

Our sincere condolences continue to be with Peg and her boys, and all Ed's family and friends, since his passing in December.

Ed was larger-than-life and his boisterous all-encompassing personality enveloped all those that were around him and his beloved Red Knights. We all know that the most recent years were very difficult for Ed and Peg, and those that did not know Ed in years' past missed out on what a wonderful and supportive friend we had, and that we have now lost.

The Red Knights were very special to Ed. He was a Charter member of our chapter and was a Past-president (10 years) and Past-vice-president (5 years), and even served a period as chapter Road Captain (3 years) in the early years. He stepped in as International Vice-president when an unexpected vacancy occurred and served that position (1995-2000) and also served as International President (2000-2007). Prior to holding an elected International position, Ed also served on the International By-Law Committee.

During his time on the International Board, the Red Knights saw unprecedented growth. In the mid-nineties we had around 700 members in the U.S. and Canada. When Ed stepped down as International president in 2007, we had a membership ten times that number, with members across the world.

Fittingly, Ed was recognized for his decades of service to our club in receiving the 2012 Perry Carter Red Knight of the Year Award.

I can tell you that I joined the Red Knights in 1988 because of Ed and his visit to my fire station with other members of the chapter. I can tell you that I became a chapter officer because of the example that Ed set for all of us on how to be good Red Knights, and to be a good leader. And I can tell you that one big reason we have a history as a successful and vibrant chapter because of the legwork and foundation that Ed developed during his tenure as a chapter officer.

On the local level, Ed rarely missed any Mass-2 functions. He was always there to help in whatever way he could. When he took over as President, he worked to plan different rides and events to increase the interest of members. Short rides and weekend trips, ice cream rides, and different destinations were placed on the schedule. To help accommodate when members were available, the rides alternated from Saturday and Sunday to give everyone a chance to ride. By the end of his ten years as Chapter President and his earlier years as Vice-president, the club was growing and was one of the most active chapters in Massachusetts.

Many times, when an active officer hands over the reins to the next generation they fade off into the sunset. Not with Ed. Ed continued to be one of the most active members of the chapter attending nearly all the events we planned each year, until his health began to decline. Even when he was no longer able to ride, Ed continued to join us and participate when he was able.

On the International level, Ed attended almost all the International Conventions since becoming a member in 1984, up until his last attendance at the 2019 Convention in New Hampshire. Although he was not able to attend the first truly



international convention in Austria, he was on hand in 2015 at the EuCon Rally in Switzerland. Events like the conventions and Americade are dates he looked forward to every year to renew friendships that had been made during the past four decades. A very outgoing and friendly person, Ed was always a great ambassador to the Red Knights in meeting new members and making new friends.

I remember one Americade (2002), the "Ride On" motorcycle show from Speed TV was filming a show on Americade and Ed was one of the interviews conducted. A big smile and his red vest featured prominently on national television that

year.

Each time the Red Knights have come to Massachusetts for the annual convention, Massachusetts Chapter 2 has been part of the planning committee. And each time Ed has been a strongly active member of those committees. His ideas and his willingness to pitch in his own sweat and muscle helped these large-scale events happen successfully.

He said that one of his proudest moments was the anniversary Convention held in Boylston when the Red Knights Memorial was dedicated. The work done on the memorial, through its planning and construction, was an act of love that into, Ed placed many hours, and many private tears in the memories of those Red Knight friends who had passed. That day in August 2007 was an awesome day. That planning continued with the procurement and placement of the 9-11 steel. Ed was also one of the leaders to begin the legwork to make that September day and all those lost souls a special honor within our memorial.

Prior to the dedication of our memorial in 2007, the procession of Red Knights were led to the site of the Cold Storage Warehouse fire where six Worcester firefighters perished on December 3, 1999. One of those brave firefighters was Red Knight Tim Jackson. Tim was the first Red Knight killed in the line of duty, and he is remembered in our memorial in Boylston. That memorial dedication carried more weight for Ed than many people knew. The summer after the Worcester Cold Storage Fire, he and the late Steve Mickle had gone on a monumental, 12,000 mile trip to the four corners of the U.S. to raise funds for the Worcester Firefighters Memorial. The memorial for those six fallen firefighters that was eventually built on the land where the warehouse once stood. In that journey, Ed and Steve met with many firefighters, Red Knights, and supporters from around the country and raised over \$10,000 and donated it to the Worcester fighters and their Memorial Fund.

Ed was always very passionate about the Red Knights and what we represent. Ed's interactions with all he met as a Red Knight was true to the core and you could not find a better man to point to and say, "that man is a Red Knight."

We know that Ed is making his rounds within the Heaven-1 chapter greeting each and every member and friend with a big hug, and they are all celebrating with Ed. Thank you for all you did for the Red Knights, Ed. Rest well, we will take it from here.



Red Knights®

Mass Chapter 2 — Winter 2024

www.rk-mass2.org [facebook facebook.com/RKMASS2](https://facebook.com/RKMASS2)

Loyal to Our Duty

From the President's Desk

Hello MA2 family,

Here we are dreaming about another upcoming riding season, as the spring of 2024 approaches. It has been a relatively mild winter and a few of our members have been able to sneak out for short rides on some of our warmer days. As we move from our 40th year to a new decade, we are fortunate for all the great memories as a chapter during our 40th anniversary year, and as we begin this new year with our winter potlucks and gatherings.

It has also been an emotional winter for our chapter as we mourn the loss of our dear friend and brother Eddie Brouillet.

I want to thank everyone for the continued support and patience as I learn the ropes and try to navigate this President position to the best of my ability. I'm very proud to be a member of this great club, but more specifically this amazing chapter.

Our leadership, membership and activity level as a chapter has always been top notch and continues to be an example for other chapters to model themselves after.

Some things that we have created this year is a "Family Assistance Form" to help guide and answer the uncomfortable questions that need to be asked regarding a family's or member's wishes for Red Knight presence and assistance with the final ceremonies for a member.

We have also implemented regular zoom options for our snowbirds and members who cannot attend in person at our winter get togethers. This has been well received, with members logging on at each event this winter.

Our first annual "gear swap" was also initiated this year at our winter potluck and many members left with "new to them" goodies including some very sentimental shirts and gear of Ed's that was donated by Peggy.

The entire Executive board and I also appreciate the large response we received to our survey inquiring about ideas to increase chapter activity and attendance. We hope to be able to use the information gathered to accommodate more members this year. (More details of the survey's results are in this newsletter).

We are excited to have our Sgt. at Arms Ian Hurley be able to attend another international convention this year in Germany and represent our chapter once again at an international level.

I am looking forward to seeing you all this riding season. Whether you join us on 2, 3, or 4 wheels, please come enjoy time with this great family in 2024.

Fraternally,

President Jeff Hamberg

2024 Ride Schedule is posted!

Our 2024 Ride Schedule is ready — and being distributed.

Get your copy (or download it from our webpage), grab your red marker and start writing the dates on your calendar!

Put a copy on your refrigerator right by your finger paintings and come join us for a fun season with friends!

MA-2 Chapter statistics for 2024

- 75 Total Members
- Active (Firefighter) - 44,
- Social — 24,
- Associate — 3,
- Junior — 2,
- Compassionate Honorary—2

Of the above, 20 are Life Members, and 9 of those are "International" Life Members, recognized by the RKMC-I Board for past service to the International Board.

There are 14 Charter members who have been with the club since its Charter year in 1983. We appreciate their forethought and leadership to start this great club as we move into our next decade!

Our chapter has had a webpage for many years (www.rk-mass2.org) and has also had a presence on Facebook at facebook.com/RKMASS2 — and now we have an Instagram account to share information with those that follow that branch of Social Media. Do you follow us?

Membership news...

Our condolences go out to Joanne Billiard on the passing of Hal, our Canadian member of the chapter for so many years.

Congratulations to Joe Hopkins on his recent retirement! Now there is more riding time come spring, Joe! Congratulations to Kevin and Valerie on their recent engagement!

Congratulations to our new Assistant Road Captain, Charlie Hamberg, and welcome to the E-board!

Congratulations to President Hamberg on completing his ten week program at the Fire Academy.

Congratulations to Caitlin (Barclay) Renzaglia and husband Kevin on their recently purchased Victory Cross-Tour (and she's even riding pillion!). Caitlin, with that you should be able to

scoot back to New England and ride with us!

Congratulations to Matthew Hamberg on his new KLX 300 and to Tim and Darlene on their new BMW K1600! I guess that riding a Beemer in Europe made an impression!

Welcome to Caitlin's husband, Kevin and to Julie Ricketts, Lonny's wife as our two newest members.



2024 Chapter 50/50

You too can be a winner!

We will continue the tradition of holding 50/50 drawings when we get together during the riding season. Our Treasurer will keep track of the funds brought in, and at our annual business meeting we will decide what worthy local charity will receive the donation.

At our annual meeting we decided to send the 50/50 donations for 2023 to the Central Mass Cancer Support Fund.

If you have a local charity that we should consider for our year-end donation at our annual meeting in the fall, please let an officer know.



2023 Ride Statistics

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will be able to review the miles that our members put on their bikes... and in 2024 we continue to chart more miles and memories together as start our 41st year together!

Overall last year we averaged 15.56 people per event for our 28 official events. We had some BIG turnouts with 55 MA-2 members and more than 30 other friends and family at our 40th anniversary celebration, and we had 47 members RSVP to our Christmas party, and 30 at our 2023 Winter Potluck. Our Hooky rides (there were 8 of them) had between 5 and 11 riders!

Saturday, March 23. Mondadnock Harley Chili Contest and Open House. The chili will be ready at noon. Meet at the Citgo Station (next to Matthieu Ford) at Routes 140 and 12 in Winchendon at 11:30 am.

Sunday, April 28. Spring Dust-Off Ride. Shake off the winter dust with our first official ride of the year. Meet at the Westminster Dunkin's for 1:00 pm. It's an afternoon ride with maybe some ice cream!

Sunday, June 23. Another Dam Ride. Our "Dam Ride" was postponed in 2022 and 2023 because of weather, and it is back on the schedule for 2024. We'll stop at the Granville Country Store to pick up some sandwiches for lunch and ride to the Saville Dam for a picnic. Meet at 2/202 Shell Station in Orange for 10:00 am, and we will meet up with some riders further south — and maybe some RKMC family from other chapters, too.

Ice cream Rides return to our schedule! We have not had monthly ice cream rides on the schedule for a few years, but we have them again for 2024! We're moving them around both for meeting places and evenings to fit a variety of schedules. **Meeting time is 6:00 pm.**

Wednesday, May 22, at the Dunkin Donuts on Patriot Road in East Templeton, Thursday, June 20, at the 2/202 Shell Station in Orange, Tuesday, July 23, at the Westminster Dunkin's, and Wednesday, August 21 at the 2/202 Shell Station in Orange.

Saturday, July 6. 4th of July Celebration and Cookout.



Come enjoy some time with friends at a holiday pot-luck. Lori and Rick will be our hosts in New Salem. Bring some food to share and something to throw on the grill. (1:00 pm).

(It will also be a summer business meeting for the chapter).

Vermont-2's Memory Ride. Saturday, May 18.

Our friends in Vermont are once again holding their remembrance charity ride, to remember all our friends and family past. We will be heading into Windham County, Vermont to have a fun day and support our sister chapter. Meet at the 2/202 Shell Station in Orange for 8:00 am. (Several of our members will be unable to join us, as they normally do for this ride, because they will be in North Carolina at the Dixie Rally).

Don't forget our Breakfast Clubs!



Every third Saturday from November through April we gather for breakfast and fellowship. Thank you to Tim and Darlene for being our November hosts,

to kick off the cold-weather season!

Thank you to Chris and Ellen Conrad for hosting in January and to Rick and Lori Oliver for hosting in February



Upcoming Breakfast Clubs:

- March 16 at Bob and Diona's in Petersham
During our March Breakfast Club we will be talking about Americade/ Yankee Rally/Convention Planning to see whose going where for those large RKMC gatherings in 2024?
- April 20 at Jeff and Faith's in Southwick. We will talk about riding down together for a spring ride!
Our April breakfast at Jeff and Faith's will be a "Brunch" that starts at 10:00. Watch your emails for info on meeting so we can ride and/or carpool together down to Southwick.
As a *pseudo* Skills Day, Jeff will be preparing a program in his shop to talk about motorcycle maintenance schedules and tools.
- November 16 we start off again when cold weather arrives! Peg Brouillet will be our host in Westminster for that meeting.

What we have here is a failure to communicate!

Most of us know that as motorcycles have been manufactured over the last ten years, fewer and fewer have a CB radio as an option, to the point that no manufacturers have that as an add-on any longer. Communication between riders is important, whether it is hand signals, knowing where the rider is behind you at corners, or the use of "comms."

At our February Breakfast Club we had people bring their helmets with Bluetooth communication to work on linking them and seeing the nuances of this option.



Our Winter Pot Luck

There was some snow falling on the day of our Winter Potluck and meeting, but we still had a great turnout (24) and another six joining us virtually via Zoom!

The tables at the Rec Center at the Millers Woods at Riverbend in Athol were all filled. Of course, two of those tables were filled with all sorts of food, then another table had handouts full of information about our 2024 ride schedule and events to come, and another handful of tables were filled with gear for our first-ever "GEAR SWAP."

During the meeting, we voted in new social members Julie Ricketts and Kevin Renzaglia. We also voted to order some additional chapter coins, voted several donations, and reviewed the results and feedback of our recent survey of members.



2023 Chapter Mileage

2023 was a wet year for riding and it shows in many of the individual mileage totals for the year, as well as our chapter mileage. But every mile ridden is a bonus for our peace of mind!

On our original 2023 schedule there were 33 events, and at the end of the year we had 28 official rides, plus and additional 8 "Hooky" rides.

We had members at a number of regional rallies and at the International convention in Austria! Our picture board showed a lot of smiles in the 80 pictures that greeted us at the Christmas party.

We have been keeping track of Chapter Member mileage for 16 years now, and our total of documented miles for those years is 2,245,891 with the addition of this year's 97,644 miles.

With over 2.2 million miles (collectively) in those years, our yearly average is over 140,000 miles. A bit less than average this year, but still a lot of miles our tires have rolled!

Thank you to our VP, Rick Oliver, for tracking the mileage.

Congratulations to Tim Kilhart as our top mileage rider in 2023, with **14,535** and our top female rider, Diona Laford with **3,608** miles.

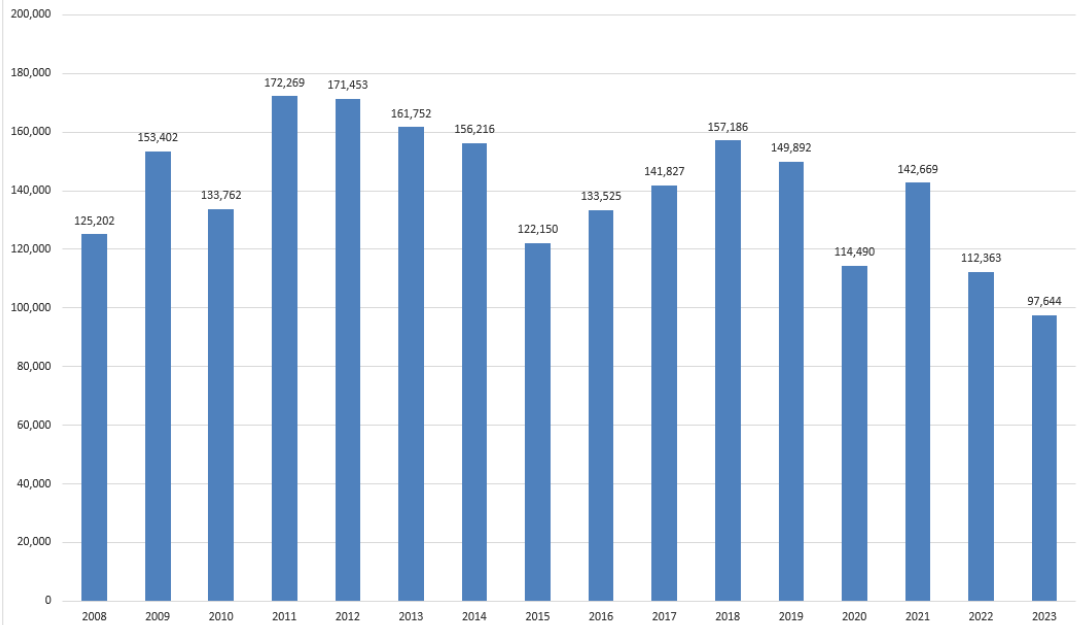
Most of us had lower mileages this year (it was such a wet riding season!). Our top twelve mileage-getters for the chapter in 2023 were:

Tim Kilhart	14,535
Armand Guilmette	13,417
Bob Laford	10,154
Jeff Hamberg	9,857
Bob Shakarian	8,398
Rick Oliver	4,505
Maurice Lizotte	4,342
Joe Hopkins	3,888
Diona Laford	3,608
Jim Skehan	2,641
Ian Hurley	2,463
Michelle Shepard	2,100

Please get Rick your 2024 start mileage if you did not give him your end mileage in 2023. Let's see who makes the list in 2024!

There are a lot of smiles and friendships in those miles. Keep riding and ride safe!

Red Knights Miles 2008-2023
2,245,801



Americade again returns to Lake George, and for 2024, once again, will be during part of Memorial Day week and run from Wednesday, May 29 to Saturday, June 1.

The Red Knights, in general, and MA-2, specifically do not have the attendee numbers that we saw in years past when we were all together at the Bay Front Cottage — but Americade in general does not have the large attendee numbers that it saw in bygone days, either.

But Americade and the Adirondack region still gives us all reason to smile with the miles of great roads to ride, and the friends that we do see when visiting Lake George. Whether you register for the rally and take on some of their planned rides, or venture out on your own, you cannot beat the motorcycle riding in the springtime in the area. (Need a new route to ride? Just ask our Road Captain Tim Kilhart and he will give you a quick list of a half-dozen or more favorite routes to take when in NY).

The vendor tents will be open, to let us shake out some of our winter doldrums and see what is on the market. Americade still provides a large number of motorcycle manufacturers to peruse as well as seminars and shows that help round out the week.

The Red Knights have been part of Americade since the beginning and 2024 will be no different.

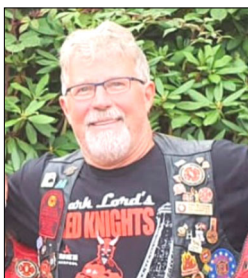
RK NY 12 is again hosting the RKMC Open House at the Lake George FD on May 30. There is no Founders' Ride at Lake George this year, as plans are in the works for a Founders' Ride based out of Massachusetts for 2024.

Along with the above events planned at Americade, NY Chapter 3 is also planning a Red Knight ride on Wednesday (May 29)

International Special Election

We know that with Spike Ostiguy being elected as International President at last year's International Convention, a vacancy had to be filled for International Vice-President.

Both Matt Mattera of NJ and Norm Beausoleil of MA1 were candidates, and after the votes were cast, we congratulate our friend and Founding Father Norm Beausoleil as he joins the board as the new International VP.



Here's to all the copilots out there; that little boy or girl, sitting behind mom or dad for the first time and taking the first ride around the neighborhood; the young couple heading off on their first long adventure; the couple with hundreds of thousand of miles under their butts. No matter what style of bike you're on, take a seat and enjoy the ride.

*Shira Kamil, editor
Backroads Magazine*

Who is your favorite co-pilot, secure behind you on the saddle. How many miles have you put on together? Close your eyes. I bet you can think of the first time they got behind you on the bike — and the many more adventures and rides you took together since then!

On the road with our friends...

Just a small turnout for our 2023 Polar Bear ride, but the sun was shining and temperatures in the 50's, making it a very pleasant day for a November ride.

It was not too many days later that some of us saw the roads being treated from some brief wintry mix!



Our 50/50 donation for 2023 went to the Cancer Support Fund of Central Mass. They sent us a nice thank you, and it included some information about the organization.



KEEPING SUPPORT LOCAL

The Cancer Support Fund of Central Mass., Inc. was founded in 2018 by a small group of individuals with the mission of supporting cancer patients receiving treatment at Heywood Healthcare Hospital in Gardner or Athol, or Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center in Fitchburg.

OUR STORY

After our own experiences as caretakers for friends and family, we have seen firsthand the financial toll cancer can take on a patient and their family. After talking with social workers at local hospitals and treatment centers, we discovered there was a need for more help.

We started this organization with the goal of helping to provide financial support to cancer patients in treatment locally. Within a few short months our organization has turned this dream into reality, helping to provide financial support to many patients.

WHAT WE DO

- Gifts cards for gas, groceries and prescriptions.
- Financial assistance for purchasing needed medical equipment.
- Financial assistance paying utilities.
- Financial assistance for restorative and complimentary care services recommended by the patient's care team.

APPLYING FOR SUPPORT

Applications for support must be submitted through the oncology staff at Heywood Healthcare or Simonds-Sinon Regional Cancer Center (to maintain confidentiality).

Visit cancersupportcentralma.org for more information. (501-c-3)

Mass-4 40th Anniversary

Our neighbors to the south RKMC Mass-4 are celebrating their 40th anniversary as a chapter in 2024 and they have invited us to celebrate with them!

Saturday, June 1. Co-Ride with Mass-4. Ride to visit the **USS Nautilus Museum** at the Groton, CT submarine base. (Details TBD)

Saturday, August 24. Co-Ride with Mass-4. We will be having lunch at the **Speedway Restaurant** at Thompson Speedway. (Details TBD)

MA-4 40th Anniversary Celebration!

Sunday, August 18
at the Charlton Beagle Club
Chicken BBQ (\$15)

There will be more details forthcoming

If you have not received your 2024 membership card, contact the Treasurer.

Mary Barclay and her magic fingers have made another special Afghan for us to use to support the Boylston Memorial.

We have made arrangements with those planning the Yankee Rally that it will be auctioned off when we have a big crowd from the Region in our neighborhood. Thank you Mary!

Our Motorcycle Registrations Expired on Dec. 31.

Massachusetts
23

Don't wait until that first unexpected warm day with clear roads to realize that you have not renewed your registration! (Inspections are due by the end of May).

The officers have talked about paying closer attention to the bikes that show up on our rides. To ensure the safety of all our members and those on our rides. You may be spoken to if you are deficient in regards to inspection or registration or if your bike's condition (especially tires) may be in an unsafe condition.

2024 Yankee Rally

June 5-9, 2024 In Keene, NH

With the rally so close to home, MA-2 should have a big turn-out of members to support our family in New Hampshire and see our many friends from the region and beyond.

There are MA-2 people with hotel reservations, and others that are taking advantage of the proximity and riding up each day. Never been to a regional rally? This is your chance to scope it out and have a great time!

Some of the events on the schedule include:

- Early Bird Ride on Thursday June 6th; depart at 10 am. The ride will go to the New Hampshire Telephone & Warner Firefighter's Museum
- Saturday night prizes include #1-Coin Collector with RKMC chapter, RKMC event, RKMC memorial, and members fire department coins. The winner will take home a treasure trove of coins for their coffers. #2 — Patches with RKMC chapter, RKMC event, RKMC memorial, and members fire department patches. The winner will take home a plethora of patches for their collection.
- Farewell Buffet Breakfast for all participants on Sunday morning.

Registration was attached to the fall newsletter, and is also available on the RK International webpage.

(One change from the registration form we shared with you before is that they would like the checks made out to **RKMC NH9 Yankee Rally 2024**).

Spring State Meeting

We are hosting the Spring State meeting on Saturday, May 4, at the Congregational Church at 21 North Main Street (Route 32) in Petersham.

This is the same day as our Blessing of the bikes, in hopes that we will draw members from the meeting down to the Petersham Common to participate in the blessing and enjoy some ice cream together.

Kevin Martin was presented with a 30-year certificate and member pin and Tim Kilhart a 25-year pin and certificate at the Christmas party.

Our 40-year charter members, Ed Brouillet, Charlie Clarkson, John and Carole Collins, Marty and Cliff Eldridge, Robert Feeley, Phil and Bea Jordan, Wayne Stacy, and Richard Wheeler were all recognized at our 40th celebration in August.



For the 2024 International Board elections we, as a Region-1 chapter, will be voting for Vice-President (yes, even though the special election was just a few months ago) and Secretary. We will only cast a ballot if there are contested positions.

Later in the spring we will discuss candidates and issues so all members will have a chance to voice their opinions before the chapter casts a ballot.



Modeling his new “Past-president” jacket, we were pleased to recognize Kevin Martin for his years of service to the E-board and the chapter at the Christmas party.

got ~~milk~~? gear?

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first-ever **Gear Swap** at our Winter Potluck and meeting — and thanks to the member that came up with the idea!

We had a great assortment of gently worn riding gear (and some other essentials) and almost all of it found new homes before the afternoon was complete.

We'll try this again in the future!



Where might our Hooky Rides lead in 2024

Have an idea for a ride, or would you like to lead a ride along a favorite route? Don't be shy, others would like the ride too!

2024 is the fourth year of our mid-week “Let's Play Hooky” rides idea. One more year and it becomes a tradition!



October 27, 2023 was the last Hooky Ride of the 2023 riding season. We were fortunate to get out in some perfect riding weather amid the last of the autumn colors in western Massachusetts. Keep an eye out for emails announcing this year's mid-week rides. Meeting times, locations and destinations are usually dependent on who can meet up to ride!

Sworn in at our Christmas party as newly elected, appointed, or re-elected officers: Charlie Hamberg (Assistant Road Captain), Tim Kilhart (Road Captain), Jim Skehan (Secretary) and Jeff Hamberg (President).

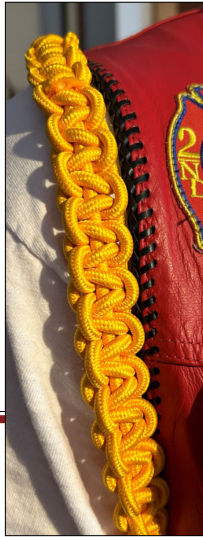


Also serving you on the E-board for 2024 are Rick Oliver (VP), Bob Laford (Treasurer), and Ian Hurley (Sgt.-at-Arms).

A special thank you to Larry and Nancy Robinson for their donation to the chapter in memory of their son, Kevin Robinson-Parizo, for the purchase of shoulder cords to be used by chapter honor guards.

If you would like to serve in a role as an honor guard in the future, please contact Vice-President Oliver.

Thank you to all those who stood as honor guard for our friend Ed Brouillet.



Family Assistance. We know that our own “finality” is not a pleasant topic to think about or discuss, but thinking about your final plans before the stress and emotions that accompany a loved one’s death help your family in working through the situation and what you would like to take place.

During the planning of Ed’s services, Peg was very gracious to allow the Red Knights to be a very special part of Ed’s goodbye.

Coming out of those planning steps, we have developed a “Family Assistance” document, that is there to help you and your family, if you want to consider how the Red Knights can offer support.

Some of the topics that are listed on this planning document are:

- Would you like the Red Knights to be present as a uniformed contingent at the services for your family member?
- Would you like the Red Knights to provide pall bearers for your family member?
- Would you like the Red Knights to provide an honor guard at the wake for your family member?
- Would you like the Patriot Guard Riders to provide flag lines at services (For Veteran’s and First Responders)?
- The Red Knights International have a funeral protocol that includes a presentation to the family, in honor of the Red Knight who has passed. How would you like that presentation completed?
- How would you like the name to appear on the RKMC Memorial in Boylston?

By having this planning document available, we thought it might offer some assistance to all our members. If you have not seen one of these forms, and would like one, contact Treasurer Laford.

RKMC — MA2
and Rev. Geoffrey Smith
of the Petersham Congregational Church

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

Saturday, May 4, 2024, 12:00 pm
At the Petersham Common — Route 32

A free-will donation of \$10 per bike is asked, and all proceeds will be donated to Home Base, a Massachusetts-based Veterans Support Service



The 2023 blessing brought out 41 motorcycles (and 5 bicycles) to the common in Petersham. Let’s work to have a bigger turnout for 2024 of both our members and other riders you know!

Scheduled immediately following the spring state meeting, please plan on joining us whether you are on two, three or four wheels!



Home Base, a Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Program, is dedicated to healing the invisible wounds for Veterans of all eras, Service Members, Military Families and Families of the Fallen through world-class clinical care, wellness, education and research. Home Base operates the nation’s foremost private-sector clinic devoted to treating the invisible wounds associated with military service. Since its inception, it has provided excellent complimentary care to over 24,000 veterans and family members.

For more information on Home Base visit www.homebase.org

RK Mass-2 CHRISTMAS 2023

We had one of our largest turnouts for our Christmas party at Slattery's in Fitchburg, back in December. We had 47 RSVPs, but because it was cold and flu season, we ended up with 7 take out orders and 40 in attendance.

There were lots of hugs and smiles, and everyone seemed to have a great time.

President Hamberg presented awards for the top mileage (Tim Kilhart and Diona Laford) and 25 and 30 year certificates to Tim Kilhart and Kevin Martin, respectively. Charlie Hamberg was officially announced as our chapter's new Assistant Road Captain and was presented with an ARC Red Knights decal.

Kevin Martin was presented and modeled his new "Past-president" Red Knights jacket, and it looked great!

Our picture board boasted 80 photos of those events throughout our 40th year celebration.

VP Rick Oliver swore in the newly elected, appointed, and re-elected board members for the 2024 season.

Most attendees brought gifts to participate in the Yankee gift swap, and as always there were a few gifts that got passed from person to person.

In 2024 the first Sunday in December is actually just three days after Thanksgiving, so the 2024 Christmas gathering will actually be a week later on Sunday, December 8 (back at Slattery's with a buffet). Mark your calendars!



*With all the gift cards we collected at the Christmas party, we sent a donation of \$320 to Sherry's House!
THANK YOU ALL for your generosity.*

Non-Red Knight events to support our communities

Thank you to everyone who came out in November to support our helping the **Marine Corps League Toys for Kids**. We staffed the Toys for Kids tent at the Walmart in Orange on the Sunday after Thanksgiving and were in awe of all the generosity shown to the program by all the shoppers and our members. Our chapter made a generous contribution, as well, that allowed a few of our members to go toy shopping in the store while we were "on post." And a big thank you to Mark and MJ for bringing a pickup truck full of toys with them! (Mark your calendars for the Sunday after Thanksgiving 2024 and we will be back!)



It was an honor to have some MA-2 members participate in the 2023 **Wreaths Across America**. We joined several hundred other volunteers in placing wreaths at each of the over 3,400 graves at the Veterans' Cemetery in Winchendon.



We know there are other Red Knights around the country who participate in these events at over 4,200 different Veteran's Cemeteries and each of us knows how important it is to give this well-deserved respect to our Veterans-passed.

Please consider joining us in December 2024.

Red Knight Rodeo (Saturday, June 15) — Ok all you asphalt cowboys and cowgirls, ride your favorite steed out and join us for our Dust-Buster Rodeo as we all hone our riding skills and enjoy some laughs and camaraderie. Grub will be available including hot dogs and beans to get into that western attitude with your two-wheeled steed.



Bring your motorcycle and your sense of humor.

While we plan some serious parking lot practice, and to review some safety essentials, we also plan to have some fun games and enjoy a fun day together!

More details about meeting place and time will be shared when final plans are confirmed.

2024 RKMC International Convention

August 12-18, 2024—Leipzig - Germany
(From Germany 18's Flyer)



Accommodation in a four-star hotel with air conditioning, including all taxes and a lavish breakfast buffet and access to a "Top Fit Club" with fitness equipment, dry and steam sauna.

Bus trips to Dresden with a cask cellar event at the 500-year-old Auerbachskeller, and bus trip to Berlin are available. A motorcycle tour of the area is planned, for those with bikes on hand.

A Friday BBQ is on the docket complete with transportation to and from the facility. In addition to the International Annual Business Meeting, Saturday includes a Gulaschkanone lunch (Goulash Can) with live entertainment, and the gala dinner and awards ceremony.

Leipzig and the surrounding area offer so much beauty to explore. The host chapter, with their insider knowledge are available to organize tours of different fire stations, as well as many museums and churches to visit, different swimming possibilities, rafting and boating excursions, motorcycle rental, motorcycle tours, a famous zoo, and of course, the Leipzig nightlife.



Sargent-at-Arms Ian Hurley will be representing MA-2 in Germany. Our chapter has had a representative at every convention in 40 years!

Locations to remember for future conventions:

- 2025 to be hosted by the Illinois State Association
- 2026 to be hosted by Australia 5

Survey Says!

Thank you to everyone that participated in our chapter survey in January. We had 30 respondents that gave us a good amount of feedback (most of it positive) and your board will use that information as we move ahead.

A couple of points have already been implemented from the information shared on the survey.

- 2024 Christmas Party. The survey was clear that most people want to try a different format. We will be going with a buffet this coming December, to try and alleviate the issue about meal “timing.” For those who have dietary restrictions, do not worry, we will work with the caterer to make sure everyone can feel comfortable with what is served.
- Formal meetings. We were asked if there could be more than just the annual meeting in the fall. We have scheduled one for the winter potluck that was just held, and also another that will be held at the July cookout.
- New England Motorcycle Museum. We have plugged in a cold-weather visit on the first Saturday in April (and will probably have an impromptu ride later in the season).
- One person asked why there are not pick up rides, where someone calls around to see if anyone wants to ride on a free day. YES! We try to do this with our “Hooky” rides, but each of you should be comfortable sending out an email saying “I WANT TO RIDE TOMORROW, WHO’S WITH ME!” You do not have to wait for your board to do that.

A few members have voiced their opinion to our board that they feel we are meeting “in the west” in Orange too often. It is true, that when the club began in 1983 the membership was focused in Fitchburg and Leominster and the neighboring communities around those two cities.

Our chapter membership now expands much further than it did 40 years ago and the chapter officers have to take that all into consideration, while providing a balanced approach of when and where we gather.

The location of our members is now split between those that live in “the east” towards Fitchburg and Leominster and to “the west” towards Athol and Orange. Also, fifteen percent of our membership no longer reside in Massachusetts.

It is estimated that 60% of our members still have a registered motorcycle in their possession. Although there are a few of these bikes that do not get ridden, most do, and 23% of these with registered bikes are in the east and 32% are in the west.

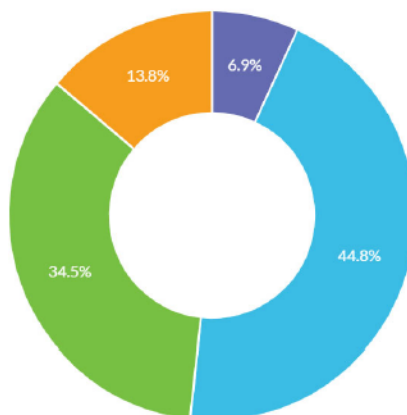
No matter if we meet in Orange or Westminister/Fitchburg, half of our membership has to travel 25-30 miles for a meeting point. Most times, the decision on where we meet is dependent on where we are headed. Are we heading west, or into Vermont or are we headed east or into NH?

The board feels that we have given the membership a fair listing of rides, and meeting places, and looking at the ride schedule over the past several years, east and west meeting points have been nearly split 50/50. In 2021 50% of the meeting places were in each, and in 2022 46% were in the east and 54% were in the west. The 2024 schedule is almost split 50/50.

It looks like 100-175 miles is the sweet spot for our chapter rides. It is also noted that “picnic rides” where we pick up lunch along the way and stop to socialize for lunch are popular. As we started in 2023, we are going to try and post length, route and destination when the weekly communications are sent out. This will also help for those times that someone cannot go on the ride, but might want to meet up with us when we stop for lunch (or ice cream).

Remember, MA-2 is YOUR club! Please do not wait for a survey if you have a question, idea or concern. Contact your officers to keep communicating!

What is your ideal length of ride with our group?



Choice	Total
Under 100 miles	2
100-125 Miles	13
150-175 Miles	10
200 or more Miles	0
Other	4

Mary Barclay posted this on Facebook on January 3, 2024 (and we thank her and all the bakers that helped with Ed's service):

Eddie, you and adventure always did travel in tandem, and you definitely enjoyed the classic, twisted sense of humor of a firefighter, sooooo...

It's been years since I've experienced one of what used to be my all-too-frequent kitchen catastrophes; long enough I can't remember when I last had to ventilate the premises due to heavy smoke conditions - until TODAY. As I sit here in the kitchen, tears coming from my smoke-irritated eyes, laughing like a crazy woman, I feel this turn of events has "Eddie Adventure" written all over it!

I'm baking snickerdoodles for your funeral this Saturday. I assembled the ingredients last night so I could get mixing and baking bright and early for what I figure will be an impressive turnout, testimony to the countless friends and many thankful acquaintances you've amassed over your years of selfless public service. I was pre-heating the oven for said snickerdoodles (first opening the oven door to ensure nothing was in there, a pre-emptive strike I have learned the hard way... more than once... many times, actually, lol) when things went amok.

I was responsibly using the 10 minutes' pre-heat time to tidy up the mess I'd made to that point, and get the next batch of cookie dough ready to roll. As I tidied, I noticed a little smoke; nothing surprising, given the oven temp was unusually high at 400F. for these cookies, and the last thing I baked in the oven was bacon. (And yes, I had removed the bacon pan.) A little bacon grease is burning off, is all, I figured... that is until the kitchen became hazy with smoke, and the smell was decidedly NOT that of bacon.

By now, Jim was out of his chair in the TV room, questioning why he couldn't see from the dining room into the kitchen. (He's alert to such conditions, since he's traditionally the one to hold the "smoke ejector" - AKA: Box Fan - on his shoulder in the back doorway during such events...)

Ok. What is the deal, here? I opened the oven door to see, and was met by belching black smoke. Not good! I stopped, dropped, and not needing to roll, peered into the recesses of the oven, only to find a smoldering, quilted cotton fabric pot holder in the back corner... Ahhhh, YES, (the light dawns) I had used that to prop up the bacon pan in the lukewarm oven to facilitate removing the grease for future home-baked doggie biscuits. Wellllll, shhhhhhhhugar!

I quickly grabbed a second pot holder, snagged the smoldering (and now GLOWING) pot holder from the back corner of the oven, and choking all the while, ran to the nearest exit. With (sadly, well-practiced) precision, I managed to open the back door while juggling the source of smoke, get out onto the back stoop (now efficiently tarped for winter by daughter Heather), wrangle the flapping edge of the tarp, and toss the pot holder onto the driveway, witnessing it burst briefly into flames as the smoldering wad of fabric experienced addition of the third element of the fire triangle. (You know: Heat, fuel, and OXYGEN!)

The impact of the fabric on the cold driveway extinguished the flames and left the pot holder (or more accurately, what REMAINS of the pot holder) sending my transgressions via dainty wisps of light gray smoke Heavenward, clearly for your enjoyment.

It is in your memory, Eddie, I throw myself under the bus on Facebook, so the members of our Red Knights family can all enjoy (albeit vicariously, thankfully!) my final adventure with you!



Thank you to all who supported Peg and her family, and honored Ed with your presence, your prayers, and your assistance during Ed's declining health and at his services.

We know one cook made 28 dozen cookies with her kids helping in the kitchen and no operating electric mixer. And we also have heard already of Mary Barclay's kitchen antics.

In Peg's thank you note to the chapter she wishes to thank all the Red Knights for the love and support during the recent difficult time following Ed's death.

She went on to say, "Even the funeral director was impressed with the tribute Ed was given. He said he had never seen anything like it. It was a sea of red."

The chapter has Heaven-1 Rockers in memory of Ed, as well as memorial decals for Ed. It is apparent how many Red Knights Ed touched as many people from across our worldwide organization have been reaching out to receive these.

Please, if you have not received either of these and wish to, please contact Treasurer Laford while we still have some available.

(We also have rockers on order in memory of Hal Billiard)



International's TMLA Audit

The International's Trademark Agreement program has been in existence for over 20 years. Each chapter is required to file for a "Trademark License Agreement" (TMLA) each time it wants to produce any item bearing the RKMC's name or images.

A part of the regulation for the TMLA program are routine audits of approved TMLAs, by the International Secretary. This requirement seemed to have fallen by the wayside. In the history of the club's program, MA-2 was only contacted once and asked about just a couple of our 26 separate TMLA agreements that we hold.

Our current International Secretary, Mike Woods, definitely stepped up to the plate to try and bring this requirement into compliance across the club. Woody told us there are around 6,000 TMLA agreements on hand, and he hopes that by conducting the required audit with all the chapters, this number will become more manageable and a structured means to conduct ongoing audits will be accomplished.

President Hamberg, VP Oliver and Treasurer Laford reviewed the 26 TMLAs that our chapter held, and decided that ten of them could be "sunsetting" by the International, since they were no longer in active use. We completed our audit with the International by submitting a report to update our current outlook on our "products."

Two TMLAs that we hold, that are not active, but we wish to keep on file were a breast badge for chapter members (something we never produced) and the Lady of the Knights T-shirts that Caitlin designed.

If there is anyone that wishes to have a badge, we are able to produce those for our members.

We are also thinking of advertising reissued "Lady of the Knights" T-shirts. If there are any members of our club that would like one (or a new one), please contact Treasurer Laford. We are working with our new clothing vendor on refreshing the design, and getting quotes for shirts.

New year "Revelation"

Since we are beyond the first three weeks of 2024, my guess is that any New Year's resolutions you made have already been left behind in the rear-view mirror!

In the January edition of Rider Magazine, columnist Eric Trow brought up this point and said he wanted to talk about New Revelations rather than resolutions, so I thought I would share some excerpts from his writing.

Instead of looking forward with rose-colored glasses, I'm looking back on this past year with smudged bifocals, and contemplating [what] can be learned from the experience. Let's identify what really matters, what didn't and what has changed.

-I've realized that I now enjoy riding casually on backroads. It's the kind of riding my dad used to enjoy, but would trigger a "C'mon Dad, let's go!" remark from those of us behind him.

-Another revelation is that my garage is so crowded that fetching a wrench requires negotiating a maze [to find what I am looking for in the first place]. Since a larger garage would be nice [but not in the budget], I'm compelled to thin the herd of machines and just have the bikes I most ride and enjoy.

-I hate to admit that I don't enjoy wrenching as much as I used to. Chasing problems is less exhilarating these days than chasing horizons.

-I don't like being cold. While I was once motivated by the idea of heading out even when there was frost on the ground, I now have little desire to cope with cold temperature at speed.

-But not all revelations are bad. I have rediscovered how much I love taking two-wheeled trips with my wife.

The real revelation heading into the new year? As I contemplated where I am today, despite some shifts in priorities and a touch of curmudgeonly attitude, I realize that I still love motorcycles and motorcycle travel as much as I ever have.



New for 2024 are some “topical discussions” for our Breakfast Clubs. In January we talked about motorcycle inspections. 540 CMR is the Massachusetts regulation that details motor vehicle inspections. Seven (7) pages of that document list what is supposed to be inspected on motorcycles each year!

Needless to say, many shops that do our inspections fall far short when they take a five minute inspection to test our horns and directional lights!

Each motorcycle that is not inspected properly could pose a danger to each of us fellow riders, as well as the riders on those bikes. Below are some excerpts from the regulations. If you would like a full copy of the regulation, contact Bob Laford.

The Certificate of Registration shall be inspected and verified with the subject motorcycle.

The number plate must be undamaged, securely horizontally mounted on the rear of the motorcycle, clean and clearly visible (with a light for illumination).

Brakes: Reject motorcycles if (1) Hoses or tubing leaks or they are cracked, chaffed, flattened, restricted or improperly fastened. (2) Master cylinder leaks or reservoir is less than 1/2 capacity. (3) There is any leaks in the brake system. (4) Push rod is improperly adjusted. (5) Wheel cylinder or caliper fails to function. Test motorcycle brakes from standing position. The inspector should be able to maintain brake lever under moderate force for 15 seconds [reject if not able to maintain pressure]. Allow wheels to turn freely when not in braking mode [reject if binding occurs]. Inspect brake pads and discs for cracking, mechanical damage, oil contamination, warped disc, or if pad is broken, loose, or worn beyond replacement indicators.

Exhaust system: The motorcycle shall be equipped with a muffler to prevent excessive and unnecessary noise. Accelerate motor to half throttle position to test for unnecessary noise and emission of unreasonable amount of smoke [Reject if exhaust is modified, pinched, obstructed or louder than the manufacturer's original equipment.] Reject if the exhaust system is not shielded to prevent riders from being burnt while in the normal riding position.

Suspension of Front End: [Jack up and] Spin front wheel and reject if noticeable play or roughness or growl, or if bearing seals are cracked, torn or discolored. Reject if front to rear wheel is misaligned, if the wheel is not parallel to front fork tubes, or if the rim “run out” is greater than the manufacturer’s limit. Inspect fork suspension for severe leakage.

Handlebars: Reject if (1) Handlebars or grips are higher than the operator’s shoulders. (2) Not a minimum of 18 inches between grip ends, or cannot rotate stop to stop.

Horn: Shall be audible at a distance of 200 feet, but shall not be unreasonably loud or harsh.

Tires: References to tire tread wear indicators, and minimum 2/32” tread by using a tread depth gauge.

Wheels: Reject if wheel is bent, cracked or damaged, or if there is more than one missing, bent or broken spoke (on spoked wheels).

Suspension of Rear End: Place bike on lift and check for lateral movement and inspect for wear and looseness.

Lighting devices and Reflectors: All lighting devices and reflectors when motorcycle was originally manufactured shall be securely attached and perform their design function. Lenses must be intact, clean, unobstructed and free from cracks. Each motorcycle shall be equipped with a white light as to illuminate the rear number plate. Each motorcycle shall have at least one rear red reflector and two red side reflectors. East motorcycle shall be equipped with front and rear turn signal lamps. If equipped with auxiliary lighting, reject if fog lamps or auxiliary lights operate with high beam headlight.

Body Components: Fenders shall be mounted over both wheels and shall cover the width of the tire and a minimum of 1/4 the wheel circumference. Highway bars are not to extend beyond the widest portion of the motorcycle. Foot rests must be in place for each seating position.

Chain Drive: Inspect chain slack, chain guard, and sprockets.

Side stand: Reject if side stand will not remain in stored position.

Frame: Inspect frame to see if repairs are made in any temporary manner or frame components are cracked, rotted, broken or deteriorated.

Fuel system: Inspect for fuel leakage at any point in the system. Reject if throttle does not return to idle position when force is removed. Inspect hoses.

Engine: Reject if there is any leakage of oil or other fluids which create tire traction problems.

Battery: Inspect to ensure secured properly and vent tube is fastened and properly routed.

Rear view mirror: Must have minimum of one rear view mirror. Reject if cracked or will not hold adjustment. Mirror must have 12 square inches of reflective surface.

Controls: Reject if Clutch or Brake lever broken or missing. Each motorcycle shall be equipped with a locking ignition to prevent the motorcycle from being used by unauthorized persons.

As you can see, there is a lot that goes into a proper annual inspection of our motorcycles, if the shop follows the regulations. These excerpts do not go into the detail listed in the CMR, just the highlights. Would your bike pass if the inspector took the time to go over every detail that is required by the regulations?