



Red Knights Motorcycle Club Massachusetts — Home of the Founders

Spring 2012
<http://massredknights.org/>

The Fall 2012 meeting will be hosted by RK Mass-13 in Ayer on Saturday, October 13.
The meeting will be at the Ayer Fire Headquarters with coffee at 9:30 and the meeting at 10:00.

From the desk of the State Rep
Greetings all Massachusetts Red Knights.

Welcome to the second edition of our Massachusetts State Red Knights Newsletter. Hopefully this serves as another means of maintaining open communication between all Massachusetts State Red Knights.

The number of emails I send out to you is legendary, but it was my promise to you, when I was voted to the position as your state representative, that I would keep you informed.

To that end I hereby post my intention to run for re-election.

Voting for your Massachusetts State Representative takes place at the 2012 Fall State meeting in Ayer Saturday October 13th. I would appreciate your support.

Anyone else who would care to run for the office of Massachusetts State Representative should have their letter of intention and biography in my hands (via email) no later than September 1, 2012. This will allow time for distribution to all the state chapters and MAL's and time for all chapters to meet and discuss their voting preference.

I am dedicated to this position as State Representative, just as each of you has a dedication to the Red Knights. Working closely with your Assistant State Representative, Bob Laford, I promise to continue keeping you informed. Together we can all continue to move forward to make the Massachusetts State Red Knights the best state organization in the International Red Knights community.

This newsletter will contain other things of interest outside of the day-to-day business and changes within the Red Knights Motorcycle Club as a whole.

If you have something you would like to see added or included within future newsletters feel free to send it to us for publication.

It is our desire to maintain these newsletters and publish on a biannual schedule Spring and Fall. I hope you enjoy the newest offering from your state representatives.

By the time you receive this I will already be on the road. MA-3 Al Holmes and I are heading out on another cross country trip. I will be posting a daily Blog and expect to include a brief dialog of our days events as well as photos and video. The URL, should you care to check in from time to time, is:

<http://georges2ndtrip.blogspot.com/>

Have a safe and fun Summer.

Regards to all,
George Colby

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, June 16**, for the WTC dedication at the Red Knights Memorial in Boylston @ 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, June 17, is also a Firemen's Muster in the area and Mass-1 is making arrangements that offer our members the opportunity to make it a weekend event

See back page for more details!

We had eight chapters and 40 members in attendance at our Mass Spring State meeting in March. Much of the discussions and information is shared throughout this newsletter.

As the International President said, "He sees us as one of the best organized state groups in the Red Knights." That is because of your participation in our club.

A big thank you also to the members of RK Mass-1. Both for their hosting of the State Meeting in March and more importantly to the Founders for their forethought and dedication to the Red Knights. Who would have thought that we would see our organization grow from six men in Boylston to the great group of firefighters from around the world that the RKMC is today.

Chapter email address and 2012 Voting – The International Board has set up new RKMC email addresses for each chapter under "redknightsmc.com" If your chapter has not accessed this account and set up your individual password then this needs to be done.

The electronic voting will be ONE chapter ONE vote, and the information and ballot will be distributed via this email address. If there are no contests for the positions that Massachusetts will be voting for, there will be NO ballots. For 2012, the positions that we are voting for are International Secretary, International Vice-president, and International Quartermaster.

Nominations for any position will be open until May 20.

Come join us for the New England Ride for Kids on Sunday, August 19.

Consider joining us at Tantasqua High School for this year's Ride for Kids to help raise funds for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation. If you cannot come with us, please consider making a donation that other riders can bring on your behalf and that of the Red Knights.



Ride for Kids

RKMC Connecticut Chapter 3 sponsors the Connecticut Four Corner Ride

This self-guided tour has only four checkpoints (the 4 geographical corners of Connecticut), and you can do this whenever you want, in any order. This is not a race. Visit the four stops at your own pace. Ride fee is \$20.00. Completion gets you a custom-made Tour pin. Proceeds benefit the Western Connecticut Chapter of the American Red Cross. For more information call Greg at 203-261-7995 days, or email: loehr@snet.net.

Spring tune up. We know that each spring when we roll out the bikes for the first time they deserve some TLC before we head out on the road. We are no different either. Our skills have rusted over a bit even if the bikes have not been idle too long. So we need to spend some time polishing up our skills as well as polishing up the bike and checking it over. We need to think about our mental skills as well as our physical skills too. Below is an excerpt from an article written by Ken Condon in the April issue of Motorcycle Consumer News that talks about these mental skills:

Riding skills encompass more than the ability to skillfully turn, brake, and shift a motorcycle. Riding skills also include mental skills for surviving traffic situations, reading surface hazards, and judging cornering complexities. These skills become quite rusty from being unused over the winter.

You can begin to improve these mental skills by reading motorcycling skill books. Look for topics that discuss ways to manage your riding environment and then apply what you learned on every ride you take. Learn the specific strategies that help you to identify and predict hazards so your can act to prevent potentially dangerous situations from becoming catastrophes.

Start to develop strategies by first becoming highly conscious of typical hazards found in your riding environment. For instance, knowing that drivers often turn left across traffic at intersections should prompt you to be extra alert, cover your brakes, and have a planned escape route, just in case. You should also understand where road surface hazards typically appear and how to position your motorcycle's wheels to avoid traction loss.

It's important to remember that road debris, road salt and pot-holes can taint springtime ideas. It's also important to remember that drivers are not used to seeing motorcyclists, which means that they are more likely not to register your presence in traffic, even when looking directly at you.

You can get a head start on polishing your mental skills by noticing traffic behavior from behind the wheel of your car. Ask yourself what action you might take to ensure that other drivers will see you if you were on your motorcycle. Look for situations where an escape plan might be necessary, and spot where you might place your motorcycle to avoid a collision. This mental exercise is very effective at conditioning our brain for your first ride of the season and if you continue using car driving as mental motorcycle training your mind will remain sharp throughout the year.



The Boston Motorcycle Show
January 28 at the World Trade Center in Boston. Red Knights at the Atlantic Beer Garden enjoying lunch after the show!

John Rowen, President of Mass-9 passed on these reminders, below, to get us thinking about our bikes.

May is the month that MA State motorcycle safety inspection is required for all bikes. If you put a lot of miles on your ride last year, some components may be in need of adjustment or replacement. Rather than wait until May, get your inspection out of the way as soon as the bike is back in service. Find a shop that is thorough and checks all the items listed in the inspection protocol. A shop that skips any of the items listed below and just slaps on the plate sticker after a quick check of lights and turn signals is not doing you any favors and is placing you, your passenger and other motorists at risk. We all know these places exist and they should be avoided.

Besides tires and lights, the horn, wheel bearings, steering bearings and swing-arm bushings, handle bar and foot peg mounts, controls, brake pads & rotors, and fork seals should be within acceptable tolerances.

Every spring riders can be found on unsafe bikes waiting until the last minute to replace bald tires and worn or defective equipment. Don't take that chance on becoming another crash statistic or being cited for an expired sticker. Look out for our fellow RKMC brothers and sisters and help them with an early season informal check over of inspection criteria on your first Chapter ride.

Make your destination an Inspection Station.

Have you ever thought of routinely wearing hearing protection while on your motorcycle? Most of us have not. But last year I had an incident at work that gave me an acute hearing loss for three days and it worried me. Over the winter I read article after article about hearing loss and hearing protection on motorcycle riders. Yes, as firefighters, and as people getting older our hearing has suffered. But on our bikes we can take preventative measures to at least slow down some of that loss. I started wearing hearing protection while riding this spring and I am amazed at what I CAN hear with the plugs in. What it cuts out is the wind, and I can still hear my bike, passing traffic, and other sounds that I should hear. What is reduced is the wind noise that the experts say is comparable to running a chainsaw. OSHA says that "on the job" 110 dBA noise (from the wind or that chain saw) is only allowed for 1/2 hour in an 8 hour period. That means we are exposing ourselves to unsafe noise when we are riding. Below is an excerpt from one of the articles that I saved on the subject.

EAR PLUGS & MOTORCYCLE RIDING — by Dr. Mike Coley, Norton Riders Collective

I love motorcycles. I began riding at about age eleven and was reading about them before that. And like most everyone else I gave little consideration to what the noise associated with riding might be doing to my hearing or what I might be able to do about it.

In my mid-twenties I decided that helmets were actually a good idea and started using one routinely, but hearing protection was only something I had read about. But as my riding began to include more and more time on highways I decided to try using ear plugs. I grew-up believing that a good rider needs to be able to hear the engine, and the surrounding traffic. And I must admit that the first time I tried ear plugs I was not overly impressed. But as I got used to them the more I wanted to use them. I found myself feeling less tired at the end of a long ride, and the truth is at highway speeds about the only thing I was hearing was the wind anyway.

Over the next few years in addition to reading about and riding motorcycles, I was reading about and learning how to become an ear, nose, and throat surgeon. It was during my medical training and subsequent years in practice that I became aware of just how easy it is to damage our hearing. And unfortunately, damage that is noise induced is usually permanent and can only be treated by the use of hearing aids.

We all know that there is a lot of wind noise when we ride at speeds of about fifty miles per hour or more. And for those of us who ride with little or no fairing or windshield this noise can be pretty loud. Exposure to this degree of noise will cause damage to those hair cells that are located in the hearing portion of our ears. This is not a "maybe will cause", but is a "it will cause" situation. How much damage and how long before enough damage is done before we notice is unpredictable. Some people are much more susceptible than others and may sustain damage much, much sooner than someone else exposed to the same conditions. And this is where ear plugs will help.

The use of ear plugs will certainly lower the volume of the noise you are exposed to, but surprisingly will aid your hearing to some degree at freeway speeds. The frequency (pitch) of the wind noise is very effectively muted while lower frequencies much less so. Now don't get me wrong, you're not going to put in ear plugs and go out for a ride and find no wind noise, but the wonderful mechanical and exhaust sounds unaffected. But, what you will find is that you'll still be able to hear the engine well enough to gauge engine speed or telltale signs of a problem. You'll also be surprised just how tiring the wind noise had been and how much less fatigue there will be after a ride.

Beside being less tired at the end of a ride, by using plugs they are protecting what hearing you have left. The damage that has already been done is permanent, but if a person does not protect what hearing they have, further damage will occur. Whatever loss you presently have will worsen if you continue to subject yourself to loud noise.

Whether or not a rider chooses to use ear plugs is obviously a personal decision. But as a long time rider whose owned some forty or fifty motorcycles over the years (including: Ducati, Harley-Davidson, BMW, British Iron, and all brands Japanese); and as a physician specializing in diseases and treatment of the ear, I strongly recommend their use.

Your hearing is like your eyesight, protect what you've got because you only get one pair.

2012 Convention in
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
August 16-19, 2012

As of the middle of March there are already over 150 Red Knights signed up for the RKMC Convention in August. Are you one of them?

PA Chapter 12 is your proud host for the 2012 convention of the Red Knights International Firefighters motorcycle club. We are sure you will enjoy historic Gettysburg and the surrounding area.

They have arranged exclusive events with Harley Davidson's York Plant, the Harrisburg Fire Museum, the National Fire Academy and The National Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial.

They will also be offering national park service guided motorcycle tours of the battle fields and so much more. Click on the Schedule button on the left for a quick overview of the schedule. Each event has links to additional information.

A downloadable registration form that can be completed online and printed or printed and filled in by hand is available through their webpage at <http://www.redknightspa12.org/>.

The hosts stress that all the personal information on the registration MUST be complete if you hope to ride to the memorial at the National Fire Academy.

RK Massachusetts T-Shirts

Thank you to Mass-13 and Terry Atwood for his work on our State T-shirts this spring. They look great! There are still some T-shirts available (\$12) and you can contact Terry at TATWOOD000@aol.com to see if your size is available.

What's up in 2012?

What are you planning for 2012 for your chapter? Do you have some *great* ride ideas that you would like to share? Do you have a charity event that you would like other chapters to come out and support?

It's time to blow your own horn and tell us all about them. Post any events of interest on the RKMC Massachusetts Ride Page.

Visit the state web page at <http://massredknights.org/> and click on "MA Red Knights Ride Calendar" or send them to George for publishing on our state web site.

Ride and Event Information:

Sunday, May 20. Newton, Mass community parade. More information to come out about time and place.

Sunday, May 20. **Motor-officer Blessing and Rodeo.** Watch the Motor-Officer Rodeo and participate in their blessing of the bikes. Come watch the bike games, motorcycle rodeo, food, music, a raffle and more.
www.motorofficerblessing.com

Saturday, June 23. **Vermont-2 Paul's Ride.** Our brothers to the north host a charity ride each year to buy gas cards for families providing transportation for cancer treatments. Registration at the West Brattleboro Fire Station beginning at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, July 14. **The Moving Vietnam Wall.** The Wall is coming to Springfield, Vermont. www.themovingwall.org

Saturday, September 15. **Mass 2's annual ride for Sherry's House.** All are welcome to join Mass-2 and "play some cards." At each stop the riders will participate in some "card games" to see who ends up with the best hand. Donations and proceeds of the *gambling* will be left off at "Sherry's House" in Worcester. Meet at Westminster FD at 9:00 a.m. Visit www.whyme.org to see what requests there are for the "care packages." (Sherry's house provides lodging to families whose child is undergoing cancer treatments at area hospitals).

Saturday, September 29. **Mass 13's Poker Run.** Visit <http://masschapter13.com/> for more information. 9-10:00 Registration at Ayer FD.

Sunday, October 7. **Dummerston Apple Pie Festival.** Ride to Vermont to see what thousands of pieces of Apple Pie look like!

National Ride to Work Day

Monday, June 18, 2012

www.ridetowork.org/

George is on the road for a while and you can follow his ride at <http://georges2ndtrip.blogspot.com/> and Bob will be on the road later in April and you can follow his trip at <http://www.facebook.com/3ForTheRoad>

New England Fire Chief's Show June 22-24 In West Springfield

The RKMC will have an information booth at the Fire Chiefs Show.

Contact Steve Mickle for more information
Redknight@myfairpoint.net

We are trying to see if there is interest in reviving the Massachusetts Weekend on Cape Cod. In years past we had a gathering of Red Knights on the Cape in the Spring. We have set aside a weekend in September this year (September 21-23). Mass-8 is looking into lodging in Falmouth and a potential ride to Martha's Vineyard with Mass-7.

Please talk among yourselves and all our Massachusetts members and let the State Rep know — **BY JUNE 1** — if your chapter (and our MALs) have an interest in attending this gathering. We need to have some idea of interest.



Past Assistant State Rep Bob Felt of RK Mass-8 was thanked and recognized for his years of service to the Massachusetts Red Knights with a presentation at the Spring State Meeting. Presenting the plaque to Bob are past State Rep Steve Mickle and current State Rep George Colby.



**2012 Marks the
30th Anniversary of
the Red Knights
How is your chapter
celebrating this milestone
during the year?**

International President Dave Emery was in attendance at our RKMC State meeting and he briefed us on a number of International issues and fielded questions from the group. Here are some bits from his time on the floor.

The Red Knights continues to grow with well over 10,000 members. Europe is currently the fastest growing segment of our organization. They are very welcoming to all Red Knights who have visited. In Australia the club is growing but there is a serious concern with “one-percenter” organizations in that area to the level that they will not wear back patches.

The International Web Page is under constant revision with new information available almost daily under the work of MAL Steve Chappell.

The International is holding a raffle for a 9-11 painting to raise money for the Memorial in Boylston. Tickets are \$20 each, and there will only be 300 sold. Information can be found on the International web page at www.redknightsmc.com.

The dedication of the World Trade Center Steel at the Red Knights Memorial will be on Saturday, June 16, 2012. Mass-1 reports that planning from a local standpoint is underway and plans include the Worcester Firefighters Bagpipers as well as other fire service participation.

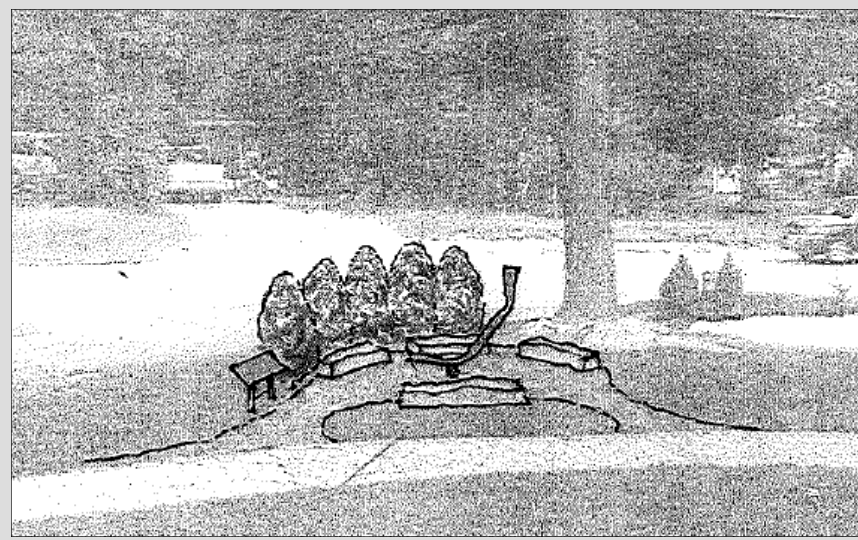
2012 will be the last of the Red Knights sponsored dinners as a corporation at Americade. In the ten years we have hosted the dinner we have given away 926 prizes. Wouldn't it be a great parting shot to say the Red Knights have given away over 1,000 prizes! Help us with a donation or two. *(And thanks to all of you because MANY of those door prizes have been from our chapter members and MALs throughout Massachusetts).*

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 70 door prizes to award dinner attendees again last year... and that has been far more than ANY of the corporate sponsors involved with Americade! If you are going to Lake George and can bring prizes with you, that is great. If you are not going or do not have the means to get your donations to the dinner, please contact Bob Laford (rflaford@tiac.net) and he can make arrangements to get your prizes to Lake George and the dinner.

The New York Red Knights will again be hosting the Red Knight Open House at Lake George on Thursday, June 7 (4:00 p.m.) Come join us! And of course, remember to bring your fire helmet and be part of the parade — where you always find the Red Knights at the front of the line!

International President Emery explained to us at the Spring meeting that the Executive Board would like to take the resources

The architect and the planning committee have been working on the World Trade Center Steel design and has come forward with a plan we can all be pleased with. Emphasis has been placed on giving the steel a place of respect without overshadowing the memorial as it is.



normally spent on this sponsorship and put it towards some special event for the Red Knights at Americade. They are looking for our suggestions for 2013. If you have any ideas on a special gathering, event, meal, ride, or a combination of events that would make our Lake George visit even more special for Red Knights, please let him know.

Communications to and between our members, our chapters, and our International leadership is very important. One means to keep good communication moving is by participating in the Red Knights Message Board on the International Web Page. The URL is <http://www.redknightsmc.com/forumlinkpage.py>



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W.T.C. STEEL DEDICATION

March 26, 2012

Hello Brother and Sister Red Knights,

This is a quick note to advise every one of the upcoming event of the “Dedication of the World Trade Center Steel” The fine details are in the final stages. But it is important to get this basic information out to you so that you can start making plans to attend. We will keep you informed as the final plans become available.

PLACE
Red knights Memorial Site
599 Main Street
Boylston, Ma.

DATE
SATURDAY, JUNE 16, 2012

TIME
10:00am

David Hamilton (one of the founding fathers) has been able to secure a “Special Rate” for Red Knights to stay at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlboro, MA 01752. The address and contact information is below. Be sure to mention you are with the RED KNIGHTS for the \$69.00 per night rate with a full breakfast (based on availability). The Hotel has 431 rooms, indoor pool, full restaurant and free parking.

The hotel is walking distance to shopping and more dining and 30 miles to Boston, MA. Best of all you are only a 15-20 minute ride to the Memorial site.

Best Western Royal Plaza
181 Boston Post Road West
Marlboro, MA01752
Phone # 508-460-0700 or 888-543-9500

I look forward to seeing you all there,
Please ride safe,

Dave