

Region 1 Director – Matt Mattera

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

I hope, as you're reading this, your year has been the best it could have been during this unique and crazy time. 2020 has been, by far, the most trying time for many of us. For those of you who have suffered personal and/or financial loss, you are in my thoughts and prayers. I jokingly have nicknamed 2020 as, "The year that nothing happened." We all started off with high hopes, at least I know I did.

This year started off the same for me as most years, with the New Jersey State After Christmas Party. This year was hosted by NJ 33 and it was a great time with great Red Knights. I was beyond honored to be named the NJ Red Knight of the Year and was presented the Barry Stires Award by Cathy Stires. Having been the NJ State President when the Barry Stires Award was created, receiving it was a very emotional occasion. I thank Cathy Stires and the rest of the committee for the honor. If you knew Barry, you understand the honor. If you didn't have the honor of meeting him, he was the definition of what a Red Knight should be! It seemed, at this point, that 2020 was shaping up to be a great year. Boy was I wrong!

Julie and I rode to Daytona Bike week on March 7, 2020 and had a blast. As we were enjoying our time, this thing called Coronavirus started to grow in the United States. We didn't pay much mind to it and continued to enjoy our trip. As we were riding home on March 16, 2020, we were thinking a lot about it. On March 17, 2020, New Jersey went into quarantine, and all our lives changed completely. I don't need to tell you much more, as you all lived it along with us. We watched as all our plans were cancelled. First up was the Red Knights International Executive Board Spring Meeting. We then began to hold monthly conference calls that eventually turned into Zoom video meetings. Although this worked during this pandemic, it didn't replace the face-to-face meetings we were accustomed. I look forward to finally, someday, getting to meet face-to-face with my fellow International Executive Board members.

As time continued very slowly, the next to fall victim was the Yankee Rally. NY 50 put a lot of effort in to planning for us all to have a great time. Sadly, they didn't get to see the fruits of their labor come to fruition. However, they are planning to put in to host the 2022 Yankee Rally and I'm very hopeful that they will. Any chapter(s) interested in hosting the 2023 Yankee Rally should get their plans together and ready to present at the 2021 Yankee Rally in Long Island, NY.

As we all stayed home to "Flatten the curve," Amanda "Smooches" Roun (SC1) and Sara-Lynn Prefontaine (VA 8) got together and began hosting a weekly Zoom "Get together" for Red Knights around the world. They quickly roped in Julie Rogers (NJ 31) to help them moderate the meetings and many Red Knights, I dare say hundreds, from around the world got to hang out and talk about, well pretty much anything. Many friendships blossomed. Many members learned what the Red Knights is all about, family! Some chapters learned they were close to other chapters and planned to get together to ride. Others have even discussed potentially hosting future Regional Rallies. I applaud all three of these ladies for a job well done in helping us to cope and lifting all our spirits. Thank you!

The NJ State Picnic was held on July 11, 2020. Big thanks to NJ 31 Active Member Scooter Marriner and his Fiancée Dakota Glenning for hosting the picnic at their home. A great time, great food and great friendship was had by all who attended.

We had plenty of loss during 2020, as nine Region 1 members joined Heaven 1, a total of twenty-five worldwide. Sadly, the honor they all deserved was delayed or cancelled due to Covid-19. Our International Chaplain Dennis Hewett did his best to honor each of our passing

members. He has told me that he was greatly saddened that each member didn't get to receive the honor of an International Executive Board member attending their funeral to present the Red Knights flag and Angel coin. But we must all remember this was beyond any of our control and we all have done our best to create a sense of normalcy.

That's it! That's all I got. As we all know, the International Convention has been cancelled. I was really looking forward to visiting Europe and finally meeting some of my fellow Italy 1 members. The Region 7 EuCon Rally is still a go, as is the Region 3 Bootlegger Rally. I look forward to seeing you if you will be attending the Bootlegger Rally. As always, thank you for the honor of being your Region 1 Director. Please stay safe and Red Knights Forever!