

REGION ONE REPORT

Wow!

It is truly hard to believe it was 2 years ago that I first addressed the members of Region 1 as their newly elected Director in Rutland, Vermont. Looking back, the past 2 years have been full of surprises, travel, new friendships and other great things! The people I've met have been nothing short of spectacular, and the way you all have welcomed me into your states, meetings, countries, homes, well, what more can be said?

Over the last 2 years I've travelled around the country and across the Atlantic performing my duties as the Region 1 Director. I can't tell you what a humbling experience it has been. I've experienced nearly all aspects of the Club and I find it amazing, that no matter how different we all are, how much we think, act, play and ride alike, with family always being our number 1 priority. I'm now getting ready to be back on the outside, just a regular member of the finest firefighters' club in the world. And we ride motorbikes, too!

There are things I've experienced as a Director that 99.9% of you will never get to experience. That's how hard working the guys at the top are. The time and energy spent by your Directors is unbelievable, and very often unrecognized and thankless. There are times when we, as Board members, find ourselves in conflict with each other, and the membership, but, by the end of the day resolution for the good of the Knights is always attained.

I want you to know that I truly enjoyed being your Regional Director, with the exception that I was not able to be everywhere I felt I needed to be to do my job and my Region justice. With that said, you all need to know that the 4 men at the top of the chain deserve far more respect than I can ever offer. The man or position doesn't matter, the work done by the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of this club can only be appreciated once you sit at the table and argue with them, negotiate with them, agree with them, cry with them, laugh with them and ride with them.

During my tenure I have watched the club continue to grow. My own region has grown, adding 4 Chapters in Maine, 1 in New Jersey and 2 in New York, and there are applications for more. I have gone to Europe to attend the second annual European Association Meeting in Bruges, Belgium, and I'm heading to Switzerland in September for their third Annual Meeting. I've become a member of Switzerland 4. I've met with nearly all the Region 1 chapters at their State level meetings.

At the convention in Gettysburg, a couple members of Mass 2 and 4 asked me if I thought there was any way we could have a gathering in Massachusetts reminiscent of the first conventions, including a pig roast. At the time I had no real ability to think about it. I was reminded of the conversation in Rutland and the wheels got turning. At the convention in Prince Edward Island I brought the topic to the table at a Region 1 Caucus and the groundwork for the "Yankee Rally" was laid out, with New York 12 bravely stepping to the plate to take on the very first. They hit a grand slam, with nobody on base!

The first Rally brought out more than 320 attendees – the biggest in all RKMC history of rallies. NJ 31 is on deck for 2016, and Vermont (likely Rutland) is in the hole for 2017. Bob Hollner and company have set the bar awfully high!

In December I put out the challenge for someone to run against me this year, knowing full well I had no intention of running for re-election. Several people skirted the possibility, but only one took it to heart. Matt Mattera, NJ 31 President and the NJ State Association President, was willing to put his hat in the ring. Being the only nominee, Matt will be declared the new Region 1 Director at the close of the Annual Business Meeting in San Antonio. I have no doubts he will be a strong leader and communicator. I will be ready to help whenever possible.

I look forward to seeing you all here in San Antonio, TX. After that, I look forward to resuming my role as just another Red Knight, offering my support to the Board and the membership as needed or requested and riding with each and every one of you. Look out Australia and New Zealand, I'm aiming to go down under in the next year or 2. There better be some good riding weather when I get there!

Thanks for all your support!

With my regards, as always, I remain Loyal to our Duty,

Norm Beausoleil
Region 1 Director,
Life Member and Founder – MA 1