

# The Rotary Club of Motorcycling Rotarians

## **A concept paper by Gerry Jackson, VP & President Elect of IFMR-NA, PDG D6380**

Note to all: I've had the good fortune of helping 5 other Rotary clubs start in the past and learned a lot in the processes. This is truly a concept paper and "just" that of my thoughts. Nothing, NOTHING is set in stone. This is meant to just get this club started as a provisional club. Whatever the club actually becomes will be because of and agreed upon by the collective group of charter members.

First of all, kudos to one of our past IFMR-NA presidents Bob Shriner. In one of our many wonderful discussions, this possibly the most recent, Bob suggested this concept and encouraged me to pursue it. The message stuck to me and I'm now motivated to move ahead. Bob has a way of doing that 😊😊😊. Through our discussions one of the motivators to start this club is that we have at least several IFMR-NA members that are between clubs as they have physically moved away from their original Rotary club (through retirement) and are between clubs at the moment, active in IFMR-NA but not yet finding that "right" Rotary club to join.

### **What has already happened:**

Earlier this year, we reached out to my district's 2016-17 district governor, Michael Angelo Caruso and he agreed to and likes the idea of starting this club via my district. We realize our members will be from all over North America (perhaps even the world). However, each Rotary club has to belong to a district and each provisional club needs a New Club Advisor who is an existing Rotarian knowledgeable in the process ... in this case that would be me. That person's job is to help the club along to becoming an actual Rotary club and to stay with that for several years into its early existence. Given my IFMR-NA (International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians – North America chapter) commitment as vice president for these next 3 years followed by 3 years as President, I'll be personally committed to this venture for at least 6 years so the ties to my current district make sense. Our current IFMR-NA President Chris Jones is also onboard with approval to start this club. I have also met with our district's membership chair Rhonda Panczyk and she too is onboard. We are in the process of understanding and organizing the paperwork to be filed with Rotary International.

We began meeting as a provisional Rotary club in March. Since then the club has already grown to 11 dues paying active "regular" members (we need a minimum of 20 "regular" members to charter the club); and 19 dues paying active "associate" members (Associate members defined below).

### **Membership:**

One thing that can be difficult in an e-Club is the establishment of community. The commonality of our mutual interest in motorcycles gives us a common "community" base to meet this need. There is already precedence for this sort of a Rotary club: in Australia there is a Rotary e-Club that is based on traveling Rotarians; and in Japan there is a Rotary e-Club based on bicycling Rotarians.

I propose our "target" membership be based on:

- 1) **Former Rotarians still associate with IFMR**
- 2) **Spouses/Partners of IFMR Rotarians** that for various reasons do not or cannot belong to the same Rotary club as their spouse/partner (e.g. conflict with spouse's club meeting time).

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3) **People that ride our IFMR-NA rides as our guests/friends** and not yet involved with a Rotary club.

4) **New people not yet associated with Rotary** or IFMR.

5) **And hopefully a relatively few existing Rotarians.** I would hope this category to be a small number as I wouldn't think we'd want to "steal" membership from existing clubs. However, unlike the past times I helped start a new club, if we are successful at starting this club I will likely change my membership to this new club so I certainly cannot fault any other Rotarian wishing to do the same. Our existing Rotarians should think long and hard before abandoning their own clubs. In general, I really do not think that would be a good thing.

We have already had people from each of the above categories participating in this new e-Club.

Of course, we do not think we should limit the club to motorcyclists and their spouses/partners. Even though we can have a focus on motorcycles, we will still be a Rotary club and doing good things for others of all walks of life.

## **Associate Members**

We have established an additional official club membership category of Associate Member (even though Rotary International does not have this membership category). The purpose of this category is to allow existing Rotarians the privilege of being actively involved with the club, and actively recognized as such, without leaving their own Rotary clubs. They have greatly reduced membership dues yet do fully participate in the club, including being available to serve on our committees as well as serve in any of our officer positions.

## **Rotary Meetings and Experiences**

This will indeed be a REAL Rotary club with REAL Rotary experiences. Our concept is that we highly encourage (we hesitate at making this a rule) each of our members to find and become associated with a local Rotary club and district. Not becoming actual members but participating in their local club projects, local club fund raisers and local district events when appropriate. I value my local Rotary experiences as much as I do my international experiences and I love going to many of the district events, they truly expand and enhance my Rotary experiences and would like to see that being available to the members of this e-Club too.

We currently have four (4) interactive on-line one-hour meetings a month: the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> meetings of the month are program meetings, typically with a guest speaker; the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the month is a club Board/Business meeting (still open to the whole membership); and the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the month is our "happy hour" meeting – we show up to our computers with our favorite beverage of choice and let the group conversation carry us at will. Our meetings are currently at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern time zone) on Mondays, although we are currently considering changing that to a different day of the week as well as a later time in the day.

Then to ensure the members get that local community Rotary experience, each member try to be involved with at least one local Rotary activity each month: visit another club's meeting, participate in a local project, attend a district event, etc. Perhaps even attend a community service event that is not

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even related to Rotary. We could also start a blog where we could each share a pic or two and a short paragraph about what we did locally that month.

We hope to eventually record and archive our interactive meetings and make them available for member makeups if any particular member cannot be online for a particular meeting. Our online meetings are also required to be available for Rotarians of other Rotary Clubs to participate in as a makeup for missing their own Rotary meeting. However, our archives we could make available to only our members.

### **Projects:**

These are just starter ideas and we will need the membership input to get our own actual projects going. Several ideas:

1) International projects: There are actually a number of possible international projects we could do related to our 2 & 3 wheel “love.”

A) Parts of the developing world need transportation. The club could get into projects that provide bicycles and small motorcycles in these remote areas.

B) Pet Projects – we certainly could consider any international project our members are personally excited about and we as a group decide to support that passion.

2) Local community service projects – this might be best if we as individuals do so through an association with a local club. However, the group could decide to support the same given the passion of one or more of our members. As we plan group motorcycle rides, we will also plan a local community service project to be conducted in conjunction with the ride.

### **Club Officers and Board of Directors:**

When we have enough members to become charter members (minimum of 20), we will as a club select club officers including President, Vice President, President Elect (which is NOT the same as vice president), Secretary, Treasurer and other board member positions as we might as a club deem appropriate for our club. That election will not occur until right before we charter as a club.

I do not intend to become one of our club’s officers. Initially I will lead the structure to get us going and add in people to act in the various roles as that talent identifies itself (a treasurer will be useful early on as well as other talents that will support us to get going). My “official” role will be to act as an advisor. The club members together will determine and elect its officers.

### **Dues:**

Even though it will be an eClub and thus have no meals costs associated with it, we will still have operating costs and do need to charge some dues. To support our club efforts (international/district dues, PETS, operations, website, etc.) we will cover these expenses through dues. Our current dues structure is: our Regular members pay \$52.50 USD per quarter dues; and our Associate members pay \$17.50 USD per quarter dues.

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## **Fundraising:**

We will likely need to consider fundraising to support our humanitarian efforts. One thought is perhaps we have a once a year annual meeting & 3 or 4 day road rally at various locations each year. We could get vendors, etc. and do some sort of a fundraising event at the same time. There might be some ideas with regards to merchandising too. Like everything else in this document – everything is preliminary and open to everyone’s input.

## **Technology:**

We will definitely need a committee to head up our technology that supports this club. Each member will need to be comfortable using the internet. Some of us will also have to support the structure that makes us operational as well including online meetings, member database & communications, online finances, meeting archives & archive access viewing, etc. Fortunately we’ve had a few members commit to join who already have this experience in a previous eClub.

## **Caution:**

As I indicated before I have had the good fortune of already helping start 5 other Rotary clubs. A difficulty I experience early on in the start of each of those clubs is existing Rotarians (all with good intentions) saying you have to do this or that, most of which was simply not true at all but was the “have to” rules of their own club. Rotary is done 33,000 wonderfully different ways throughout the world, all based on the local club members’ community and experiences. This club too will be unique and until the members of this club collectively agree on how this club operates, for the most part there is no “Have to ...”

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