

Norton Notice

Volume 1 Issue 9

December 1978



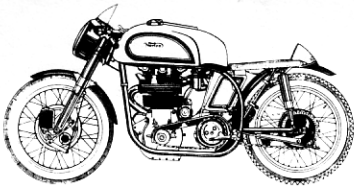
THE NEW CLUB SHIRTS ARE HERE - GET YOURS AT THE BRANCH CHRISTMAS PARTY

IN THIS ISSUE:

TRADING POST - p.3
PRESIDENT BAUSCH'S "MESSAGE" - p.4
NOVEMBER MEETING & RIDE REPORTS - p.4
HISTORY OF NORTON: "THE EARLY YEARS" - p.5
DECEMBER MEETING AND RIDE INFO. - p.6
TECHNICAL TIPS: "THE CLUTCH" - p.7
SAN LUIS OBISPO & VISALIA '79 - p.8
"ON ANY SUNDAY MORNING" - p.9
"ODD BODKINS" - p.10

THE NORTON NOTICE IS
A PUBLICATION OF THE GREAT
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH
OF THE





The NORTON NOTICE is published monthly by the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

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ADVERTISING

Current and prospective members may place any NORTON-related ads in the TRADING POST by writing the pertinent information in as concise a form as possible and sending it to the Editor. Ads will run free of charge for two months, and may be discontinued or renewed if so desired.

Commercial enterprises may advertise in the NORTON NOTICE for a nominal fee, which will help to offset printing costs and thereby support the club. Advertising rates are:

	<u>1 issue</u>	<u>3 issues</u>	<u>6 issues</u>
1/4page	\$5.00	\$13.50	\$25.00
1/2page	\$9.00	\$25.00	\$45.00

MEMBER INPUT

Members are encouraged to submit anything that might be of interest to the readers of the NORTON NOTICE. Articles, comments, technical information, travelogues, jokes, cartoons, photographs, and whatever are all welcome. Please send anything you'd like to see in the NORTON NOTICE to the Editor, who will do his best to get everything in here sooner or later. Handwritten items should be legible, please, and in order to appear in the next issue should be sent in by the middle of the month at the latest. Thanks.

MEMBERSHIP

There are three categories of membership in the Northern California Branch of the NOC. These are:

FULL MEMBERS: Full members are dues-paying members of the NOC, and therefore have full voting privileges at any general meeting of the NOC and at all branch meetings, and also any privileges resulting from affiliation of the Club with any other organization.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: This category of membership was established so that any NORTON enthusiast could join the Northern Calif. Branch for a small fee, without having to join the NOC as a full member. Associate members are required to pay only the branch dues, and have full voting privileges at all branch meetings. Any individual wishing to become an associate member must at the time of joining and membership renewal be the owner of a NORTON motorcycle, as required in the NOC by-laws. Associate members will receive the NORTON NOTICE each month, but will not receive the ROADHOLDER magazine, which is published bi-monthly for members of the NORTON OWNERS CLUB, and distributed through the branch secretary to full members.

SOCIAL MEMBERS: In order to allow those who do not own a NORTON to be associated with the club, and thereby hopefully find one to buy, the branch provides the category of "Social membership". Social members may not vote on branch or club issues or for officers, but are welcome to participate in all branch activities. Social members will receive the NORTON NOTICE each month, and are encouraged to follow up on any leads regarding NORTON motorcycles for sale. The Editor will try to help all social members in this regard.

CURRENT DUES AND PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED:

	<u>PAY:</u>	<u>RECEIVE:</u>
Full members:	\$20	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u> & <u>ROADHOLDER</u>
Assoc. members:	\$5	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u>
Social members:	\$5	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u>

NOTE: The \$20 paid annually by full members includes \$5 branch dues and £7(\$15) NOC dues which will be sent to the NOC membership secretary by the branch secretary.

TRADING POSTFOR SALE

Fastback tank- new, unused, red/silver:\$100
 Fastback seat- like new, just recovered:\$75
 Fastback tailfin- primered only:\$35
 Commando 'S' mufflers- new, unused:\$50 each
 Commando MkIII mufflers- " :\$45 each
 Commando 850 head pipes- very good:\$25
 Commando Roadster tank- fiberglass, blue:\$50
 Commando MkIII side panels-new, red:\$45 set
 Commando oil tank- 1970 type:\$20
 Commando Roadster seat- 1970, excellent:\$50
 Commando MkIII Roadster seat- 1975, new:\$80
 Commando MkII & MkIII tach/speedo housings:\$7
 NORMAN KELLEY: (916)441-0898

1971 Commando 750 "Hi-Rider"- needs to have
 carb rebuilt and new main bearings,new paint,
 good tires, two tanks, tools, owner's manual,
 case-hardened 6 ft. chain and lock: make offer
 DEAN HATTEN: (415)641-9471

1975 Commando 850 Roadster(?)- black, 2,660mi.
 excellent condition: asking \$1,500.
 1975 Commando front wheel hub, caliper, and
 master cylinder: asking \$150
 WAYNE SEEBERG: (415)229-0414, 526-0657

1965 Atlas 750- not totally stock, some damage
 left side in recent accident(gas tank and
 battery case smashed): will sell or negotiate.
 MARC DAVIDOFF: (415)391-4528 ANYTIME

1974 Commando 850 John Player Special- not in
 stock condition at present, but all stock stuff
 included; black, extra fairing, Morris mags:\$3000
 DAVE DeBELLA: (415)348-3746

WANTED

Perfect Atlas head pipes; production racer
 headlight plexiglass; AMAL GP carbs; center-
 stand for 1970 Commando; prod. racer head pipes
 NORMAN KELLEY: (916)441-0898

Stock 1973/1974 Commando 850 Mufflers- must be
 in good condition; will pay freight costs.
 CHRIS COUPER: (805)528-0834 LATE EVENINGS
 or write: 325 Grove Street
 Los Osos, CA 93402

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS: Please let your
 friendly, local NORTON NOTICE editor know
 if your ad should be removed after one run
 if you want to run longer than two months.
 Ads should be written and sent to me prior to
 the 25th of the month in order to run in the
 next month's issue.

STEVE

PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED
 5776 Paradise Drive
 Corte Madera, CA
 (415) 924-0327

See Alex McLean at MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED for NORTON parts and expert service.

Alex also has a large stock of DUNSTALL accessories for NORTON motorcycles.

For you NORTON antique buffs, Alex has some beautiful NORTON MANX racers and other machines on display at his shop.

Alex is now an associate member of the Northern California Branch of the NOC, and is very interested in meeting club members and doing business with us all. So why not stop by in Corte Madera when you're up in Marin and visit Alex's now famous (see recent ODD BODKINS strips) motorcycle shop? It'll be worth it.

MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED
 5776 Paradise Drive
 Corte Madera, CA
 (415) 924-0327

WEST BAY CYCLE DISMANTLERS, Inc.
 750 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto
 (415) 494-8033

Larry Randall, a specialist in English motorcycles, has a large stock of used parts and accessories for your NORTON or other motorcycle.

Complete engine rebuilding and machining facilities available for your use.

For probably the largest supply of used NORTON parts and accessories in the bay area, Larry is the man to see.

He also happens to know a lot about the NORTON and how to keep it running right, so go see him for advice when you're in the market for parts and not sure how to put them in. He'll be very helpful.

WEST BAY CYCLE DISMANTLERS
 750 San Antonio Road
 Palo Alto (415)494-8033

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, the November meeting has come and gone very quietly, attended by eleven true believers, and a great deal was accomplished at this meeting.

Thanks to Bob Getts, we have solved the question of whether or not one must own a NORTON to become an Associate member. The answer is YES, ownership of a NORTON motorcycle is required.

But, as Bob pointed out, (thereby refreshing all our memories, and making me feel a bit forgetful, since I am responsible for starting the branch nearly ten years ago, and therefore should know more than I apparently do about our rules and regulations!) we have always had a third category of membership. "Social" members may get our branch newsletter, and are invited to all branch functions, but have no voting rights and are not necessarily NORTON owners. Another term for this category would be "Prospective" member since this was basically why we started it--to encourage NORTON owners to join us, and to encourage NORTON enthusiasts to buy a NORTON and then join.

Anyway, my thanks to Bob for restoring reason to our ranks and resolving this matter simply and effectively. There will, therefore, be no further voting on this issue, and we can consider the matter closed.

Bob Bausch
President
Northern California
Branch

NOVEMBER BRANCH RIDE - SAUSALITO TO BOLINAS

A small (5 NORTONS and a Ducati) but hearty group made it up to Sausalito for the branch ride last month on Saturday November 11th. Although a bit cold, the day was magnificent for motorcycling up the Marin coastline. We followed the route of the now infamous (see Larry Maatz's article "On Any Sunday Morning" in the November 12 S.F. Chronicle) Sunday Ride which takes off from Tam Junction in Mill Valley every Sunday at 8:00AM or so, and heads on up to Inverness at breakneck speed. Well...we took the same route as far as the Bolinas turnoff, staying at legal speeds, and probably saw a lot more of the beautiful scenery as a result. The Ducati in the group was a brand-new Darmah with only 100 miles or so logged, and its proud owner, Bob Bausch, was taking it easy most of the way. We all made it to Bolinas without mishap, had a cup of coffee or whatever at the Blue Heron, and then headed back north over the Panoramic Hwy. I highly recommend this ride to anyone who's not yet taken it, and suggest this time of year rather than the summer. Although it is colder now, there is considerably less traffic on Hwy.1 (a real problem in the warm months), and there is much less likelihood of running into coastal fog. Pick a nice sunny morning, bundle up warm, and head up the coast for a most enjoyable ride. You'll be glad you did.

In light of the obvious fact that very small groups have been showing up for branch rides lately, I am soliciting suggestions as to how they might become more popular. I will be switching back to Sunday mornings, which I expect will make a difference to some, but would appreciate any suggestions you have.

STEVE

NOVEMBER BRANCH MEETING - SEC.'S REPORT

The main business of the last meeting is pretty well covered above in Bob's note. I would just like to add that I too am very pleased that such a satisfactory solution to what had been a most touchy issue was introduced by Bob Getts. As Secretary and Treasurer of the branch, I will go ahead and allow those persons who do not own NORTON motorcycles to join the branch as "Social" members, and will try my best to put them in touch with anyone who wants to sell a NORTON, as I have been doing for Steve Murray these past two months.

In other business, the final artwork for the new Northern California Branch logo was displayed to the members present by our President and resident artist extra-ordinaire, Bob Bausch. For those of you who weren't there to see it, I can assure you that it is magnificent, and will look absolutely perfect on our new T-shirts, cards, etc. I was asked to look into the cost of getting lapel pins, tank badges, etc, made with the new logo, and will do that soon.

Finally, I announced that I have been soliciting paid advertisements to offset the cost of printing this rag. Anyone wanting to help me get more advertisers, please let me know.

STEVE

HISTORY OF NORTON - "THE EARLY YEARS"

This month's column is the first part of my bridged version of Dennis Howard's superb book, NORTON, which was published in 1972 by Ballantine Books, Inc. I thank them for it.

James Lansdowne Norton was destined to become one of the father figures in the world of motorcycle engineering. He was born in 1869, the son of a Birmingham cabinet maker, and as a boy obviously possessed an inherent engineering ability for it is known that he would construct model steam engines and present them in working order in the window of his home. So popular did these exhibitions become that the local constabulary were obliged to restrain the boy as the gathering crowds were, in official terms, likely to cause an obstruction. As a youth James Norton was apprenticed to a tool maker in the jewellery trade where the precision work involved could not have provided a better grounding for the young man. It was not long however before he had definite ideas about being in business on his own, and in the closing years of the 19th century he formed the Norton Manufacturing Company, making chains for the push cycles of the period and various other parts, the former being no small task alone.

The first Norton motor bicycle appeared during the year 1902, some eight years before the end of the Edwardian era. To describe the machine as a motor bicycle is correct, because an imported Belgian Clement engine was added to a more robust cycle frame, clipped to the front down tube, and a transmission consisting of a thin leather belt running from a pulley on the crankshaft to a suitable belt rim on the rear wheel. It is this machine that was the first to bear the NORTON motif on its tank side, although other machines had been built by Norton but not necessarily sold under his name.

(several paragraphs omitted)

This complete concern with ensuring that his motorcycle was the best that could be obtained led unfortunately to a situation in which the company came tragically near to liquidation, but was saved at the eleventh hour by a firm of engineers, R.T. Shelley and Co., who had formerly undertaken machining jobs for Norton; thus was formed Norton Motors Limited with premises at Samson Road North, in Birmingham.

A happy combination now existed for 'Pa' Norton, as he was affectionately referred to, for under the new organisation, the engineering maestro could work away on his new designs while others with the necessary business acumen would attend to the company's financial affairs.

Under the completely revised company and most surely the Shelley influence, the motorcycles were now referred to as 'The Unapproachable Norton'. Two schools of thought exist as to how the Norton became 'Unapproachable' as a selling slogan, one declaring that following the first TT win by a Norton in 1907, plus various fastest times in hill climbs around this period, the marque was indeed rapidly becoming unapproachable. The arch-authority on motorcycle history, C.E. Allen, subscribes to the second school and considers that with the coming of the 1911 machine the slogan came into being. It must be explained that the TT-winning machine and indeed certain other motorcycles constructed by Norton prior to 1911 were using twin cylinder Peugeot and other proprietary engines, and thus were not entirely Norton to the core.

To the dedicated vintage enthusiast, the most desirable models would be the BS (Brookland's Special) or BRS (Brookland's Road Special), both being classic examples of the early sporting Norton, details of which will naturally follow as the story progresses. These machines possessed however what is described in motorcycling circles as 'Thumping big single-cylinder side-valve engines with every power stroke representing a ton and a half of finest roast beef', and it is with such power units that Pa Norton was mostly associated. Many motorcycle historians have written in detail about the first TT race in 1907 and the various continental events that preceded it, and it is therefore not necessary to write yet again about the matter. It will be of interest however to note that from that very first Isle of Man race, Norton machines have been represented in every TT meeting to date.

NEXT MONTH: "The Early Years" will continue with a look at some of the first Norton racers and their success at the Isle of Man.

DECEMBER BRANCH MEETING - A CHRISTMAS PARTY!!

This month's Northern California Branch meeting will be something a little special. Bob Bausch and his lovely wife, Elisabeth, are putting a Christmas party together for our group, and it promises to be the biggest and best meeting the branch has ever had. In honor of the occasion, we'll be getting together on a Friday night, rather than the customary Thursday. My sincere apologies to those of you who work on Saturday.

Bob and Elisabeth have requested that people try to bring something in the way of "finger food" to the party. In other words, chips and dips, cheese and crackers, and the like would be very appropriate. Anyone with a desire to put together something more exotic, is most welcome to do so. Please give Bob or Elisabeth a call to let them know what you'd like to do. Those of you who want to come to the party, but can't bring any edibles, are encouraged to come anyway. There will surely be enough for all, so please don't stay home this time.

We'll be having this meeting/Christmas party at the Edinburgh Castle, and have been asked by the management not to bring any drinks. As long as we buy our liquid there, we are most welcome to use their facilities (i.e. the club room upstairs) for our party and bring in all the food we want. So bring edibles only, please.

Another goody awaiting you at the December meet is your new Northern California Branch Norton Owners Club T-shirt! The batch of shirts is now back from the silk-screen artists, and they do look great. In addition to the standard T-shirts we also have some tank-tops, French cut shirts, and long and short-sleeve sweatshirts. They'll make great Christmas presents, for yourself or anyone else crazy about NORTONS, so come get yours at the Christmas party.

I think it would be great if we could get more than half of the branch members together at one time, and this seems like an ideal occasion to do just that. That means forty of us have to be there. Can we do it? If you haven't come to any meetings for a while, try to come this time.

DATE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th
 TIME: 7:30PM until whenever??
 PLACE: EDINBURGH CASTLE (Scottish pub)
 950 GEARY, SAN FRANCISCO
 885-4074

Please don't forget to call Bob or Elisabeth if you plan to bring some food. PHONE: 752-6400

DECEMBER BRANCH RIDE - IN THE REDWOODS!

The branch ride this month will meet two days after the Christmas party (we'll be fully recovered by then, hopefully), at one of the most popular motorcyclists' venues in the bay area, Skylonda Corners in Woodside. We will meet in front of Alice's Restaurant, as usual, at 10:00AM. Anyone interested in breakfast, should plan to be there by 9:00 or so, as Alice's can get pretty busy on Sunday mornings. The ride will leave from in front of the restaurant at 10:30, and we'll head down Skyline to Hwy.9, and then take Hwy.9 to Boulder Creek for a gas stop and coffee break or whatever. For those who don't have breakfast at Alice's or before, the Talk-of-the-Town restaurant in Boulder Creek serves up some of the tastiest omelettes on the peninsula. After the stop in Boulder Creek, we may head out to the coast or back up into the hills, depending on the weather.

DATE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th
 TIME: 10:00AM
 PLACE: ALICE'S RESTAURANT
 SKYLONDA CORNERS
 Intersection of Woodside
 Road (Hwy.84) and Skyline
 Boulevard (Hwy.35)

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

SELBY MOTORS
 346 El Camino Real
 Redwood City, CA
 (415) 369-4112

NORTON

For NORTON parts and service on the San Francisco peninsula, SELBY MOTORS in Redwood City is the place to go.

Jack will take care of all your parts needs, and being quite a NORTON freak himself, will be able to advise you if you have questions. Jack also has a large stock of motorcycle accessories in his parts department at SELBY'S, so he'll probably have everything you want.

Alan heads up the service department at SELBY'S, and will be glad to do the needful if your NORTON isn't running right. He's also an associate member.

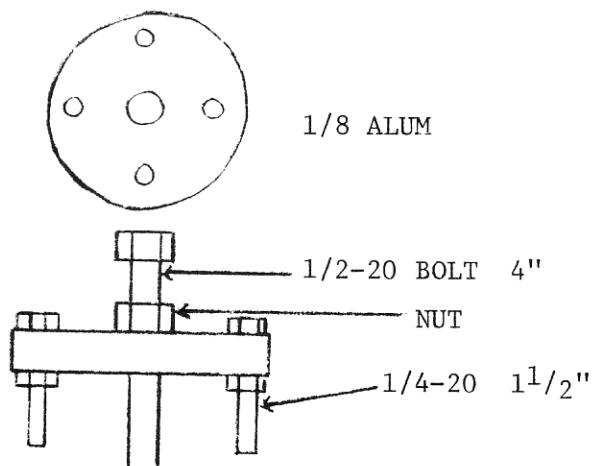
TECHNICAL TIPS - THE CLUTCH

The Commando 850 Mk III has an all-metal clutch, and therefore no fiber to wear out. The clutch will probably last forever, but the clutch center can and does wear out. I know of three in my area that have all had problems before 15,000 miles. At 12,000 on my 850's odometer, I started to notice the first symptoms: a loud "klunk" sound upon shifting into gear for the first time of the day, sometimes stalling the engine. I also noticed the clutch to slip when I was down-shifting and opening the throttle for a quick pass. I knew I had clutch problems.

What was happening was that the steel clutch plates were wearing a notch in the clutch center, and would not move sideways to disengage. The only solution to this problem is to replace the clutch center once it gets worn enough to notice. Clutch centers are hard to find, however, and expensive. Mine set me back \$60. And the job of replacing the clutch center takes some time. The whole primary drive and the entire clutch basket must be removed. The two parts of the clutch basket are pressed onto the throw-out bearing, which requires an arbor press to do properly. This whole job took me three hours to finish, and I can imagine what it might cost to have it done in a motorcycle shop.

Now for the good news! The problem can be avoided for only \$25 and 20 minutes work. Clutch plates put out by Barnett are fiber plates on an aluminum center disc. The aluminum disc does not wear the clutch center, and the plates don't seem to wear either. I have had these on my 750 since it was new, and they're still good after 33,000 miles.

The clutch plates are easy to replace. You can make the required clutch-removal tool yourself, or buy one for about \$10.



CLUTCH REMOVAL TOOL

The first thing to do is to drain the oil out of the primary case, and remove the outer cover. The shift lever needn't be removed as it comes off with the cover. Next, loosen the 3/4" nut and remove the 1/2" screw in the center of the clutch. Then use the clutch-removal tool by screwing the 1/2" bolt in it (see diagram) into the hole vacated by the removal of the adjustment screw and nut. It should be screwed in about 8 to 10 turns. Then hold the bolt with a wrench and turn the nut until the clutch spring plate and removal tool can be turned easily. Next, remove the retaining clip, which is recessed in the outer basket. While removing the clip, hold the clutch spring and removal tool with one hand to prevent them falling out. After the retaining clip has been removed, the pressure plate and clutch plates can be taken off. Notice that every other plate has teeth on the inside, with the intervening plates having teeth on the outside. Your new plates will have teeth on the inside only, so you will re-use the ones with teeth on the outside. They don't cause any problem as there are more teeth and therefore less pressure per tooth.

When removing the plates, be sure to note which plate comes out last, as it is the type that goes in first when reassembling. After all the plates and the retaining clip have been reinstalled, loosen the inner nut on the removal tool until the bolt can be removed by hand. Put the cover back on and add 200cc of 30W motor oil. It is not a good idea to use 20-50 in the primary case as it really isn't heavy enough for the chain. It's basically just 20W oil that doesn't get thin when it's hot. Some of you may disagree with me on this, but it's true nonetheless.

It is best to use a new gasket each time the primary case is opened on an 850. The paper gasket might leak if re-used. The 1/4" neoprene "O"-ring used in the 750 can be re-used many times if it is handled with care and not damaged.

Many thanks to Len Allen for this month's TECHNICAL TIPS column, and may they keep coming. Any comments should be mailed to the Editor.

STEVE

MOTORCYCLING DOWN AROUND SAN LUIS OBISPO

I don't know how many of you have had the inclination to do any riding down in the hills about 200 miles south of the bay, but I've thought about it a number of times in the past couple of years, and for some reason just haven't gotten it together yet to do a weekend ride down that way. Well, it seems that one of our members has recently moved down to Los Osos, and is studying agricultural engineering at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. Chris Couper writes the following:

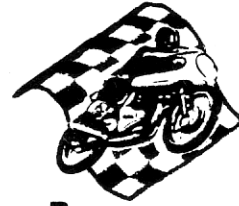
This area is indeed excellent for motorcycling. The roads are fairly light on traffic, but somewhat hazardous due to rockslides, gravel and wandering animals. I can compare the conditions to rural Marin county. The local gendarmes don't seem to hassle motorcyclists to any abnormal degree, although I received a sobering sermon one day when I was blasting around on the city streets on my room-mate's Bultaco Astro.

THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE VISALIA CLASSIC AND ANTIQUE MOTORCYCLE SHOW

Chris also raised a very important issue in his letter, which I would like to share with you in the hope that as a group we might be able to do something about it.

The location of the show will probably not be available next year. The merchants of Visalia Fair do not like the show and have probably convinced the powers-that-be that they will not host the show in 1979. It is imperative that this show continue, and that a new meeting place be found. I think that the SF NOC (i.e. the Northern California branch of the NOC - Ed.) should officially pen the organizers of the show, and the Visalia Chamber of Commerce to indicate our support and our concern that the show continue as in the past. I will also expect to see Gene Austin there with his CS-1 in '79.

Chris Couper
325 Grove Street
Los Osos, CA 93402

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cycle sports

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I am in complete agreement with Chris's sentiments concerning the CAMA show in Visalia. I went to it last year, and was very impressed, to say the least. I don't know how much difference our voice will make to the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, or to the organizers of the show for that matter, but I do agree that we should at least show support and concern. I am sure that Norm Kelley is very interested in the future of the show, since half the Nortons entered in the show this year belonged to his "stable", and I would like to suggest that anyone else interested in doing something get in touch with Norm or Chris. If there is enough interest, one of them might be willing to draft a letter of some sort that we could send as an official statement from the club to those groups involved in the organization of the show. So please speak up if you're concerned.

Steve

"ON ANY SUNDAY MORNING"

Some of you may have noticed an interesting article which appeared in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle on November 12th. It was in the California Living Magazine, and went under the "Sports" heading. The article, entitled "On Any Sunday Morning", was written by Larry Maatz, and the excellent photographs that went with it were shot by Bob McLeod. As those of you who didn't see it have probably guessed by now, the article was all about the famous Sunday Ride that takes place on those hairy turns and exhilarating straights on the road from Tam Junction to Inverness each and every Sunday morning. I'm not going to print the whole thing for you here, but I do want to give you a few of the highlights, for what they might be worth. I thought it was great.

First, a brief mention of how Maatz and McLeod did it might be in order. Here I will quote an editor (H.I.S.), whose note appeared on p.4:

Sometimes writers and photographers take particular pains to capture the essence of a story. And the photographs which illustrate "On Any Sunday Morning" (Sports, Page 62) are a case in point.

Some of the images were taken from the side of the road, but others were taken from a somewhat different vantage point. To get them, writer Larry Maatz and photographer Bob McLeod removed the rear window and deck from a Porsche 924, giving McLeod a clear field of vision behind the car. With Maatz strapped in behind the wheel, & with McLeod, better known for his ballet photography, unstrapped in the rear, they pulled out ahead of the motorcycles as they left Stinson Beach and headed out along Bolinas Lagoon.....

How fast were they going? McLeod would just as soon forget. Maatz would just as soon not say: "My relations with the Highway Patrol have always been good; I'd prefer to keep them that way."

Well, you probably get the picture. But if you missed seeing the article, you really ought to see the pictures that McLeod took. I'll bring the article to the December meeting for those of you who would like to see it. But for now, I'd like to share some of Maatz's very well written paragraphs about what these guys do. I must say, he shows excellent taste in motorcycles, and I am sure you'll agree.

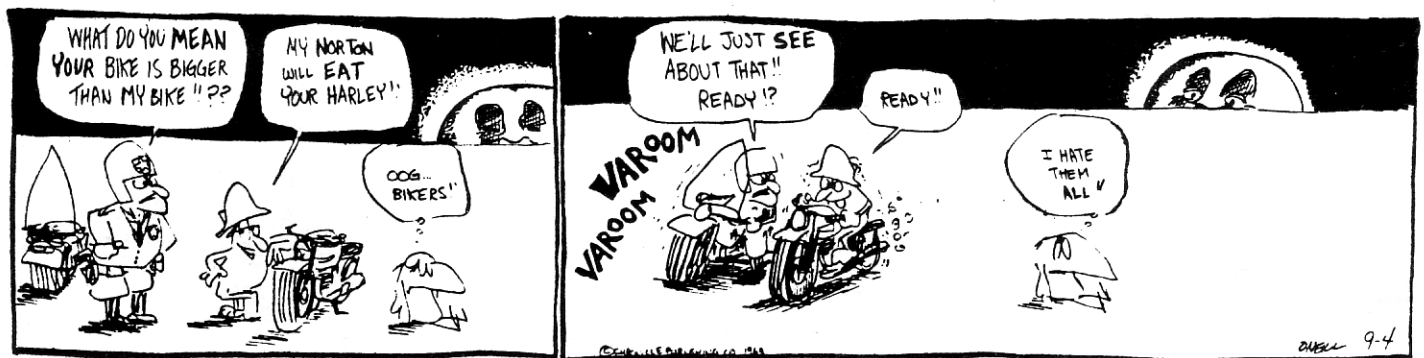
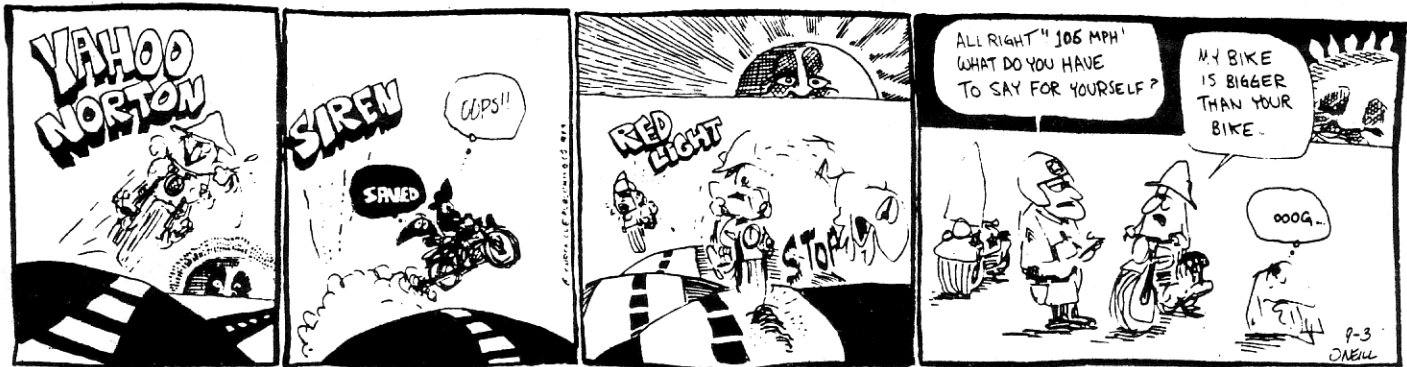
All of the following is directly quoted from the article, and I thank the San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle for letting me use the article.

You roll the Norton out of the garage, weave it past the tricycle, past the lawnmower, past the station wagon, climb astride and run through the drill. Switch off, gas on, rock it forward a bit as your right toe finds neutral, the fold out the starting lever, free the engine with a couple of kicks as you bring it up to top dead center. Retard the spark, tickle the left carburetor until you feel the gas on your fingers, give the right one a small shot, flick on the switch and come down hard on the starter, throwing all your weight on your right leg as you crack the throttle. The engine fires, skips, catches, settles down. You pull on your helmet, then your gloves, ease the Norton out of the driveway and into the street. Tomorrow it's a Brooks Brothers suit and a sincere tie; today it's a scarred, sweaty, ripe set of leathers. Tomorrow it's Montgomery Street; today it's Highway One. It's Sunday morning and time for the Ride.....

Up the hill out of Mill Valley you're halfway back in the pack, thirty machines ahead of you, maybe forty or so behind, cooling it, letting the crazies get ahead and out of your way. The Norton knows the road, leaning into the familiar curves, falling into a natural line on the exit, setting itself up for the next turn almost unattended. You squeeze it on a bit, duck by a couple of the slower machines as you climb the last hill, see Green Gulch Ranch go by on the left as Muir Beach opens up below. Now! You roll on the throttle and charge down the hill, taking five other bikes in a single pass, ducking across the yellow line when you can see around the turns, brushing the bushes with your shoulder as you use all the road on the inside, feeling the machine, feeling the road, letting them talk to you, feeling alive. This is where you get it on, clean out your brain; this is where you start to live.

There's more of course, but you get the idea.

ODD BODKINS (reprinted with the permission of Dan O'Neill)
 As promised last month, Bruce the highway patrolman is going to take on Hugh in a crazy road race to determine whether Big NORTON is as fast as a CHP Harley. Hope you like it.



LATE STUFF: I just received a letter from a fellow in the British Army Air Corps by the name of James Duffy. He is a member of the Norton Owners Club, but is now in Alberta, where he is currently stationed, and left his Norton back in England. He says he plans to come visit California during the period from January 28th to February 8th, and wonders whether there might be a Norton for rent in the bay area. If anyone would be interested in helping him out, please let me know as soon as possible, or else write to him directly. His address is:

Sgt. James A. Duffy
 Army Air Corps Det.,
 B.A.T.U. Suffield,
 BFPO 14, ENGLAND

For your info, I have invited him to attend our February branch meeting and to come on the ride if he can get a bike. I hope he'll be able to do both. We'll see what comes up.