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# Red Knights

## Mass Chapter 2 — Winter '04

<http://www.redknightsmc.org/mass2/>

### Loyal to Our Duty

From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

Written in the 1800's, Walt Whitman's *Song of the Open Road*, sounds like he wrote it for each one of us who ride. Each year I come to realize how much I love riding by taking that first ride of the new riding season. It is then that I realize how special that feeling is to be on my bike leaning into the curves and how much I missed those rides during the winter.

In 2002 our winter began with snow in October, but 2003 was a little more gentle as November even gave us some nice days of moderate temperatures and sunshine. I even had the chance to put on a few miles during the week of Thanksgiving – and usually in past years the road would have already had some sand and salt on it (if not snow) by that time.

Even though we cannot ride all through the year our chapter remains active even in the cold months. You may not get the actual feeling of banking into the curves, but you can relive those great curves and memorable rides with each other every time we meet.

Our biggest non-riding event is our Christmas party – and this year was a great success just as years past have been. Although it was not weather that allowed us to come on two wheels (actually had 6 inches of new snow in Petersham when we got home) we had twenty-nine people in attendance. Thanks go out to Donna Morreau, her sister and the other staff at the Apple Hill Farm in Leominster for such a great spread of food!

Earlier this month we met and distributed our riding schedule for the season. It's always exciting to get together and plan ahead for those great times yet to come. A copy of the ride schedule is enclosed. Please post it at home, circle the dates, and come join us! The roads are not perfect yet, so we have a few events coming up during the cold weather including our monthly **Breakfast Club** meetings, our annual **Train Ride to Boston**, and our annual spring meeting in April.

Mentioned in this newsletter is our new scholarship program to help new riders. Share your ideas with us on how best to promote this new endeavor and help us improve the image of motorcycling by helping young people.

Thank you to Ed Brouillet for designing and promoting a new decal that is available to us and to Kevin Martin who is selling shirts with the revised logo. The new logo is really sharp!

I cannot wait to be riding my bike again with Diona behind me and my friends from the Red Knights with me on the road. We hope to see all of you during our riding year — the schedule looks like it is going to be another fun filled year.

Until we meet, take care and ride safe.

### Spring Business Meeting and Pot-luck for Mass-Chapter-2

### Saturday, April 3



At Cliff and Marty Eldridge's  
856 Main Street,  
Leominster – 4 pm

Bring a dish to share, and some stories to tell. We'll do a little business, and then Marty says we'll play **BUNKO!**



Look for the 2004 Ride Schedule for Red Knights – Mass-2 included with this newsletter.

**Rider Education is the key to your safety and the safety of everyone you ride with!**

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free,  
the world before me,  
The long dark path before me,  
leading wherever I choose.  
Henceforth I ask not good fortune - I myself am good fortune;  
Henceforth I whimper no more,  
postpone no more,  
need nothing,  
Strong and content,  
I travel the open road.  
Walt Whitman  
Song of the Open Road

### Red Knights Scholarship

We have always promoted safe driving and rider education, and we are launching a new program to promote just that with a Red Knights Scholarship.

Our chapter will sponsor up to two scholarships a year for 50% of the cost of a rider education course for a new rider.

We are still working out details, so if you have ideas on how best to implement this, let an officer know. The primary thought is to help young people develop safe riding skills at the beginning of their riding career.

If you know of a new rider that could use some financial help to get trained the right way, pass his or her name on to an officer as well. Thanks!

The Red Knights encourage all its members to take a Motorcycle Safety Foundation Rider Education Course. Ask anyone who has taken the training – no matter how long you have been riding, you will learn something that will make you a better rider. Make 2004 the year you improve your riding skills.

Sharpen and enhance your skills with an Experienced Rider Course! The program covers such topics as:

- Rider and motorcycle preparation
- Street riding strategies
- Traction factors
- Braking and cornering techniques
- Swerving techniques

Not only will you become a better rider, but students successfully completing either the beginners or experienced rider course will receive a MSF course card which entitles you to a 10% limited Massachusetts motorcycle insurance discount and tuition reimbursement through some manufacturer programs.

**2004 120-Club** — *Our 120 Club tickets are available and we hope that everyone will buy and sell some!*

Think about your dues, \$10. Of that \$7 goes to the International. That means for our chapter, with our current membership we have a little over \$200 left to run the club for a year if the dues were all we had. Each newsletter costs us about \$50 to copy and mail, so that brings our dues funds down to \$50.

Our club is also very charitable. We give away nearly every dollar we make on fundraisers. We give to charities, people in need, and now we are starting a scholarship to encourage young riders to take the Motorcycle Safety Foundation training.

Our 120 Club Raffle has been a great fundraiser. Please support it and sell some tickets. If you were not at the Snow Party we had in Ashby recently, please contact Marty Eldridge to get tickets for yourself. At \$20 each they're a lot better odds than the lottery!

All unsold tickets need to be in to Marty by May 31 so we can take them to Americade to sell. Our drawing this year will be on **Thursday, June 17, after our Ice Cream Ride**. This is the Thursday after we return from Americade. So please sell some tickets, then join us for ice cream — and you may go home a winner! Prizes are \$500, \$200, \$100, 2 X \$50, and 20 X \$20. (Thanks to Kevin Martin for getting us the tickets).

*Thank you to everyone who has helped make these raffles a success for the club.*

Come join us at the  
**Annual Red Knights New England  
Regional Cape Cod Weekend**  
on Friday, April 30 through Sunday, May 2, 2004

This year we are trying out a new hotel, and the Saturday ride is being billed as a Red Knights Grand Tour on the Cape.

We leave on Friday, April 30. Meet at the **Westminster FD** at 9:00 (or the junction of Routes 140 and 12 at 9:30) and we'll head to the Yarmouth Resort on the Cape. The room rates are the same as last year (\$49.90) even though it's a different hotel. Their number is 877-838-3524 – Call soon for your reservation! The hotel is on Rt. 28 in West Yarmouth and more info is online at [www.yarmouthresort.com](http://www.yarmouthresort.com). Mention **CODE YR-404** when you call.

As with last year, the hotel will hold the special price an extra night if you want to stay over until Monday. A number of members did that last year, and we enjoyed a leisurely ride home on Monday with very little traffic!

If you have any questions about the weekend,

**Americade ...and a great time was had by all!** You can't beat the fun time we have at Americade each year — and 2004 will be no exception. To paraphrase an excerpt from an article that appeared in *BackRoads* magazine, *For one week in June 2003 all was right in our little motorcycling world. We lived in a motorcycle nation, and that is just fine with us. With a 20 year history behind it, Americade is one of the best places you can ride to on your bike. Good folks, good times and great fun is to be had in early June each year.*

If you have never been to Americade, just mention it to a rider who has been and watch their face light up! Each year we have well over twenty Mass-2 members who make their pilgrimage to Lake George, NY. Some come for just a day or two and others come for the entire week. It is just a great time and one of the best — and laid back — motorcycle rallies around.

This year as in the last several years, the Red Knights are hosting one of the three-course dinners that are part of the week's "Full Package." Along with a large contingent of Red Knights from around the northeast (and beyond) we get to visit with 400-500 other riders who come to share their meal with us. We have been one of the best dinners for our door prizes too! So please think about donating any gifts (you know those left over presents that you don't really want or need) and get them to Ed Brouillet so we can raffle off a bunch of prizes at the Wednesday evening meal.

Thursday night is always the Red Knights' general meeting at the Lake George Fire Station. We normally have 200-300 Red Knights in attendance and have a great time visiting with old friends and making new ones.

Last year Ed Brouillet led a seminar on the History of the Red Knights and this year Ed and Bob Laford are leading a seminar on "Planning for a Long Trip" at Roaring Brook Ranch. Did you catch Bob's article in the February edition of *Wing World* on last year's ride to Nova Scotia that the Laford's, Brouillet's, and Eldridge's did?

If you are looking for more information on Americade, check out their web page at [www.tourexpo.com](http://www.tourexpo.com) or contact one of the chapter officers. If it is your first trip — it won't be your last!

Who is headed to Alberta for the convention this year?

The plans that the Albert Chapter have put forth for the August Convention are just fantastic! From the Canadian Rockies to the events inside Edmonton, it looks like 2004 will be a great convention.

There are people who are flying out and others who are riding all the way. If you would like more details, visit the Red Knights web page or speak to International President Ed Brouillet.

Phil Jordan and Tim Kilhart are coordinating plans for people who are flying out. Sounds like there are already 8 or 10 signed up to fly!

If you want more details on those accommodations, contact Tim or Phil ASAP so your reservations can be made with the airlines and with Alberta-1.

## *On the road with our friends*

- Eleven members met up for our final scheduled ride for 2003. Our Polar Bear ride sometimes is very cold and sometimes is very warm, but this November, riders were greeted somewhere in between. We enjoyed temperatures that were near to 60 degrees. Mother Nature did sprinkle on us a little when we started out, and while we were having lunch in the Black and White restaurant in Spencer the skies opened up! But by the time we finished lunch, the rains had subsided and we divided into three groups to head home in three different directions. It was a good season-closing ride with good friends. Hope you all get to join us on some rides and events this year too!
- We have been drawing 8-12 people at our Breakfast Club gatherings each month (even when we were having that very cold weather in January). Consider joining us on the 3rd Saturday of the month for breakfast and wonderful conversation!
- A group of six chapter members decided to head to Boston (on short notice) to view the bike show at the World Trade Center on a very cold and windy Saturday in January. Lot's of bikes to look at and had a great time. Hmmm... maybe we should plan a "boys day out" every year!

I received the following note in the mail since our last newsletter:

I am a member of the Georgetown, MA volunteer Fire Department. Recently while looking at the November issue of 1st Responder Newspaper I came across the picture of your group delivering the "Little Heroes" Teddy Bears to local Fire Departments and ambulance crews for children that those departments come in contact with while responding. Recently we were dispatched to a call that involved a young child.

I am sure that had we had a "Little Hero" or something similar it would have eased the child's fears. I plan to suggest that at our next meeting.

Anyway, I just wanted to say that is wonderful thing you guys did! Keep up the good work!

Sincerely, Gary Bent  
Georgetown FD

When you watch the evening news you wonder if anyone ever notices the good things that happen... I say the answer is yes.

## **Rides for '04**

The chapter officers met in January and developed a ride schedule for 2004. We tried to have a variety of events from short rides, ice cream rides, longer rides, different fun things to do, and some weekend rides as well. And just because the ride schedule is printed doesn't mean we can't add something more!

We will not have another newsletter in the mail until around Americade – but of course we will be riding together between now and then even though the road and weather conditions don't look too favorable right now!

Here are some of our upcoming events in for 2004:

- Boston Train Ride on March 13
  - Pot Luck Dinner and Meeting on April 3
  - Cape Cod Weekend, April 30 through May 3
  - Off to the Races on May 22
  - Americade, June 7-13
  - 120 Club Drawing on June 17
- \*\*\*June 17 is an ice cream ride, but its not the 2nd Thursday, but the 3rd Thursday for June!  
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Your chapter officers have decided that at each event when the chapter gathers we will hold a 50/50 raffle (just as last year). The proceeds will be part of a *kitty* that is available to help us give more donations to worthy causes and people in need. As the year goes on if you hear of a charity that would benefit from a donation, a family that has been burned out and needs some help, or other worthwhile casues, please let the officers know so we can make sure this fund gets put to good use.

At the Christmas party we gave the International a check for \$500 for the Red Knights Memorial. This money was collected throughout 2003 with 50/50 raffles at rides. Combined with the \$200 that was given at the beginning of the year, the members of this chapter should be proud of their efforts in helping the RK Memorial start off with \$700 from Massachusetts-2 — because as we know, Massachusetts is where it began!

### Enclosed is a **Chapter Emergency Information Form**.

This form provides us with information in case an emergency arises while you are with the club and some sort of assistance is needed or we need to contact family for you. Each of the officers carries a database of this information. Many people have already sent in their information over the past few years. We've enclosed a form for those of you who have not yet submitted one, and also in case information needs to be updated for those who have already filled out an emergency form.

Thank you for participating in this chapter program.

### *Bikes for Sale in the Chapter:*

1997 Honda Goldwing SE 1500 – Two tone Red with Pin striping

One owner – 69,000 miles, Receiver Hitch, Cover, New Windshield New tires last spring, Garmen GPS system, New Travelcade saddle last fall (\$600)

I have all the oil change and work records that were done to the bike for review. Still runs like new. Reason for selling, I'm looking to upgrade – \$9500.00 FIRM – Contact Ed Brouillet at 978-632-8230

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2003 Honda VTX 1300, Candy-Apple Red

With Windshield, Backrest, Saddlebags, and only 8000 miles

Asking \$7700 — excellent shape

Contact Kevin Martin at 978-632-2677 or kmartin812@hotmail.com

## Soon to be back on two wheels...

Our winter hiatus from riding in the north-east invariably reduces the quality of our riding skills. As we roll our bikes out of hibernation and begin to shine them up for the beginning of riding season we must also shine up our riding skills. Take some time in a lone parking lot to practice your cornering and braking skills, and also remember that the roads that we ride on have gone through a long hard winter as well and probably need repair. Be attentive to those pot holes and cracks AND all those drivers who have forgotten that they must share the road with motorcycles.

In the November issue of *Motorcycle Consumer News*, Ken Condon wrote an article called "Limiting Factors" in his series on *proficient motorcycling*. Below are some excerpts from his article that remind us that sometimes other motorist are not to blame for bike crashes – sometimes it is us!

Every Monday morning I find myself glancing at the newspaper for any report of motorcycle accidents that may have occurred during the past weekend. It may be a rather morbid thing to do, but these reports can provide a glimpse into *why* motorcyclists crash. Too often, the primary cause of the crashes is the motorcyclist riding beyond his or her skill level, and the limits of the environment.

One such report described a rider who had collided with a car going the opposite direction on a lightly traveled scenic road. I know the area, and am familiar with the corner where the incident took place. It isn't a particularly challenging corner, but witnesses said he had been riding "in excess of 100 miles per hours." The newspaper goes on to say that he had crossed the centerline and hit the car head-on. It also mentioned that he had been riding with some other motorcyclists who came upon the scene moments after it happened.

So, what happened? We can't know for sure, but we can imagine that the rider was high on adrenaline, riding with fast friends and pushing his limits.

Live Fast, or Not. Riding fast is inherently attractive to many motorcyclists. The attraction to speed is nurtured by many of the mainstream magazines that feature knee-dragging riders on their glossy covers. The implied message is that unless you're wearing out a set of knee sliders, you're just not "with it."

The smart motorcyclist knows that risks rise in situations involving [speed], unfamiliar roads, intersecting streets and unpredictable road users – including pedestrians and animals.

Wrong Place, Wrong Time. It is easy to blame recklessness on youth, but bad judgment applies to older riders as well. Skill levels must be judged not only by how much we know and how well we can execute maneuvers, but also how attentive and sharp our skills happen to be at any given time or place. A youthful burst of adrenaline prior to a blind corner and unseen intersection can easily land the rider in the hospital after his inappropriate maneuver. Also, riding home from work I often feel a torrent of adrenaline urging me to carve the corners more aggressively. But the fatigue of the workday [for both myself and other drivers on the road] causes me to resist the impulse.

Keeping Up. Group riding seduces many motorcyclists into riding faster than they should. It can be great fun, but it can also turn into a scary experience when normally easy-going individuals merge to form a model of pack behavior.

Whether you find yourself on a charity ride or part of an impromptu meeting on the road, notice the competitive posing that often emerges. It's easy to get swept over the edge – after all; nobody wants to be seen as the rider who lacks the skill or guts to stay with the pack. Most times than not, groups consist of riders with diverse skill levels.

Margin for Safety. We constantly urge riders of all skill levels to take advantage of skills training to increase their margin for safety. Riding a motorcycle on the street is risky. But you can pursue a long and safe riding career if you keep your head straight and know the limitations of your abilities and those of the environment. Respect your physical and emotional limits as well as the limits of the street environment.

## CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW!



Or more factually, can you receive my email? All this technology we live with is a good thing. Although we cannot rely on it 100% because not everyone has e-mail. Using e-mail and the Internet helps your officers be more efficient in chapter business and helps keep the members active and informed. If you have an email address but are not receiving the updates that are periodically sent out by the officers, please drop Bob Laford an e-mail at [rflaford@tiac.net](mailto:rflaford@tiac.net) and let him know.

## Red Knights Decal



Have you seen the new decals that our chapter is selling? It is the Red Knights Seal with the U.S. and Canadian flags imbedded in it and a Mass-2 rocker at the bottom. They look really sharp.

They are being sold for \$4 and you can get them from Cliff Eldridge.

Remember, Cliff always has club paraphernalia available — patches and rockers, large vest patches, and an assortment of window decals too.

Kevin Martin is also selling T-shirts and Golf Shirts with the new logo on them and boy they look great! See him if you would like any.

I hope that everyone who rides with us as a chapter feels comfortable with how we ride. The most important concept in a group ride is to "ride your own ride." What is comfortable for you.

Those of us who take the lead on our rides take our responsibility very seriously. We try to take into account the skills of everyone with us – so everyone enjoys the ride. No one should head home after a ride "all stressed out" because they pushed their personal skill limits all day.

If ever any one feels uncomfortable with what is happening on a ride, please speak up. Our rides are to enjoy and be done safely.

Our condolences go out to Phil and Bea Jordan and their family on the passing of Phil's mother, Mildred, recently, and to Steve and Deb Mickle and their family on the passing of Steve's mom in the fall.

Those who were around when our chapter was first chartered will remember that Phil's mom and dad were charter members of our club.

Membership News:  
**Congratulations** to Jason Leblanc on his appointment as a full-time firefighter with the Shirley Fire Department. And good luck to Steve as we venture on the roads this spring with his brand-spanking-new Firefighters' Special Harley Davidson!

Join us for our annual **Train Ride into Boston** on Saturday, March 13. Meet at the Fitchburg Train Station at 9:00 a.m. and then as the train moves east we'll pick up other Red Knights along the way.

We always have a great time and find some wonderful food in the North End at Mother Anna's. This year will be exciting because with the demolition of the Central Artery, the Boston Skyline and the walk to the North End are something new for everyone! Who knows what adventures we'll find! But there are always the traditional stops like Quincy Market, the street performers, and lots of sites, sounds, smells, and tastes!

We need to make reservations for dinner, so please call Bob Laford **by Monday, March 8** if you plan on going to Boston with us.

Our last scheduled ride for 2003. The roads were a little damp, but the rains came while we were having lunch at "The Black and White" in Spencer and were done when we finished eating! Here our members gathered for the ride's 50/50 drawing.



Whitewater Rafting in Maine!

Everyone who went to ride the river last year said it was great and they are going again. How about you?

The trip to the Kennebec is Friday, June 25 through Sunday June 27. A great ride up, fun on the water, and more New England roads to ride home on Sunday.

**ALL RESERVATIONS AND DOWN PAYMENTS NEED TO BE IN TO TIM KILHART BY THE BEGINNING OF MARCH.**

Cost is \$154 per person and that includes Cabin Space, and the ride down the river. Half that amount is the deposit that needs to get in to Tim so the cabin and river space can be reserved.

The ride will be along the Kennebec River near Bingham, Maine. The North County Rivers guides will be our trip leaders. You can find them online at [www.ncrivers.com](http://www.ncrivers.com)

Our final 50/50 raffle on a ride last year was won by Ed Brouillet back in November. This was a fitting outcome because it was Ed who had the idea to hold the raffles on each ride. At the Christmas party the chapter presented (International President) Brouillet with a check for \$500 as a Mass-2 donation towards the Red Knights Memorial. Thank you to everyone who has bought 50-50's throughout the year.

If you have paid your dues for 2004 and have not seen your membership card yet, it should be with this newsletter. If you have not paid your dues, this will probably be your last newsletter, because we have to have the updated rosters in to the International by March 1. If you have any questions, call Chapter Treasurer Cliff Eldridge.

**Breakfast and Ice Cream**

The last few years we have been having Ice Cream rides each 2nd Thursday from May through September. That has been so successful that we decided to keep up that type of gathering through the months we are not going for ice cream — but for Breakfast instead!

**Join the Red Knights Breakfast Club**

**Each 3rd Saturday** of October through April meet up at the **Westminster FD at 8:00 am** and we'll try a different breakfast place each month.

**Join us for some Ice Cream**

**Each 2nd Thursday** of May through September meet up at the **Westminster FD ready to leave at 6:30 pm** and we'll try a different ice cream place each month.

|          |         |          |      |      |           |
|----------|---------|----------|------|------|-----------|
| February | April   | November | May  | July | August    |
| March    | October | December | June |      | September |

*June is the 3rd Tuesday*

Hi Everyone,

I thought my fund raising days were long over when I left NYC and nonprofit theater - and they are - but on a recent trip to NYC I had an opportunity to visit a small firehouse tucked just far enough away from the hubbub of the city streets to avoid discovery from curious tourists or others still seeking understanding, information, or first hand accounts from those most intimate with the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Since that day in September, firehouses on the main thoroughfares, avenues, and streets of New York are often besieged with well meaning, sincere civilians asking firefighters questions relating to the WTC rescue and recovery efforts. Visitors also have an opportunity to purchase T-shirts and other memorabilia that display each fire station's numbers, logos, mottos, or whatever. Since 9/11 the proceeds from the sale of these items goes into the individual station's "Memorial Fund," which directly benefits the families of firefighters who perished. There are no middlemen, no bureaucracy to contend with, and no arguments as to what's the best use for the money. It goes to the families - that's it.

Engine 6 Tigers has a colorful history dating back to 1756, when they were called Neptune Engine 6. In 1850, during the reign of the infamous Boss Tweed, Engine 6 became known as the "Tigers" because a tiger's head became a part of the engine's decorations. For nearly 250 years Engine 6 firefighters have been holding watch over the southern most neighborhoods of Manhattan. The Company's base is located at 47 Beekman Street (for those of you in NYC it's just around the corner from the downtown J & Rs), a narrow, 100-year old building that has as a vintage feel to it, complete with brass poles and high, tin ceilings. The engine relocated there after their former residence was demolished to make room for the World Trade Center sometime in

the late 1960s.

Engine 6, set only blocks away from the WTC, and because it has a specially built pump powerful enough to push water to the top of the 110-story towers, was one of the first companies to respond on the day of the terrorist attacks. Engine 6 Tigers, one of the smallest companies in NYC, lost 4 of its members on 9/11. There are 7 children without their fathers.

Main-road firehouses have no problem selling their fundraising merchandise. All they have to do is open their doors and folks flock towards the station. This is not the case with Engine 6 Tigers because travelers have no reason to venture down a skinny street without shops or restaurants to entice them. When I went into the station to buy a couple of T-shirts, a couple of the firefighter's on duty, Dave Farran and Mike Bosson, happily engaged me in a conversation that led them to show me the many, many unopened boxes of T's and sweatshirts, as well as hats, patches, and pins. Two of the engine's firefighters, Billy Green (the only survivor of the 5-man crew that enter the North Tower) and Paul Schmalzried have organized the efforts on behalf of families of their fallen brothers.

If you are so inclined, please go to their website - [www.fdneyengine6.org](http://www.fdneyengine6.org) (filled with lots of information) - and see if there's a perfect gift you might want to purchase for someone or for yourself. It's a good cause, you know exactly where the money is going, and who knows - maybe we can make a difference. The price includes shipping and they promise to mail the stuff out within 24 hours after receiving the order. All shipping and handling is being done by the members of Engine 6 to keep costs to a minimum.

Good wishes,  
Donna

At our Christmas party, one of the donations we made was for grocery money to a family who had recently lost their husband/dad to cancer. He was a part-time Police Officer in a small town in our area and a member of the Blue Knights.

We received a very nice thank you from his family that read,

"Thank you so much for your recent gift in memory of Mike. It just happened that the card and gift arrived in the mail the day I was planning on doing grocery shopping for Christmas. Great Timing!

I was so touched that you were so generous to someone that you don't know.

Enjoy your motorcycles! Mike loved his and road whenever he could. Mike's faith was also important to him. Please share this book among yourselves. It belonged to him."

The book that his wife speaks of was Mike's Motorcyclist's Bible, distributed by the Christian Motorcycle Association. It is titled "Hope for the highway." I think that is a very special gesture by this family and we will be honored to carry Mike's bible on rides with us. That's just another angel that is keeping watch over us.

#### RK Conn-2 New Hampshire Ride & Stay Weekend

July 22-25th, 2004 (3 nights) in Lincoln, NH

Check their webpage soon ([www.rkmcct2.org](http://www.rkmcct2.org)) for info on rates and registration

RK Mass-4 is having a **Scavenger Hunt** on Sunday, May 16...

Consider helping support fellow Red Knights with their fundraiser. We'll meet at Westminster FD at 8:30 a.m. and head down for the ride.

#### Gardner Lions Club - 2nd Annual *Ride for Sight*

Saturday, May 8 - Registration from 9-10 am at the William's Restaurant in Gardner.

They are promoting a Poker Run, Chicken BBQ, and Raffle (for a 2004 Victory Vegas)  
More info at 978-632-3368

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

The Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett, Mass. is hosting a charity motorcycle ride on Saturday, July 3

...no other information yet, but will get it to you when we know. A fellow employee at UMass and I are helping their volunteers plan for the ride. Yes, it is July 4th weekend, but there are always plenty of people around that will be ready for a fun time. Put it on your calendar and we'll go for a ride and meet some of their animals too!

[www.dakinshelter.org](http://www.dakinshelter.org)

Hi Everyone,

From the Vice-president

Since this is my first posting to our newsletter, I'll try to keep the article brief. I have a bad habit of running off with the words once I get started! President Laford had asked if I would contribute an article as "Word from the Vice President" column.

First, I would like to thank you all for the vote of confidence in electing me as your Vice-president of this fine organization. If it weren't for our Past President Ed Brouillet stepping down and Past Vice-president Bob Laford stepping up, the VP's position would not have needed to be filled. I want to remind everyone that in the fall there will be another election of officers for the positions of Road Captain and Vice-president. If you think you would like to hold one of these positions, start thinking about it and planning your strategy.

Do you know what the vice-president does? The VP is a part of the chapter management structure that is part of the decision-making process for the chapter. That person provides input, ideas and feedback to the President and other officers. If anything happens to the President and he or she cannot function in that role, the Vice-president fills in to continue to lead the organization and ensure that chapter business is carried out.

From our perspective, as the Red Knights, we hope nothing like this would ever happen, but things do happen and we are one of the strongest and most dynamic organizations around. We need people in these positions of leadership that aren't afraid to make reasonable decisions when it counts if we are to continue to be the best!

On another note, with the riding season bearing down on us, the time is ripe for some preventive maintenance. A little time and effort expended now can ensure your riding season won't be interrupted by mechanical or other problems.

**Service department:** Do it yourself or make an appointment with a good mechanic. A tune-up and service is a good place to start. This should include sometimes overlooked measures like changing the brake fluid and lubing major pivots. Liquid-cooled bikes should have their cooling systems flushed every few years. Fix anything that could take you off the road. Are there any adjustments that would make your bike more comfortable or manageable? Perhaps the brake pedal location or the angle of the handlebar? Do it now.

**Early replacement:** You should also replace any parts that are getting old before they put a crimp on your summer fun. Tires are the best example. If they are getting thin or aged-cracked or worn in the middle, making the motorcycle squirrely when leaned over, it makes sense to replace them now. Other candidates for early retirement include an aging battery or brake pads.

**Accessorize:** The off-season is also the ideal time to equip your bike for the rides you're planning for this summer. This might mean a backrest for your riding companion or traveling amenities like saddlebags, a rack and a comfortable saddle. Saddlebags can also be handy if you plan to commute.

**Riding gear:** This is the time to replace that scratched face shield or tattered rainsuit. You might also want an additional pair of glove. Are the soles on your boots losing their tread? Has your helmet gotten loose and floppy from extensive wear? Are the seams on your jacket or gloves unraveling? Take care of these things now.

**Take the course:** Nothing interrupts your riding season like a crash. Why not sign up for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's Experienced Rider Course?

**Make a list:** Finally, put a small pad of paper and a writing implement in your riding jacket or a storage spot on your bike. Use it to make a list of things that require attention, replacement or adjustment, and accessories you find yourself needing. It will come in handy at this time next year. Remember it's not just you on the bike even when you're riding alone.

The officers of this organization worked tremendously hard to build up the reputation and membership we have in our chapter. As your current officers, we want to keep up that hard work and build on what we already have to make it better. We will continue to move forward with the goals and ideas that have been set up and hopefully the entire membership will see that what is done is for the good of the entire Red Knights organization. Take care and be safe. Get those rides ready to go for the first sign of spring and we'll see you on the road!

Kevin Martin, Mass. Chapter-2 Vice-president.

## As the sports gear ad says... Just do it!

When was the last time you spent time by yourself in an abandoned parking lot practicing your braking and slow riding skills? It may sound like an odd thing to do, but especially with the new season just getting ready to start, our road skills have deteriorated during the winter and we NEED some practice!

In the January issue of RoadBike magazine they had an article entitled "The Secrets of Slow Speed Handling." The article gave some guidance on slow speed handling and encouraged practice time to hone our skills:

The key mental process in handling motorcycles at slow speed, especially big bikes, is learning to overcome the foot-down reflex. You must learn to use this feeling to ease out the clutch, and balance the bike with the clutch and throttle. In order for this to work, you must master some clutch control skills. Practicing the Slow Ride Drill can help.

The Slow Ride Drill is a simulation of riding in stop-and-go traffic. The idea is to ride as slowly as possible, in as a straight line as possible, without putting a foot down. Looking far ahead helps control direction – where you look is where you go.

Remember, when you have that foot-down reflex, that's the signal to ease out the clutch. You must keep the engine running at above-idle speed, so that when you ease out the clutch there is power available. Once you're comfortable with your clutch control skills while riding in a straight line, move on to the u-turn practice.

Go to a deserted parking lot and use the parking space lines as a guide. Start conservatively, using three spaces as the boundary area for the width of your U-turn box. Ride into the area, and quickly drop your speed to a walking pace. Lean the motorcycle immediately. Turn your handlebars full lock. Look over your shoulder in the direction of the turn, and balance the motorcycle with the clutch and throttle through the entire turn. Remember that motorcycles are unstable unless they are powered.

Gradually work at improving your technique. And keep in mind that this is a moderately difficult skill that can be mastered, but will require constant practice to maintain.

What makes most riders nervous about handling bikes, especially big bikes, is clumsy slow-speed handling. Clumsy handling is more the lack of a rider's technique and skill than the limitations of the bike. So practice, practice, practice! Master these slow speed techniques, and you will reach a new level of confidence in your overall riding.

**POST THE RIDES!** Don't forget to pull the middle page of the newsletter out and post it where you see it every day!

On one side is a chapter roster & on the other side is our ride schedule for 2004

## It's the things you never expect! - from the author of "Life is a Road, the Soul is a Motorcycle"

I never dreamed that slowly cruising through a residential neighborhood could be so incredibly dangerous! I was headed through a few big residential neighborhoods as a new route home. As I turned onto the nearly empty streets I opened the visor on my full-face helmet to help get some air.

*Little did I suspect...*

As I passed an oncoming car, a brown furry missile shot out from under it and tumbled to a stop immediately in front of me. It was a squirrel, and must have been trying to run across the road when it encountered the car. I really was not going very fast, but there was no time to brake or avoid it—it was that close.

I barely had time to brace for the impact. Inches before impact, the squirrel flipped to his feet. He was standing on his hind legs and facing the oncoming Valkyrie with steadfast resolve in his little beady eyes. His mouth opened, and at the last possible second, he screamed and leapt! I am pretty sure the scream was squirrel for, "Banzai!" or maybe, "Die you gravy-sucking, heathen scum!" as the leap was spectacular and he flew over the windshield and impacted me squarely in the chest.

Instantly he set upon me. If I did not know better I would have sworn he brought twenty of his little buddies along for the attack. Snarling, hissing, and tearing at my clothes, he was a frenzy of activity. As I was dressed only in a light T-shirt, summer riding gloves, and jeans this was a bit of a cause for concern. This furry little tornado was doing some damage!

Picture a large man on a huge black and chrome cruiser, dressed in jeans, a T-shirt, and leather gloves pattering maybe 25mph down a quiet residential street... and in the fight of his life with a squirrel. *And losing.*

I grabbed for him with my left hand and managed to snag his tail. With all my strength I flung the evil rodent off the left of the bike, almost running into the right curb as I recoiled from the throw.

That should have done it. The matter should have ended right there. It really should have. The squirrel could have sailed into one of the pristinely kept yards and gone on about his business, and I could have headed home. No one would have been the wiser.

But this was no ordinary squirrel. This was not even an ordinary pissed-off squirrel. This was an evil attack squirrel of death!

Somehow he caught my gloved finger with one of his little hands, and with the force of the throw swung around and with a resounding thump and an amazing impact he landed square on my back and resumed his rather anti-social and extremely distracting activities. He also managed to take my left glove with him!

The situation was not improved. Not improved at all. His attacks were continuing, and now I could not reach him.

I was startled to say the least. The combination of the force of the throw, only having one hand (the throttle hand) on the handlebars, and my jerking back unfortunately put a healthy twist through my right hand and into the throttle. A healthy twist on the throttle of a Valkyrie can only have one result. Torque. This is what the Valkyrie is made for, and she is *very, very good* at it.

The engine roared as the front wheel left the pavement. The squirrel screamed in anger. The Valkyrie screamed in ecstasy. I screamed in...well...I just plain screamed.

Now picture a large man on a huge black and chrome cruiser, dressed in jeans, a slightly squirrel torn t-shirt, and only one leather glove roaring at maybe 70mph and rapidly accelerating down a quiet residential street...on one wheel and with a demonic squirrel on his back. The man and the squirrel are both screaming bloody murder.

With the sudden acceleration I was forced to put my other hand back on the handlebars and try to get control of the bike. This was leaving the mutant squirrel to his own devices, but I really did not want to crash into somebody's tree, house, or parked car. Also, I had not yet figured out how to release the throttle...my brain was just simply overloaded. I did manage to mash the back brake, but it had little affect against the massive power of the big cruiser.

About this time the squirrel decided that I was not paying sufficient attention to this very serious battle, and he came around my neck and got IN my full-face helmet with me. As the faceplate closed part-way and he began hissing in my face I am quite sure my screaming changed tone and intensity. It seemed to have little affect on the squirrel however.

Now picture the large man on the huge black and chrome cruiser, dressed in jeans, a very ragged torn t-shirt, and wearing one leather glove, roaring at probably 80mph, still on one wheel, with a large puffy squirrel's tail sticking out his

mostly closed full-face helmet. By now the screams are probably getting a little hoarse.

Finally I got the upper hand...I managed to grab his tail again, pulled him out of my helmet, and slung him to the left as hard as I could. This time it worked... sort-of. Spectacularly sort-of, so to speak.

Picture the scene. You are a cop. You and your partner have pulled off on a quiet residential street and parked with your windows down to do some paperwork.

Suddenly a large man on a huge black and chrome cruiser, dressed in jeans, a torn t-shirt flapping in the breeze, and wearing one leather glove, moving at probably 80mph on one wheel, and screaming bloody murder roars by and with all his strength throws a live squirrel grenade directly into your police car. I heard screams. They weren't mine...

I managed to get the big motorcycle under directional control and dropped the front wheel to the ground. I then used maximum braking and skidded to a stop in a cloud of tire smoke at the stop sign at a busy cross street.

I would have returned to fess up (and to get my glove back). I really would have. Really. But for two things. First, the cops did not seem interested or the slightest bit concerned about me at the moment. One of them was on his back in the front yard of the house they had been parked in front of and was rapidly crabbing backwards away from the patrol car. The other was standing in the street and was training a riot shotgun on the police cruiser.

So the cops were not interested in me. They often insist to "let the professionals handle it" anyway. That was one thing. The other? Well, I swear I could see the squirrel, standing in the back window of the patrol car among shredded and flying pieces of foam and upholstery, and shaking his little fist at me. I think he was shooting me the finger.... That is one dangerous squirrel. *And now he has a patrol car!*

I took a deep breath, turned on my turn-signal, made an easy right turn, and sedately left the neighborhood.

As for my easy and slow drive home? Screw it. Faced with a choice of 80mph cars and inattentive drivers, or the evil, demonic, attack squirrel of death...I'll take my chances with the freeway. Every time.