



From the  
President's Desk

# Red Knights

## Mass Chapter 2 — March 2011

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

*Loyal to Our Duty*

Many of you know that I play in a community band. Being in that kind of an organization I know that it takes a lot of work to blend together to make the best harmony and music together. I also know that as a bunch of amateur musicians there are always ways to improve even though we do many things well together.

What does this have to do with the Red Knights? This winter I read a Motorcycle Safety Article that linked musical harmony with group riding and as I read it I was nodding my head in agreement. I totally understood what the author was saying and below are some excerpts and paraphrasing from his article. Looking ahead to a new riding season we know that we as a group have been very fortunate for our friendships and our fun times, but we are not stagnant and there are always ways to improve who we are as Red Knights Mass Chapter 2. The author in that article said that musical harmony and group riding is similar in that if we, "Get it right and it's magical. Get it wrong and everything comes crashing down."

One way to improve in our street smarts is how we "keep together" as a group on the road. This season one goal I have is to better accommodate all our riders, not just those with CB's. We should never have anyone anxious about "losing the group," because rider safety should always be above someone trying to keep together. One simple way to accomplish this is the **buddy system**. That means always having the person behind you in sight. If the group spreads out or gets broken up because of intersections, traffic, or red lights, we keep moving onward at a reduced pace. If we take a turn from the straight-line route then we each make sure the person behind us sees the turn. If I cannot see the rider behind me, then I wait at the turn until that rider approaches. This way we are *leaving breadcrumbs* to follow.

Some other points the author made were:

Think twice about riding in unison. Just as a group vocalist needs to sing his own part — separate, but in harmony with the others — each group rider should ride his or her own ride as well. Be ready to change your tune. Riding in harmony on the road requires that each rider be able to adapt, or to "ride by ear," if you will, based on the situation at hand. Learn to blend. Group harmony only works when singers don't try to out-sing their partners. On the road, sudden speed changes or radical movements within a group create tension and make other riders wary and nervous. Move smoothly. Signal your intentions. Be respectful of how your actions may affect other riders.

He also stressed that if you feel that another rider is being disruptive or dangerous, let someone know. I hope that each of our members will speak up if they are concerned about actions that any of us on the road take.

Aside from our "riding business" your chapter officers must also manage our administrative chapter business. One discussion we have been having is to change to an "electronic" newsletter for all those with e-mail addresses as a way to cut expenditures and to try and keep the dues stable. Please review the insert about this that is included with your newsletter. Plans are to begin our change in newsletter policy with the June newsletter.

Get the bikes polished up, your skills brushed off, and we will see you on the road soon!

Because we're human, it is our nature to journey, to discover that what we've been looking for is all around us. Very often the grassy spot we seek is right under our feet. We just need to awaken to that knowledge that's hidden from our conscious mind. Yes, we're all wearing ruby slippers and can go home anytime we like. Embrace this grand adventure!

Colette Baron-Reid

**2011** What's planned for 2011 — and will you be there? (Look at our schedule—there is something for everyone!) Post the [enclosed] schedule on your refrigerator, mark up your calendar, and put up the "gone riding" sign at work and come join us for many fun miles!



Saturday, April 2.

**To Boston for a visit to the  
North End and Mother  
Anna's (& more).**

We'll pick up the train at 9:25 a.m. in Leominster and provide "on the rail" entertainment inbound to Boston.

Enjoy the tastes of our favorite Italian restaurant... and dessert at *Mike's Pastries!* Plus we'll have a walking tour to take us around and see what kind of fun we can find!

*Call Bob L. by Monday, March 28 if you plan to go so we can give John a heads-up at Mother Anna's and look for you at the train stops.*



Enclosed is a flyer for the 2011 New England Ride for Kids.

Our friend David Odess visited with us at our February Pot Luck and we look forward to participating in this year's Ride for Kids in August.

Please consider participating with us this year — and start right off today with your flyer in gathering donations from friends and family to help the kids!

### *On the road with our friends...*

Have you ever noticed that different riding groups take on different riding personalities? I hope that the *riding personality* that our chapter has developed makes those who ride with us comfortable. And if you do not ride with us because you are uncomfortable with our style, please speak to me or one of the officers to see if we can answer your personal concerns. I would hate to think that someone is not riding with us because of *the way* we ride.

I had two discussions about this with people from outside our chapter last year that made me think about this. One was a member of another chapter whose chapter was invited to ride with another chapter near their home location. He told me how the pack was traveling in excesses of 55 and 60 mph throughout the ride even as they cruised through towns and villages. His members were together and every time they slowed down the host chapter's tail gunner would speak to them about keeping up. I could see how this could prove to be dangerous and very uncomfortable and not make for an enjoyable ride.

The other conversation I had was with a person who is considering starting up a chapter. A group of us had the privilege on Columbus Day of having two members of the Amherst FD ride with us for the day, as they are looking to start a chapter. After our ride I was contacted by one of them expressing their thanks. He said it was the most he had ever enjoyed a group ride as the pace and how we worked together was very comfortable. He noted that in the rides that they had been starting to do together at home, the lead rider was an aggressive rider and the group always was working to keep up and keep together.

I told him my theory of how riding groups develop a riding personality and they as a group can work to develop one together that makes everyone comfortable with the ride.

We, in Mass-2, always need to fine-tune that riding group personality too, so each of you feels comfortable and enjoy being on the road with us.

### **Breakfast and Ice Cream**

Don't forget that our **Breakfast Clubs** still have a few "gatherings"!



**Every third Saturday** from October through April we gather for breakfast and fellowship. Meet at the Westminster FD for 9:00 a.m. and we will discover a different breakfast haunt for the month. March 19 and April 16

In January we had 10 people that braved the cold... and half continued on after breakfast to see the Indian Motorcycles in the Springfield Museums. In February we had 15 members and five ended up at a hockey game in Rhode Island later in the day!



**Starting in May, join us for some Ice Cream**

**Each 4th Wednesday** from May through September meet up at the Westminster FD ready to leave at **6:30 pm** and we'll try a different ice cream place each month.

Wednesdays: May 25, June 22, July 27, August 24, & Sept. 28

### **Why join a motorcycle rights organization like the AMA or the MMA?**

The noblest of reasons is that they fight for motorcyclists in the State House and in the Capitol. But beyond that, both the American Motorcycle Association and the Mass Motorcycle Association offer a number of benefits and business discounts to its members.

One benefit I just found out about is that Eagle Rider Rentals ([www.eaglerider.com](http://www.eaglerider.com)) offers a 10% discount to AMA members — AND if you rent a bike on your birthday — IT'S FREE! I've wanted to try out a Road Glide.... I think I may give myself a birthday present this year with a ride on an HD (I hope there are no cameras around)!

Give yourself and your fellow motorcyclists a gift this year with your membership to the AMA or the MMA and help protect all of our rights as riders.

We had a couple cars of RK members (who have been enduring Parked Motorcycle Syndrome) head north to a Chili Fest at Monadnock HD in Swanzey. Lot's of great chili and pulled pork to sample and vote on as our favorite.

We'll have to put this on the calendar for 2012 too!

## Health Awareness Day 2011

We all know that we must take care of our bikes so that they are road ready for our rides. We also know that our skills become rusty over the winter and we need to practice those skills so they become sharp again and help provide us with a safe ride.

But sometimes we ignore our own bodies and our own health and that can affect how much or if we will enjoy our riding as well.

There was an ad in a recent magazine that promoted a Health Awareness Day at a dealership.

They were providing health screening like cholesterol and blood pressure checks and offering information on cancer screening, good diet and exercise programs, etc.

What a great idea... bring your bike in for service and get a mini-tune up for yourself!

So this spring, as you get your bike and your skills checked out, don't forget to get YOU checked out and tuned up too!

**C**ongratulations to this year's recipients of our **Motorcycle Safety Training Scholarships** through the Central Mass Safety Council.

Receiving a full scholarship for the Beginner Rider's Course are: Ashley Reed, a firefighter with the Barre FD and Ashley's mom Michelle. They are linked to our chapter as Michelle is Larry & Nancy Robinson's daughter and Ashley is their granddaughter. The ERC recipients are Maury Lizotte, Terry Atwood, and Dean Atwood.

A big thank you goes out to our committee; Bob Shakarian, Don Hurme, Maury Lizotte, and Marcia Marjomaa (and Stand-in Kevin Martin) for their work over the past few months. And thank you as well to the Central Mass Safety Council for their continued support of our scholarship program.

Check out our Chapter's On-line Blog where we discuss some of our adventures. It is linked off our picture page and the URL is:

<http://rkmass2.blogspot.com/>

## If it's June... this must be Americade!

When Americade Founder Bill Dutcher arrived amidst the pouring rain at the beginning of the 2010 Americade parade he had a big smile and said, "I knew that if anyone was going to show up in the rain for the parade it would be the Red Knights to lead us up Canada Street!"

And he was right! For many years the RKMC has been in the lead of the parade with our red crests displayed proudly along with our flags, fire helmets, and smiles.

But it was not just the closing ceremonies where Red Knight members were prominent. Throughout the week you did not have to look far to find "Red" in the crowd. Walking up and down Canada Street, in the lines of bikes cruising through town or enjoying the many great Adirondack Park roadways, walking through the vendor tents or in the Lake George Forum, or at Roaring Brook Ranch. Red Knights were everywhere — all week long. And the reason that it's so—is because the Americade crowd is a big family and the week is chock full of fun!

***Come join us in Lake George!***

*The Red Knights Ladies will be meeting at Peg's house on **Wednesday, May 23** at 6:30 to plan for our week's supplies and related logistical needs.*

*...since the ladies will be out of the house, the guys will meet at 2 & 202 in Orange at 6:00 and fend for ourselves at some local eating establishment (with a ride of course!)*

There are varying departure times and staying times throughout the week. The two largest contingents are heading up on Saturday and Sunday (June 4 & 5).

**If you are planning on attending, please let Peg know so she can fine-tune the accommodations. Space is always limited and we don't want to have challenges with last minute lodging surprises!**

The Red Knights are hosting the Wednesday evening three-course Dinner, the Red Knights open house Thursday evening — and as always we will be participating in the Parade on Saturday morning—so remember to bring your fire department helmet to wear in the parade!

Please think about door prizes to help the Red Knights International at the Wednesday evening dinner at the Fort William Henry Conference Center at Americade. We had over 140 door prizes to award dinner attendees again last year... and that has been far more than ANY of the corporate sponsors involved with Americade!

## How are your early spring riding skills?

Many motorcycle riders think it is unnecessary to develop their skills beyond what they consider to be adequate. It often takes a close call to realize that their skills may not be sufficient to handle complex braking or cornering situations. Such a life-threatening moment may cause them to reconsider riding at all or it will serve to jumpstart the pursuit of skill development. On the other hand, some motorcyclists are always motivated to develop their skills, simply because they know that keeping skills sharp not only prepares them for hazards, but also makes motorcycling more fun.

Ken Condon  
Riding in the Zone

Ken Condon promotes motorcycle safety and rider education with every article that he pens for the motorcycle industry. As we each begin a new riding season we need to take his words to heart and spend some time dusting off both our mental and physical riding skills that have been dormant the last few months.

I saved an article that appeared in Motorcycle Consumer News last year because I thought the author's "beginning of the season" riding thoughts were of value to all of us. So below are some excerpts and paraphrasing of Mark Barnes' article "Getting Online."

I've written before about the phenomena involved in getting back into the saddle after extended time away, and the need for caution as we clear out the mental cobwebs that accumulated during the off-season. This piece isn't going to be a how-to; it's more a recounting of some details I noticed while going through the process this time around. I wonder if my experience sounds similar to yours.

Being out of practice means those pre-riding preparations that were fine-tuned at the end of the season are more difficult and inefficient with the first ride out. Items that were always at hand at the end of the last season were hard to locate quickly. The mental checklist that was completed automatically at the end of last season were sketchy now in the early season. Inevitably, some things were forgotten on the first outing. Among them

was my prophylactic dose of NSAID's — a particularly regrettable lapse, given that the first ride of the season often leaves me very sore.

Obviously, it wasn't just my physical conditioning that wasn't where I left it at end of the last season. I also found myself recalling many of the technical considerations that are second-nature when I'm riding regularly.

It took more than half the day for me to go from what I'll call "defensive" riding to "offensive" riding. The former term meaning reacting to conditions; always playing catch-up because some element of my riding technique was not yet back online, or some combination of control actions was not operating in a coordinated fashion.

That first phase was not fun. I felt wooden and out of sorts, and that zapped

my confidence and made poor riding choices much more likely. By the end of the day, however, I was beginning to better manage my ride, confident that I could handle what it would throw at me, but also still wary enough to avoid pushing the envelope.

As my mental faculties got up to speed and my actions became better coordinated, the next hurdle presented itself: fatigue. Unfortunately, by the time I started to feel more competent, I started to run out of energy.

Not long after that, I noticed that my concentration was fading, too. I caught myself not remembering familiar turns, misjudging braking distances and drifting off on mental tangents: *My steering feels vague here ... I wonder if that's an air-pressure issue ... There was an air pump on the curb in my neighborhood when I drove out. ... I should ask my neighbor if it's theirs ... They make such a good barbecue ... Whoa! That was a big curve I almost missed!*

The body that had felt stiff and wooden at the start, was now flaccid. The mind that had been a cacophony of confused signals was now dull and vacant. Somewhere in-between those extremes, things had come together for a little while, recalling the riding pleasure I'd felt in the thick of the prior season.

As I get more saddle time, my skills will come together more quickly, more consistently, and more reflexively, eventually creating a foundation from which I'll be able to push a little further this season than last, before next hiatus starts my reboot cycle over again.

This quote appears in the Dr. Seuss park in Springfield — and the author has us riders in mind!

Oh,  
the  
Places  
You'll  
Go!

Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to Great Places! You're off and away! You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And *YOU* are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care. About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there." With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet, you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street. And you may not find *any* you'll want to go down. In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there in the wide open air. Out there things can happen and frequently do to people as brainy and footsy as you. And when things start to happen, don't worry. Don't stew. Just go right along. *You'll* start happening too. OH! THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!



# RED KNIGHTS SKILLS DAY 2011

When veteran riders who have taken experienced-level courses are asked whether the course was worthwhile, they say “Yes,” not necessarily because they learned anything new, but because it gave them the opportunity to practice skills that had become deficient with disuse.

Those who recognize that more training is a good thing may elect to learn and practice on their own, which is fine as long as these riders are motivated and disciplined enough to pursue the self-help approach and their interpretations and execution of techniques are accurate.

Whatever path you take, keep in mind that the skills you learn are perishable.

Continual practice is required to keep skills sharp enough to be available when you need them.

Ken Condon, Ride Ed Professional  
Author, *Riding in the Zone*

## What's packed away on your bike for the season's events?

One of the exercises I did on occasion when I was a fire department training officer was to have everyone empty the pockets of their gear and then ask “why” you carried those specific items. Sometime we would each learn something new that was a value to have on us as emergency responders — and sometimes we would laugh at what we might find in our personal storage.

We could do a similar exercise with what we carry on our bikes and why? Tools, maps, camera, RKMC paraphernalia, snacks... I bet you can think of more, and some things would give us all a laugh.

Rider magazine listed a number of items that we all may want to consider carrying on our bikes to help us out on our two-wheeled journey beyond the obvious essentials:

### Things for your bike

- A working, fully charged cell phone and wall charging unit for it.
- High-visibility article of clothing (whether you plan on wearing when you ride or not)
- Small flashlight
- Owners manual or a workshop manual
- Tool kit and the knowledge to perform basic functions like accessing your battery and fuse block.

### Thoughts for you

- Safety versus schedule attitude. If something on the bike is acting up, don't press your luck—STOP!
- File a *flight plan*. Make sure someone knows your route and remember to check in.
- Join the AMA, GWRRA, MMA, HOG, Star, or another organization that offers roadside assistance in their benefits.

## May 21, 2011

Come join us for our annual Spring Skills Day for 2011. Each year we put together an opportunity for us each to sharpen our riding skills that have been dormant for the winter.

This is not a competition—nor in place to make fun of anyone. It is a time under a controlled atmosphere to see where we as individuals can improve our skills and become better and safer riders.

We'll review some safe riding procedures to sharpen our riding thoughts and spurn some discussion and then we'll be off to run over more tennis balls.

If you have not joined us in years' past, come out for a spin around the parking lot. The only one you compete with is yourself. The goal is to make us think about being better riders and to give us a few exercises to begin working on that goal.

It looks like we will have some friends from Mass-13 and Vermont-2 join us in the yard as well. It will be a fun day for sure!

We'll meet at Westminster FD on Saturday, May 21 at 9:00 a.m. and then head over to the *drill yard* where Terry, Dean, and Shakey will be working on the drill yard and be waiting for us.

And I imagine food will be involved at some point!

### Membership news...

Congratulations to Don Hurme on his appointment as Interim Chief of the Harvard FD. He tells me that he'll actually have more time to ride during this appointment because he'll have more free weekends!



### Some tips for the Road...

**PARKING ON A HILL.** Leave the bike parked at an angle to the curb so it can be easily pulled into traffic. Leave the bike parked with the tire against the curb and in gear.

Parking the bike where the lean on the side stand is going **DOWN** the hill could make it unstable and difficult to upright from its side stand.

Try various positions on a hill depending on whether the hill is going up or down to satisfy yourself that the bike remains stable, is easy to lift off its side stand, and is easy to ride away into traffic.

**OTHER PARKING TIPS:** When parking in a parking lot, place the bike in the middle of the lane at the end of the space so motorists will be able to see you as soon as they try to park there.

**TECH TIP:** Did you know that synthetic oils run cooler, reduce crankcase temperature, and provide maximum wear protection for all brands of motorcycles.

#### **GENERAL TIPS:**

- Slow down before entering blind turns and be watchful at intersections and when passing driveways and alleys.
- Stay to the left side of your lane when passing parked cars to your right.
- Look ahead, plan ahead! Look as far down the road as you can. Pay close attention to colors and shapes on the road surface (scanning for trash, bumps, holes, cracks, new asphalt, old concrete, spills, puddles, etc.) Watch how other vehicles are reacting to the road (scanning for brake lights, swerves.)
- At low speeds, you can stabilize your bike by "loading" your rear brake slightly while idling in low gear. With practice, you can roll up to a light so smooth and straight you can balance for four or five seconds before you need to drop a foot.
- When stopping in traffic, position your bike either to the left or right side of the lane and stop at least 8-10 feet from the car in front. This gives a clear shot out if the guy coming up behind doesn't stop.



We can still move about through horse power even if there is still snow on the ground!

Thanks to Kevin Martin for making the arrangements for our 2011 Sleigh Ride!

We figured out that it has been nearly 20 years since we went on a hayride out of the Silver Ranch in Jaffrey. So our four-legged guides this year are probably grandsons to the two gents that took us around two decades ago!



### **2011 RKMC Convention**

Hosted by the RKMC Maryland - 3 — Ocean City, MD  
September 8, 9, 10 & 11, 2011

The Quality Inn is primary hotel for the event. Be sure to mention that you are with the Red Knights. You must register with the hotel for your accommodations it is not part of the Convention Registration mentioned above.

Quality Inn Boardwalk  
1601 Atlantic Avenue  
Ocean City, Maryland 21842  
410.289.4401

Paid Registrations postmarked by April 30, 2011 will be entered in a drawing for (3) FREE Hotel Nights during the Convention.

Registration Includes: Registration, Convention Program, Convention Pins, Goody Bag, Hospitality Room, Thursday Evening BBQ, Saturday Evening Banquet Dinner with Entertainment, Sunday Morning Send-off Breakfast and more!

With the snow and cold we had in January... I could even see myself on a HD if it makes the winter go away faster! We had ten members and friends take the train to the Boston Bike Show and met a couple more that had made their way to the World Trade Center for a fun day out.





**Join your Red Knight  
friends and family for a  
Spring Weekend  
Away  
May 6-8, 2011**



This year's Spring Weekend will be touring the Berkshires (and beyond) with the Yankee Inn in Lenox as our host hotel.

The Berkshires offer a great riding experience. But the highlight of the weekend will be our rendezvous with RK-NY Chapter 29 for their annual

***Ride to the Home***

This charity ride is to raise funds for the New York State Firemen's Home.



The ride ends with a Chicken BBQ on the Home's Grounds (which is also home to the NY Firemen's Museum). With games, prizes, and fun with the Red Knights from New York.



Make your reservations today at the Yankee Inn by calling 800-835-2364 and tell them that you are with the Red Knights.

Special group rate of \$69 per night (plus tax)  
Limited rooms at the group rate so call soon  
Rate to be held until April 6.

Amenities include indoor pool & spa, exercise room, cocktail lounge, and guest Internet station



***RUN TO THE HOME  
2011***

**OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC**

DATE: MAY 07, 2011 TIME: 9:00AM

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**RED KNIGHTS MC NY29**



Join us at the Maple Leaf  
Motel — In the  
White Mountains of  
New Hampshire  
For a weekend get-away  
this summer



Our neighbor to the north offers many miles of wonderful roads within her majestic White Mountains. I imagine that Maury's GPS (Zelda) can find twists and turns up and down the mountain range on roads that we've never been on before!

Friday-Sunday, July 29-31

## RED KNIGHT WHITE MOUNTAIN WEEKEND

Save the date for our weekend away

There are eight (8) rooms reserved for the Red Knights for our summer's ride. Our special *pre-season* rate is \$59.99 + tax (\$64.25) Per night and includes Coffee in the am. The rooms will be held first come first serve (at that price) until Friday, June 17. Most rooms have Queen Beds however a couple had 2 full size beds etc.



(We know it's early to think about a July reservation, but that is peak season time for the area and reserving your room now may be a good idea. The motel will be closed for 2-3 weeks from 3/1-3/18 but messages can be left on the answering machine if you wish to call).

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