



# International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians

## North American Chapter (IFMR-NA)

December 21, 2014

### -- IFMR-NA President's Newsletter --

#### Chapter President

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#### \*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*

- **May 8-10, IFMR 2014 Spring Rally, Dubois, PA.** Ken Brandt is planning another great spring weekend ride thru beautiful NW PA, including Allegheny National Forest (famous for its elk herds and twisty mountain roads) and a visit to the spectacular Kinzua Bridge and gorge overlook. Lodging will be at the Best Western in Dubois. Mark your calendar and watch for further details.

For info on domestic and international IFMR rides, also check [www.ifmr-na.org](http://www.ifmr-na.org) and [www.ifmr.org](http://www.ifmr.org). If you plan an IFMR event in your area, send information about it to newsletter editor [bob@shiner.com](mailto:bob@shiner.com) and to webmaster Chris Jones at [webmaster@ifmr-na.org](mailto:webmaster@ifmr-na.org)

\* \* \*

Start planning your IFMR rides for 2015 now. Pick the date and location, then let us know and we'll help you get the word out to other IFMR members in your area. Also, let your DG, ADG, and district bulletin editor know; and ask them to help you spread the word among Rotarians who may not have heard of IFMR yet.

**IFMR . . . Join, Ride, Share, Enjoy!!!**

#### Raymond Plue Nominated for IFMR World President

In early December the IFMR-NA Executive Council announced the nomination of IFMR-NA past president and PDG Raymond Plue as a candidate for IFMR World President 2015-2018.

The Executive Council acted after current IFMR World President Adilson Bonatto (Brazil) announced in mid-November the process for nomination and election of his successor, who will take office 1 July 2015 and serve for a term of three years (ie, 2015-2018). Among other qualifications, nominees for IFMR World President must have served previously as president of one of IFMR's 18 chapters.

IFMR-NA President Tim Cudd promptly appointed a nominating committee of IFMR-NA past presidents chaired by immediate past president Bob Shriner. After discussing the possibilities, the nominating committee recommended Raymond Plue to the Executive Council, who unanimously approved and endorsed his nomination. His nomination was then forwarded to the IFMR World President and Secretary by IFMR-NA President Tim Cudd, then announced to chapter members in an email.

Raymond served previously as IFMR-NA president 2010-2013 and governor of Rotary District 6080 in Missouri 2010-2011. He currently serves as chairman of the IFMR-NA Council of Governors, which he helped found in 2011, as Dean of the District 6080 Rotary Leadership Academy, and in various other Rotary district and zone positions.

# Notes . . . from the Top

by IFMR-NA President Tim Cudd

I hope that everyone is doing well and enjoying the ride wherever you are located. Things have been pretty hectic lately and being in the middle of the holiday season keeps us all busy.



Hopefully you have been reading the exciting news the past few weeks regarding the upcoming election of the new IFMR World President to take office in July 2015. Several weeks ago IFMR-NA Past President Bob Shriner was tasked with putting together a committee to discuss the possibility of nominating a candidate from our group. Realizing that we will be having two International Conventions (Atlanta and Toronto) in our area in the next few years, it only made sense to move forward with placing a North American chapter member's name into nomination. As you can imagine there are some pretty stringent criteria in place for a person to serve as the World President. Among others, the nominee must have previously served as president of one of the IFMR chapters.

After much discussion with the nominating committee and our Executive Council, I am extremely pleased and proud to officially place the name of PDG and Past IFMR-NA President Raymond Plue into nomination to serve as IFMR World President for 2015-2018. Those of you that know Raymond personally also know that he is very dedicated not only to Rotary but to this fellowship as well. I have every confidence that if elected he will do a stellar job in this new role. I look forward to continue serving and working with Raymond in this new position if elected. Please pass along your congratulations to Raymond on his nomination.

The election of the next IFMR World President will be held in February 2015, with each IFMR chapter president having one vote on behalf of his chapter. The results will be announced by the IFMR World Secretary after the voting has been completed.

It's hard to believe that it's been a year and a half since I stepped into the role as President of the IFMR-NA. With the help of a lot of people we have been able to get several things done to enhance and streamline several aspects of our organization. From changes made to our website, merchandise ordering system, the establishment of an operational guideline document, the naming and placement of our Regional Directors, the naming of a Vice President to serve now and take over as President in 2016, to now being able to nominate someone from our group to serve as World President is just amazing.

While my name is at the top of the page let me be the first to say that without the help of Past President Bob Shriner we wouldn't be where we are at today. Bob has been, and continues to be, a wealth of knowledge and very instrumental in helping to get these things accomplished. Thank you Bob for your help and guidance.

Thank you also to Jean, Hal, Ken, Raymond, Chris, and the entire Executive Committee and Regional Directors for all you do to make things run smoothly. I want to say a special thank you to our members. Without you there is no IFMR-NA. You are the backbone of this fellowship and the reason that we exist. I appreciate your membership and involvement in our organization and look forward to continuing to ride and have fun.

Also, as I have mentioned in the past, we have a couple of positions that we need a volunteer or two for. As you know, Bob Shriner is looking for someone to take over the newsletter and Jean Does is looking for someone to take over membership. Both of these folks have served the past few years in these positions and have requested a much needed break. While they are looking for others to step up and take these over they have assured me that they are not just going to turn it over and walk away and will train and assist anyone taking it over to get up and running. If you have any experience or just the desire to get involved I encourage you to step up and help the organization wherever and whenever possible. Please let me know if you can help.

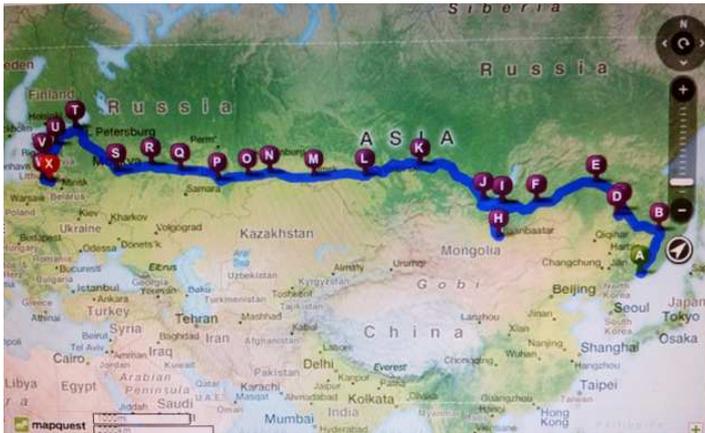
*Ride safe* and I will see you on the road . . . .

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim D. Cudd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# A Solo Ride Across Russia

by Gary Wegener, Woodland, CA

In September I completed a ride across Russia on my 2006 Honda Gold Wing – about 7100 miles in 30 days, from Vladivostok to St Petersburg, paralleling the Trans-Siberian Railway.



I was especially fortunate to be hosted by Rotarians all along the way. It would take an entire article just acknowledging people and recommending places, but instead I would encourage others to seriously consider a similar trip and to experience Russia for yourself.



## Welcome by Vladivostok Rotarians

The heartfelt desire of most, if not all, of my hosts was that we collectively explore ways to increase the interaction between Russians and Americans, on a people to people level. I think you would find, as I did, that the similarities between us far outweigh the differences, and that you would be amazed at the erroneous stereotypes that come tumbling down.



## Banner swap with PDG Vladimir Donstoy in Irkutsk

I was greatly helped by PDG Vladimir Donskoy, of Rotary District 2225 (the eastern two-thirds of Russia), and PDG Nadia Papp, of the western portion of Russia, who lined me up with Rotarians for every stop along the way. These local Russian Rotarians met me, hosted me, toured me around their city, then pointed me down the highway, telling me when/where I was expected in the next city.

Being solo made hosting easier on my hosts, but most voiced interest in how to encourage more inter-country travel and interaction. It was truly a learning



## Yurt visit in Mongolia

Continued on page 4.

## Solo Across Russia, continued from page 3



**Checking out travel options in Mongolia**

experience for all involved, both for me and for my hosts.

First, I didn't originally intend to go alone; but initial plans went awry and I found myself with plane tickets to start the trip two weeks ahead of a dual-sport group I could have joined. However, joining them would likely have impacted the Rotary connections I had developed, so I opted to proceed solo with the option of laying over two weeks enroute if I ran into difficulties (which never happened).



**The road to Never is good. Really it is!**

Research for the trip indicated the road was probably paved all the way, although one major map company (ITMB) said there was no connecting east-west road for 600 miles in the middle of Siberia (ironically centered on the village of Never). Plenty of web articles talked about plans to complete the highway by 2010, and one article quoted President Putin heralding the completion of the highway, but

noting "it wasn't the autobahn, it was a good, modern farm road". That leaves a lot of wiggle room.

It turns out that my predominate speed on the entire trip was 65 mph plus, and the 600 miles segment was the newest and nicest. Russians used on- and off-line GPS mapping programs, so they weren't concerned about missing segments on traditional maps. Many of their maps didn't show the missing segment either.



**Gary (center) with Novosibirsk Rotarians**

I didn't do anything unusual in prepping the Gold Wing for the trip, and because of all the open highway miles, I am glad I was on it instead of a dual sport. Everything, including camping gear which I didn't use in Russia, fit in the saddlebags and trunk. Some of the road segments under repair got a little dicey; but I never dropped the bike.

Large motorcycles were a rarity east of the Urals. West of the Urals, Harleys were the bike of choice.



**Countryside near Ulan Ude**

**Continued on page 5.**

## Solo Across Russia, continued from page 4

Russians called Harleys “the spirit of America” and loved them. My Gold Wing was largely trouble-free throughout the trip. I had an oil change midway across Russia in a nice modern shop, and some trouble in Lithuania that I think was probably due to bad or incorrect gas.



**Gary visits the Kremlin for a photo op**

I was happy to have a Delorme InReach satellite GPS tracker/text communicator, with its related SAR and Medivac insurance. I opted for third-party liability insurance only for the motorcycle, as the collision/comprehensive coverage that was available was very pricey. I had a Garmin Zumo GPS with the Russian map set that worked fine, supplemented by Sygic off-line maps. I probably did something wrong, but I never received any traveler warnings or alerts through the US State Department's STEP program.

Some observations:

- Russian Rotarians are wonderful people.
- Russian language, with the Cyrillic alphabet proved impossible for me, but English is one of the more common second languages, which is taught starting in the second grade.
- Siberia is not a wasteland; it is beautiful and there are large cities of half-a-million or so population about a days ride apart (OK, some are long days);
- Russians drivers are fine;

- The main road is fine; 70 mph was not unusual. While sections under repair were a challenge, they weren't unlike the AlCan Hiway in North America;
- \$30 dollar rooms are available through AirBnB.com, which works the same as in the US, or at truck stop motels;
- Russians have Colgate tooth paste and brushes, MaryKay cosmetics, and their kids play hop-scotch, much like ours do

I saw much more similarities to the US or Europe than differences and would love to have any of the Rotarians I met as neighbors. They do take bike security seriously; and their homes typically have steel plate security doors, although some say that is a holdover from Soviet times.



**Gary (left) with St. Petersburg Rotaractors**

Rotary is alive and well across Russia. The Rotary Clubs I saw were small but very energetic. BBQ in Mongolia may be over-rated, but the vistas are spectacular.

The IFMR banner in the Kremlin photo belongs to a local Rotarian; but I wasn't sure of their chapter status. While I found a range of opinions about what was happening in the Ukraine, I never hesitated to say I was an American. If there is any tension, it is with our government, not individual American citizens (and they hope others reciprocate).

Covering 7100 miles in 30 days across Russia made for a tight schedule and a whirlwind of experiences that flooded the senses. I was struck at

**Continued on page 6.**

## Solo Across Russia, continued from page 5

how similar things were to the US, and in particular, how misplaced my stereotypes of Russia were. But that is what travel does, and why we love it so much. I can not tell you what I did not see, and I am sure the Rotarians hosting me were showing off the positive, as I would do with them in the US.



### Performing Arts Building in Novosibirsk

I was impressed with their public buildings and especially their cultural venues, be it performing arts centers, beautiful public squares, parks, and monuments celebrating their history and sacrifices. Their places of worship—Orthodox Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist—shared equal prominence and were stunning, each in their own way. It was heartwarming to see young couples strolling down riverside promenades, older couples waltzing to the music from a community orchestra on a public square, or the dazzling lights from a sports venue. Streets were clean, litter noticeably absent, across Siberia even highway shoulders were groomed. The noticeable standout was the ever-present roadside 'toilet' facilities in eastern Russia.

The multistory tenement housing buildings from Soviet times were ubiquitous, with drab exteriors that could mask sometimes beautiful four-room flats inside. In the countryside, roadside vendors with all manner of local crafts and foods were a source of extra income for families, and forays into the forest for mushrooms seemed like a national past time. Interestingly, I never saw the homeless or panhandlers that are common in the US.

I was able to stay more than a one night in about half the cities I visited, normally because they had so much to see. Vladivostok is a very modern city and

home to Russia's Pacific fleet. Khabarovsk has beautiful museums and beaches. Blagoveschensk is beautifully situated on the Amur River across from China. Chita has a nice blend of old single story log homes and the five story tenement housing. Ulan-Ude is home of a military aircraft plant. UlaanBaatar is the capital of Mongolia. Irkutsk is the gateway to Lake Bakal. Novosibirsk has a beautiful museum of natural history and nature. Kazan is the capital of Tatarstan with a strong ethnic Tatar/Sunni Islam presence and history. And of course Moscow and St Petersburg are both beautiful modern cities with a strong European influence. St Petersburg is often referred to as the Venice of eastern Europe.

I was riding on 18 of the 30 days I was in Russia, averaging 375 miles on ride days. Half the cities I stayed in were over one million population; only one was under 200,000. If all had gone as planned, it would have been about an \$18,000 trip around the world, including air transport of the motorcycle over the two oceans. However, in Lithuania I ran over a large bolt dropped from a truck in front of me. It punctured the engine casing and the engine was toast; so I sold the bike there for \$1000. A sad ending, but I was thankful it occurred *after* crossing Russia.



**Gary's Gold Wing was disabled after hitting a large bolt that punctured his engine casing.**

If others are interested in making a similar trip and would like more details, don't hesitate to contact me.

– Gary Wegener, Woodland, California  
[gwegener4098@gmail.com](mailto:gwegener4098@gmail.com)

To view more photos from Gary's ride, go to the IFMR-NA web album at <http://tinyurl.com/n7xhjt7>

## Visit the IFMR-NA Store

[www.ifmr-na.org/store.htm](http://www.ifmr-na.org/store.htm)

for banners, shirts, caps, & more!

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## Welcome New IFMR Members

Since the previous update of the IFMR-NA roster was distributed last June, five new members have joined the fellowship. Here are their names and where they are located:

**Kenton Acton, Owen Sound, ON**

**Bill Black, Annan, ON**

**Nick Bokides, Acampo, CA**

**Tom Carroll, Olympia, WA**

**Peter Lyrantzis, Woodland Hill, CA**

You can find their detailed contact information in the updated member directory that accompanies this issue of the newsletter. If they live near you, look up their contact info and give them a call to get acquainted -- or send them an email welcoming them to IFMR -- and invite them to get together soon for a ride or other event. That's IFMR fellowship!

## SE Region Report

Carlton Pernell, Regional Director

**SNOW BIRDS WANTED:** With a growing number of IFMR members spending time in the sunny South during the winter months, NE Regional Director Blair Campbell and I recently came up with the idea of organizing a few "Snow Bird" rides in Florida and perhaps other parts of the south for IFMR members who are wintering in that area.

If you plan to spend part of the winter in the Sunbelt and would be interested in getting together occasionally with other IFMR "Snow Birds", contact either me ([carltonpernell@aol.com](mailto:carltonpernell@aol.com)) or Blair ([blarecam@gmail.com](mailto:blarecam@gmail.com)) and let us know.

**SPRING & SUMMER RIDES:** I've been thinking about a ride, perhaps in early June, in SC and/or GA, connecting with several of the numerous waterfalls around that area. With help from Jim Dodmead and others interested in helping us, we should be able to put together a wonderful weekend get-together of great scenery, great roads, and great fellowship for IFMR members and their friends. Let me know if you're interested in helping or in just showing up for the ride. Ya'll come! We'll have a ball!



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## NE Region Report

Blair Campbell, Regional Director

## NC Region Report

Rory Windrim, Regional Director

### SPRING RALLY, Dubois, PA, May 8-10:

Ken Brandt is planning another great spring weekend ride thru beautiful NW PA, including Allegheny National Forest (famous for its elk herds and twisty mountain roads) and a visit to the spectacular Kinzua Bridge and gorge overlook. Mark your calendar and watch for further details.

**CANADIAN SUMMER RIDES:** The Canadian Team is busy evaluating a couple of interesting rides for summer 2015. Top of the list is a Great Lakes loop – a ride around Lake Michigan and across the top of Lake Huron looping the lakes with an interesting stop and stay on Manitoulin Island. A feature of this ride would be the two hour ferry from Manitoulin Island to Tobermory, ON.

This would likely be a three day ride, potentially starting in Sarnia ON up through Michigan to Sault St. Marie; then from SSM along the northern shores of Lake Huron to Manitoulin Island and a very scenic ride around the island, with an overnight stay in the tiny town of Little Current. Next day would be the ferry ride from Manitoulin over to Tobermory and the mainland, and from there back down to Sarnia/Port Huron. As the ferry can only accommodate approximately 20 bikes, everyone would need to make timely reservations to participate fully in this ride.

The second option under consideration is a 2 to 3 day ride through central Ontario. We would meet/start in the small central town of Tweed, and from there meander up to Calabogie where we would overnight at a delightful little bed and breakfast. Next day we would proceed up through Barry's bay and on into and through Algonquin Park, Ontario's largest and most scenic provincial park. We would then carry on down to Sir Sam's Inn near the quaint wee town of Fort Irwin for our second night. Next day we would proceed through Haliburton on down to Lindsay, which is just southwest of Lake Simcoe, for either an overnight or dispatches home bound.

These rides have yet to be test-driven, but are definitely interesting ideas we're working on. And as the snow is now starting to fly around these parts, and most of Michigan, test driving will not happen until the spring! So... stay tuned and we'll update you then on where we'd like to have the IFMR Summer North-South group ride!

### NORTH CENTRAL UPDATE: *Wishing Everyone a Happy Holiday Season.*

Now that the riding season is over here in the North Central Region, it's time to reflect on friendships-- old friends, new friends, and friends we have yet to meet (sometimes called strangers). Rides we have been on and rides we would like to do. Along those lines, it's not too early to start thinking about and planning ride for the upcoming riding season.

So far there are preliminary plans for a ride in northern Illinois in May or June and a northern Michigan ride in early September. If you are still riding, I'm jealous; but ride safe and hopefully we will meet up next year.

**International  
Fellowship of  
Motorcycling  
Rotarians**



*Merry CHRISTMAS  
And a HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!!*

*Bob Shiner*



Winter Road, Shenandoah Valley

Photo: Bob Shiner