

Here Come The Red Knights

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do not need to belong to a motorcycle and has the Fitchburg department, however, Any firefighter in the Montachusett area, either permanent, on call or retired who owns or has access to a motorcycle and has a valid license, is eligible. Associate and social memberships (for spouses and friends of active members) are also available.

The Maltese Cross, long a symbol for firefighters, also figures in the club's insignia. The sides of the cross contain pictures of firefighters equipment. In the center

circle, a motorcyclist is depicted. Besides the cross, which will be worn on the red jackets, Red Knights will have special "vanity" plates available to them at the

registry.

A variety of activities is available to club members. These include tours and other social events. The Red Knights will sponsor first aid and CPR courses. Eventually, as they become more established, the group will be active in fund raising for sponsored charities. Some of the events will not be limited to just the Red Knights. In June, for instance, the club will sponsor a "Blessing of the Bikes" ceremony at a local church. (It is actually a blessing of the riders, Jordan clarified.)

An enthusiastic motorcyclist, Jordan sees the image of his sport changing. In the past, with violent gangs nationally and in this region, biking earned a very negative reputation. "Today it's changed," he says. More people began riding motorcycles because of the gas crunch, he believes. They found out, like he did, that it is a unique experience. "It's a different feeling riding where everything is open."

The Red Knights are trying to promote that change in people's attitudes toward bikers. Their emphasis is on safety. Motorcyclists have to be more cautious, Jordan says, "We're on the bad end of the accident."

Firefighter Jordan sees the growth of the Red Knights as a very positive thing. And, he says with a certain amount of pride, "With the way we've grown, I think we'll be one of the larger groups in the state."

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by Patricia Forest



Officers of the Fitchburg chapter of the Red Knights are (l. to r.) Maurie Lizotte, secretary; Philip Jordan, president; George Fregeau, vice president; and Cliff Eldridge, treasurer.

There is a new motorcycle gang coming to town. They are setting down roots in New England and spreading like brush fire across the U.S. The gang, whose members wear flaming red jackets, meet at night in an old building in Fitchburg.

The mayor knows. He doesn't mind.

The police know. They aren't doing anything to stop them.

Even local businesses support the club by allowing them the use of their parking lots.

There is good reason that the group is getting

support instead of suspicion: The membership is composed primarily of firefighters who have an interest in motorcycles.

They call themselves the "Red Knights".

Phil Jordan is the president and moving force behind the initiation of the Fitchburg chapter of the club. Jordan's interest in starting the club in the Montachusett area began while reading a motorcycle magazine. The article talked about the Red Knights forming in Connecticut. The Fitchburg firefighter

contacted the organizer and, in short order, Fitchburg became the second chartered Red Knights Club in Massachusetts.

It has been only a few months since the first Connecticut chapter was formed and the article printed in the motorcyclists magazine. Fittingly, for a firefighter, Jordan explained, "It was like hay sitting in a field. All it took is one spark to make the whole thing flare up. It was that initial spark that started things moving."

Firefighters are tradi-

tionally a close-knit group. With their lives frequently dependent on each other, they have to be. But they had no outside organization. The police, with the Blue Knights club, have had a fraternal group for ten years. Firefighters were hungry for one, believes Jordan. And that is why, in less than one year, with the recognition of a Canadian chapter, the Red Knights have already become international.

There are presently 36 members in the Fitchburg chapter. Members (Continued on Page 15)