



Red Knights Motorcycle Club

Massachusetts — Home of the Founders

Spring 2020

From the desk of the Massachusetts Red Knights State Representative

Greetings all Massachusetts Red Knights!

This is the 18th Edition of the Massachusetts State Red Knights news letter.

Without the production of this newsletter, there would not be the unprecedented sharing of information we have, and all the thanks for this goes to MA-2 Bob Laford.

Our 2020 spring state meeting was the shortest on record. Because it didn't happen...

Hopefully we WILL have a 2020 fall meeting. I'll worry about finding a host when the time comes.

At the 2019 fall meeting, YOUR Assistant State Rep. Bob Binnall was re-elected for another two year term. Working with Bob as my assistant has been an ongoing pleasure. Bob and I talk at all hours of the day and night and with him being reelected for another two years, our over watch of the Mass Red Knights will continue without interruption. Remember people. We have written the book on what a state organization should be. Those words are from past International Red Knight Presidents and directors.

This fall the position of MA State Representative is up for election.

If you are interested in the position you need to have your letter of intent and biography in to Bob NO LATER than September 1, 2020. His address is: bbaudiovs@gmail.com

I will tell you now, that as long as you will have me I will continue to serve as your MA State Rep. So unless the COVID gets me I will keep my hat in the ring.

According to Bob I can't get the COVID. He prohibits it. Why? Because in his words; "I am more than willing to help but I am way too busy to be the State Rep."

COVID has put the kybosh on every Red Knight and Chapter event so far this year. Not being able to come together to ride and socialize is not the norm for us but we all need to continue to be diligent and continue to maintain social distancing.

I know... I am getting tired of hearing the phrase as well. Persevere people. This shall pass. Hopefully before we have to trade our bikes in for snowmobiles.

I asked Bob to say a few words for this edition so at this time I yield the floor to Bob.

George

Thank you, George,

Hello fellow Brothers and sisters. I'd like to start with echoing George's statement towards Bob Laford from MA-2. *Without the production of this newsletter, there would not be the unprecedented sharing of information we have, and all the thanks for this goes to MA-2 Bob Laford.*

As you all know, many MA Red Knights events and Regional events like the Yankee Rally have already been cancelled, due to the COVID pandemic. To say this "SUCKS" is an understatement, sorry I'm not as eloquent with my words as George is. That being said, the cancelling of these events so that we can all get through this and be able to get back on two wheels again, three if you have a trike or Spyder, in the future is well worth it. Please continue to social distance yourself, wash your hands and if possible, STAY HOME!

I look forward to continuing working with George so that MA, in my opinion, continues to be the best state in this organization/family. Thank you for trusting me to continue being your Assistant State Rep, even though I won by default but as they say, "A Win is a Win".

In conclusion, as you all know Boylston "Where It All Began" is in Massachusetts, OUR State. I bring this up because as Massachusetts is where the Red Knights started back in 1982. I believe we, as a state, have a larger responsibility than any other state, province etc. around the world, to help one another. If you or your family need anything, please reach out to George or myself and we will do our very best to help you however we can.

Stay safe everyone

Bob B.

There was an article posted on-line (On a BMW owners site) titled, "The Decline Of The Motorcycle Club." It had many valid points and opinions about a club needing everyone's support and the changing of the riding world and our culture in general. The article hit the nail on the head with its closing statement:

If you want your club to keep riding into the Roaring Twenties, the next steps are up to YOU:

- ⇒ **Attend meetings!**
- ⇒ **Volunteer!**
- ⇒ **Get involved!**
- ⇒ **Serve as a club officers!**
- ⇒ **Do something for your club!**

Riding is good — for mind and body

In a fresh take on a UCLA study, a study conducted by the Institute of Neuroscience and Human Behavior has concluded that motorcyclists are less stressed and more fulfilled than their four-wheeled counterparts.

The study originally set about trying to find out if bikers were constantly riding in fear of being involved in an accident, but inadvertently proved the opposite!

The results center around a certain hormone called cortisol that is released in the brain when we become anxious. Scientists found that bikers would produce 28% less during testing that drivers on the [test] course.

The results found that when riding, the subjects experienced increased focus and resiliency to distractions, while producing increased heart rates and adrenaline — similar to when conducting light exercise.

The news regarding the mental well-being of riders goes hand-in-hand with a study that found that riding a motorcycle can burn between 170-600 calories an hour. As much as some people can burn in a visit to the gym.

(It's not news to us that riding is good for your mental and physical health!)

Chapter email address and 2020 Voting – The International Board has set up RKMC email addresses for each chapter under “redknightsmc.com” If you need assistance with your official chapter e-mail contact your state rep for guidance.

For 2020, the positions that we are voting for in Massachusetts are International Vice-President and International Secretary.

Nominations will close on May 24 and that is when we will know if any contests must be decided by electronic ballot for our chapters.

If you are an Active Members of the Red Knights International Motorcycle Club, who have previously served a Chapter or Association as President or Vice President or as a State or Provincial Representative for a minimum of one term, you may serve on the International Executive Board.

To be placed on the ballot a qualified member must be nominated by the President or Vice President of two Chapters. A Member-at-Large may be nominated for any position on the International Executive Board having received a majority vote of the International Executive Board.

If you, or the person whom you are nominating, suit the requirements for nomination, you may fill out the nomination. The Nominee must complete the Nomination Profile prior to close of nominations and provide a photo. Form more information, refer to the International webpage at <https://www.redknightsmc.com/election-information>

Voting is the only way we can voice our opinions on our representation. When was the last time that your chapter email account was checked for in-coming messages from the International or others?

The Red Knights International Executive Board convened via conference call on March 27, 2020 to discuss a few important items.

- The International Executive Board meeting scheduled for April 23 – 25, 2020 has been cancelled. We will attempt to reschedule at a later date, hopefully prior to the International Convention in August.
- ALL Red Knights events are cancelled until June 1, 2020. This date may be extended as needed. What does this mean to you? First, all International sponsored events (Dixie and Yankee) are cancelled. This also means that ALL Chapter events (poker runs, benefit rides, gatherings, etc.) are cancelled. This is done for your own safety and wellbeing, as well as to comply with CDC recommendations. By no means does this mean you must stop riding your motorcycle or wearing your colors. Please follow your local restrictions set by your governing body.
- The Red Knights Memorial and Hall are closed until further notice. This is to comply with travel restrictions and to ensure the safety of the Red Knights Memorial Hall House Committee. In addition, the Memorial Spring Clean Up is cancelled.
- The insurance company that the International works with to provide insurance for RK events has informed us that they WILL NOT insure any events through June 1, 2020. Again, this date may be extended.

Frequently, the International Executive Board proposes Bylaw changes to clarify or fix issues that we may have discovered since last International Convention. These proposals are usually crafted during the International Executive Board Spring Meeting, as we are all face to face and can hash out the details. As the Spring Meeting is cancelled, we have decided not to propose any Bylaw changes from the Board. This will in no way hinder proposals that may come from the membership. Those will still be discussed and voted on at the International Convention in August.

The International Executive Board, from this point forward through the COVID-19 crisis, will be holding monthly conference calls to discuss any issues of importance that may come up.

The International Convention is still on for August.

Other dates affiliated with the 2020 voting:

- Incumbents Intent — 180 Days prior to convention by Feb. 24th
- Nominations Closed — 90 Days prior to convention by May 24th
- Chapters Start Vote — 60 Days prior to convention on June 23rd
- Voting Closed — 30 Days prior to convention on July 23rd
- Vote Results Announced at Convention — August 22nd

Chapter preparation for voting:

- Chapters must be in Good Standing
 - * Dues current
 - * Roster up-to date
 - * Signed TMLA Agreement
- Members at Large must be in Good Standing
 - * Dues current
 - * Active email address provided prior to the closing of nominations
- Notification via Chapter RKMC Email Address
 - * One Chapter – One Vote!
(A simple majority of the individual MAL ballots cast will determine the candidate receiving the MAL vote to be cast with Chapter votes)
 - * Keep your password to RKMC email confidential – change it if necessary
 - * MAL’s will receive individual ballot via email
- Know the timeline
 - * Posted on International Webpage & above in this publication
- Review Nominee Profiles on line at International Webpage
- Ballot sent to Chapter email address and to individual MAL’s.
- Select Candidate
- Submit
- Print receipt confirming vote

Dates to remember:

- 2021 New Brunswick, Canada
- 2022 Johnstown, PA
- 2023 Maryland

Here is our State Rep in his role as Communications Chair for the International, taking all the necessary precautions as not to catch or spread any of those new fangled computer viruses while communicating with us!



And he makes sure that he is protected outside the house, too, when his beloved sends him outside into the harsh world in search of sustenance for the family!

How many times are you washing your hands, these days? What precautions are you taking to "Flatten the Curve?"

I spent one day last week trying to be aware of doing all the right things. I mean, how hard can it be to wash your hands a lot and avoid crowds?

The hope is to prevent the spread of the coronavirus — and protect myself, too. Don't touch your face, Wash your hands often, Cough/Sneeze into your elbow, and Avoid close contact. How hard can that be?

Swiping cards at the gas station or coffee shop, taking my order from service counter and pressing the key pad (AWK!). First outside act of the day and my hands are already compromised!

How many door handles and stair railings do I touch just to get to work or the store? I'm where I need to be, time to wash my hands (again). My nose itches. Wash my hands again.

Need to wipe down high-touch areas. (Do I have wipes, still available?) Phone, and cell phone, Keyboard, Mouse, arm rests, coffee station, my coffee mug, wallet, work surfaces... and now I need to wash my hands again.

Lunch time... what is the communal kitchen like? Sanitize some more, wash my hands again. I have my brought-from-home lunch, no counter-service today. Touched my face again. Wash my hands again.

What have I touched in the last hour? Water dispenser, coffee machine, chairs in work kitchen and conference room, television remote, telephone key pad, radio microphone, and I need to wash my hands again.

I need to take an Uber home today... what kind of illness does the driver have... or the people that were sitting here before me? What about the bus or the subway? (AWK!). All this is making me (us) neurotic.

Grab some take out for dinner. When was the last time that teenager behind the counter washed his hands... or touched his face? (AWK!)

These notes were an excerpt from a story on NPR. The author went on to speak with a infection control professional to talk about the precautions we are all attempting to highlight in our day. And that does not even begin to touch on the necessary actions those of you responding to calls are taking!

The infection control person stated, "This is a good exercise to make you notice your personal hygiene and have an appreciation for it," she says. "It can make you see how important it is to prevent exposure, especially around populations vulnerable to coronavirus," including elderly people and those who are sick.

We all know that we need to assume that every surface touched at the coffee shop, at the office and in public was contaminated. Continue to follow the CDC guidance to protect yourselves and your family.

Did you first learn to ride on something that Mr. Soichiro Honda's company designed and manufactured?

In December 2019, Honda surpassed the 400 Million mark for motorcycles leaving its 35



factories around the world since 1949. That is 400,000,000. For the past ten years, Honda sales have exceeded 15 million annually, with 2018 and 2019 breaking the 20 million bikes sold mark. The Honda marquis is varied, with motorcycles and scooters from the funky 50cc commuters like the Dunk, to cutting edge off-road bikes like the CRF450R, to icons like the GL1800 Gold Wing, the new CRF1100L Africa Twin and the new 160Kw CBR1000RR-R Fireblade.

Approximately 335,800 units of on-highway motorcycles and almost 90,000 units of off-highway motorcycles are sold to customers in the United States each year. That means that the U.S. is not the largest market for Honda by far, but the on-highway numbers are comparable to those of Harley Davidson's annual sales in the U.S.

Honda's entry in the U.S. market in the 1960's was tagged with their now famous slogan, 'You meet the nicest people on a Honda.' The Super Cub's US advertising campaign had a lasting impact on Honda's image and on American attitudes to motorcycling

The image of the motorcyclist in early 60s America was much more James Dean and gang related, than a nice lady in a headscarf. Grey Advertising took on Honda's challenge to produce ideas for a US campaign and it was 1961 when they proposed the 'You Meet the Nicest People on a Honda' moniker to reach the American market.

Statistics say there are about 8 million registered motorcycles in the US. Just as with the Red Knights, the median age of the typical motorcycle owner is 47, up from 32 in 1990 and 40 in 2009. What's troubling for motorcycling is the decline in young riders.

We all look back with smiles on our youthfulness on two wheels. Once many of us had that first ride, maybe with a dad, brother, neighbor or cool uncle – we were hooked. We could not wait to have our own bike. Was your first ride on a Honda, Harley, or something else? When was the last time you took a member of the youngster generation for their first ride?

We need to help the market keep alive by sharing our passion, so the next generation of riders looks forward to purchasing their fist bike!

2020 YANKEE RALLY

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you are staying healthy and safe, practicing social distancing and looking forward to getting back to “normal” life. If any of you need assistance due to this crisis, please remember you have a huge support system within your chapters, states, region and worldwide! Please reach out and ask for assistance, no matter how big or how small. We are family, after all.

Due to lots of uncertainty and conversations taking place, I thought I would reach out to you all to discuss some things in regards to the Yankee Rally. As you should be aware, the Yankee Rally 2020 has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was a decision that was made by NY 50, with the support of the Red Knights International Executive Board. I have spoken with Eric Jock of NY 50 on numerous occasions about this situation. Thankfully, for the most part, he believes he will be able to work with all of his vendors to push his dates back to 2022. Of course, this involves NY 50 winning the bid to host for 2022. We already know that the Red Knights Long Island chapters will be hosting the Yankee Rally 2021, and they have been working on some great plans.

At the Yankee Rally 2019 in Boylston, MA, Where It All Began, we decided to vote for the hosts 3 years out to allow for easier planning. With that being said, this year we would have voted on 2022 and 2023 hosts. Obviously, that won't be able to happen since this year's Yankee Rally has been cancelled. So how do we fix our two problems? Those problems would be if NY 50 can host the Yankee Rally 2022 and who will host 2023. We have no official system to solve these problems, such as a Regional Association.

Please understand, I'm not suggesting an Association. However, since we have no system in place, I feel as though we must follow past practice. That practice has been voting on the Yankee Rally hosts at the rally. Therefore, I feel the only prudent and proper way to handle this unique issue would be to hold off deciding who will host 2022 and 2023 until we are all at the Yankee Rally 2021 on Long Island. This will allow face-to-face discussions that email will not.

I wish I could tell all of you not to put in a bid for 2022 so NY 50 would win and not lose any deposits, but obviously that wouldn't be very objective of me to do. I hope this puts many of your minds at ease. If anyone has any questions, please follow the chain of command and feel free to send your questions up the chain. Region 1 and the rest of the Red Knights around the world will prevail. We just need to keep calm, do our part to flatten the curve and stay healthy. If you are out riding, please be extra careful, now is not the time to be in a hospital from a crash. Again, stay safe, stay healthy and above all else, Red Knights Forever!

Faternally,

Matthew J. Mattera
(609)846-3648
Red Knights International Firefighters Motorcycle Club
International Executive Board – Region 1 Director



Do not forget to get your annual inspection completed before your 2019 *sticker* expires the end of May.

Because of the COVID-19 limited operations, motorcycle inspection stickers originally set to expire on May 31 must now be inspected by June 30.

2020 RKMC International Convention

At the current time, the International Convention in France is still planning to go forward.

We all hope that the pandemic will wane prior to this summer, and our plans for July and August begin to return to normal.

Keep an eye on email and Internet updates as the date grows closer.

The Federal DOT has said that any flight canceled by the airlines, domestic or foreign, because of the COVID-19 must be reimbursed to the ticket holder for the full cost of the ticket.

Motorcycle Accident Statistics & Facts:
Most Common Causes - RevZilla

TOP 3 RISK FACTORS
(x Times More Likely To Crash)



INTERSECTIONS

41x - Unmarked Intersections
8x - Driveways/Parking Lots
3x - Traffic Signals



ROAD HAZARDS

12x - Evasive Maneuvers



Did you know?

We motorcyclists often complain drivers are out to get us, but we are nearly twice as likely to plow into the back of another vehicle than we are to have one pull out into our path.



AGGRESSIVE RIDING

18x - Aggression
9x - Inattention

Press Release from the
Laconia Motorcycle Week.

Optimism for the 97th
Progressive Laconia
Motorcycle Week®

LACONIA, New
Hampshire, March 27,
2020: The Board of
Directors of the Laconia
Motorcycle Week

Association held a teleconference meeting on March 26th and determined a decision would be made no later than April 30th on whether or not the Rally would be postponed from June 13th-21st, 2020 to August 22nd – 30th, 2020. At this time, they are optimistic the rally will still be held in June.

“This could be a huge boost for morale of not just motorcycle enthusiasts but everyone in the region,” says Charlie St. Clair, Executive Director for the Laconia Motorcycle Week Association. “This event brings millions of dollars to the state and is critically important to NH businesses & our tourism economy. Not only that, we have all been cooped up inside for well over a month - What better way to tell the world we’re returning to normal when we hear the familiar June roar of motorcycles returning to Weirs Beach?”

The health and wellness of fellow riders and motorcycle enthusiasts everywhere continues to be Laconia Motorcycle Week’s #1 priority. Over the next several weeks, directors will continue to maintain communication with local and state officials and will post any/all updates to LaconiaMCWeek.com.

What will our world be like on June 17?

Only time will tell. If you are still commuting in to work at the Fire House or elsewhere — take your bike. If you have a job where you are working remotely from home, suit up and go for a ride before your “work time” begins, and then again at the end of the day.

Retired or not currently working? Get out and ride!

We know how beneficial some fresh air is while we have our knees-in-the-breeze. And that ride definitely helps our mental outlook! We need that stress release now more than ever in our lives! Ride safe and keep well!



Another episode of the traveling bottles...

(January 2020 edition)

Well, thanks to Norm Beausoleil and many others, this bottle of Jack Daniels FINALLY made it to its intended destination this week - to Terry Mallay in Marystown, Newfoundland - just in time before a massive blizzard!

The really cool part is its path of travel and a few back tracks -

- Lynchburg, Tennessee to
- New Salem, Massachusetts to
- Northborough, Massachusetts to
- Our Red Knights Convention in Lincoln, New Hampshire
- Back to Massachusetts - Boylston in fact - to
- Baddeck, Nova Scotia to
- Truro, Nova Scotia - where it was in hibernation for several months until we could figure out a way to get it to "The Rock" aka Newfoundland - to
- Enfield, Nova Scotia to
- St. John's Newfoundland and then finally to
- Marystown

For a grand total of 3,489 miles or 5,582 km - not the farthest distance one of these bottles has travelled, but maybe one of the more interesting paths of travel.

Terry Mallay 's smile
says it all!



AMERICADE 2020 Postponed until July 21-25

The Dutchers have announced that Americade will not happen in June but is being postponed until July 21-25 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Christian Dutcher said, “We will be very sensitive to public health concerns. We will conduct Americade 2020 in a manner that is respectful of the terrible ordeal this pandemic has caused.”

The 2020 “touchless” Americade will emphasize current public safety protocols including social distancing and hand washing and scenic tours rather than large group gatherings. Specifically:

- The number of people attending the Americade Expo will be restricted to ensure plenty of space between attendees.
- Some events that have historically attracted shoulder-to-shoulder crowds will not be held.
- Attendees will be encouraged to register electronically (instead of in person) and pay remotely.
- Americade 2020 will de-emphasize guided, large-group rides and instead facilitate unguided rides.
- For lunches during rides, participants will be encouraged to choose from a broad selection of restaurants to reduce crowding in any one establishment.

Dutcher said he hopes a “full-throttle” Americade will be possible again in 2021.

The Red Knights Motorcycle Club — Mass Chapter 2

and Rev. David Purdy of the Orthodox
Congregational Church of Petersham

Invite you to a
**Blessing of the Bikes and Ice Cream
Social**

Saturday, May 23, 2020, 1:00 pm
At the Petersham Orthodox Congregational Church
21 North Main Street (Route
32) Petersham

A free-will donation of \$5 per
bike is asked, and all proceeds
will be donated to Home Base,
a Massachusetts-based
Veterans Support Service



**Bike Made From Wood, Skillfully Carved
By A Tribe In The Philippines**

In the 21st century, many forms of transportation have been modernized such as motorbikes, bicycles, electric bikes, scooters and many more. Technology made our lives improve and level up from traditional ways.

But one tribe in the Philippines made the modern into traditional in a most unthinkable creative way. They created a bike made from wood or let's say, carved from wood.



An aborigine tribe in the Philippines called the Igolot-Garonne is known for their excellent wood-carving skills. They were notably remembered for their skills and special techniques passed down from generation.

They are known in their specialty of making amusement bikes that are carved and sourced 100% from trees. This bike is made from wood but each wood-bicycle is different in appearance showing each woodman's interest and skills



The bike made from wood is mostly designed with carve animals like a horse head, dragon, lion and etc. The bikes, however, have no brakes and pedals to stop or accelerate so it requires added skills to learn how to ride it

To ride, they will wear their tribe costume in bright red and rolls down the street.

They are so proud of their bike made from wood that probably took years of skills to polish and more months to complete.

www.americade.com

Americade 2020 —39 Years and Counting!

Heading to Lake George for the first week of June is one of those "staple" events for many Red Knights. Whether you are an officially registered "Americader" or someone who heads to the Adirondacks just to join up with the motorcycle community, you know what a great time it is!

The Americade planners and their nearly 300 volunteer staff roll out a great event with seminars at *Americade University*, a block party along Beach Road, hundreds of vendors in the tent city, guided and self-guided rides, the most manufacturer marquis at any event in the county, and much much more.

Americade is where we as Red Knights meet up at the start of the riding season to see old and new friends — at the annual Red Knight ride on Wednesday — along Canada Street while bike watching — at the vendors — on the road — and at the Lake George FD for the open house on Thursday afternoon.

Looking for motorcycle "stuff?" It's here!

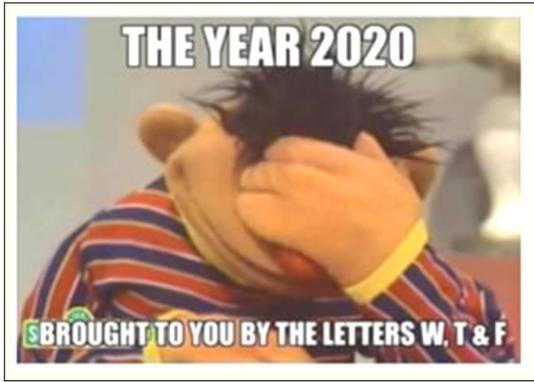
And Americade is the roads. Hundreds of miles of great mountain roads throughout the Adirondack Park and the nearby Green Mountains. The Adirondack park is the largest park in the contiguous United States and covers 6 million acres (1/5 of NY State). You can ride roads you have never been on — year after year. Set your GPS at your hotel and just head out. When its time to head back to Lake George, just hit home.

Whether you come for family, friends, miles, or stuff, just make it a point to head to Lake George in early June and find out why so many Red Knights return year after year.



The Red Knights were asked to lead the ride again for 2020 and also take the kids and their parents. They also need help with blocking during the event. Contact Bob Holiner (RK NY12) at Americade@redknights.com if you would like to help, or if you have questions.

Americade 2020 Ride for Kids is Saturday, June 6. Come ride with us to raise funds to help cure kids with Brain Tumors!



Spring 2020 State Meeting

Our Spring State Meeting, scheduled for April, was cancelled as we were all stay-at-homes with gathering restrictions around the country and around the world because of COVID-19.

The International Board issued a directive that ALL Red Knight events — whether sponsored by the International, State or Regional, AND Chapters will be cancelled through June 1.

Although we can each get out for rides to get some wind therapy, we were not able to gather physically, for our meeting.

One reminder about our Massachusetts Red Knights is that the position of MA State Rep. comes up for vote this fall. If you are interested in running for the position please have your letter of intent and biography in to Assistant MA State Rep. Bob Binnall NO LATER than September 1, 2020. (bbaudiovs@gmail.com).

The 2020 fall MA State Red Knights meeting (tentatively) will be held during the Cape Cod Weekend, September 25-27

Massachusetts Cape Cod Weekend

Mass Chapter 8 is currently working up details to host the Red Knights for another weekend excursion to the Cape in September.

(Hopefully) It will be the weekend of Sept 25-27 and will again be at the Town Crier in Eastham. This is always a great time, mark your calendar and come enjoy the weekend with us! More info will be passed on from the State Rep.



What's up in 2020?



Who knows when and how our world will return to a semblance of normalcy. But do not let that stop your planning, as you look towards the future! We will be joining together again as groups and celebrating our Red Knight times together, hopefully soon.

What are you planning for during the latter half 2020 with 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.

If you have rides and events that you want other chapters to know about get the information to State Rep Colby (who is also the International's Communications Chairman) so he can use his vast collection of email addresses to get the information out to other Red Knights or post information on the Region-1 Facebook Page, International pages, and beyond!

RK Vermont-2's Paul's Ride

Saturday, June 20.

Proceeds buy gas cards to help those undergoing Cancer treatments. The ride is in memory of VT-2 Dave Emery's brother Paul.

Many of us have the tradition of attending VT-2's Paul's Ride. Unfortunately Dave Emery has informed us that they will be canceling this year's ride because of the pandemic.

April 18 Mass-1 Spaghetti Dinner



We look forward to 2021!

Front Brake or Rear Brake?

Excerpts from the Riding in the Zone Blog, October 29, 2019, by Ken Condon

A lot of riders ask about which brake is appropriate for what situations. The short answer is that it depends on speed, desired maneuver and available traction.

Front Brake. Your front brake is your “power” brake. The front brake is designed to take the burden of getting the bike and you stopped ASAP. The front brakes include components that provide maximum brake force...two large multi-piston calipers, large vented brake rotors, and brake pads designed to handle and dissipate lots of heat. Even the front brake components on smaller bikes and cruisers with a single front brake are more robust than the rear brake.

Rear Brake. In contrast, the rear brake is the “control” brake. It provides additional braking power at road speed, but it is the tool you want to use to refine your speed and direction.

Which Brake and Why? Now that we have an understanding of the basic characteristics of each brake, we can discuss the benefits or disadvantages of each brake in specific scenarios.

Normal braking (street). When slowing or stopping normally, use both brakes. This shares the braking load between both tires and helps stabilize the chassis.

Emergency Braking. Use both brakes to get the most braking power for the shortest stop. The caveat here is that emergency braking causes the load to transfer to the front tire, reducing weight on rear of the machine. This means that it's much more likely to skid the rear tire and is why you'll engage the ABS on the rear tire first.

Control the Rear. So, how to get the maximum brake force without skidding? Reduce rear brake pressure as you increase front brake pressure. This isn't easy to get perfect, but is worth practicing. If all you can manage in an emergency is to use one brake, use the FRONT BRAKE! That's where the majority of your brake power comes from. Do it firmly and progressively for maximum effect.

Passengers. The rear brake is much more useful and effective when carrying a passenger or heavy

luggage, because of the extra weight on the rear wheel.

Normal Stops at Intersections, etc. For the smoothest, controlled “normal” stops, like at an intersection, taper off the front brake and finish with the rear brake. Reduce brake pressure and speed progressively. Avoiding abrupt stops is especially appreciated by passengers who hate having to brace themselves to avoid the unwelcome “helmet bonk”.

Keep the right foot on the rear brake until completely stopped. This avoids rolling past your desired stopping point.

Poor Traction Surfaces. When riding on gravel, sand, wet leaves or slick construction plates, use the rear brake. This is because the powerful front brake is much more likely to skid when traction is sketchy and a skidding front wheel means a crash is imminent. Whereas a skidding rear tire is less likely to cause a crash unless it fishtails violently.

The MSF says to ride out a rear tire skid to avoid the rear tire hooking up when sideways and causing a highside.

Slow Speeds. Favor the rear brake when creeping along in traffic, stopping smoothly from a slow speed and making tight u-turns. Be very gentle with the front brake, or avoid it altogether when speeds are below, say 8-10 mph; the front brake is too powerful for slow speeds and you risk stopping the bike abruptly which will cause imbalance. I like to lightly “dab” the rear brake as I make very tight U-turns. It gives me more speed control and feel.

Trailbraking. Trailbraking is when you carry some brake force past the turn entry to allow more time to refine your entry speed. Light trailbraking (and/or deceleration) also helps the bike lean into the curve. Read all about trailbraking here.

There is a belief that trailbraking is using the rear brake only. But, you can use front only, rear only, both brakes, or even strong deceleration (trail-deceleration) to get the desired speed reduction and easy turn-in.

Tight, Slow Corners. I just

described a simple use of trailbraking. However, a skilled rider can fine tune their speed and direction control with a finely orchestrated use of the brakes. Start by using both brakes to slow into the curve, but about halfway around (this varies depending on the radius of the curve) smoothly release the front brake but keep a bit of rear brake applied.

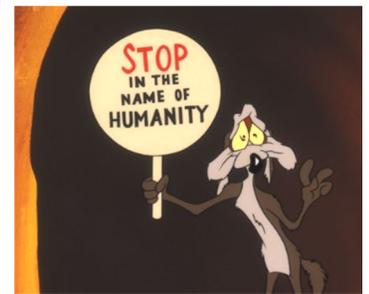
This helps “hook” the bike around the last section of the curve and helps refine speed. Ideally, at this point you don't want to slow anymore, so brake lightly. For uphill tight turns where momentum is important, I often overlap acceleration against that last bit of rear brake force to execute the smoothest transition I can. A bit of late rear brake also helps manage the effects of gravity in downhill curves.

Linked Brakes. Some larger bikes, particularly tourers link the front and rear brakes. While this limits the proportioning the rider has control of, many manufacturers design their brakes to give more or less power to the front or rear depending on the input of the rider. In this case, these techniques still apply, but the effect is lessened.

Racetrack. On the racetrack and when riding fast and hard, it makes sense to concentrate on using the front brake only. Yes, you're giving up the advantages of the rear brake, but brake forces are considerably higher where the rear wheel is barely in contact with the surface.

Professional-level racers develop their rear brake technique to help with direction control, but track day riders and amateur racers are usually better off keeping it simple.

Practice. Like most skills, braking skill is perishable and needs regular practice just to maintain proficiency. You don't need anything more than a large parking lot or a straight piece of remote roadway. Brake hard from speed to practice emergency stopping and work on trailbraking when in appropriate corners.



A Letter From AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman

Managing the COVID-19 situation

Since 1924, the American Motorcyclist Association has been a unified voice for motorcyclists. Established to organize rider activity of all kinds, the AMA has since been a source for structure, planning, protection and, at the center of it all, community.

Community is at the heart of what we do. As a membership organization, community is the source of our value, our influence and our power. By building our community, we strengthen our hand. With a stronger hand, we can do more for our community.

Certainly, we have all been affected by COVID-19. Much of our AMA activity is built around events, and new federal, state and local laws and regulations are unfortunately impacting those events in big ways. Many rides and races have been postponed, some have been cancelled and others have been pared back to keep attendees and organizers safe. We encourage all AMA members and event organizers to comply with all federal, state and local guidelines.

As motorcyclists, we understand that safety matters. But in these challenging and uncharted times, we especially know that keeping ourselves, our loved ones, and other people around us healthy and safe is paramount. This includes first responders, healthcare workers, community volunteers, and others who are on the front lines managing this crisis.

And that brings me back to community.

The AMA is its members. We are a community of riders, joined together to promote and protect our motorcycle lifestyle. The AMA is you, individually and collectively.

This includes our chartered clubs and promoters. For those organizing events, this is a particularly stressful time.

Consider the following:

- Prepare for event changes. Make a list of everything your organization will need to address if you have to postpone or cancel your event, as in venue, vendors, participants, AMA sanction, etc.
- Contact the AMA. Reach out to the AMA department coordinator for your discipline if you need to make changes to your event sanction. Please communicate your changes prior to the event date so your sanction fee can be held for your next sanctioned event.
- Communicate to your participants, workers and vendors. You cannot overcommunicate in these situations. Use email, social media, your website and your cell phone to get the word out.
- Refunds or rainchecks. If your participants pre-registered, you could let them know that their entry will be held for the rescheduled date or they can request a refund.
- Hosting a virtual event. Instead of holding in-person club meetings, use email, phone conference and collaboration software such as Zoom or Google Hangouts to meet.
- Plan for the future. This situation will pass. When it does, motorcyclists will want to ride! Look ahead confidently and positively. Brighter days are ahead.

I'm going to ride when I can. If I can't ride, I'm going to plan riding trips, talk about riding with friends and think about riding. I'm going to get some work done on my sidecar project. In short, I'm going to continue to be an active member of the motorcycle community because as a membership organization, community is, after all, how we do what we do.

Stay safe, plan for the future.

But also join me. Get out there and ride your motorcycle.

Thank you for your support,

Rob Dingman
President and CEO
American Motorcyclist Association



For individual motorcyclists, there is one more thing we can do, and it's the most important:

Get out there and ride.

I'm sure you've seen the meme on social media by now. Under the ominous warning "Be Advised:" it repeats much of the safety guidance we're getting these days, appended with some smart, specific advice:

- Avoid crowded spaces: Ride motorcycles.
- Do not use public transportation: Ride motorcycles.
- Well-ventilated spaces are virus free: Ride motorcycles.
- Wear gloves: Ride motorcycles.
- Keep at least six feet from other people: Ride motorcycles.
- Keep a positive attitude: Ride motorcycles!

While the meme is intended to be a humorous diversion from the anxiety caused by a global pandemic, I intend to take its advice. I recommend you consider it, too.