

# Blue Knights® International



**FOUNDED 1974**

38 Alden Street, Bangor, ME 04401

Website: [www.BlueKnights.org](http://www.BlueKnights.org)

Phone: (207) 947-4600 Fax: (207) 947-5814

Email: International Office @BlueKnights.org

***NEW MEMBER INFORMATION***



## **TO: ALL NEW BLUE KNIGHTS® MEMBERS**

On behalf of all Blue Knights' around the world, I would like to take a moment and welcome you to our "family."

As you may be aware, the Blue Knights is an organization comprising Law Enforcement Officers from every aspect of the job and from many areas of the world. It's an organization that started in Bangor, Maine in 1974, when a few friends, all connected with Law Enforcement, started riding motorcycles together. From this, the idea of the club was formed and, because they were all connected with law enforcement, the name Blue Knights was chosen. From the original seven members, our organization has grown to almost 20,000 members and currently represents twenty six countries worldwide. Our International Office is located in Bangor, Maine and is open to anyone to visit during regular business hours Monday thru Friday.

Each year, during the month of July, we hold our annual International Convention, where Blue Knights from around the world gather and share the pleasures of motorcycling, while renewing old friendships and making new ones.

If you should have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to call or write me or any of the International Board members. The office staff, Bessie Small (Manager) and her assistant, is also available to assist you by calling 207-947-4600 (Eastern Time).

As you join our "family", remember, there are no strangers in the Blue Knights, only friends you haven't met. We're looking forward to seeing you at Blue Knights functions.

Until our paths cross . . .

***“ Ride with Pride”***

International Executive Board 2005-2006

President, Connie Flanagan

Vice President, Mike Ripsch

Secretary, Patrick O. Fox

Treasurer, Jerry Bryan

## **HISTORY OF THE BLUE KNIGHTS**

The Blue Knights started in April 1974 when Ed Gallant, a police officer with Bangor, Maine police Department, had an idea and seven or eight other “cops” worked with him to see the idea become a reality. The idea was to form a motorcycle club for people in law enforcement. Some of the early members were Chuck Shuman of the Brewer Police Department, Urban Dyer, Brewer P.D., Wayne LaBree, Sheriff's Office, Doug Miner, Game Warden Service, Bill Robinson, Maine State Police, Joel Rudom, Penobscot County Sheriff Dept., Chuck Gessner, Probation & Parole.

The name “Blue Knights” was suggested by Dave Coleman, Chief of the Brewer P.D. and John Bryant, an artist for the Brewer P.D. drew the logo for the club.

The news of the Blue Knights’ organization began to spread after an article that ran in the Bangor Daily News was picked up by UPI, and Road Rider Magazine. Inquiries started pouring in and chapters began to form. The first outside of Maine was in Brockton MA and in Canada the first chapter was in Moncton N.B.

The first annual convention was held in 1975 at Squaw Mountain, Maine. The annual conventions have since been held from coast to coast, including Canada.

The club has continued to grow over the years, as has the structure, which now includes an expanded International board, Conferences and Chapters. We are an incorporated fraternal organization operating under an International Constitution and Bylaws. The organization has survived many growing pains to reach its size today. Now there are Blue Knights spread throughout seventeen different countries and we are growing annually.

The rewards of Blue Knights are, enjoying the company of different people who share the common bond of law enforcement and the love of motorcycles, being able to visit your friends in various countries and being treated like family, receiving get well cards from people you’ve never met, riding with Blue Knights families who give that added touch, donating your time to children’s camps and various charities . . . and much more!

Ed Gallant’s dream to have a motorcycle club and to ride with his fellow officers has become a reality. “Ride with Pride”

## **INTERNATIONAL OFFICE HEADQUARTERS**

Address: 38 Alden Street, Bangor, Me. 04401  
Phone: (207) 947-4600 Fax: (207) 947-5814  
E-mail: [InternationalOffice@BlueKnights.org](mailto:InternationalOffice@BlueKnights.org)  
Website: [www.BlueKnights.org](http://www.BlueKnights.org)  
Office Manager: Bessie Small

The Blue Knights Headquarters is the location where all administrative activities are performed. Our staff answers questions concerning the organization and directs inquiries through the proper channels. The Office Manager oversees the operation and keeps the International President informed of issues as they occur so that the proper actions can be taken.

In 1993, the Blue Knights purchased their first International Headquarters building in Bangor, Maine. The purchase included not only an office for our needs. There is also a rental property

adjacent to the office. After five years of hard work and dedication from the membership, the property was paid off in June of 1998.

Located at the office are assorted donations from chapters and members, a photo gallery of Past International Presidents, an armored knight and building donation plaques. Members are welcome during business hours.

## **CHAPTER STARTER KITS**

Persons interested in starting a new Blue Knights chapter receive a “Starter Kit” from the International Office. The kit includes bylaws, applications, info concerning the protection of our trademark, sales guidelines, contact phone numbers and more.

International notifies the conference where the potential new chapter is located in order to allow them to assist and verify that there is not an existing chapter in or near that area so recruiting conflicts may be avoided.

If you as a member learn of someone interested in starting a chapter, either provide their name and address to the International Office, or direct them to call the International Office.

Recruitment & Retention Line 1-800-BKILEMC (254-5362).

## **MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS**

The five membership classifications are:

- 1) Regular members
- 2) Associate members
- 3) Honorary members
- 4) Special honorary members (Chapter Chaplain)
- 5) Life members

No members will hold membership in more than one chartered chapter of the BLUE KNIGHTS. The criterion for membership is detailed in the International Constitution, Article 6, Sections 1-6, and in the International Bylaws Article II, Sections 2.01 to 2.06. When determining if a person qualifies for membership make certain that they meet all criteria before the person is given membership.

“Friends” or “Associates” of the Blue Knights are not permitted and are ineligible for membership if they do not meet the requirements. Any chapter found violating this Bylaw will be subject to disciplinary action to include the possible revocation of their charter. ( Intl. Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7.04)

## **HEAVEN I**

Heaven I is the chapter that our deceased members are transferred to upon their death. The names are recorded on a leather bound book displayed at the International Office. Beginning in 1996, the memorial book has been taken to the annual International Convention for display and a reading of the previous year’s deceased members is given, with a moment of silence offered on their behalf.

Upon request by the chapter President, the surviving spouse of a member transferred to Heaven I, will receive a letter from the International President, that entitles them to remain welcome at all BLUE KNIGHTS® functions, a special certificate is also available.

## **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

International dues are due on January 31 each year. A renewal package is sent to all chapters in the fall. The package includes the previous year's membership roster, new applications, recruitment & retention forms, Heaven I form, the allotment allowed for honorary members (based on previous years membership), a worksheet for calculating dues, directions and a checklist to insure completeness.

Details for members dues to International are found in the International Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7.01.

There is a prorated due's structure for new members who join throughout the year. Late renewals will pay the \$20.00 renewal fee plus a \$5.00 late fee and are accepted until September.

Regulations concerning chapter dues are in the International Bylaws, Article VII, section 7.03. Conference dues are in Article V, Section 5.05 and Board of Governors dues are in Article IV, Section 4.04.

## **INTERNATIONAL BOARD**

*(International Bylaws identifying and describing the Board of Directors is covered in Article III.)*

The International Board of Directors includes the President, V. President, Secretary, Treasurer, the Immediate Past President, the Chairman of the Board of Governors and an International Representative from each of the eleven conferences. Each of these positions requires that they be held by regular members who are or have been a Chapter President. Their duties are covered in the International Bylaws, Article III.

Elections for the offices of the executive Board are held every two years (an odd year) and International Representatives are governed by the Conference Bylaws.

The International Board meets via tele-conference call every five to six weeks and handles the general business of the organization. The board uses a written agenda format when conducting a meeting. A consolidation of the minutes recorded during these meetings is sent to each chapter to circulate the information to the membership.

During the International Convention in July, a general business meeting is held and open to all members. Details of the location, date, time and agenda are forwarded to each chapter at least thirty days prior to the meeting.

## **INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

*International Bylaws identifying and describing the Board of Governors is covered in Article IV.*

Each chapter President, upon being elected, automatically becomes a member of the Board of Governors for their term of office. An annual meeting is held at the International Convention in July. The BOG secretary will forward the previous years minutes, a proposed agenda, date and time for the meeting to each Chapter President thirty days prior to the meeting. The BOG Executives are elected biannually (even years) and consist of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The BOG acts as a "checks and balance" system for the Blue Knights, and may act as advisors at the request of the International Board. The Chairman sits on the International Board of Directors representing the Board of Governors.

## **SPECIAL FUND**

The BOG executives and act as trustees for the Blue Knights “Special Fund.” The fund was founded in memory of Blue Knights Jerry Digeronimo a member that died as a result of a motorcycle accident en route to the International Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona. All members are eligible to apply for financial assistance when they’re involved in an accident while traveling to, from or during a sanctioned BLUE KNIGHTS® Event. The BOG outlines criteria and guidelines for receiving assistance and is generally provided within 24 hours of the request. Although it is not required, it is requested that if a member should receive monetary compensation from insurance, etc., that they make restitution to the fund to remain self sufficient and available for others that may need it. It is requested that each chapter make a \$25.00 donation at the beginning of each year. All donations should be forwarded to the Treasurer of the BOG.

## **CONFERENCES**

*The International Bylaw detailing Conferences is found in Article V.*

The organization is broken up into eleven conferences that consist of a number of chapters, in a specified number of states and/or countries. The original conference boundaries were arbitrarily based on geography.

Each Conference hosts at least one business meeting a year usually including a social gathering. The conference events are held in a variety of formats, from weekend camping to a more formal event and are attended by Blue Knights from everywhere.

Each conference elects (annual or biannual) their executive board. This board consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Sec., Treas., and an International Rep. The positions of Chairman/ Intl. Rep and Sec./Treas may be held by a single person, in accordance with that conference’s Bylaws. The office of Chairman, V. Chairman, and International Rep must be held by a member who is or has been chapter president. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer must be held by a regular member.

Conference meetings are generally open to all members, however only the President or their representative is allowed to vote on business matters.

The eleven conferences are, United Kingdom & Ireland (UKIC), European (EC), Northeast (NEC), Tri-State (TSC), Mason - Dixon (MDC), Southern Regional (SRC), Rio-Grande (RGC), Southwest (SWC), West Coast (WCC), Midwest Regional (MWRC), Great Lakes Regional (GLRC).

## **CHAPTERS**

*(International Bylaws defining chapters are located in Article VI.)*

All members who live within 50 miles of a chapter must belong to a chapter. Eligibility for a chapter to form is outlined in Art. III, Section 3.11 (e). The chapter executive officers are to be elected from within the chapter and in accordance with the chapters Bylaws. The offices of President and V. President must be held by a regular member and the Secretary and Treasurer positions may be held by an associate provided that it is not wanted by a regular member. The office of Sec/Treas may be held by one person. Honorary members may not hold any executive offices.

## HONORARY & SPECIAL HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

A chapter may have up to 10% as Honorary members. The 10% is based on the previous years regular and associate members. The international office will advise the chapter of the number of honorary positions available when the renewal packages are sent. All honorary members are to be evaluated and voted on annually (Article II, Section 2.04). Each chapter is allowed one “Special” honorary position that is held by an ordained chaplain or minister. Honorary and Special Honorary members pay the same dues to International as regular and associate members.

Spouses and families are welcome to attend and participate in Blue Knights functions, however, only members are allowed to vote on official business.

Each chapter may develop their own bylaws. However, they must remain consistent with those of the International Constitution and Bylaws and must be approved by the International.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM

As with any organization, membership is an important part. Blue Knights International has installed a toll free recruiting line for non-members inquiring about membership, joining or starting a chapter. This is voice mail line for inquiries only and one of the office staff will get back to you. The toll free number is 1-877-BKILEMC or 1-877-254-5362.

It is the duty of the International V. President to supervise the overall program. The Conference Vice Chairman and Chapter Vice Presidents are held to participate at their respective levels. It should be the ambition of all members to do their part in recruiting new and retaining the current members we have. Recruitment and Retention are recognized with the following awards:

**Recruiter Award** – For members who have recruited five or more new members in the year.

**Super Recruiter** – Ten or more new members in the year.

**Super Recruiter** – Those who recruit fifteen or more members in the year, will receive their dues paid for the following year. Also, the Super Recruiter that recruits at least fifteen or more new members, and recruits the most new members, will receive \$250.00 from the International Office.

**100% Retention Award** – Chapters who retain the same number of members from one year to the next.

**Helping Hands Award** – For members who actively assist in the formation of a new chapter.

*\*Award information must be received by the International Vice President no later than May 1st. You may contact the International Office for detailed guidelines.*

*\*\* The forms for the awards are sent annually with the renewal package.*

*The awards above are held for Chapters that have had their charter for 1 year.*

## GENERAL RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

If you are aware of an event that warrants a BLUE KNIGHTS® booth etc., guidance is available from the International Vice President. Each conference is eligible to apply for up to \$200.00 to be applied toward recruitment and retention efforts. All documentation (invoices etc.) must be sent to the International office to the attention of the Intl. V. President for potential reimbursement. The office also has promotional materials available upon request.

## **MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD**

These awards honor Blue Knights who serve above and beyond their normal duties, at work or off duty. There are three categories; lifesaving, heroism and distinguished service, which are presented by the Board of Governors, annually at the international convention banquet, since 1994.

Written nominations, including any related news articles must be sent to the International office for forwarding to the Board of Governors by May 1. The BOG executive reviews the nominations and brings the selections to the International board for approval. The selected candidates are notified in writing.

## **ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION**

The annual convention is held the third full week in July. The event site moves annually, is bid two years in advance and is voted on by the Chapter Presidents present at the annual Board of Governors meeting (held on the Monday of the annual convention).

A Chapter or group of Chapters, bidding for the International Convention, must request updated "Convention Rules and Guidelines" from the International Office in Bangor, Maine. The "Rules and Guidelines" provide the required format for an International Convention and should be acquired in advance of your bid.

You must notify the International Office of your intent to bid by May 1st, so that it can be placed on the BOG's agenda by their deadline. When your bid is placed on the BOG agenda, it will be sent to all the chapter presidents and they will then have the opportunity for input from their chapter in advance of the BOG meeting. For up to date details on this process contact the International Office.

The International convention is attended by Blue Knights families from all corners of our membership and is a great place to make new contacts, renew old acquaintances, tour and enjoy motorcycling.

The annual BOG meeting and the General Membership meeting take place at this convention. These provide opportunities for you to meet your International Board and take part in the business at hand. Agendas for these meetings are mailed out in advance to the chapters.

The format of each convention varies somewhat depending on the ingenuity of the host chapter(s). There are usually rides, tours, BBQ's, banquet, awards, entertainment, skill competitions, parade, sales rooms, participation awards and much more fun. Accommodations are available ranging from hotels to campsites. Give a Convention a try. You should truly enjoy yourself.

## **INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE "BLUE KNIGHTS® NEWS"**

The "BLUE KNIGHTS® NEWS" is a quarterly publication. Articles and photographs may be submitted by members, chapters or conferences to the International Editor, Mike Fletcher, 5 Briarwood Dr., South Portland, Maine, USA 01406. Phone: (207) 828-0956, E-mail: bknewsed@aol.com.

Should you know of a business or individual who would like to advertise in our magazine, please contact the editor with the details.

If the material does not reach Mike by the deadline, it cannot be considered for that issue.

## **SALES ITEMS**

*(Ref:INTL. Bylaws Article I, Section 1.08)*

A variety of sales items can be purchased through the BLUE KNIGHTS® International Sales Catalog which is published once a year.

Any articles intended for sale outside the chapter that incorporate the BLUE KNIGHTS® registered trademarks, must be chapter approved and will be submitted to International for approval. Each chapter should submit a detailed description, photograph, or an actual sample. Production cost and planned sale price must also be included. In order to sell these articles, there is an initial approval fee of \$10.00. Each year thereafter, a renewal fee of \$ 10.00 is applied. The sales items will be advertised in the sales catalog. A sales permit will be issued to chapters for authorized sales items only. The permit must be displayed while the items are being sold. A special permit may be requested to sell specific items to non-Blue Knight's members.

All Chapters are required to abide by the International Sales rules. The International Bylaws, Art. I, Sec. 1.08 details the penalties for violations relating to sales items. Penalties increase from a warning letter, to \$100 fine, to \$250 fine, to suspension or revocation of the chapter's charter. The fines collected under this section are placed in the "Special Fund Account."

## **BLUE KNIGHTS® VEST**

The official Blue Knights vest is light blue in color. This color was chosen early in the Blue Knights' history so that we as an organization of Law Enforcement Officers would present an image different from the stereotypical biker. On the back is a bottom rocker showing the state/province and optional chapter number, a top rocker reading the Blue Knights and a center patch of the International crest. Mens and ladies leather vests are available from the International Office. The bottom rockers are a special order. The International cresting is the only cresting approved to wear by a member. (Ref. Art. I Bylaws Sec. 1.03-1.04)

## **MBNA CREDIT CARD**

A credit card bearing the Blue Knights® insignia is available to Blue Knights members and their family living in the United States. There is no renewal fee for either a silver, gold or platinum card. A commission is paid by the bank to the Blue Knights for each transaction that is put on the card, and each application that is made and granted. All the proceeds go toward the Building Association for operating expenses and to maintain repairs on International Headquarters. To apply for a card, you can acquire an application from the International Office or call MBNA (1-800-847-7378 ext. 5000). In either case, it is very important that you use the priority code "CTDG." This is the Blue Knights generated application code, and gives us a higher commission than if you apply using an MBNA form or giving no code by phone.

## CHARITY STATS & HISTORY BOOK

The International Secretary collects and collates the entire organization's charity statistics. From Sept. 1991 through July 2005, members, chapters, conferences and the board have collectively donated the following to charitable causes:

**Total Charities:** 1700

**Knight Hours Planning Charitable Functions:** 150,956

**Total Goods Donated (est. Cash Value):** \$512,029.63

**Total Cash Donations:** \$7,930,637.68

It is certain that not all donations have been reported, so be sure to send in your statistics relating to charitable contributions. The stats are calculated and the report is mailed out to the chapters, so it may be used when they are doing local Blue Knights® events.

The International Secretary also compiles newspaper articles, information, and other data for history books. Some of the books are on display at the International Office. Be sure to send copies of your public events so that your accomplishments may be recorded.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is a constant issue within the Blue Knights. You as a member should receive four issues of the Blue Knights News, an International Ballot in the election year, and a new member package when you join (via your chapter executives). From your chapter you should receive a newsletter or minutes. At your chapter meetings, you should have available to you, the International Board minutes, conference newsletters, other chapter newsletters, and event announcements. If you are not seeing this material, ask your chapter executive to provide it. It is the member's responsibility to keep their address and phone number current with the International office and their chapter.

## WEBSITE

The official Blue Knights Website is located at [www.BlueKnights.org](http://www.BlueKnights.org). The Website has been an effective tool for providing information to members. A bulletin board is available that posts specific topics of interest. There is an official chat room, Heaven I pages, sales catalog information, chapter and conference links. The members only section requires a password that is available by contacting the International Office. Much work and donated time has been put into this by our Web Master, Gil Mitchell, an International honorary member and the Web Committee and it has proved to be a very well received communication tool.

