

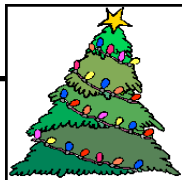


# Red Knights

Mass Chapter 2 — October '12

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

*Loyal to Our Duty*



## Mass-2 Christmas Party

- Sunday, December 9, 2012
- 1:00 p.m.
- The Glen Cafe  
63 Glenallen Street, Winchendon

Come join us for our catered dinner and annual Yankee Gift Swap.

Bring a wrapped gift with a value of no more than \$15 for the gift swap.

*This year's menu tentatively is a buffet that includes Chicken & Broccoli, Baked Haddock, and Sliced Prime Rib with appetizer, potato, vegetables, salad, and dessert.*

The cost is \$20 per person (the chapter is picking up the remainder of the cost). A special thank you goes out to Maury Lizotte for his leg work on this year's party planning.

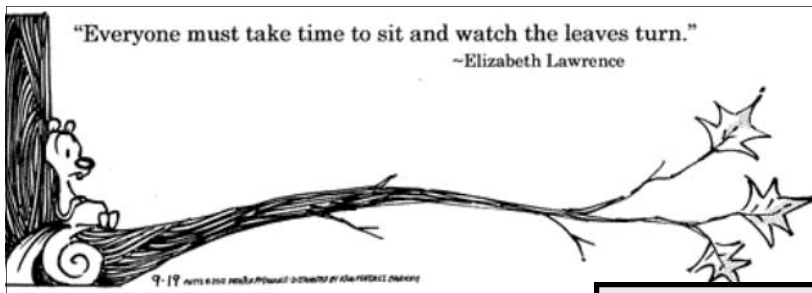
*...hope to see you all there!*

Hello everyone,

Just a quick note to let you in on some ride and event reminders for the rest of the year — and also to remind you that it is that time again for our dues for the upcoming year. Attached to this correspondence is a dues invoice for you.

We appreciate your membership and participation in our chapter — and also thank you all for your support in time, talent, ideas — and your dues.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the other officers.



*Still plenty of riding time left in the season!*

Sunday, October 7:

### Breakfast (and Apple Pie) with Smokey Bear....

Breakfast first (to support our brethren at the Jaffrey FD) and then off to the Dummerston Apple Pie Festival! Leave Westminster DD at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, October 13.

**RK Massachusetts State Meeting.** Fall meeting hosted by Mass-13 at the Ayer F.D. Meet and greet in Ayer at 10:30 a.m. Mass-2 meet at Westminster DD for 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 20.

**Annual Meeting and (Brunch/Lunch) Ride.** Our first Saturday Breakfast Club for the Fall, but it will be more for lunch. Meet at the Shell Station in Orange at 2/202 at 9:00 a.m. A short ride to Amherst where we will have our annual meeting (and election of officers) and then a *post-meeting* ride

Sunday, October 28.

**Gold Star Mother Ride.** Fall ride to Manchester, NH to view the Gold Star Mothers Monument. Meet at Westminster DD for 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, November 4.

**Polar Bear Ride.** What will the weather bring in '12? Meet at Westminster DD at 11:00 a.m. (*Don't forget to change your clocks!*)

Our **Breakfast Clubs** are starting up again! The riding season may be winding down, but that does not mean that the fun is going to stop.

**Every third Saturday** from November through April we will gather for breakfast and fellowship. Meet at the Westminster Dunkin Donuts for 9:00 a.m. and we will discover a different breakfast haunt for each month.

November 17,  
December 15,  
January 19,  
February 16,  
March 16, and  
April 20

We will again be accepting donations for Sherry's House at our Christmas party.

Please consider purchasing and donating gift cards for **Wal-Mart, Target, K-Mart, Shaw's, Stop & Shop, CVS, etc. or Gas Cards, Phone Cards, VISA and American Express** gift cards. Visit [www.whyme.org](http://www.whyme.org) for more information about Sherry's House. We will be bringing all of those collected to Sherry's House in Worcester to assist them in their mission for the kids this holiday season.

As always, thank you for your generosity — the children and families at the home thank you as well.

**We must have a RSVPs and pre-paid dinners by Sunday, November 25 to give to the caterer.** Please contact Tim Kilhart with your meal payment as soon as you can.

2013 marks the 30th anniversary of Red Knights Mass Chapter 2. We all owe a tip of our hat to those people who started our group (see article below) — and to all those who have worked hard to keep our chapter alive and vibrant over the last three decades. Don't sit on the sidelines; be part of our group to help keep us moving in the right direction for the next thirty years!

## Here Come The Red Knights

(Continued from Page 1)

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

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."

## Here Come The Red Knights

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

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*Do you have ride ideas for 2013?*

It is time to start thinking about what, when, where and how for 2013.

Our ride schedule belongs to everyone! So if you know of a place that would be a good ride (or a good food place), or if we have been somewhere in the past that you would like to go again, let an officer know and we will sort through all the ideas and come up with another fun year of rides!

## 2013 Dues

Attached are the electronic reminders about your 2013 dues.

As with any organization there are expenses that we incur and your dues help us cover those costs. A portion of your dues also go to the International for our charter dues. (We must have all International dues paid by the end of the year or we incur a \$50 penalty).

# Los Angeles Fire Department tries out a motorcycle response unit

Two-wheeled responders can go where larger vehicles can't, an advantage in certain situations — especially in car-clogged Los Angeles.

Los Angeles firefighter Greg Pascola spotted a column of smoke from the corner of his eye — a fire burning on a distant hillside.

He looked east from his vantage point on a mountaintop road near Mulholland Drive and felt wind at his back. It was 3 p.m. on a September Friday that would see record-breaking heat, and cars choked every lane of the 405 Freeway for miles.

He and his partner gunned their motorcycles.

They are part of the Los Angeles Fire Department's pilot motorcycle response team, a five-man unit that can speed to the side of an injured victim, provide information to dispatchers and skirt traffic to scout fires and other problems. The unit first rode during last year's "Carmageddon" closure of the 405, and its next deployment will take place during the follow-up closure this weekend, when workers will demolish the other half of the Mulholland Drive bridge overhead.

Fire departments serving traffic-snarled cities around the nation have adopted similar motorcycle teams to improve response times, staff special events and, in some cases, save lives and resources. As the L.A. department faces budget cuts and intense scrutiny over response times that lag behind national standards, some believe that a roving motorcycle unit could help the department.

The pilot unit features five off-road-capable motorcycles on loan from the Kawasaki Motor Corp. Each bike retails for about \$6,300 and is outfitted with a defibrillator, a small fire extinguisher, various medical supplies and a handlebar-mounted GPS system. A dozen firefighters have undergone the necessary training, and a permanent unit could have up to 10 motorcycles and 28 riders, said Capt. Craig White, who first proposed the unit to the department.

White said he'd thought about creating a motorcycle unit for years, and last year's 405 closure — shutting down 10 miles of one of the nation's busiest freeways — presented the ideal test. The department already had a bicycle medic unit for events such as the L.A. Marathon.

Though the nightmare Carmageddon traffic

jams that officials feared never materialized, the motorcycle unit had an opportunity to show what it could do earlier this month.

As a 70-acre brush fire stopped traffic on the 405 and caused the evacuation of the Getty Center, Pascola and his partner reached the command post within three minutes — even before helicopters could reach the site. They were handed radios and began to map the blaze, weaving between cars, hopping sidewalks and navigating narrow, curving mountain roads.

"At the time, we were the only ones out there to scout," Pascola said.

In addition to scouting fires, advocates say the motorcycle response team could also help save lives. When a heart attack occurs, the American Heart and Lung Assn. says, irreversible brain damage can begin after four minutes. Motorcycle-borne medics equipped with defibrillators in Miami cut response times from an average of seven minutes to less than three in some places, said Capt. Roman Bas of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue.

"Absolutely it saved lives," Bas said. "And it saved money too."

Bas said deploying motorcycles instead of ambulances and trucks reduced fuel consumption and extended the working life of more valuable emergency response vehicles, which were used less. He had planned to expand the program to 12 battalions, with a roving motorcycle response unit to cover multiple areas of the city.

But Miami's motorcycle medic unit was dismantled in 2008 after department wide budget cuts. Though the program was relatively cheap — the fleet of 10 donated motorcycles cost \$36,000 a year to maintain — Bas said it wasn't a priority.

"Putting firefighters on motorcycles is just not tradition," Bas

said. "You still have departments where all they do is handle fire. They need to look into new ways of using these units."

The Seattle Fire Department has also explored motorcycle response units, but a program never got off the ground. Austin, Texas, has a program with four motorcycles, but it is run separately from the Austin Fire Department.

The units are more common overseas in Japan and Europe, where some motorcycle units tow cars and fight fires with specialized attachments.

White said LAFD officials want to see if state and federal grants could help make their motorcycle unit permanent, although a large expansion like the one Miami's Bas had wanted is unlikely.

LAFD Chief Brian Cummings said motorcycles could be "one of the solutions" the department considers for improving response times.

"Do I see the motorcycles supplanting larger vehicles? No. There's always going to be a need to bring heavy equipment and large numbers of individuals," Cummings said. "They each have a role. They're each tools in the toolbox."

White, a motorcycle enthusiast since high school, said the unit's biggest selling point is its flexibility.

"Right now," he said, "we just want to see what we can do with them."





## Product Evaluation: Rider Gear E.A.R. Insta-Mold Plugs



**Silicone material can't go past a small temporary foam plug that the technician sets in place with a length of thread draped out of your ear.**

Eyeglasses, Contact Lenses, Hearing Aids, Eye Exams

### LEONARD OPTICIAN, INC.

119 New Athol Rd.  
Orange, Mass. 01364

#### DOUGLAS J. DUPELL

Optical Lic. # 4072  
Hearing Aid Lic. # 79  
978-249-9033  
978-249-9020

**W**hile checking out the vendors at a major rally, I was introduced to the team from E.A.R. Inc. by a colleague. He insisted that E.A.R. products were the best earplugs he had ever tried. After introductions, I stood by and watched the technicians ply their trade while waiting my turn to go under the syringe.

E.A.R. Insta-Mold silicone earplugs are custom fitted to your ear by a technician who squeezes the right amount of color-coordinated goo into your ear. It is allowed to set before removal and detailing.

The custom-fit feature of Insta-Mold plugs offers better fit, comfort, maximum attenuation value and greater convenience. It provides a reliable "tissue-to-tissue" fit, duplicating every crevice and contour of the ear, which allows the user to wear these earplugs for extended periods of time without discomfort or irritation.

E.A.R. uses a medical-grade, hypoallergenic silicone that remains flexible and soft throughout the lifetime of the plugs, giving you several years of con-

sistent use. Insta-Mold ear protection is virtually unshrinkable and can be used in a variety of activities. Unlike imitations, Insta-Molds use a Seal-Kote to add luster and provide a skin to protect the mold against dirt and grime. The plugs are easily washable with soap and water and are immediately ready for use. By obtaining the ultimate fit, Insta-Molds achieve the best attainable noise-reduction rating and provide the maximum in hearing protection. The fit of my plugs is so spot-on that the proper method of installing or removing them requires a corkscrew-like rotating motion. These plugs don't just pop out.

The company is based in Boulder, Colorado, but it has properly trained techs at outlets all over the country. The price shown is an estimate. Contact your local provider for a quote. E.A.R.'s web site has a contact form to help you find your local outlet, or visit the E.A.R. booth at your next rally. —*Steve Lita*

#### hard data

E.A.R. Inc. Insta-Mold Earplugs @ \$65, contact local provider for quote 800/525-2690 EARInc.com

### Can you hear me now??

*Probably a few years late*, but this year I started to wear hearing protection when I am riding. My hearing has been diminishing a bit and as with any of us I have not been very kind to my hearing whether it was from concerts in the Centrum, music blaring in my car, 30 years of being a firefighter, or the wind noise from riding.

Even with a full face helmet, the experts say that the decibels created at highway speed exceed what OSHA considers safe for us at work even in a very brief amount of time.

What I found when I started wearing the disposable plugs at the beginning of riding season was that I could still hear what was going on around me — actually even better. I can hear my wife in the headset, I can hear my engine, the horn, and the traffic around me. What the ear plugs cut out was the wind noise. And if I spent the day on the bike wearing ear pugs, I was not as mentally fatigued at the end of the day. Now that I have been riding with them for a while, something does not feel "right" if I ride off without putting them in. Just like any piece of protective equipment, from gloves, boots, or helmet. If we get into the habit of wearing them, it becomes part of our routine.

At Americade in June, there were several vendors for "custom" hearing protection. I kept going back to them asking questions and looking at their documentation, and I finally shelled out the money and sat to have a custom pair of ear plugs made. They use a polymer that forms to your ear canal so that it fits your ear perfectly. That increases the

amount of sound attenuation that is possible, makes them more comfortable to wear, and they won't fall out.

I encourage everyone investing in a pair of custom ear plugs. You will not regret it. Pricy? Not really. It was around \$55, and as the rep told me, "you'll lose one long before they wear out."

As Campus Safety Officer I go through about \$300 worth of disposable ear plugs for the people in my circle of responsibility each year. I am so impressed with these custom plugs that I have brought in a vendor to fit out a number of people as a "market trial" at the University.

Since there was no vendor in our area, I contacted my friend Doug Dupell at Leonard Opticians in Orange. Doug is a fellow rider, EMT, and retired firefighter as well. His company has been working in the hearing aid business for many years, and the way to make these ear plugs is very similar to how he makes ear casts for hearing aids. Doug has now taken on the E.A.R. Inc brand of custom hearing protection in his store. (*Leonard Optician's business card is scanned in above*).

Above is a review of the E.A.R. Inc product from Road Bike Magazine. If you are interested in getting a set for yourself, stop by and see Doug on Route 2A, right on the Athol/Orange town line at Leonard Optician. And mention you are a Red Knight and he will give you a discounted price of \$45 for the custom molded hearing protection!