without hitting anyone else. As your speeds increase, so should the distance increase between each of the riders.

Speed, intervals, and distance. The lead bike will maintain a uniform speed consistent with the ability of the least experienced rider, the surrounding conditions, and safe riding practices. No one should feel forced to ride outside of his/her limits or comfort range.

Even though it is a group ride, each rider must "ride your own ride" to your own comfort level.

Cruising Lake George at Americade!

After what seemed like months and months of cold damp weather, we were blessed to have some fantastic weather when June arrived and we made our way to Americade. The three words that describe the week's weather best were HOT, HOTTER, HOTTEST! Five of us took off on Saturday morning and the majority of the chapter's members came up on Sunday. This year we were able to secure two extra cabins and just by moving the people around who normally bunked on the couches we were already "over-booked" for beds!

Bill Curtis greeted us with a nice surprise and had his boat moored at the docks by our cabins. He was a great skipper and offered us pleasure cruises around the lake during the week. So we had the chance to enjoy the local sites on two wheels and via the RKMC fleet.

As always, Americade puts out the welcome mat with hundreds of vendors, demo rides, events and seminars to attend, and lots of bikes to look at during the week.

This year our members took advantage of the hot weather and put on many miles throughout the Adirondack miles with rides to the Adirondack Museum, to Lake Placid, around the "five lake loop," Stoney Creek (of course) for lunch, Howe's Caverns, and Vermont Route 100 to name a few that I can think of! We did get evening T-storms almost every day to accompany the hot weather. On Monday the Lafords and Kilharts were about 60 miles from home when they ran into a front with high winds, a bit of hail, and lots of rain. During that storm, lightning hit a tree very near the cabins and the rains flooded out some of the vendors in tent city.

Back at the cabins we enjoyed each others' company with group meals like Spaghetti and Meatballs, Hot Dogs and Hamburgers on the grill, breakfasts each day, and even a steak BBQ to round out the week. Boy do we eat well! We had plenty of wood to help enjoy the fire pit by the water this year — because Steve and Cliff brought a truck load of cord wood from home.

With the big group at the cabins (and it grew each evening with visitors like King Bill from Martha's Vineyard and Clayton Thomas from Indiana) we had fun entertaining ourselves too. Bocce is the staple game, but *twister* showed up, some fishing (and sleeping) at the water front, and lots of games of dice and cards too. Our friend Skip turned 60 while we were there so the Mass-2 girls helped him celebrate with a birthday poem... and more.

Bob and Ed did their seminar at Roaring Brook for about 60 people on Wednesday and the RKMC hosted about 300 people and gave out 96 door prizes at the Dinner on Wednesday. The open house at the LGFD brought in about 250 Red Knights too.

We rounded out another great week with the Saturday parade and a hot ride home... the week always zooms by too fast. Thanks for a great week everyone & see you next year.



Annual Red Knights New England Regional Cape Cod Weekend

Mother Nature gave us a cool, wet early spring. I think that this is the first "Cape Weekend" that we were almost all in four-wheels instead of two. The week before it was time to leave the weather forecast kept getting worse and worse.

When it was time to leave for the Cape it was overcast and cool and the next several days looked worse! Mass-2 had 3/4 of all the Red Knights in attendance, but it was the wind and the water that was the talk of the town. Heavy rains and hurricane force winds greeted us for both Saturday and Sunday. And think of the golfers that share that weekend with us at the Heritage House each year — they were grounded too!

Even though there was no cooperation from the weather we still had members show up from Mass 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and Connecticut 2. AND we still had a great time. We took over the hall as our congregating point and played bocce (in the hall) and dice (in the hall) and cribbage (in the hall).

We also seemed to always have members in the pool and Jacuzzi too. The Cape Cod Mall was also a popular spot as were various "Christmas Tree Shops" because the ladies realized very quickly that being in cars instead of on bikes meant they could shop more!

Of course there was plenty of time to eat as well. From all sorts of munchies (in the hall) to great breakfasts at Percy's, Wings at *Hooters*, and dinner at the brewery we always find the time and place to eat.

Mass-8 was planning a benefit ride for later in May to help the Orleans Firefighters that were hurt when a drunk driver hit their ambulance head-on. Our members present voted to make a donation from our chapter (since we probably would not get back for the ride) and then we passed the hat to help the donation grow. On Sunday afternoon Chris Olson drove us down to Orleans in his Deputy Chief's car so we could present our check and the get-well card signed by everyone. The wrecked ambulance was parked (and covered) in the rear of the station. After looking at it I think we all said a prayer thanking God that the two jakes are still with us. (Their ride netted over \$10,000 for the firefighters!)

We shared dinner with Chris and his wife Carole and Bob Felt, president of Mass-8 at the Land Ho restaurant in Orleans. Some of our members headed back home on Sunday and a few of us held on hoping for a break of sunshine on Monday morning. But it wouldn't happen. The first sun and blue sky we saw was on Route 2 in Gardner! Oh well, maybe next time.

Red Knights Motorcycle Club
Massachusetts Chapter 2
P.O. Box 316
Westminster, MA 01473

Upcoming Chapter Rides and Events:

Saturday, July 9.

Red Knights Pig Roast

Join us for a ride that ends at the house Steve and Deb own in Nashua where we will have a Pig Roast waiting for us. Meet at Westminster FD at 9:00 a.m. We need numbers, call Bob to RSVP

Saturday, July 23.

Baseball — NH Fisher Cats versus the Portland Sea Dogs

Meet at WFD at 1:00 p.m. We'll head to the new semi-pro stadium in Manchester to see the (5 pm) game.

Sunday, July 24.

RK Mass-4 Poker Run

Meet at WFD at 9:00 a.m. and we'll head off to Charlton for Mass-4's charity ride.

Saturday, July 30.

DAKIN Animal Shelter's *Ride for the Animals* www.dakinshelter.org

Saturday, August 6.

Summertime Breakfast Ride

Some of the chapter will be heading off to a stop at Niagara Falls and then to the convention. For those of us still at home, meet at the Westminster FD at 8:00 a.m. and we'll go out for breakfast.

August 11-14.

Red Knights' Convention in Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Many events planned by this year's hosts, Ontario-1. Included is a *pre-convention trip* to Niagara Falls.

August 19 & 20.

Ashburnham Fire Department's 150th Anniversary Celebration

Friday evening is AFD's Grand Ball — Saturday is their anniversary parade led by the Red Knights!

The next **Ice Cream Ride** is Tuesday, June 28