



Norton Notice



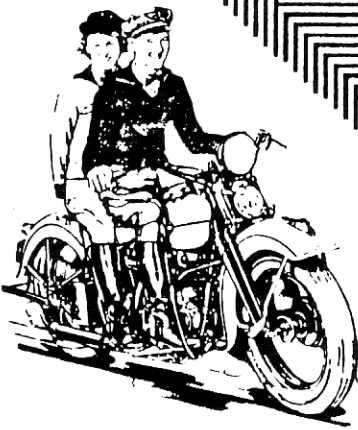
The Newsletter of the
Northern California Norton Owners Club

No. 190

February, 1994



**WE NEED
YOUR
BIKES**



ANNOUNCING: SWEETHEART RIDE: FEBRUARY 13TH !!



Norton Notice

is published by the Northern California Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members regarding all aspects of the Norton motorcycle, including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque.

The *NORTON NOTICE* is a reflection of the readership, who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, photograph (original or otherwise) as long as it is in good taste, so that other Norton enthusiasts may enjoy it. (Good taste is somewhat optional, but hey- this is a group of bikers we're talking about here... that's why we have an editor.)

The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 20th of each month. The *NORTON NOTICE* welcomes contributions submitted electronically. Material in MS Word or Aldus Page-maker on a Macintosh 3.5" disc is ideal. You may also send it directly to the editor via X modem at the telephone number listed for the Editor; set your telecom software for 8/n/1, use the **X or Z MODEM** file transfer protocol, and just ring up the Editor who is home most evenings. Also E-mail can be received by using INTERNET to norton2@aol.com.

Membership in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20.00 per year. Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer.

Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, that month being designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as listed on the mailing label of the *NORTON NOTICE* and the membership card.

All changes of address should go to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer- not the NOTICE editor.

The Northern California Norton Owners Club is affiliated with both the Norton Owners Club of England and the International Norton Owners Association. Interested persons can join these two organizations per the terms described on the Branch membership application form.

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IMPORTANT (Please take note of the following fine print):
The object of the Northern California Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop motorcycling activities. The Club's members are owners of Norton motorcycles and they often submit for publication in the *NORTON NOTICE* technical tips pertaining to motorcycles of the Norton marque. Technical tips so published have been reviewed for technical content and are believed to be both acceptable and workable, but no guarantee is made or implied that they will work correctly, nor is any liability assumed by either the Norton Owners Club or the members for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The club also assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. *NORTON NOTICE* articles or other materials express the authors' views only and not necessarily the official policy of the Norton owners Club or its Northern California Branch. The editor reserves the right to accept, reject or alter all editorial and advertising material submitted for publication. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.

Upcoming Events

Club Rides Schedule

The ride schedule for 1994

- February 13:** (Sunday) Sweetheart Ride in the East Bay
- March 13:** (Sunday) Flying Lady Ride
- April 3:** (Sunday) Easter Morning Mt. Tamalpais Ride
- May 15:** (Sunday) Jim's North Bay Ride (Napa, Berryessa Lake area)
- June 11:** (Saturday) Fred Twigg Ride
- July 16:** (Saturday) Santa Cruz Ride
- July 30:** over night to Minden, Nevada
- August 12, 13, 14:** unofficial ride at the Dardenelles
- September 11:** (Sunday) Old Timer's Ride
- October 16:** (Sunday) Mt. Hamilton Ride
- November 5:** (Saturday) Don Danemeier's British Birthday Ride
- December ?:** No ride scheduled

Activities at a glance.....

- January 7, 8 & 9:** International Motorcycle show, Cow Palace, San Francisco
- March 27:** Clubman's All-British Show and Swap Meet
- May 20 - 22:** AMA Superbike Race, Laguna Seca
- August 19-21:** AMA Superbike Race at

As I am informed of events, I will include them in the Notice.....editor

Meeting Schedule

The Club meets on the second Thursday of each month. The meetings are SUPPOSED to start at 8:00 PM. If you get tired of bench racing, bring a newspaper to read.

- February 10th** - Prince of Wales
- March 10th** - Harry's Hofbrau
- April 14th** - Connecticut Yankee
- May 12th** - Brew Pub
- June 9th** - Prince of Wales
- July 14th** - Harry's Hofbrau
- August 11th** - To be announced
- September 8th** - Brew Pub
- October 13th** - Prince of Wales
- November 10th** - Harry's Hofbrau
- December ?** - To be announced

Harry's Hofbrau: 399 West El Camino Real, Mountain View, CA., (415)964-8455 just north of Highway 85 on El Camino Real

Prince of Wales Pub: 106 East 25th Avenue, San Mateo, CA., (415)574-9723 — Off Highway 101 between Highway 92 and Hillsdale Blvd. Next to San Mateo County Fairgrounds.

Brew Pub on the Green: 3350 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont, CA., — East of Highway 880 near Paseo Padre.

Connecticut Yankee: 100 Connecticut St, San Francisco, CA. (415)552-4440. Vermont St. turnoff off of Highway 101 North

Graphics Contributions

Photography:

- Gerald Mauricio, Degas,
- Lou Caputo, Alan Mueller

Press Production and Halftones:

John & Carrie Follett:
White Oak Press, San Carlos, CA

Maya's Minutes

by Maya Lai, President

Well, my first meeting went wonderful. Carolyn got the gang quieted down for me by banging my gavel. The meeting started a little after 8PM. We have 168 paid up members and three gave me their dues to join. Please welcome Lyle Jameson, Dave Hoopes and David Hand, into the club. Excellent for 1994.

We have \$547 in the kitty. To do something different we voted on having some Norton watches made. The Green ball with the Norton logo in the middle was elected. These will hopefully be out to show before the ClubMan show. The meeting place for San Francisco was picked by officers and some of the members for a fair selection. I do hope that you all like our choice.

I would like to say this weekend (as beautiful as it was) was an eyesore from the side of the freeway. "Snort" stopped in the fast lane again like it was the natural thing to do these days. Tom Dable stopped and helped me get to a call box for a tow. He was on his Atlas on his way up to Alices. I called for a tow, and

pushed him on his way. Why screw up a Wonderful Sunday for two?

It took about three hours, due to a convoy of tow trucks attending a funeral of their owners who had it out a few days ago. **500 trucks!** That left not alot for towing services.

After finally getting home there is a message from Chris Nichols, stating that he had gone to look for me, heard I broke down while he was at Alices. I would like to personally thank you both, Tom and Chris. You are the type of Norton owners that I like to see in a club. Good people!!

It's nice to know that people are willing to help. (love and kisses). The Next meeting will host "Phil Radford" with a Tech session for us! I don't know what he has in mind, but I'm sure it will be good! *Well, that's it for this month.*

Happy riding !!!!

Maya

Pipes Up

by Duncan Ferguson, V. P.

Here we go again. A new year... A new officer in the N.C.N.O.C....A new? bike? My first article will be short and sweet.

Maya did an excellent job at the January 13th meeting of the Club at the Brew Pub.

A special thanks to Alan Mueller for getting the Notice out early. It was really great to get the Notice at the house before the meeting.

Jim Carton, the new Rides Marshall, stated that the February ride, called the Sweetheart Ride, will depart from the Brew Pub on the Green at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, February 13th. This will not be a rocket ride or race so bring your sweetheart and enjoy the ride.

At the City Bike Swap Meet

something took hold of my brain and would not let go until I bought an old round barrel BSA (Victor or Victom?)

I told the wife it deserved a nice home - and it would take only a few dollars to get into running condition. BSA's are nothing like Nortons.

Back to Norton business: This time of year is perfect for riding the big twins. They like cool weather and I like road conditions because there is less traffic. Remember, though, always be prepared. A club member I know was stung by a wasp in **December**. The critter flew up my sleeve and stung me.

KEEP IT IN THE WIND !!

Duncan

Minutes of the January Meeting

The first meeting for the year of the Northern California Norton Owners Club was called to order by our new president, Maya Lai. The meeting was held at Brew Pub on the Green in Fremont. The Vice-President, Duncan Ferguson, counted 8 Nortons in attendance. There were, at the last count, 20 members present.

Maya opened the meeting by saying a few words about the Christmas Party and how successful it was.

Next, there was discussion about the new San Francisco venue. John Covell and Lynne Miller had offered *The Little Shamrock* as a possible venue. At this point things got a little out of hand with several suggestions being thrown out as to possible places to meet. It was decided to have the officers go up to the city and check a few places out and make a decision. This was to be done soon.

Maya suggested we buy motorcycle watches with British bike logos to use as a fund raising project. The discussion went on as to whether we should include bike logos other than Norton. First it was moved, seconded and passed (almost unanimously) that we take on this project. It was also decided to include only Norton logos at this time.

Duncan asked if we could offer a 50-50 raffle at the swap meet this year. No one knew the answer as to the legality of this question. John C. will be asked if he knows the answer.

We got onto the subject of new members and retaining or bringing back old members. It was decided that this is a **must** if we are to maintain the success of

the club. A new member, David Hand, was introduced.

Jim Carton discussed the next ride, The Sweetheart Ride, on February 13th. We are to meet at the Brew Pub on the Green at 10:00 A.M. Mike Pollack volunteered his truck as a chase vehicle.

Alan Mueller stated that the Notice will be late this month due to vacation and printing time problems (since resolved). It was decided that getting the Notice in the hands of the readers early is a problem. Printing, mailing are all time consuming. The editor agreed that he will do his best (Grover also, in abstentia).

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 by Maya.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Mueller

Editors note: I feel that this first meeting got a little out of hand and unruly. We need to respect Maya and let her conduct the meeting in an orderly manner.



Whazz Happ'nin

...regional news of the NCNOC

East Bay Report

by Duncan Ferguson

I took a very nice ride thru Niles Canyon early on Sunday the 16th of January (approx, 9:00 A.M.). The temperature was 47 degrees. It is amazing the extra horsepower the Norton develops when the temperature is down and the humidity is up.

This is the best time of the year to ride the Norton (fast). As long as the roads are dry.

Later that afternoon, Joe Edwards and I traveled to Oakland to see the Oakland Roadster Show. We were a week early. The show does not start until the 19th of January. Sorry about that Joe but I did enjoy the side trip to Jack London Square.

Peninsula Snooze

by Jerry Jolliff

Happy New Year - 1993 is behind us. Good riddance. This year I'll be spending more time with venders on the Peninsula checking on local rides, monthly specials, new products, etc. But I might now need your help. I'm working on the "Perfect Norton Emergency Tool Pouch". Please let me know what you have found necessary to have on board. Leave a message at (415)637-1123 and I'll compile them and bring the kit to a club meeting later this year. A 3"X5" card with the name of the towing company with a hundred dollar bill stapled to it in a bag with a six-pack doesn't qualify. I'm

looking for items like flashlight, wire, duct tape, etc. 1994 will be a great year to ride, so get your stuff together, winter is half over. I'll be looking forward to ridding with you. **Keep your knees in the breeze !!**

South Bay Report

by Mike Pawlak

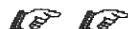
January brought wonderful weather to the South Bay. It was not too hot and not too cold, excellent for biking. I went on a few rides in the hills and attended the club meeting at the Brew Pub.

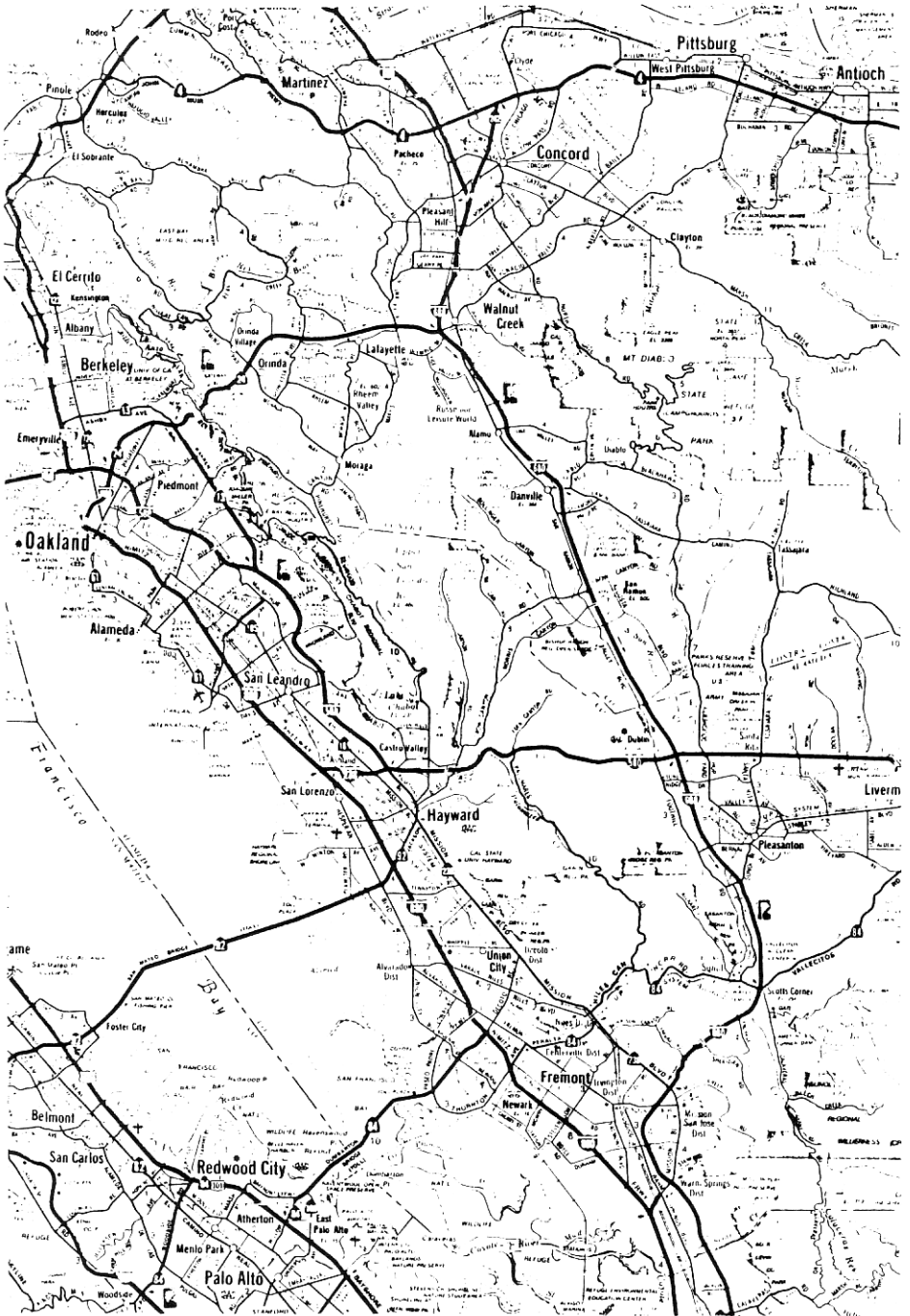
Here's a good word for Lucas Electrics. I was riding a Triumph twin and blew the fuse because I didn't properly close the seat. It grounded out a wire. The bike is runnable even without a battery if the revs are kept high enough (over 1800 rpms). This is true with Nortons, too. So I was able to make it home !!

The Sweetheart Ride !!

The February Norton Ride will leave the Brew Pub on the Green (3350 Stevenson) in Fremont at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday the 13th. This Sweetheart ride is the only official "Bring a friend along" club ride, i.e. wife, girl friend, significant other, dog, cat, etc. To show them how much fun we have on group rides. This is a fairly scenic ride with great vistas of the west bay and San Francisco and the east bay hills. Just ask anyone who went last year. I am extending the ride to include Bear Creek Road and points North or East depending on the weather. We will try to locate a nice eatery by ride time for lunch. We should end up around Martinez. See the map on the next page for the approximate route.

.....SEE MAP





View from the BRIDGE

by Alan Mueller, Editor

Motorcycles are new to me. I am a born again motorcycle enthusiast.

I guess I have been intrigued with motorcycles since I was a small child. Motorcycles were never a part of our family life. My father had a very interesting opinion of motorcycles and those who rode them. Riders were all "low life" types. People who worked on machines, especially motorcycles, were never considered to fit into our life style.

Also, there was the danger factor. Having little or no knowledge of bikes and their riders, led to a fear that if one got near a motorcycle they wouldn't survive the summer. I guess I bought into this philosophy not knowing anything different.

However, whenever a "big bike" would pass us or I'd see one parked by the curb, I would gaze enviously at it. They just seemed real "cool". Then my "rational mind" would take over and I would suppress my thoughts and forget about it.

I remember when in college (U.C. Dental School in San Francisco), I had it all figured out that I needed a motorcycle. Gas mileage would be cheaper (just think how much I could save my parents), parking would be a breeze (parking in San Francisco was real tough), and it would be fun (what a terrible thought, I was supposed to be studying!). Well, I was talked to (a family discussion?), and it was decided that it was just too dangerous. What if I killed myself, or God forbid I injured my hands? It made no difference that I played handball on a daily basis (that's real good for your hands!).

Many, many years went by with me continuing to gaze enviously at passing motorcycles until I reached the ripe old age of 50 years. Having known John Bria for a few years through our common music

connection, I listened to him talk about riding and his Norton. What was a Norton? He showed it to me one evening and I thought, "that's nice" but so what?

At about the same time my cousin, Rich Alves (now also a Norton Nut), told me he had started riding bikes again. This rekindled the old flame that had been burning for so long. I called up C.C. Rider and took a course in motorcycle safety. Remember, I had never ridden a bike before so this was quite an experience (maybe for another article). But, it encouraged me enough to seriously give this riding thing a real chance. A friend of mine owned an old '82 Suzuki (blasphemy) GS550L that he wanted to sell. I bought it for \$800. That was the best \$800 I ever spent. It opened up a whole new world to me.

Two years ago on the eve before Easter, John and I were playing a music gig together and at intermission he said, "Hey, I'm getting up early tomorrow morning to go on a ride. Would you like to come along?" I said "How early?" "Oh, about 3:30 A.M." he replied. I was really close to saying "no way", but I didn't.

The rest is history! I remember riding down 19th Avenue in the dark at 4:00 A.M. following all these guys (turns out they were Grover, Joe and a few others) on these neat, great sounding machines. Then to stand and watch the sun come up on a gorgeous Easter morning. What could be greater? Then, to top it all off, to roam the parking area and see all the beautiful bikes. Where did they come from? I didn't know they existed. I asked John, "Where do I get one?" He told me to see Ken Armann!!!

To be continued next month or
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET A
BIKE BUILT !!

Nuts & Bolts & Odds & Ends

STUFF by John Bria

OK folks, here's what we have remaining in stock at this time. As you can see, we're just about out of T-Shirts and need to get something in stock to replace our latest design. I've received a couple of suggestions for our next shirt: long sleeves, the Atlas engine cutout on back, nothing on the back, a small NCNOC logo on the breast pocket, grey or dark blue colors, sweatshirt, polo shirt. What do you want? Let me know ...**please?**

You might notice that some of the items have ?? next to them. This is my way of questioning if these items have any remaining value. If you have any suggestions about these items (keep it clean), I'd be happy to hear them.

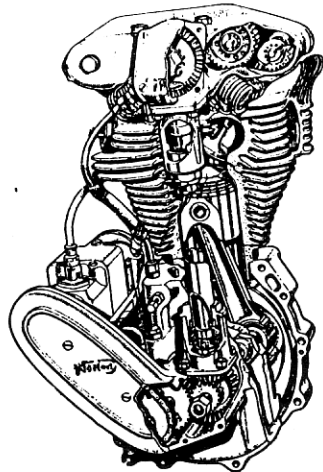
Periphenalia Inventory

Category	Description	Qty	Price	Value??
Decals	N.O.C. - Large	39	2.00	78.00
	N.O.C. - Small	10	1.25	12.50
Patches	Commando Union Jack	4	2.25	9.00
	N.O.C. - Large	2	3.50	7.00
	N.O.C. - Small	2	2.50	5.00
Pins	N.O.C. - Red	23	3.00	69.00
	Norton - Black	57	3.00	171.00
	INOA 1991 Rally	133	2.50	332.50
	??			
	N.C.N.O.C.	157	4.00	628.00
Key Fobs	N.O.C. Leather	14	3.50	49.00
	N.O.C. Clear	7	2.00	14.00
Shirts	Medium Green	4	12.00	48.00
	Large Green	1	12.00	12.00
	X-Large Green	1	12.00	12.00

XX-Large Blue	3	12.00	36.00
Misc. Metal Badge	1	10.00	10.00
Service Notes	4	5.00	20.00
INOA 1991 Rally Caps	3	5.00	15.00
??			

Additional thoughts:

I frequently wonder about all the riders that aren't as fortunate as those of us living in California. How could anyone have watched the 49er/Giants game from their freezing part of the country and not been envious of the beautiful weather that we have here. Alan Mueller, Rich Alves (another new member), Dave Fullerton and I took a really beautiful ride down Skyline to Bear Creek Road on the way to Ken Armann's on January 16. The ride back was even better: Scott's Valley, Felton, Bonny Doon, Davenport and then up Highway 1. A sunny day, crisp air - I can't think of any better place to live.



Cool=TEC

Oil Coolers for the Norton Commando motorcycle



Replacement oil tank cover with a built-in cooler!

- Available in Roadster or Interstate pattern
- Solid-state design - no hoses or fittings to leak oil
- Install easily in just minutes using original bolts
- Lowers oil temperature by up to 15 degrees

Prices:	primer finish	\$99.95
	painted in original colors, with decal	\$129.95

please specify black, silver, red or primer
and 750, 850 or MkIII decal if painted

Magic Devices
1780 Chanticleer Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
(408)475-7505

The Seventh Annual

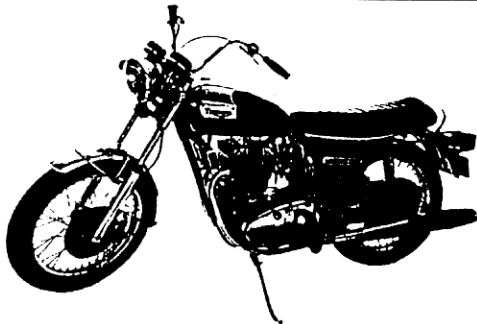
CLUBMAN'S

ALL-BRITISH MOTORCYCLE SHOW & SWAP MEET

Sunday March 27, 1994



*Honoring
British Triples*



**Exhibition Hall, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds
San Jose, California**

Indoors - Rain or Shine

OPEN FOR SHOW & SWAP ENTRIES 6:30AM
DOOR PRIZE ELIGIBILITY WITH ADMISSION

GENERAL ADMISSION \$5.00 8:00 AM
KIDS 12 AND UNDER FREE

AWARDS

Street & Competition Classes

Restored and Unrestored Divisions

Trophies also for Specials, People's Choice, and Best of Marque

RAFFLE

Win a 1974 Triumph Trident

Tickets \$1 in advance or at the show

Raffle Tickets via: BSAOC, P.O. Box 594, Novato, CA 94948

BUY & SELL

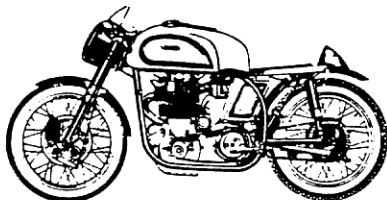
Registration Deadline March 19

PRODUCED BY THE BSA OWNERS CLUB OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ARIEL, AJS/MATCHLESS, GREEVES, ROYAL ENFIELD, NORTON, TRIUMPH, VELOCETTE AND VINCENT OWNERS' CLUBS, THE A.H.R.M.A., AND THE BSA OWNERS' CLUB OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

FOR DETAILS CONTACT:

DON DANMEIER (415) 897-6145 (DAYS) • (415) 898-0330 (EVES TO 9)
ALL ENTRIES/CHECKS PAYABLE TO: BSAOC, P.O. BOX 594, NOVATO CA 94948



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M

Chinese medicine has for about six thousand years been developing some first aid techniques that are not generally known to the western world. As a non-practicing acupuncturist I have, by applying pressure, used some specific points everyone should know about.

The Red Cross teaches some excellent courses in rendering aid and care in emergency situations. While getting my CPR certification, I had the opportunity to demonstrate some first aid techniques from my acupuncture experience.

Prevention is "the best" first aid method, however, sometimes we need everything we do to help.

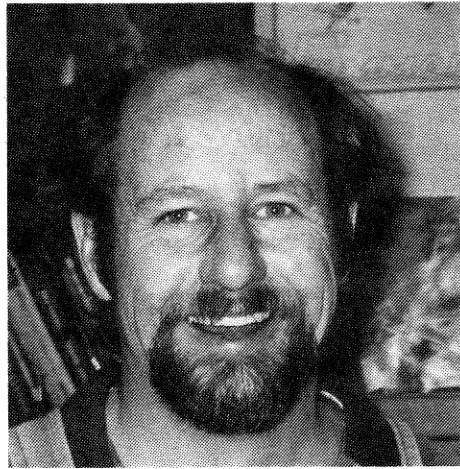
One Sunday afternoon coming home from Aptos on the "Old Branch Forty Road", my wife and I on my Electric Start Norton (moving at a brisk pace), four FJ 1200's blew past us like we were standing still. Two minutes later four more flew by. Two minutes later we came upon the second group, one pilot down on the left with bike. 150 yards away on the right, one pilot was trying to stop oncoming traffic. The third pilot had moved on ahead to catch the first group.

I went to the downed pilot, who was moving across the road with his riding partner (the fourth pilot). As he sat down, I was looking at his face, in his eyes, and he appeared to be moving away (losing consciousness). I quickly pulled off my glove and "stuffed" (applied pressure with) my thumbnail into "Renzhong" GV26*. He shook his head, as a boxer with his "Bell Rung". I asked him ("What Is Your Name?") applying pressure continuously, until he could answer the question. At that point he had cleared his head, consciousness and was able to speak at this time I removed my thumb. This is one of many techniques that can be applied by the average person who is aware of what he can do.

It is much harder to "wake them up" if they lose consciousness!. There is a 50% chance after 24 hours, 25% after 48 hours; After one week, less than 1 in 100 and after 2 weeks, less than 1 in 3,000 come out of the coma.

Headaches and stiff necks are very common among riders and can become chronic.

Dr. Norton: by Ken Armann



A simple yet effective method of releasing the stress, is to apply pressure and massage the Hegu (LL-4)* point. Rub and apply pressure until the pain in the hand is gone. Use this method on both hand for a complete treatment, this way the pain will not return; it works like a charm!!

One more negative element of riding is cold feet! Apply a dash of cayenne pepper to the inside of your socks (just a dash) before putting on. Just a little in the socks keep the feet warm. For about 4,000 years the American Indians have been keeping their feet warm using cayenne

pepper this way.

* Renzhong (GV26) is located below the nose and above the top lip about 1/2 way between. Press this point with your little finger nail and you will notice it "talk to your patient.. This will work on any loss of consciousness situation; heat stroke, trauma.

* Hegu (LL4) is at the end of the crease of the web between thumb and first finger. Rub and apply pressure with thumb and first finger of other hand.



All "Pilots" Are Responsible for their Vehicles:

Pretrip inspection cannot be overemphasized!! Check some components can insure a safe and uneventful ride.

REAR CHAIN: Lubed carefully with 3/4" to 1" slack while you are sitting on the bike — on its wheels, not the center stand!

OIL TANK: if it's empty, it could be sumped. Drain the crankcase and refill the oil tank: at least run the bike 3 to 5 minutes and check the oil tank level. If you smell gas, the fuel could be in the oil via leaky petcocks and float needles stuck. You need to change the oil and the oil filter. The oil level should be halfway between the high and low marks. Do not overfill!!

Tire (Tyre) Air Pressure makes an incredible difference in handling. Remember, rubber leaks air! So check that pressure.

*Here is a letter that came to me last month.
I think it warrants thought...editor*

December 29, 1994

Dear Al:

There's an idea that has knocked around for a while but has never really been put into effect, and I think now is the time to try it again. It concerns the club's meetings.

Some years ago, during my tenure as club president, we implemented the system of rotational meeting venues, north/south/west/east—S.F., South Bay, Mid-Peninsula, East Bay. The intent behind this is to give as many members as possible the opportunity to attend at least some club meetings easily no matter where they live. Though the actual spots have changed from time to time as establishments folded or changed management, we've stuck pretty closely to this rotation, and in light of the geography of the Bay Area we should continue doing so. Predictability and reliability are high virtues for any social institution like a MC club.

However, most club members cannot attend every meeting because it's just not always convenient to travel a long distance for a 90-minute event. Club officers are especially aware of this! I live in San Francisco, and I tend to miss the meetings in Mountain View and Fremont, as good as our venues in those towns are.

We should institute a system of alternative meetings for those who can't make it all the way to the main meeting

but still would like to get together with a few fellow NOCcers at a nearby place. The simplest way to do this would be to post a standard announcement in the Notice to the effect that, wherever the main club meeting is being held in any given month, as a convenience to the NOC's far-flung membership an alternative, purely social meeting will occur simultaneously in the regular club venue at the opposite compass point. Thus, when the main meeting is in San Francisco, there's a social gathering at Harry's Hofbrau in Mountain View for anyone who can't conveniently attend the meeting in the City; when the main meeting is in Fremont, the alternative is at the Prince of Wales in San Mateo; and so forth.

I want to emphasize that the purpose here is NOT to splinter the club or to foster any clique. It would be purely a social meeting at which the conduct of club business is not possible, no matter who's there. The idea is to get together with your buddies, hoist a couple, tell some lies, and roll on home afterwards without a long trek. That's all. But I believe it will strengthen the club, because it will give members a further option to see one another, and only regular and frequent social intercourse creates good club spirit.

I'd like to hear some discussion of this proposal. But even more, I'd like to, **JUST DO IT.**

Sincerely,

John Covell

The Globe and Mail, Report on Business Section, January 13, 1994

NORTON GIVES SKALBANIA
A RIDE

DEAL MAKER/ *Nelson Skalbania would rather buy and sell firms than run them. That's what he's trying to do with his latest deal for a British motorcycle legend. But it's a rough road.*

BY ROBERT WILLIAMSON British Columbia Bureau, Vancouver

Somebody should tell the Russians that Nelson Skalbania is coming.

The Vancouver deal Junkie flies to Moscow next week to talk motorcycles with the builders of Russia's MiG fighters and missiles. He wants to check out whether Russian rockets can be recycled into titanium frames for a new line of bikes to help rescue his latest acquisition: Norton Motors Ltd., a British legend that's running on fumes. "It's speculative," concedes the man who declines more money-making schemes in a week than most of us imagine in a lifetime. It's also off-the-wall - but no more so than some of his other ideas.

Norton, though, has become a saga of a deal gone awry - stalled at a roadblock thrown up by the Alberta Stock Exchange. It has all the Skalbania hallmarks: behind-the-scenes deals-within-deals, complications and huge legal bills. Moscow may yield nothing more than frequent-flier points. But it's also calculated to impress potential investors. Norton desperately needs millions of dollars to stay off the scrap heap. The name must be kept alive if its Canadian owners are ever to realize a potential payoff - although experience suggests any big rewards may well be pocketed by others with more patience than Mr. Skalbania.

Once the toast of the West Coast's acquirer class, he plunged to near-bankruptcy in the mid-1980s. Now 55, he has clawed his way back to grudging respect, and is Western Canada's most frenetic asset flipper. The chase is his passion. Money - mostly the lack of it - is his biggest handicap. "He mightn't be able to give you \$20 from his wallet, but if you need \$50,000 by 5 p.m. to clinch a deal, he can get it," one acquaintance says. A supporting circle of investors keeps him in business. Some, even

one or two who have sued him in the past over soured deals, have made millions from his deal making. But they generally have more patience than Mr. Skalbania. With what one admirer terms "the attention span of a flea," Mr. Skalbania is a buyer of anything that's a bargain - and a longterm operator of nothing. Once acquired, everything usually is for sale again. "I have tended in the past to assemble things, put them together, and then run on to do the next deal," he admits.

Impatience has a price. Mr. Skalbania once sold a skinny, 17-year-old Wayne Gretzky - destined to be hockey's greatest money machine - to Edmonton wheeler-dealer Peter Pocklington for \$700,000. Mr. Pocklington eventually resold Mr. Gretzky to the Los Angeles Kings for \$18-million. Mr. Pocklington took the Edmonton Oilers off Mr. Skalbania's hands, paying with Group of Seven paintings, two Rolls-Royces and his wife's seven-carat diamond ring. Mr. Skalbania gave the keys to one Rolls - a 1928 classic filmed in Hollywood's *The Great Gatsby* - to his first wife as part of their divorce settlement. Second wife, hotelier-socialite Eleni, has their beachfront home in Vancouver's exclusive Point Grey, and the chic Wedgewood Hotel downtown, securely in her name.

These days, Mr. Skalbania sports a monogrammed Norton sweater and poses with Commander bikes. But he doesn't know how to ride one. In fact, he is selling most of what's left of Norton. He'll even let the home factory in Staffordshire go in a side deal for \$600,000 or so.

"Everyone says that when Skalbania gets involved, everything is for sale," he reflects. So is there anything at Norton that's not for sale? "Not at the moment." Over the past few years, bad management decisions turned Norton into the basket case of the motorcycling world. Norton Group spent a fortune diversifying into other businesses, hoping they would produce cash flow to prop up the motorcycle division. The strategy bombed. Mr. Skalbania saw an opportunity. Norton tried to sell him go-cart, engines a decade ago when he and investor Ira Young bought the Mailibu Grand Prix chain of mini racetracks from Warner Communications Inc. He brokered the sale of Norton Group's disastrous German industrial fastener subsidiary, FUS Fasteners, to his pal, Calgary entrepreneur

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Larry Ryckman, owner of the Calgary Stampede's football club and a bike fan who owns two Harley-Davidsons.

FUS originally cost Norton about \$30-million. Mr. Ryckman got it for \$20 000 plus \$2-million in liabilities - and a \$500 000 deal-making fee for Mr. Skalbania. But it backfired. "FUS was tied up in a horrible web of litigation for more than a decade," Mr. Ryckman said. "It was dirtier than what was represented to us." Mr. Ryckman's Westgroup Corps. Inc. ran out of money to sort out the mess, forcing him to surrender control to a U.S. backer.

Mr. Skalbania couldn't resist two key assets of the Norton Motors subsidiary: tax losses thought to be worth at least \$20-million, and the 90-year-old Norton name and trademarks. He is gambling that global rights just for the name will fetch a bundle. And if faithful investors and quality engineering can do for the Norton/BSA name what they did for Harley-Davidson, he could be talking real money. His blunder, though, was to try to fund the deal through a public company, Wildrose Ventures Inc. A shell listing on the Alberta Stock Exchange, Wildrose originally was set up to raise alpacas. When Wildrose announced last June 18 that it was buying Norton, the nervous Alberta exchange promptly halted trading.

The ASE was aware of the Norton mess, didn't like the promotional hype, knew of the VSE wrecks in Mr. Skalbania's wake and became suspicious of his undeclared involvement in Wildrose. Mr. Skalbania faces a B.C. Supreme Court trial May 10 on fraud, theft and forgery charges laid more than two years ago over an alleged \$100 000 investment in a \$30-million real estate deal that collapsed.

Wildrose, still under suspension, has not traded since June. The exchange ignored Mr. Skalbania's ultimatum that it lift its suspension by Dec. 1. Instead, it demanded that Wildrose raise its stake in Norton Motors 1993 Ltd., which acquired Norton Motors Ltd., to 51 per cent from 40. That posed another cash crisis for Mr. Skalbania. He covered it by selling his interest in Luigi Aquilini's \$54.5-million buyout from the Alberta government of West Edmonton Village, a housing complex formerly owned by the Ghermezians' Triple Five Corp. The deal, slated to close this month, was put together by Mr. Skalbania last year.

Although he says Wildrose now owns 51


per cent of Norton, with an option to buy another 39 per cent (leaving his sometime partner Mr. Aquilini with 10 per cent), the Alberta Exchange won't budge without the proper paper work. Mr. Skalbania is threatening to take Norton to the Toronto or Nasdaq exchanges.

The actual Norton Motors deal turned out to be a messy, bitter affair. The tax losses and some Norton properties are still under a legal cloud. "We were buying a car we thought was a Cadillac and all it needed was gas to make it go. Instead it had no friggig wheels and no engine," Mr. Skalbania complains.

His team didn't get around to kicking Norton's tires in due diligence checks until mid-September, just two weeks before the sale was to close. They say they discovered that Norton was 50 per cent overstaffed and losing \$100 000 a month. The company was hyping new rotary engines and a flashy, F2 motorcycle prototype so riddled with expensive problems that the Canadians abandoned them on the spot.

Mr. Skalbania junked the original deal. He demanded, and got, a 50-per-cent cut in the closing price. Norton Group chief executive officer David Macdonald, who had resigned, howled that the Canadian had scooped up Norton's assets for half their market value. "A serious under-value was involved," one memo said. Skalbania accused Mr. Macdonald of acting as an unpaid liquidator for the bank. "Many things came to light that are absolutely material and if the truth were known, Wildrose would never have advanced the initial [working capital] funds back in May," he wrote in onrebuke.

In the end he got Norton for \$1-million and left the bank with Norton's \$1.5-million in

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debt - although he says he and his partners have spent another \$1.5-million for working capital and other costs related to the buying. Mr. Macdonald claims the Canadians got assets worth \$3-million; Wildrose's latest guesstimate is about \$7-million. "We did a hell of a deal," Mr. Skalbania allows.

While the Norton drama has put Mr. Skalbania back in the news, other deals away from the regulatory glare and grind in recent years serve to illustrate his business style. In 1992, he led the purchase of PCL Plastics Corp. of Oakville, Ont. He quickly sold off an insulating foam subsidiary, Plasti-Fab Ltd., to Calgary's Aeonian Capital Corp. Then he resold the PCL plastic bag company to Toronto and Vancouver investors.

"There was a lot of teeth-gnashing when Nelson walked in," said one source close to the PCL deal. "Nelson comes with a reputation; he has no desire to be an operator of anything. I don't know if he has a plugged nickel to his name, but he can get in doors, and people listen." His haste to do deals using other people's money tends to leave a lot of loose ends - and lawsuits. Investor Sam Belzberg, whose company sued a Skalbania/Aquilini venture in 1990 over a \$1-million Whistler mortgage, still teamed up with Mr. Skalbania in the takeover last year of Alberta oil field supplier Franklin Supply Co. Ltd.

Last month, Mr. Skalbania bailed out of his partnership with Mr. Belzberg on the 1989 purchase of Vancouver's old B.C. Hydro office tower, and its current conversion to condominiums. So far, the \$60-million deal has lost about \$10-million, on paper. It won't make money unless the city approves building another condo tower on the adjoining parking lot, and that's not even in the planning stage.

He's currently trying to engineer deals to buy the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas, the Winnipeg Jets hockey team and a Bulgarian AIDS drug. Meantime, investors interested in Norton are hovering around, but they won't touch a suspended Wildrose. Norton has to keep its doors open if it's ever to collect the tax losses. The cash starvation has added urgency to the selling of Norton assets.

A license agreement for bikes and accessories in the United States and Mexico has been sold to Seattle

businessman Pakie Plastino. Deals worth about \$200 000 are said to be in the works with European leather jacket and boot makers just for the use of the Norton name. There's talk of joint venture deals with South Koreans and even Russians to produce new lines of motorcycles - but that would take millions of dollars Norton does not have. Most Skalbania watchers believe the brave, new-model talk is really calculated to bait the hook for the next deal for pieces, or all, of Norton.

He recently looked at a flying car prototype. Wildrose and Norton have joined a British-led consortium on Project Blue Thunder - "a Cadillac with wing stubs," the ultimate California fantasy, at \$200,000 a pop, using Norton engines. There's said to be a Bulgarian company interested in a line of Norton skis, and he's even talking about buying into the Malibu Grand Prix operation.

Skalbania watchers are both aghast and admiring. "I wish I could do a deal like Norton; get the assets and leave all the liabilities behind," said Malcolm Hunter, vice-president and chief financial officer of Fred Deeley Imports Ltd., the Vancouver-based Canadian distributor of Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

Norton is a grand name of the bike world with a loyal following and there's real market potential if Norton can get its act together, he says. "But from reading about Mr. Skalbania's deals from years past, he seems like an unlikely candidate to operate the company." Exactly. Mr. Skalbania recently assigned his Norton interest to daughter Rozanda's ROI Enterprises Inc. "I don't want to run a public company," he says. "I like to put things together. I am not and don't want to be, an operator. I would rather do, and conclude, deals, rather than manage."



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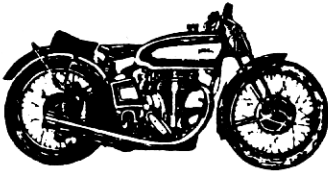
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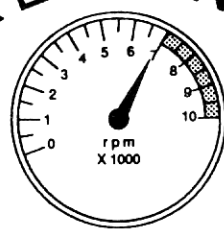
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