

Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club Of North America: Field Representative's Guide

Suggestions and Guidelines for the VJMC Field Representatives

One of the primary challenges facing the Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club is that of membership engagement. Through an ongoing effort by many club volunteers who have devoted countless hours of their personal time, the club has grown to approximately 3,000 members.

An important factor for the VJMC relative to its future success, however, depends on an actively engaged Field Representative's organization. As Field Representatives, you play an important role in providing leadership for the VJMC members in your area. As many present Field Representatives know, the more activities that occur in your area, the more interest there will be in the VJMC and the more people there will be wishing to join us as VJMC members. The more interaction there is among those people in your area who share our interest and passion for the vintage Japanese motorcycle hobby, the more satisfying most people find the VJMC experience to be.

*Please take ten minutes and review this guide. It is intended as a guide, not a rule book. If you are already engaged and working actively in your area, we thank you for your efforts. If you are not engaged, and don't know how to start, this guide should be helpful to you. Please pay particular attention to the Duties and Goals of the Field Representative's section. It is understood that you are volunteers and that each person's time and energy are limited. It should be the goal for each Field Representative to organize and hold at least **ONE** local area event per year. Thank you for your willingness to serve the VJMC.*

Content authored by past Field Representative coordinator Lloyd Blythe and edited by Steve Passwater.

I. DUTIES AND GOALS OF A FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

- Promote networking among the VJMC members in your area.
- Organize and promote Vintage motorcycle events (shows, rides, lunch gatherings, picnics etc.) for present and prospective VJMC members in your area.
- Increase the visibility of the VJMC by representing it at local, regional and national events in your area.
- Represent the VJMC members in your area in the day to day management of the Club.
- Lead the effort in your area to help the VJMC grow by introducing prospective VJMC members to the benefits and value associated with VJMC membership.
- The most important goal of participation in the VJMC should be to gain a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction from your activities with the club.

II. SUGGESTED FIELD REPRESENTATIVE COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

- Request a current list of members for your area from the membership chairman (currently Bill Granade – vjmcna@verizon.net). You can find the membership chairman's contact information listed on the officer's page on the VJMC website. It is suggested that you request the membership list for your area at least three times per year. This will permit you to identify new members who have recently joined so that they can be welcomed to your group and will also permit you to identify people whose membership may have lapsed. (Please remember that when dealing with members' personal contact information to respect their privacy. Use their information for VJMC business only.)
- Use the email list you receive from the membership chairman for communication with the members in your area. For example, compose an e-mail to the members introducing yourself. Provide an overview of the activities that you are involved in and the bikes you own, etc. Encourage the members on your mailing list to share the same information with others in your group.

- Use this list to share information about coming events and activities. They need not be specific VJMC events but may simply be other motorcycle events in your area in which members have an interest. Encourage all of the members in your area to do the same.
- Add new members to the list as they join. Welcome them and request that they introduce themselves to the other area members. Encourage them to participate in the group's planned activities.

III. ORGANIZATION OF INFORMAL EVENTS

- Activities can be as simple as meeting at a local restaurant one evening per month. The objective should be to give the members an opportunity to interact with each other and to do so while enjoying their vintage bikes. The membership list that you receive from the Membership Chairman provides you with the means to communicate and plan the informal activities that best suit your group.
- Examples of activities that others have enjoyed in the past include:
 1. Cookout at a member's house
 2. Home showing of motorcycle related movies
 3. Technical demonstration at a member's shop of procedures such as tire changing, tune-up methods, or carburetor synchronization, etc.
 4. Group ride to a local motorcycle or car cruise-in.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF PLANNED GROUP RIDES

A. Guidelines for Group Rides

- Identify where you will meet in your selected riding area. Remember to pick a location with ample parking for those who will be trailering their bikes to the starting point. It is helpful to select an area near services like gas stations and stores that offer refreshments. Examples of locations to meet are shopping center parking lots, dealer's lots, or local parks.
- It is advisable to provide at least 4-6 weeks' notice prior to the date of a planned ride. The notice should include all of the pertinent information pertaining to the ride such as the starting point, the departure time, the destination, and the estimated time of return.

- It is advisable to send a reminder one week prior to the ride. Repeat all the pertinent information again in the reminder message. Ask all participants to arrive ready to ride with gas tanks full and tires properly inflated, etc.
- The leader should arrive early for the ride to greet the participants as they arrive. It is important to be punctual to start the ride on time. Most participants will appreciate the fact that the event is taking place within the scheduled time. Ask for an experienced rider familiar with the planned route to ride “sweep”. The “sweep” rider goes last and should never pass any other rider. This ensures that the group has someone who can stop to assist anyone that has a problem during the ride.
- Before departing, determine the distance the bike with the shortest range can travel, and plan fuel stops that accommodate that range.

B. Suggested Rules for Group Rides

- Recommend that all participants dress properly. If you are going to higher altitudes or where colder weather is expected, make all participants aware of that fact in advance of the ride. Approved helmets are always recommended.
- The route you take on a ride should be clearly identified and shared with the participants. Consider having a copy of written directions available for each rider.
- The pace of the ride should be appropriate for all of the bikes in the group. Consider the speed capability of the slowest bike in the group when choosing the speed at which the group travels on highways and freeways.
- Suggest that the group use a staggered formation during the ride.
- The leader should always keep in mind the size of the group that is participating when negotiating intersections. The leader should wait for breaks in traffic large enough so that the entire group can leave the intersection as one if possible. The leader should never leave an intersection until the entire group has arrived there. If not done in this manner, pressure is placed on those at the back of the group to keep up and can cause them to take unnecessary risks negotiating the intersection.
- Before the start of the ride, it should be explained to all riders that they are responsible to ensure that the bike behind them is in sight of the group. If they lose site of the bike behind them, they should stop. This procedure will result in riders at the rear of the group

being able to catch up and will result in riders not being left behind.

- The most important concept to explain to all of the riders is that they are ultimately responsible for their own safety. They should never feel pressured to ride at a pace or in a manner that is beyond their capability to do safely.

V. REPRESENTING THE VJMC AT EVENTS

- Make contact with the sponsor of the event in which you want to participate with adequate lead time for their planning and for yours.
- Identify the costs associated with booth space rental required at the event. Some promoters will donate free space for non-profit clubs like the VJMC. If space rental is required, you should request approval of the expenditure by the VJMC Board of Directors in advance of the event.
- Involve your area members in planning and staffing the booth. If you are requesting them to bring bikes, select the best examples available for the display.
- For long two or three day events, consider adopting an hourly staffing schedule so that the time each person spends at the VJMC booth is fairly shared and that everyone gets an opportunity to enjoy other activities at the event.
- Be sure you have ample supplies of membership brochures and past issues of the VJMC magazine, etc., for the event that you are attending.
- Plan for whatever components are required for the display such as a table, chairs, pop-ups for shade and rain cover that may be needed for your event.
- Consider selling club regalia at events in which you represent the VJMC. If you plan for this, arrangements can be made through the club regalia chairman to ship regalia items to you in a timely manner for your event.
- Remember, you're representing the club; we all appreciate your effort in representing the VJMC in the most positive constructive manner possible.

VI. PROCURING SUPPLIES, HANDLING OF CLUB FUNDS, AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES

- When planning to staff a VJMC event, please request at least 30 days prior to the event, a show event package from the membership chairman (Bill Granade 813- 961- 3737 vjmcna@verizon.net). The event package will include a New Member Sign up Tally sheet, membership application forms, VJMC flyer handouts, and magazines for display.
- Each newly signed member should receive the bottom portion of the application as a paid receipt. The top portion of each completed application is to be returned to the membership chairman. Each new member should receive a complimentary magazine as part of their new membership if supplies permit.
- If payment for new member sign ups, regalia items or other payments to the VJMC are made by personal check, the personal check/s should be forwarded to the VJMC treasurer along with the new member signup tally sheet. For payments for memberships or regalia items that have been made in cash, please forward your own personal check in lieu of the cash along with the new member sign up tally sheet to the VJMC treasurer (Bill Granade 813- 961- 3737 vjmcna@verizon.net).
- VJMC Regalia items may be requested for events by contacting the VJMC regalia chairman Tom Kolenko at: (tkolenko@kennesaw.edu) at least 30 days prior to the planned event.
- VJMC Banners and VJMC Table covers will be supplied for events if available. These can be requested from the membership chairman and should be shipped back to the membership chairman after each event.
- You may submit a detailed expense report to request reimbursement for approved expenses to the VJMC treasurer. Typical approved expenses would include shipping cost to return VJMC club supplies to the membership chairman, table rental at events and phone calls to other members regarding event coordination etc. Procurement of services or products in the name of the Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club will not be reimbursed

unless they have received prior approval by the Board of Directors. Travel, food and beverage expenses are not typically covered expenses. You will receive a check from the Club to reimburse you for the expenses that are approved.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS TO CONSIDER

- While involved in any event, from a simple meeting to a show or a planned ride, consider writing an article for the VJMC magazine about the activity. If you decide to do this, you will need names, dates, places, and photographs, etc.
- When attending national events, consider volunteering one or two hours of your time to work at the VJMC display. These events require a lot of effort to manage and present; if everyone pitches in, it's much easier.
- If you recruit four new members per year, your dues are free the following year. This is referred to as the "Freebie Four Program". Be sure to ask the members that you sign-up to designate you as the person who assisted them with the sign-up.
- The third Saturday in May is our annual VJMC day. Many field representatives plan rides or club gatherings on "VJMC Day". We would love for every area to hold an event on this day.
- Club regalia are available through the VJMC web page or at many events at which the VJMC has a booth. It is possible for you to display your affiliation with the VJMC by proudly wearing its regalia.
- Consider networking with neighboring Field Representatives. If you schedule an event, copy them on the e-mail and ask that they do the same for the members in their area.
- For events scheduled months in advance, forward the information to the VJMC magazine staff. They can publicize it in the future issues of the magazine. Always keep in mind that the lead time for printing our magazine is normally several weeks.

Hopefully, this information will provide you with general guidelines for serving your area as a VJMC Field Representative. You should always feel free to contact any of the club officers, members of the Board of Directors, or other Field Representatives if you have questions or need direction on how to carry out any of the suggested activities described in this guide.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve the VJMC. We look forward to sharing in many enjoyable Vintage Japanese Motorcycle activities with you in the future.

*Respectfully,
Board of Directors
Vintage Japanese Motorcycle Club of North America
June, 11, 2008*