

# THE KNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER

*Blue Knights © California VI*



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## DECEMBER 2024



Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. Steve Jobs

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING DATE

**JANUARY 11, 2025**

Featured in  
this edition



**No Poker Chip drawing was held. \$5 was added to the pot.**

By being present at the monthly Blue Knight Chapter meeting you become eligible for the drawing. If you are present, you win the amount in the pot. If you are not present \$5 is added to the pot. Currently the amount is \$30.



# THE BLUE KNIGHTS



The Blue Knights® International Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club, Inc., is an International fraternal organization comprised of law enforcement officers and their families who are also motorcycle enthusiasts.

Headquartered in Bangor, Maine, the Blue Knights® operates under an international constitution and bylaws within an organizational structure of an international board of directors and eleven regional conferences, each conference including a number of local chapters. The Blue Knights® promotes safe and responsible motorcycling and sponsors fund raising in support of numerous charities.

The inception of the Blue Knights® came in April 1974 when a Bangor Maine, police officer had the idea of forming a motorcycle club for people in law enforcement. Since then, the club has grown to become the foremost and largest international law enforcement motorcycle club. Today, there are over twenty thousand Blue Knights® worldwide in six hundred in six hundred chapters in the twenty-nine countries and one commonwealth.



## OUR CHAPTER IN SAN DIEGO

### CALIFORNIA VI



Chapter California VI was formed in 1987 by a group of seventeen San Diego area law enforcement officers, some retired and some on active duty. We have been chartered since January 1988, making us one of the oldest currently existing Blue Knights® chapters in California. Our members are full-time, part-time and retired law enforcement officers from local, county, state and federal levels.

We are presently one of the largest chapters in the Southwest Conference, with over 40 members on our rolls. Chapter California VI members strive to promote a positive image both of law enforcement and motorcycling. We are active in community service projects, and each year we donate to local charities.

Chapter meetings are held at 0900 on the second Saturday of the month at the Broken Yolk Restaurant, 1851 Garnet Avenue, Pacific Beach, CA. (Unless that is a holiday weekend) After the breakfast and one hour meeting, we go for a ride.

Persons interested in becoming a member may contact Vice President Ray Juanengo by email at: [BlueKnightsCAVI.VP@gmail.com](mailto:BlueKnightsCAVI.VP@gmail.com)



# CALIFORNIA VI OFFICERS AND STAFF



## **PRESIDENT**

**Ken Smith**

## **VICE-PRESIDENT**

**Ray Juanengo**

## **SECRETARY**

**Mike Wagner**

## **TREASURER**

**Chuck Belletti**

## **DIRECTORS**

**Richard Bennett**

**Mike Harrison**

**Arturo Romero**

## **MORALE & WELFARE**

**Michelle Juanengo**

## **IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT**

**John Lopotosky**

## **WEBMASTER**

**Stephen Roche**

## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Richard Bennett**

## **RIDE COORDINATOR**

**Michael Belluso**

## **SAFETY OFFICER**

**Mike Manen**

## **QUARTERMASTER**

**Alex Cross**

## **GREETER**

**Tina Lopotosky**

PLEDGE: As a Blue Knight, I pledge to act with honor and pride to promote motorcycling and motorcycle safety by being an example of the safe use, operation and enjoyment of motorcycles. I will work at all times to improve the relationship between the motorcycling law enforcement community and the general public. The fraternal spirit will always guide me in relating to other Blue Knights®



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Ken Smith President**

### Reflections and Gratitude



Happy Holidays my fellow Blue Knights!

I hope you are all taking the time to be with those you love and making special memories. I know the holidays are also a time for reflection, and can be tough for some. I hope that if anyone would need anything, they would reach out to a fellow Blue Knight – WE ARE ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU!

Patti and I, as well as my sister-in-law and nephew, had a wonderful time at the Christmas party. (Sorry for the few of us hardcore holdouts that got kicked out at 10pm when the hotel said it was time to go. I'll remember that for next time and maybe get things started a little earlier.) We only had a couple of "less desirable" Christmas gifts at the white elephant exchange, so we have a little to work on for next year, lol.

As we also approach the New year, I know folks will make resolutions and have high hopes that a fresh start to the year will be better for all. As a Chapter and a Conference, we had a great 2024. I know things are shaping up for 2025 to be just as great, if not greater. We have sworn in our new leadership and everyone is excited to get going! I will talk about my visions and hopes for the Chapter in next month's message.

I wanted to take a minute to talk about reflections, and how the holidays seem to bring those out, whether we like it or not! I personally have been doing a lot, and I can honestly say that my membership with Blue Knights is a big positive against all the negatives; I will say it is one of the better decisions I have ever made.

The Chapter is only as good as we make it, and I am glad so many of you are making it better than ever. I am excited about all our new and newer members, and know we will get even more in 2025. The fun in this club never ends! So, if you need positive reflections, think about all we have done this last year: The Veterans Home Ride and generous donation, our annual Grant V Frey Memorial Poker Run, the Southwest Conference, Chapter Picnic, multiple after-meeting and charity rides, including Toys for Tots, Cal X Poker Run, May Ride, our Christmas Party and others. We've donated to multiple charities, sponsored a young race car driver, and took care of Danielle our server at Broken Yolk with a very generous Christmas bonus.

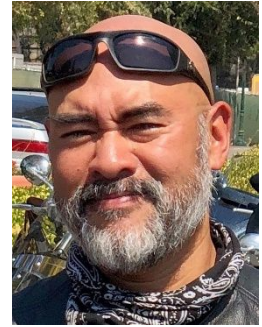
So much to do and see and so little time. I am grateful for ALL of you; I value you as my friends and family. I value all the good things we do as Blue Knights and as people. Lord knows we need more of that in the world.

So, as we stop and reflect, think of all the positive things around us we are grateful for. Ask for continued blessings to ALL Blue Knights, their friends and families, and all who support us. I also ask you take a moment to say a prayer and a blessing to ALL our first responders, who are out there day and night, keeping us all safe. We have their backs, just like I have all of yours. I am forever grateful you all have mine.

Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and I will see you all in 2025!

# VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Ray Juanengo, Vice President**



## USMC Toys 4 Tots Benefit Ride

Photos by Ray Juanengo

Across our great nation, a majority of motorcycle riders are beginning to, or have, put their bikes up for the oncoming winter months. Snow and inclement weather are not conducive regarding our chosen passion. Fortunately for us in the Southern California area we are able to ride year-round.

On 11/24/24, several Blue Knights from California VI, along with over sixty other motorcycle enthusiasts, attended a children's benefit ride from Indian Motorcycles of El Cajon to the Del Mar Fairgrounds on the coast of San Diego.

The ride required that the participants bring an unwrapped toy along with a monetary donation. This ride is one that our chapter participates in yearly, and I'm glad to report that we had a great chapter turnout.

When a good cause needs supporting, the biker community can be counted on to show up. In this instance, the Blue Knights did not disappoint.

Ray Juanengo  
Vice President  
Blue Knights CA VI



Blue Knights at Del Mar Racetrack



BK CA VI with Santa and Fire Department



## SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

**Mike Wagner, Secretary**



**December 14, 2024  
MEETING MINUTES**

Call to Order: Chapter President Ken Smith at 1814 hours

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mike Wagner

Moment of Silence for Members of Heaven I  
Recognition of Fallen Chapter Members

Introductions/Guests:

Blue Knights Pledge

"As a Blue Knight, I pledge to act with honor and pride to promote motorcycling and motorcycle safety by being an example of the safe use, operation and enjoyment of motorcycles. I will work at all times to improve the relationship between the motorcycling law enforcement community and the general public. The fraternal spirit will always guide me in relating to other Blue Knights."

**President Ken Smith - Present**

1. Opening Comments
2. Announcement of Blue Knights, swearing in of Blue Knights, Chapter VI Board Members for 2025(Swearing in under SWC International Rep Jorge Ortiz)
3. Selection of BK and Lady Blue Knight of the Year.: Lord Knight: Chuck Belletti and Lady Blue Knight: Sistiana Chestnut.
4. Money collection for annual Xmas bonus to our server Danielle at Broken Yolk Restaurant.
5. \$500.00 donated to the club in the name of Rick Ferrero presented by Mike and Tracy Brashars
6. White Elephant drawing
7. Raffle Drawing: 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Roxanne Bennett \$1,000.00 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Joline Morales \$500.00 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Craig Fox \$250.00.
8. Photos taken of members and guests attending the Christmas Party.

**Vice President Ray Juanengo - Not Present**

**Secretary Mike Wagner - Present**

**Treasurer Chuck Belletti - Present**

1. The fiscal status of CA VI given to the club members.

Funds collected for Waitress Danielle (175.00) I will buy a card and hand deliver the cash to her at the Broken Yolk with thanks from us all.

I was able to leave the party with the third prize winner information and will mail his \$250.00 prize money on Monday. Alan Wheeler notified him of the win. All three prize winning tickets were sold by the Wheelers.

**Past President John Lopotosky - Present**

1. Collecting dues from members who have not paid their annual dues.

**Chapter Directors:**

**Director and News Editor Richard Bennett - Present**

1. Articles needed for another Spotlight writeup.

**Director Mike Harrison - Present**

**Director Arturo Romero - Present**

**SWC International Rep Jorge Ortiz - Present**

1. Swearing in of the chapter board members for 2025 and pictures sent to the SWC.
2. The SWC has submitted its Treasury Report.

**Raffle Ticket Coordinator Miguel Martinez – Present**

1. All 500 raffle tickets were sold.

**Staff:**

**Safety Officer- Mike Manen - Present**

**Webmaster - Stephen Roche - Not Present**

**Quarter Master Alex Cross - Present**

**Ride Coordinator Michael Belluso – Present**

1. Suggested we look at sponsoring the 2026 SWC in San Diego, California. It will be the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United States.

**Michelle Juanengo (Morale/Welfare Coordinator) - Not Present**

**Tina Lopotosky (Morale/Welfare Coordinator) - Present**

**Poker Chip Drawing – Not held; \$5.00 added to the January drawing.**

**25 50/50 Winners:** 1<sup>st</sup> Richard Bennett \$50.00 donated back to club 2<sup>nd</sup> Arturo Romero \$50.00.

**Good of the Order** No comments made

Motion to Adjourn by: First: John Lopotosky      Seconded by: Miguel Martinez

Meeting Adjourned at: 21:10 PM

Next Meeting: January 11, 2025 at the Broken Yolk Café located at 1851 Garnet Avenue.  
The meeting will start at 0900 hours.



## SAFETY MESSAGE

### Mike Manen, Safety Officer



### Blowin' In The Wind

I hate to say it, but this month's article is going to blow. Earlier this month I was riding up the grade from Ocotillo, when I started to encounter extremely strong wind. I was being blown the complete width of the freeway. I found these tips from Harley-Davidson:

#### **Wind.**

In its many pleasant forms, we riders generally consider it our friend.

We relish feeling the "wind in our faces." Riding a motorcycle in the wind carries the scents, good and bad, that make riding an extra-dimensional experience. We describe ourselves as "brothers and sisters in the wind." When the sun is high and hot, it's our natural air conditioner, carrying heat away from our bodies (and engines) as we ride toward the inevitable sunset.

These and other wind-aided scenarios help distinguish our travel experience from that of the cage-dwelling driver.

But wind also has a treacherous side.

#### **WHAT AFFECTS A BIKE IN STRONG WINDS?**

When wind gusts unpredictably, barrels across the wide-open spaces we love so much, and blasts like jet wash over a high bridge, we suddenly find ourselves cursing our constant traveling companion. Sometimes we have a choice about riding when the wind whips up.

Sometimes we don't (though in truth, we always really do. Consider waiting for better conditions if you are not comfortable). But whatever the circumstances, knowing how to prepare for and react to the challenges high winds present is key to enjoying the ride.

Or, as the case may be, simply enduring it.

#### **Motorcycle Model Behavior**

One of the most basic things that can affect your ride in the wind is simply your choice of motorcycle.

Now, we're not about to suggest that you choose your ride based on how well it handles the wind. But knowing how that choice may affect you in certain situations can help you prepare for them.

Generally speaking, all Harley-Davidson® motorcycles handle exceptionally well in windy conditions. For one thing, they're "heavyweight" motorcycles, which helps anchor them against the force of an intense blast.



And their powerful engines give you an edge when you find yourself riding straight into the teeth of the wind's resistance.

**Key Takeaway:** Choose a heavier bike if you frequently ride in windy conditions. Heavier motorcycles can handle windy conditions better.

### Motorcycle Riding Position

However, riding position can make a difference, as well – for better or worse. For instance, a classic “cruiser” riding position does not provide the same control as a more upright position. And on windy days, “ape-hanger” handlebars may just give you fits. Features such as solid wheels can also affect handling.

Let's be clear: I'm not suggesting any of these things are bad. They're just things to think about when battling the breeze.

**Key Takeaway:** An upright riding position offers better control. Adjust your posture to improve handling in high winds.

### Motorcycle Packing

How you pack your bike can have a big effect, as well so it is vital to follow the owner's manual for loading your motorcycle. In his book, *Proficient Motorcycling*, author David L. Hough talks about “sails” – that is, parts of your motorcycle that are particularly prone to catching the wind and pushing it around the road.

A particularly “effective” sail is that big touring pack riders often strap to their passenger pillion or luggage rack. Because these are often mounted so high, so far above the motorcycle's center of gravity, the wind gets a lot of leverage as it slams into the side of the pack. (Riding with a passenger has a similar effect.)



**Key Takeaway:** If the weather forecast predicts a windy ride, avoid packing tall or wide luggage. Keep your load low and balanced.

### Motorcycle Windshields

Another sail is the windshield or fairing on your motorcycle. These popular accessories can be something of a double-edged sword when it comes to wind. On most days, or when you're riding directly into a headwind, windshields and fairings do exactly what they're supposed to: shield you from the wind. In high crosswind situations, however, they can work against you.

It can also make a difference in crosswinds whether the fairing is fork mounted or frame-mounted. When crosswinds hit a frame-mounted fairing, the effect is to push the bike downwind. However, with a fork-mounted fairing, the wind can turn the bars and create a counter steering effect, which can turn you slightly into the wind. (We'll discuss this more later.)

The difference may not be dramatic, but again, the bottom line is to know what you're dealing with. Because in riding, as in life, knowledge is power.

**Key Takeaway:** Consider the type of windshield or fairing you use and how it affects handling in windy conditions.

## HOW TO ACT AND REACT TO WINDY WEATHER CONDITIONS

The more you study safe riding practices, the more certain themes keep emerging. In the case of high winds, as in almost any riding situation, one of the most important things you can do is anticipate. Be ready for that wind gust before it knocks you into the next lane.

### Anticipate Sudden Gusty Wind

Look for visual clues such as swaying trees or flag. Sometimes, a sign of coming wind can be quite literal: a sign on a bridge warning of “STRONG CROSSWINDS.” More often, however, they're more subtle:

- You're riding down into a wide valley and see the trees and bushes ahead swaying.
- You're cresting a mountain pass and know from experience that the winds may pick up on the other side.
- You see dark clouds up ahead or a foreboding change in the cloud pattern.
- Maybe you can just feel the wind start to pick up.

### Anticipate Heavy Crosswind

Be prepared for gusts when passing large vehicles or emerging from tunnels. When you ride under an overpass or pass a semi, be prepared for the crosswind to stop suddenly – and to increase again suddenly when you've completed the pass or passed completely under the road.

No matter the situation, knowing how to react – before you have to – is what's important.

### Adjust Riding Position

For starters, adjust your riding position as needed when encountering high wind speeds. As discussed, a laid-back position is less than ideal, so sit up and lean forward a little bit if you can to reduce wind resistance. A slight bend in the elbows will help you better respond to steering inputs created by the wind by absorbing the wind's force.



### Counter steering

A common reaction to a big gust is to clamp onto your handlebar with a tight grip, but this is counterproductive. Maintain a firm but flexible grip on the bars and prepare to lean into the wind as it hits. This is done by counter steering.

A quick review is in order here. “Counter steering” is the process by which all riders turn their motorcycles at speed – whether they realize it or not. To turn the bike to the right, pressure is applied to the right handgrip, which initiates a rightward lean, turning the motorcycle. To lean/turn left, apply pressure to the left handgrip.

Many motorcyclists counter steer naturally without necessarily understanding it, but it's especially important to understand what you're doing in special situations. When blasted with a sudden crosswind, an inexperienced rider's initial, instinctive reaction may be to turn the bars into the wind.

The problem is, this will produce the opposite of the intended reaction. Instead, to counter steer against strong gusts of wind you should apply pressure to the "upwind" handgrip, as firmly and as often as needed, to keep the bike pointed straight down the road in a strong side wind. Keep your body as relaxed as possible and make smooth, firm steering inputs. Don't jerk the bars.

### **Pay Attention to Safety Zones**

It also becomes especially important to pay attention to your lane position and "safety zones" in these situations. Stay as far away as you can from other traffic. On a four-lane road, stay in the upwind lane if possible and try to keep open space to the downwind side, in case you're unexpectedly pushed across the road.

### **WHAT MOTORCYCLE GEAR IS BEST FOR WINDY CONDITIONS?**

Finally, wearing the proper bike gear will take some of the sting out of your windy ride, perhaps literally.

### **Motorcycle Eye Protection**

For starters, make sure you're wearing the best eye protection you can, as windy conditions kick up a lot of debris.

If you do not have a full face helmet with a face shield, consider wearing a bandana or face mask to cover your mouth and nose in high winds. This will not just help protect you from blowing debris but also will make it easier to breathe.

Packing some eye drops and earplugs for the wind noise is also not a bad idea.

### **Cover Your Skin**

Covering your skin completely – with a jacket or long-sleeved shirt – will help protect you from blowing debris and help your body retain moisture. High winds and bare skin provide a quicker path to dehydration, so consider stopping more frequently than usual for water. And keep everything zipped and buttoned to keep things from flapping in the breeze.

### **BOTTOM LINE ON RIDING A MOTORCYCLE IN WIND**

But remember: Riding a motorcycle as safely as possible is all about reducing, not eliminating, risk.

By taking a few simple precautions, and arming yourself with as much knowledge as possible, riding in high winds can be looked at as just one more adventure you encounter on the road instead of something that might ruin your ride.

# Blue Knights 2024 Christmas party

photos submitted by Ken Smith



Blue Knights at Embassy Suites, La Jolla



President Ken Smith with his family



2025-2026 Board Members sworn in



**2025-2026 Board of Directors: SWC Int. Rep. Jorge Ortiz, Immediate Past President John Lopotosky, President Ken Smith, Treasurer Chuck Belletti, Director Mike Harrison, Quartermaster Alex Cross, Directors Arturo Romero, Richard Bennett, Secretary Michael Wagner. Not pictured: Vice President Ray Juanengo**



**Blue Knights of the Year  
Sistiana Chestnut & Chuck Belletti**



**Kyle Smith with Blue Line American Flag**



**Table for Heaven One Blue Knights**



**Come and join us next year!**



**Look-alikes? Richard Bennett  
and Randy Aldredge**



# Road Wisdom



There is a difference between wisdom and knowledge.

Noah Webster

## Commuting

One of my friends approached me at work one morning some years ago. He asked if I had seen him on the highway on the way to work. He was in his pickup truck, and I had been on my motorcycle. I had missed seeing him, but he keyed in on me; I was singing along to some tune and engrossed in the ride through rush-hour traffic. That was several years ago, but he kept that image of me in his mind.

I must admit that every time I ride my motorcycle, I still get a thrill; every time, despite the dangers I know exist on the road. For me, it is a time for a positive attitude adjustment. When I ride to a destination, I feel my mood lighten. When I am in a good mood, I am a better rider. I am courteous, patient and friendly. I use my turn signals. I give motorists a friendly wave when they make a little room for me. I have fun.

Recently I refilled my gas tank. Gasoline was \$4.73 a gallon. This time next year, who knows? Now, on top of the thrill factor, I can add gas-saving to my justification for riding my motorcycle. My R1200RT consistently gives 40+ miles per gallon. My four-wheel vehicles get 26mpg, tops, with the pickup truck coming in at 16mpg. Not so good.

I see lots of motorcycles on the road these days. True, the weather is cool, and the days are often cloudy, but with gasoline prices rising, motorcycles are an economical way to get to work and back. Or anywhere else you want to go.

Now for a reality check. Basic motorcycle rider courses do not teach you how to commute. The "Experienced Rider" course doesn't cover the topic all that thoroughly, either. They talk about street riding, left-turning hazards, braking skills, etc. "Street riding" is not the same as commuting in rush-hour traffic.

At the Police Academy, we tell the recruits that police work is inherently dangerous. The secret to survival is to know the dangers, and to avoid unnecessary risks. Commuting by motorcycle is much the same.

In order to enjoy the ride in heavy traffic, you must be able to recognize the hazards and be confident in your riding skills. To that end, I offer some suggestions that may help.

Take the Motorcycle Safety Foundation "Experienced Rider" or similar course. Sure, I just said they don't teach you how to commute in heavy traffic; however, they *do* teach you self-confidence on your motorcycle. And that is the first step, so take a day, invest the registration fee and do it.



Be a courteous rider, but take advantage of your motorcycle's dynamics. If you haven't noticed, motorcycle riders split lanes between the number one and two lanes. It is an unofficial ritual, and motorists expect to see bikes between these lanes. Granted, there are risks, so it is important to do this carefully. I only split lanes in stop and go traffic, and never "at speed". If a motorist sees me approaching and moves over to make room, I always give a "thank you" wave. It also works when you want to get to the front of the line at a signal light.

Take advantage of the H.O.V. lanes. Motorcycles qualify, so why not take the road less traveled? Fewer cars mean lower risk.

Ride in the left wheel track of the vehicle ahead of you. This gives the driver a clear view of you in both the left and inside mirrors. Visibility is the first step to prevention.

Secure any luggage very thoroughly. My standard is this: if my motorcycle were to hit the ground, my luggage would stay attached to the bike. I lost a good friend who was commuting home from work, and was distracted by a loose load. While he was trying to keep his luggage from falling off of his motorcycle, he ran off the road and died.



Always use your signals. I often use my hands to point to a lane in addition to my turn signals. Motorists almost always make room for me to move over. When they do, I give a friendly “thank you” wave.

Deal with trucks. There are two types of trucks that get my attention; semis and trucks driven by tradesmen. Semi-trucks have serious “blind” spots; areas where you can legally ride, but not be seen by the driver. Also, semi-trucks tend to crowd the lane, especially when the highway curves. Semis are the biggest vehicle we encounter in commuting. I like to get around them as quickly as possible, and not linger beside them. In fact, I like to be a lane or two away from them.

Trucks that are driven by tradesmen are another concern. Remember the ladder you saw on the road? That probably came from a tradesman’s truck. These are the trucks that have landscaping equipment, building materials, and ladders strapped on them. The drivers are on their way to a job, or tired and heading home. How well did they secure their load? I get nervous thinking how I would dodge something that fell off a truck. So, with the same logic that tells me not to follow a loaded cattle truck, I stay out from behind tradesmen’s trucks.

Avoid confrontations. There will always be aggressive drivers who put others at risk, you included. Call him names inside your helmet, but let the driver get out of your safety zone. I avoid rude gestures, despite my overwhelming urge to “communicate”. An aggressive driver can easily target you for “revenge”, and you are much more exposed to injury. Let it go, already.



Watch for unexpected lane changes. Car drivers are already distracted by radios, cell phones, passengers, reading, eating and day dreaming. So, it is no surprise that a driver may come into your lane without warning. We all have stories about the “jerk” who tried to run us off the road. My experience has been that most of these “jerks” are embarrassed about their mistake. I always try to make eye contact with the driver, and give them a friendly wave instead of a rude gesture. They know what they did was wrong.

There are many more subtleties that you will learn on your own. This is not an all-inclusive list, but a place to start building your confidence in rush-hour traffic. Before long you will be enjoying the ride and the lower gas bills. And who knows, maybe one of your friends will spot you singing as you ride your motorcycle.



## The biggest little non-event in the Southwest Conference.

Story and photos by Alan Wheeler

Arizona VI out performed themselves, once again, by hosting a fabulous event. This year's event was held at the Hampton Inn, Carefree, AZ. A beautiful new hotel with lounges, pool, bar and two large fire pits—which were burning full-tilt as the Carefree nights can be chilly in November. However, the days warmed nicely into the low 80's for both chapter and self-guided rides.



Chet Parker, AZ VI President

Chet Parker, the AZ VI President, and his chapter members provided bottled water, snacks and soft drinks for all attendees. Friday and Saturday night 50/50 opportunity drawings yielded two winners—the Wheeler's CAVI, and Steve/Lisa Gaeta, Carefree residents and Blue Knight supporters.

AZ VI also drew three winners for their first ever CASH raffle on Saturday. First place-Mike Skeen AZ VI, 2nd place-Phil Simpson AZ VI, 3rd place-Steve/Lisa Gaeta once again. You have to play to win people!

While there was an estimated 110 people attending this non-event, the furthest riders hailed from Shreveport Louisiana—Chapter XV. San Diego had 7 participants attend: The Lopotosky's, the Wheeler's, the Belluso's and Mike Manen.

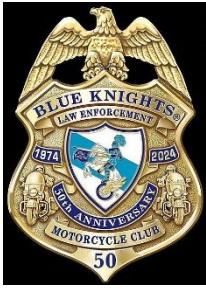


Blue Knights from California VI

A fun time was had by all with no injuries or mishaps. The Arizona weather cooperated for an excellent riding weekend. Don't miss next year's biggest little non-event!



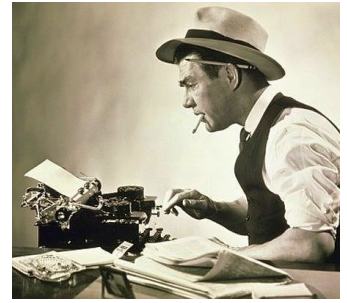




Just sayin' ...

## The value of Chapter Newsletters (But don't give up Facebook)

by Richard Bennett



Chapter Newsletters used to be the most reliable, informative way to keep Blue Knight members up on current events. I think they still are, but before the advent of the world wide web and the easy communication with emails, the Chapter Newsletter was the go-to source for information.

Please allow me to give some perspective, and state my case about the value of Chapter Newsletters.

This is my 35<sup>th</sup> year as a Blue Knight. I have seen a lot of changes in those years, both in society and the Blue Knights club.

Initially, Chapter leaders had to rely upon phone tree communication for contacting members between meetings. The Chapter Newsletter was typed on a typewriter and mailed to members each month, keeping them informed of meeting minutes and events. Nothing elaborate, just done in memo style. Photos were seldom included. We have come a long way since then.

The progress of computers and the internet have led to the current way we interact with members. Some Chapters stopped producing newsletters and began to use Facebook as their Chapter info venue. Others just stopped mass communication with chapter members. Chapter Newsletters became the dinosaurs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In March, 2022, my chapter was looking for a Newsletter Editor. COVID and other issues halted the chapter Newsletter for over a year. The last issue of the Chapter Newsletter had been written by our Chapter President, who had unfortunately succumbed to COVID. As a Chapter Director, I volunteered to be the Newsletter Editor for our chapter.

I had no experience with producing a newsletter, and I looked for other newsletters and editors for guidance. Searching the Blue Knights Southwest Conference chapters resulted in very few examples. Nothing seemed to encompass the format I needed. Newsletters, it seems, truly had become the dinosaurs of communication.

With help from our then-Chapter Webmaster Larry Hansen, and the newsletter editor from another motorcycle club, I was able to create my first Chapter Newsletter. It was rudimentary, and unsophisticated, but it was a start.

With trial and error, it was a learn-as-you-go process. I published meeting minutes and a Presidents message. I asked chapter members to submit articles and photos for the newsletter. I wrote some informational articles about motorcycles and riding tips.

Slowly the newsletter evolved, and became a showcase for members and chapter events. When a Board Member mentioned my newsletter at the 2023 Southwestern Conference, calling it "Better than the Sword and Shield" (International Blue Knight magazine), I felt that I had finally achieved success.

I will admit I enjoy being the Newsletter Editor. I like to enhance chapter newsletters with magazine-like formats. But producing chapter newsletters does not have to be so sophisticated. Anyone with basic computer skills can create a simple, newsworthy monthly newsletter.

A president's message, copies of meeting minutes and announcements can be all you need. Editorial creativity is optional.

I have produced 40 newsletters since becoming the Newsletter Editor for my Chapter. Unlike previous chapter newsletters, these are archived on our Chapter website. They can be accessed by anyone who visits our website.

Here are some of the things I have learned:

- Facebook is no substitute for chapter newsletters. Newsletters target chapter members and events in an informative and personal way that Facebook does not.
- Newsletters record chapter history. I found several examples of lost history when I researched details of people and events in other chapters. My own chapter lost history from early years.
- Newsletters showcase your chapter. Chapters are always looking for new members. Posting newsletters on your Chapter website shows potential members the character of the chapter.
- Newsletters are good source of reference material. Meeting minutes can be reviewed for details of prior actions and obligations.
- Newsletters can be shared in ways unlike other venues. Copies are available to other chapters, the Southwest Conference, B. K. International and the general public. It pays to advertise.
- Newsletters stimulate member participation. Advertising events, and recognizing members for achievements, stimulates increased participation.
- Newsletters educate. Safety articles, trip stories, member "spotlights" and meeting minutes add to member knowledge.

I visited 21 Chapter websites in our Southwestern Conference while researching this article. Of the 21, only two had dedicated newsletters; my Chapter (CA VI) and Arizona VI.

The other 19 chapters had varied chapter profiles. (I say this without criticism of the chapters.) Some had no chapter website (7), some had Facebook links as their venue (4), some had photos posted; with and without captions (8).

This old Blue Knight has seen newsletters come and go in 35 years. I believe there is value in all forms of social media, and I do not suggest abandoning any of them.

What I DO recommend is that chapter leaders and chapter members give newsletters a try. MS Word, and other word-processing programs, such as PDF can produce your basic home-grown newsletters. I use a combination of both, with finished newsletters published in PDF for ease of reading on computers.

Newsletter formats and instructions can also be found on the internet. "Google" "Newsletter formats". It is so simple, even a lieutenant can do it.

The screenshot shows a newsletter template page with the following sections:

- Newsletter Title**: ISSUE #01, SEPTEMBER 21, 2010
- Contents**: 01: Using This Template, 02: Template Themes, 03: Paragraph Styles, 04: Newsletter Header and Footer, 05: Sharing Your Newsletter
- Using This Template**: Designed to make newsletter creation a snap. This newsletter template, provided by Vertex42.com was designed to help you quickly create a great looking newsletter for your school, organization, club or group. Before replacing this content with your own text, please look over this template. We've included helpful tips and examples that will make it easy for you to make your imported text match the look and feel you see here. The quote below is an example:  
*Intense Quote: To create a pull quote like this, select the text that you want, then select "Intense Quote" from Home > Styles. To change how the specific style looks, right click on the Intense Quote style and select Modify. Changes you make will be applied to all Intense Quotes.*
- Paragraph Styles**: How to apply and change paragraph styles. To make it even easier to make your imported text match the design you see here, we've used the built-in paragraph styles. Under Home > Styles you'll see a variety of preset paragraph styles. The main content, like this text in your document will automatically update. This is much faster than manually selecting each section title and changing its font size. It also
- Template Themes**: Quickly change this template's look and feel. Using design themes will allow you to quickly try different designs for your entire newsletter without having to edit each element to look different. To see the different themes, click on Themes under the Design tab. You'll see a dropdown of many premade themes. Hovering over the themes with your mouse will allow you a preview of what your newsletter will look like. Click on the theme you like to apply it to the document. You can take things a step further by saving your own design as a theme. After you've modified your current theme's colors, paragraph styles and fonts, select "Save Current Theme" under Design > Document Formatting > Themes.

At the bottom, it says: NEWLETTER TITLE Newsletter Template by Vertex42.com Page 1 | 1

Why not make it a New Year's resolution to start a Chapter Newsletter? **Sample format from the internet**

It is true: Everything old is new again...

Find our Knightly News: <https://bk-cavi.org>



**FOR EXCLUSIVE USE OF BK CA VI MEMBERS**



**ALEX CROSS**



\$45



\$10



\$45



\$10



\$10



\$10



\$5



\$10



\$10

The above items are immediately available from the Quarter Master. Contact Alex at the monthly meetings or by email.

# UPCOMING RIDES



January 31 - February 2, 2025

2025 SWC Winter Gathering

"Non-Event" No meetings, No Agenda, No Fees - Just hanging out and riding with friends.

245 London Bridge Road, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403...  
Event Details

January 31 - February 2, 2025

Lake Havazu City, AZ.

June 8-12, 2025

SWC 2025 Red River, NM Hosted by NM VI

Red River, New Mexico

Hosted by NM VI.

Host Hotel: River Side Lodge

201 E. Main St., Red River, NM, 87558

Mailing: PO Box 568, Red River, NM 87...

Event Details