



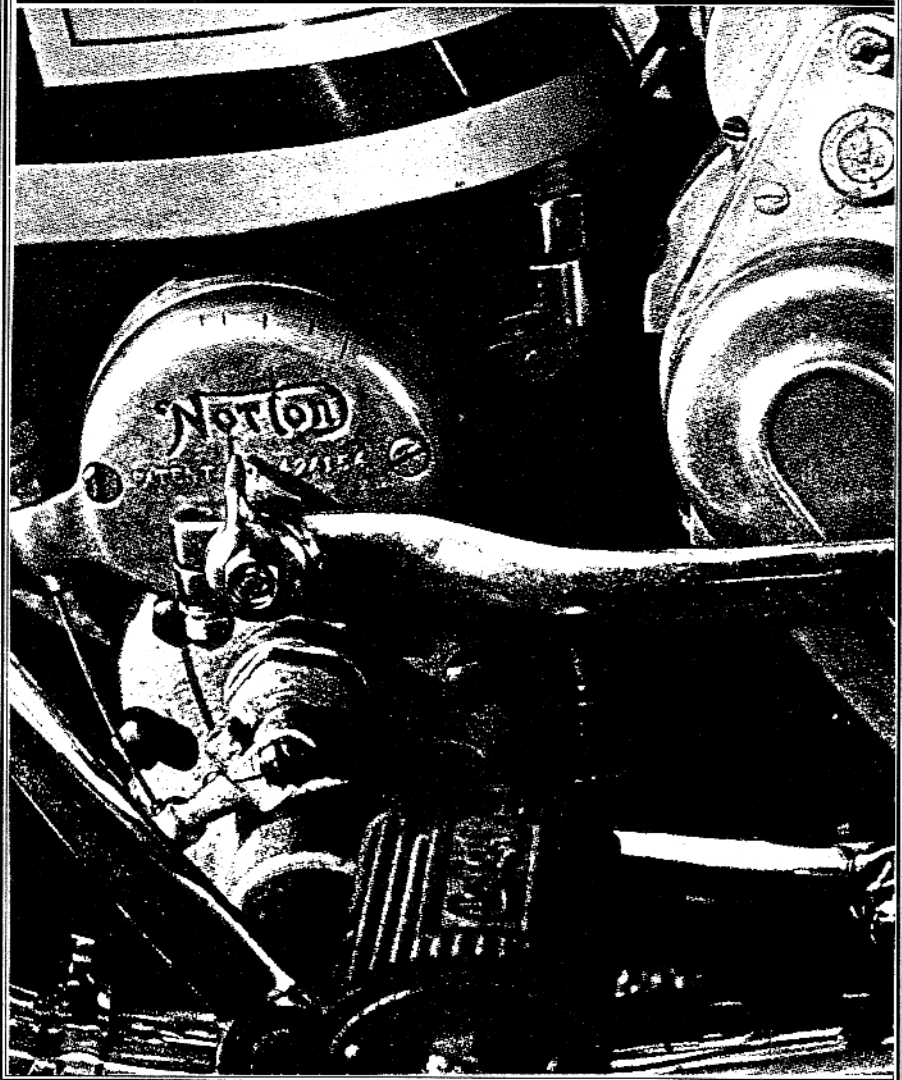
# Norton Notice

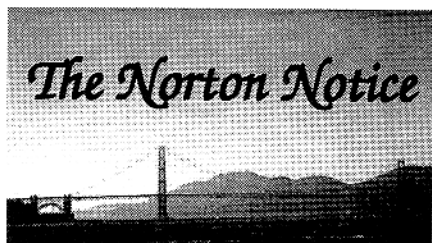


The Newsletter of the  
Northern California Norton Owners Club

No. 215

May, 1996





is published by the Northern California Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members about all aspects of Norton motorcycles, including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque. The *Norton Notice* is a reflection of its readers, who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, or photograph (original or otherwise) in good taste for other Norton enthusiasts to enjoy.

*The deadline for submitting items for publication is the 20th of each month.* The *Norton Notice* welcomes contributions submitted electronically, preferably in MS Word, MS Works, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format. The *Notice* is produced using Aldus PageMaker 5.0.

Membership in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20 per year. Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer. Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, in the month designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as listed on the mailing label of the *Norton Notice* and on the membership card.

**Send change-of-address information to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, not the *Norton Notice* Editor.**

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

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### *About this issue...*

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**Words to live by. . .** *The objective 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 often submit technical tips pertaining to Norton motorcycles for publication in the Norton Notice. Technical tips 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 its members for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The Club assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles 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. Club activities and membership are subject to standards established in the Club by-laws. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.*



## Upcoming Events

Rides are on Sundays, unless otherwise noted. All rides kickstart at **9 a.m. sharp**. Be gassed-up, fed, and ready to roll! Call Jim Carton for details about any ride.

### ■ May

**11 (Saturday) Pre-Mother's Day ride\***

Leaves from Emeryville Denny's, or meet us at Solano Community College about 10 a.m. Lunch in Calistoga at The Lord Derby Arms. 150 - 175 miles.

**19 Monterey Bay Classic European Motorcycle Club Rally of European Motorcycles, Santa Cruz Frgrnds.**

True rally format and scoring, great party at the finish! Call Mario at (408) 394-7346 for details.

**19 Vintage show/swap meet, Hanford**

Call (805) 733-1137 for details

### ■ June

**TBA Fred Twigg ride\***

**8 - 9 (Saturday - Sunday) BSA Club Loop of the Lakes Dual-Sport Ride, Lake Mendocino**

Call (415) 457-5423 for details

**16 Santa Cruz/South Coast ride\***

Trophy party\* to follow, Alan Goldwater's house, Santa Cruz

### ■ July

**18 - 21 (Thursday - Sunday) INOA Rally, \* Quincy, CA**

**20 - 21 (Saturday - Sunday) BMT Promotions show and swap meet, Carson City, NV**

**28 Norton/BSA Club British Singles/ Pre-Commando Twins Ride**

Velocette Owners Club also invited. The objective is to get older bikes on the road; no Commandos! If there's enough interest, this could become an annual event. Route TBD, will probably go through Marin County. Call Steve Meyer at (415) 331-2477 or Stevan Thomas at (415) 923-1662 for details.

### ■ August

**8 - 11 (Thursday - Sunday) Dardanelle ride (unofficial)**

### ■ September

**15 Old Timers' ride**

It's tradition to ride your favorite "old timer" to this one, which is also the Club's annual picnic.

### ■ October

**13 Mt. Hamilton ride\***

### ■ November

**17 After the Danmeier ride\***

\* Points awarded for participation:

Nortons	6
Other British makes	4
Non-British makes	2
Other	1

Sign up with the Ride Marshall to get your points!



## Maya's Minutes

by Maya Lai, President

I'm happy to say that the April meeting went well! It was short, but a lot of bikes showed up, and Mike Sullivan raffled off a wrench, which went for \$17. I had a great ride the next day. I even tried my luck going to Marin to ride around with a friend. I've got to say, two Nortons in unison is the greatest sound one can hear! It was the best ride I've had in years. I have been hesitant to ride because of my shoulder being weak, but it seemed to be OK. I hope to make more rides now, job permitting.

It looks like summer is coming, so get your dusty bikes out and try to make some rides, so you can have everything sorted out before the rally. By the way, if you plan to go to the rally, it would be very helpful if you would pre-register (soon). Alan still needs help with the Friday night "spaghetti feed," and a few other things, so please call him and pitch in.

Hope to see you all at the next meeting! It's at the Prince of Wales.



## THOUGHTS for Public Consumption

by Greg Braithwaite

Wa-hoo-wee! The weather's great! The bike is great! So, as of right now, I'm very pleased to be living amongst such beautiful landscape.

If you, the Reader, may (or may not) have noticed, the V.P. hasn't had an article in the last two *Notices*. Evidently, there was some confusion with the article I submitted for publication in the February issue (and I was bitter. . .so I didn't write one for March).

I have found some excellent roads in my new home county of Santa Cruz. I'm sure the roads were discovered previously, I just rode them for the first time. If I may, I would like to briefly summarize my last ride. . . Vroom! Vroom! Blap! Blap! Pop! Vroom! Blap! Vroom!. . . It was an experience worth revisiting (give me a ring, maybe we'll hook up, maybe not).

In closing I would like to quote Arlo Guthrie's tune, *Motorcycle Song*:

I don't want a pickle, I just wanna  
ride on my motorsickle  
and, I don't want a tickle, cause I'd  
rather ride on my motorsickle  
and I don't wanna die, I just wanna  
ride my motorcy...cle

Is there much more to say than that  
(possibly, but who gives a crap)?

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## Upon the Avons

by Stevan Thomas

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I heard there were a few snide remarks at the last Club meeting about the April *Notice* being a little late. I held the deadline for two reasons: a Club member died and his friends wanted to submit pieces, (his memorial wake was after the "official" deadline), and I was waiting for final details about his memorial ride, which was to be in April. Not too many people would have made the ride if it hadn't been in the *Notice*. I don't apologize for that one at all, so let's cut the sniveling and whining. This is a Club about enjoying our bikes and riding them.

This is a good time for all of us to reflect on our collective vision for the Club. I am going to float a few trial balloons that are my opinions. We may send out a survey form in the next *Notice* to poll your opinions. You'll have to put a stamp on it, but please fill it out. It's important because you, as a member, are important, and you will be voting on changes this year.

I thought about the reasons I first joined the Club, back in the early 1980s, and why I rejoined in 1990:

- To get a good newsletter
- To go on Club rides
- To get a discount on parts (that was then, this is now. No discounts).
- To meet other Norton riders in my area and make some friends
- To learn about my bike

All those reasons are geared toward

having my bike run well, and *riding*--alone or with friends--on cool roads.

I did **not** join to go to monthly meetings in a bar somewhere south of San Francisco, on a week night before I have to get up in the morning to go to work. Judging from the number who show up at most meetings, neither did most of you. If you did, there would be 50 to 100 people at each meeting, since we have over 200 members and many of you live in the Bay Area. Besides--I would have been embarrassed to have brought new members, or friends from outside the Club, to some of our recent meetings.

I also think that having meetings on Thursday nights severely limits the number of candidates who will run for elective office. I have to be *at work* at 6 am. What time do you have to be at work? Does that affect whether or not you want to get involved in running the Club from a bar in San Jose on a week night? I haven't really seen any "business" conducted at monthly meetings that couldn't be handled quarterly.

Again, this is my opinion, but I think the BSA Club has a much better operating format, and one we should seriously consider adopting. Its members elect officers to run the Club, and they let them run it! As a result, the BSA Club does a whole

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## Treasurer's Report

by Bruce McGregor

Please welcome the following new members, many of whom joined at the Clubman's Show:

John Ahern, Pacifica,  
 Michael Berghofer, San Francisco  
 Don Bray, Sacramento  
 Charlie Brookman, San Francisco  
 Robert Call, Lockwood  
 Lloyd Chapman, Greebrae  
 William Cravens, Hercules  
 Mike Crick, Granite Bay  
 Kenny Dreer, Oregon City, OR  
 Ralph Loza, Ripon  
 Peter Martin, San Francisco  
 David Ogorzalek, San Francisco  
 Paul Williams, Concord

Also, welcome back, Art Sirota!

Since January 1, the Club has received 25 renewals. When you add in the 13 new members, the Club has a grand total of 206 paid members. Thanks to all the new members and to those who renewed. The Club appreciates your interest and support. By the way, when you write your checks, please make them out to "N.O.C. of Northern California", and everything will be hunky dory!

Speaking of the membership, Dave Neal of Mill Valley recently won the Vintage Class at Sears Point (on a Norton, of course!). Best of luck the rest of the year, Dave.

Now, on to the Quarterly Report. Cash flow in the Club account has been good over the last three

### N.C.N.O.C. Income Statement First Quarter, 1996

**Beginning balance, 01/01/96 \$800.00**

#### Income

Membership dues	789.00
Ads	240.00
Paraphernalia	380.00
50/50 raffles	31.00
	<b>\$1,440.00</b>

#### Expenditures

Notice printing & postage	\$564.00
IBM computer deposit	100.00
Raffle bike refund	225.00
INOA dues	35.00
Administration (door prize, computer labels, phone, etc.)	302.00
	<b>\$1,226.00</b>

**Ending balance, 03/31/96 \$1,014.00**

months (January, February, and March). Income of \$1,440 was collected, the majority coming from membership dues and paraphernalia sales. Expenses were rather high, with the raffle bike refund being the main extraordinary cost. We hope that raffle ticket sales in the future will be handled in a more professional manner that won't result in a loss to the Club. Total expenditures were \$1,226 for the quarter, leaving an ending balance of \$1,014.

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## Ride Points Update

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As we announced earlier this year, Club members now earn "ride points" for participating in Club rides. The member with the most points at the end of the year gets. . . well, we're not sure yet. Possibly free dues for a year. No matter what you win, you will definitely have had the most fun on Club rides! Here's how members are doing so far.

### \* Easter Morning Ride

#### **Nortons (6 points)**

David Bright  
 Mike Burnham (P 11)  
 Lou Caputo  
 Jim Carton  
 Jerry Kaplan (Atlas Special)  
 Patrick McDowell  
 Lynne Miller  
 Robert Newman  
 George and Sachi Shoblo  
 Tarmo  
 Stevan Thomas  
 Fred Twigg (Featherbed International)

#### **Other British makes (4 points)**

Dennis Magri (Vincent)  
 Jim and Pat Munroe (new Triumphs)

#### **Non-British makes (2 points)**

John Caraway (Suzuki)  
 Mike Sullivan (BMW)

### \* John Bria Memorial Ride

#### **Nortons (6 points)**

Richard Alves  
 Carol Bria  
 Lou Caputo  
 Jim Carton  
 Jerry Jolliff  
 Steve and Linda Marsh  
 Bruce McGregor  
 Alan and Vicci Mueller  
 George and Sachi Shoblo

#### **Non-British (2 points)**

Mike Sullivan (R-27)

- \* The next points ride is the Pre-Mother's Day ride scheduled for Saturday, May 11. Be there!

Jim Carton (or the acting Ride Marshall) will have a sign-up sheet at each ride. To get your ride points, go see him during the ride and write down your name and what you rode. **We didn't have sign-up sheets at the first two rides, so if you were there and don't see your name here, please call or write the Notice Editor and let him know!**

By the way, a couple of members were miffed that we aren't giving points for attending meetings. It's my understanding that Maya will now keep a separate points list for meetings.

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## Ride Report

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Our May ride has been changed to Saturday, May 11 so as not to conflict with Mother's Day. The ride kickstarts at 9 a.m. at Denny's on Powell Street in Emeryville (at Highway 880 and Powell). Come early to eat, or be fed, gassed and ready to roll! This ride will take us to the North Bay, near Lake Berryessa, and up to Monticello Dam (a great stretch of road!). Lunch will be at The Lord Derby Arms, which is our usual spot in Calistoga. North Bay riders can meet us at Solano County Community College on Suisun Valley Road about 10 a.m. This ride is 150 to 175 miles long.

The **Easter Morning Ride** was a huge success, as usual. We had a great view of the Bay Area from the summit before sunrise (very little fog this time, and warm!). It's a sight to behold. You have to do it at least once! Thank you, Mean Marshall, for giving us a Bay Area tradition that roughly 400 motorcyclists (one-third British) enjoy and share every year.

There were 448 motorcycles at the top, of which 34 were Nortons. The oldest bike was a 1932 AJS with a hand-shift. The oldest Norton may have been Fred Twigg's International. Keith Sides rode his new (four miles on the clock) 1950 light-metallic-green, sprung-hub Triumph Thunderbird. Mike Sullivan's 1961 Norton 350 single is undergoing a heart transplant, so he

rode his BMW 250 single. Tarmo rode 100 miles from Marysville with no headlight, straight to Jerry Kaplan's house in Davis, where he a got a bulb. Lucas overcame the forces of darkness for the rest of the ride!

If you didn't make the front side of Mount Tam on Easter, you could have made the back side with Ed Meagor and friends the following week, at the **Rallye de Milani Grand Prix**. Goldstars, Vincents, Royal Enfields, A-10s, Triumphs of all descriptions, BSAs and Nortons took the usual route to Fairfax up that lovely road to Alpine Dam for the first stop. The only annoyance was the one and only outfit that led the ride on the steep and narrow twisties up from the dam to the top. Fortunately, many riders went around it to enjoy the ascent at their own pace.

After that, it was over the ridge (with a great view of Stinson Beach) to the summit, where we stopped to enjoy the same fabulous view we saw Easter morning. Then down the front and over the Headlands, to the Point Bonita Lighthouse for the last scenic view before heading back to Milani's for food, awards and more bike ogling. This ride is shorter and has more stops than most Norton Club rides, but it's a really good time and there's always

*(continued on page 10)*

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## The History of the Easter Morning Ride: A "Mean" Story

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*This story can now be told, because the Statute of Limitations has expired.*

The evening before Easter, in 1975, Mean Marshall and five friends went out for what turned out to be an all-night drunk. They'd done the East Bay, ridden to San Francisco and closed the bars there, and ridden back to the East Bay, at a loss for what to do. It was too nice a night to call it quits, but nothing was open.

Mean had an inspiration. He remembered, as a child, being dragged to Easter morning sunrise services. Since it was Easter, he suggested to his accomplices that they all go watch the sun rise. They, not being in their right minds, wholeheartedly agreed.

Off to Marin toward Mount Tam they rode, their British twins thundering up the mountain (back then, the rode was open for a morning service at the Mountain Theater, below the summit). They arrived well before dawn, enjoyed the sunrise, then rode to Stinson Beach for breakfast and were home by 3 p.m. The next year, to Marshall's surprise, 25 riders wanted to go! Thus, the Easter Ride was born.

Until 1990, the ride was invitation-only, and, for a while, was 90% British. Impressively, even though eventually as many as 400 riders participated, there was only one (minor) accident in 15 years.

As the ride grew, it became more difficult to keep it a "Clubman" event. Mean tried several things--he even cut

a deal with five restaurants to serve food only to "official" riders, who had passes and badges! You could crash the ride, but you couldn't eat. However, the "Sunday Morning Ride" had grown as well. Rice Rockets were proliferating and Mean was getting just a little nervous about safety, and frustrated with the growing pile of red tape, so he decided to step aside, and Lynne Miller came forward to continue the tradition.

Our unwitting guests the last couple of years have been the Crystal Covergence. In fact, Lynne was standing next to the head Ranger this year when one of them came down to complain about all the motorcycles, saying "we would really rather have the mountain quiet, and to ourselves."

"Do you have a permit to be here?" the Ranger asked.

"Oh, you need a permit?" was the crystalline reply.

"Yes," said the Ranger, "you do, and the reason the road is open this morning is because the motorcyclists have one." At that, the Converger wandered away, looking a little confused.

It's a long walk from Pan Toll to the summit.

So, here we are. The Rangers love us, there's never a mess when we leave and we are the Park Service's single biggest fundraiser of the year! How much more fun can you have for \$5?

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## Member Profile

by John Covell

### Jeff Gruwell

**Age:** 34, as of May 1

**City:** Pittsburg

**Personal:** Married, two daughters

#### Occupation

Process operator (octane boost) for Shell Oil Co.

#### NOC Member since

1992. In So. CA clubs since 1988.

#### How did you become involved with NOC?

"I moved north, and the rest is history (unpublishable)."

#### Club offices held

None, yet

#### Norton(s) owned

Ten Commandos, every type except a John Player

#### Other motorcycles

"None! I'm a 'Norton supremacist!'"

#### What first interested you in the Norton?

"My father tried to persuade me—the handling, the charisma, the exhaust note."

#### Other hobbies/interests

Music (playing lead guitar), all types; mechanical/electrical hobbyist

#### Favorite motorcycling road/ride

Mines Road, north of Mt. Hamilton

#### If you could redesign the Norton, what would you change?

"Management and their cost-cutting measures! Then I wouldn't have to redesign anything."

#### Favorite/most embarrassing episode on a Norton

"First time I rode one, when I almost smashed into the neighbor's car. I pulled a wheelie because I popped the clutch, almost hit the VW Rabbit, [and] tried to lay it down, [but] instead it turned! Great-handling bike."

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a great turn-out. Thank you, Ed!

Eleven Nortoneers showed up for the **John Bria Memorial Ride** on April 20. We started at Alice's, headed for the store in San Gregorio, then took Stage Road to Pescadero, where we spotted Alan, out with the Vincent club, on his rotary. Steve Marsh led our group over to Bean Hollow Road, which looped back to Pescadero, where we stopped for beverages at Duarte's Tavern. Then it was back to Alice's. Short but sweet, and a perfect day. No wonder this area was one of John's favorite places to ride.

Roadside note: Lou Caputo's Boyer terminals came un-crimped, and, to everyone's amazement, Jim fixed his 8th Boyer along the side of the road!

*Jim Carton, Bruce McGregor and Stevan Thomas contributed to this report.*

(continued from page 5)

lot more than the Norton Club, has a much bigger budget for events, and never would have had the fiasco we just went through with the "raffle bike".

The Norton Club, in contrast, has been a financial mess for the last couple of years, and is virtually the only major Club in the Bay Area that is not incorporated as a nonprofit. Be advised, when you step forward to run for office, that if we get sued as a Club, you are personally liable as an Officer and can lose everything you own. Do you own a business? A house? Wanna risk it and live dangerously? I've heard a call for new blood in the Club's leadership, but who in his or her right mind would take on this uninsured risk?

I think it's time the Club grew up. We need to re-think our operating format, and we clearly need to incorporate. We must qualify as a non-profit--we never seem to have any money! And, most importantly, we need to get our focus back to RIDING. We need to make the rides "user-friendly", so more new members will participate, and, if we must have meetings, we should have quarterly meetings at the rides! A fundamental point to consider is this: Do you want the Club to reflect those members who ride, or those who go to the meetings that most members obviously do not attend?

All of this will undoubtedly be discussed at the next few meetings, highlights of which will be published in the *Notice*. When you get the

survey I mentioned, please fill it out and send it in. Your response will help determine the future direction of the Club.

On a lighter note, in this issue, you will notice a change in format for "Upcoming Events", and more detail in "Ride Report". These changes are intended to encourage newer members, who don't know the rides as well as the old timers, to participate. In addition, at least one, and maybe two, non-Commando rides are planned in conjunction with the BSA Club, the Velo Club and possibly the Monterey Bay Classic European Club. The idea is to get the singles and older bikes out. The Old Timer's Ride used to do that, but since it's now the Club picnic, it's evolved into a Commando ride.

Please write soon, and often. I want to hear your feedback on the content and format of the new *Notice*, and on issues important to the Club. Submissions on disk are always appreciated. By the way, I **do** apologize for this *Notice's* lateness. We had technical difficulties.

The weather's fabulous...get up on your Avons (or Dunlops) and let's go ride!



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# In Search of the Perfect Norton

by Robert Newman

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## ■ Fuel tank tips

Here are some suggestions on making your Commando fuel tank easier to work with and more reliable in the long run.

1. The factory supplied some dense foam insulators to go between the main frame tube and the inside of the tank tunnel. Today, they look pretty ancient and tend to not be attached very well to whatever they happen to stick to when the tank is removed. Although there are new ones available, there is a better substitute which has other uses as well. It's sold at auto parts stores as camper shell mounting foam. Look for the heavy black stuff with adhesive on one side. It's only a quarter inch thick, but it's easy to layer it to whatever thickness is required. I have it layered to the frame tube and secured with large ty-wraps. Now it stays put.
  2. Those rubber block muffler mounts make good front tank mounts since they separate the threaded bungs in the bottom of the tank from frame vibration better than the stud and washer stack from the factory. Also, I've never observed any fatigue fractures on the bottom of a Norton tank which was mounted this way. Another advantage of the muffler mounts is that you don't need a rubber washer under the frame bracket; just use a 5/16" fender washer and a nut. Mine have never vibrated loose.
  3. Omitting the factory rear mount has never caused me any regret. Without it, the tank comes off in half the time. . . a real plus when you're traveling. My tank won't come off without first removing the seat, which prevents the rear of the tank from lifting up. The down-side of this is that the tank is not as well-secured in the event of an accident.
  4. The factory petcocks leak sooner or later, maybe they all do, but I have a pair of BAP petcocks which are fuel-tight after three years. I think they cost less than the stock ones. I must confess that I tend not to turn them off much, since my Amals don't leak or overflow. Incidentally, if your carbs overflow with the motor off, they overflow with the motor on and will not be carbureting properly. . . so get 'em fixed.
  5. In-line fuel filters, one on each side, prevent clogging of the pilot fuel circuit. Since I've put them on, I've had no more idling problems.
  6. Standard automotive fuel line (1/4") never loses its flexibility. Various English motorcycles have been fitted with clear vinyl fuel line, which eventually darkens and petrifies. I'm looking into some industrial clear tubings to see if this shortcoming can be avoided.
  7. An interesting modification by Jeff Gruwell is the re-welding of the top of an Interstate gas tank to accept a flush-mount filler cap that can be found at a salvage yard. Now that he's repainted it, he has about the
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best looking Norton tank around. Also, there's no big lump pushing up inside the bottom of a tank-bag.

8. A caution for Commandos fitted with braided stainless head oil feed lines: check for contact at the bottom of the tank. In a toughness contest between the tank and the hose, the hose wins easily and will wear through the bottom of the tank. Slit a length of vinyl tubing and fit it over the cross-over piece and secure it with small ty-wraps.

#### ■ "Better" gasoline update

Joe Williams, foreman of the Fleet Services Department for PG&E's Sacramento division (and a Club member), has promised some concise info on the qualities and effects of this new gas. One story he tells involves a new problem with the vehicles PG&E has equipped with CNG (compressed natural gas) as a primary fuel, which automatically switch to gasoline when the CNG pressure falls too low. Since the gasoline is stagnant for long periods, it creates rust in the tanks and lines, which quickly clogs the filter, causing the vehicles to stall. The drivers never know when the switch-over will occur, as it is totally automatic and the motor doesn't miss a beat or feel any different. More on this later.

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## Alan's Wrench

*by Alan Goldwater*

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When I first saw the 3/8-mile track and empty grandstands at the Quincy Fairgrounds, I could hear the ghost echoes of open-pipe twins at full bore echoing off the walls. I could almost feel the excitement and smell the sweet aroma of Castor Race Oil.

I'm therefore very pleased to report that we have firmed up our deal for AHRMA Vintage Flat-Track Racing at the rally. The date has been moved up to Friday, July 19, with practice in the afternoon and the main event in the evening. If you are interested in competing, contact Mike Lightfoot at 7601 Chester Drive, Salinas, 93907, or (708) 663-7017. Racers must have a current AMA race license.

We've also arranged for the Rainbow Girls in Quincy to do an "all you can eat" spaghetti feed on Friday. They will need some adult help in the Rally kitchen. If you'd like to volunteer, give me a call.

We need to come up with \$1,500 for an advance deposit on the food service, and for this we must rely on Rally pre-registrations. We really need your help, so PLEASE send yours to Maya soon. You save \$5 by signing up early!

Finally, I'd like to remind all of you that I'm throwing a Rally trophy-sanding party on June 16 following the Santa Cruz ride. The beer's on me! I will not be at the May meeting at The Prince of Wales, but Lou will be there to sign up volunteers and answer questions. Thanks, Lou.

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## *The Agent*

by I. Pushtit Holme

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Once upon a weekend balmy, I was riding my old Dommie  
Over to a quaint and curious British motorcycle store.  
Suddenly I heard a tapping--could it be a piston slapping?  
As my Norton started crapping, crapping out on me once more.  
"Tis pre-ignition," I muttered, "bad gas at the petrol store.  
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I recall how quickly night began to fall,  
and as I heard my engine stall, I knew I was stuck for sure.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to borrow  
tools from someone's passing car-o, but my pleas were all ignored.  
And my Norton seemed to mock me, as it kicked me back once more.  
Then the rain began to pour.

I pulled out the rider's handbook and with trembling flashlight did look  
for the source of my bike's sorrows, could the valve be bent once more?  
Is the camshaft getting flatter? Did a piston ring get shattered?  
Not that I believed it mattered, as the evening on it wore.  
And my eyes were growing sore.

Then, through all the mist and sprizzle, I heard footsteps in the drizzle,  
all my hopes by then had fizzled, leaving me cold, scared and poor.  
Who could be approaching hither? Suddenly I felt a shiver,  
and my hands began to quiver as they never had before  
'Twas my own insurance agent, who I had met but once before.  
Only him and no one more.

"Why," I asked, "come thee unbidden to a spot concealed and hidden?  
Many miles from home you've ridden in this tempest-like downpour."  
I could see his cold eyes flicking, feel the seconds slowly ticking,  
as he watched me vainly kicking, 'til finally I could kick no more.  
"Will this stupid engine start and take me down the road once more?!"  
Quoth my agent, "Nevermore!"

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken  
from my agent who had obviously never worked on bikes before.  
Inside I felt laughter growing, for I knew that I had trowing  
and I'd soon be off and going to some safe and distant shore  
where a nice hot cup of coffee was a'waiting to be poured.  
Quoth my agent, "Nevermore!"

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“Respite, respite and nepenthe, did you get the check I sent thee?  
To pay my policy in full, I mailed it several days before.”  
But my confidence was shaken, as my Norton was a-breakin’  
all my hopes were now forsaken, suddenly I felt unsure  
in my pocket was that letter: no stamps at the grocery store!  
Quoth my agent, “Nevermore!”

“Be that word our sign of parting!” I took one last stab at starting  
up my Norton with a mighty kick in hopes that it would roar.  
But my faith it was collapsing as my policy was lapsing  
and I felt perhaps inglorious Fate was knocking at my door,  
knocking like a Norton twin exploding from within its core.  
Quoth my agent, “Nevermore!”

“Help me push it down the road, this Norton is a heavy load!”  
but his silence did not bode well and my arms were getting sore.  
In the darkness I was sweating, cursing, crying but not forgetting  
that my agent was for letting my bike perish and I swore,  
“I’ll get even! You’ll be sorry!” louder than I had before.  
Quoth my agent, “Nevermore!”

Now it is eight hours later and my fears are growing greater  
for my broken Dominator - no longer will the crank turn o’er.  
And the agent, never leaving, sees me grieving, sees me grieving,  
never will I be believing in his kindness evermore.  
Once your policy has lapsed, he’ll show concern for you no more.  
So I’ll pay him - nevermore!

*The first half of this poem was run in December, 1992. The second half was recently discovered in a dusty loft under a pile of Inter parts. The poem is hereby published in its entirety.*



## April Meeting Minutes

- **Northern California Norton Owners Club April 11, 1996 meeting**  
Harry's Hofbrau, San Jose

The April meeting was called to order by President Maya Lai at 8:04 p.m. with 18 people present.

Maya stated that the Club picked up ten new members at the Clubman's Show and 25 renewals since January.

Jim Carton reported that the Easter ride went well and that the ride on the 21st will be dedicated to John Bria and will start at Alice's.

Maya discussed the ride point system and the question of whether or not there will be "meeting points" as well. There were quite a few Nortons at this meeting. She also discussed changing the day of the week for future meetings. This is pending input from members before it is voted upon by mailed ballot.

Alan Goldwater showed the Club the trophies he's been working on and said there would be a "sanding party" after the June ride at his house. Help him complete these and you get beer and ride points!

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.



## Club Meeting Schedule

*The Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 8 p.m.*

- May 9** Prince of Wales Pub  
106 East 25th Ave.  
San Mateo  
(415) 574-9723
- June 13** Fremont Brewery  
3350 Stevenson Blvd.  
Fremont
- July 18-21** Quincy
- Aug. 8** Connecticut Yankee  
100 Connecticut St.  
San Francisco  
(415) 552-4440
- Sept. 12** Harry's Hofbrau  
399 W. El Camino Real  
Mountain View  
(415) 964-8455
- Oct. 10** Location TBD
- Nov. 14** Prince of Wales Pub

## ❖ PARTS BIN

Custom Corners, one of the largest Commando sources on the East Coast closed within the last 8 weeks. I hope its not a trend. . .Also, the Club Archives are gone. Brad Green gave them to Duncan, and they, along with the Club tools were taken by his ex. The archives are meaningless to anyone except the Club. If anyone knows the family, let's try to get them back. His daughter may help, if someone knows her well enough to ask. Meanwhile, Phil Radford will donate his past copies, so we have a start on a new set.



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### ■ FOR SALE OR TRADE

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**Jeff Gruwell (510) 432-9999** (8/96)

### ■ FOR SALE

1984 Pontiac TransAm (sort of like an automotive Interstate). There aren't too many cars I've sold that I would like to have sold to someone I know. This is one of the few. It's a good car to fix up for you or your teenager. Great buy at \$2,200 o.b.o.

**Jeff Gruwell (510) 432-9999** (8/96)

### ■ FOR SALE OR PARTING OUT

1969 Commando 20M3S - rear frame loop has been cut, no side panels, seat, headlight or front wheel. Looks like it only had 7,100 miles. Engine and primary partially disassembled, have about all except pistons. Amal 930s, instruments, f.g. Roadster/S tank with newer black paint, good front forks, etc. Possible trade for goodies for featherbed Manx Atlas project, like 3 gallon alloy Manx tank and rearsets.

**Frank Holden (415) 593-4106 eves.**

Frank\_Holden@qmgates.affymax.com  
(07/96)

### ■ FOR SALE

Amal Mark I 1/2 carburetors. Get rid of your choke cables and still have a choke! Looks like a Mark I, but has Mark II lever choke and large-bore float needle. \$150 ea.

**Mostly British (916) 927-2748**  
(07/96)

### ■ FOR SALE

Redline synthetic oil (20W50) at dealer cost. \$6/quart or \$72/case, plus tax and shipping. Protect your Norton with the best oil made!

**Alan (408) 475-7505** (07/96)

### ■ FOR SALE

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\$1,000 **Jim (510) 483-2045** (07/96)

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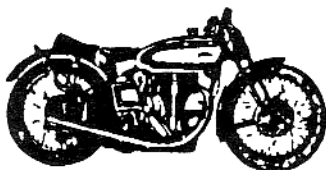
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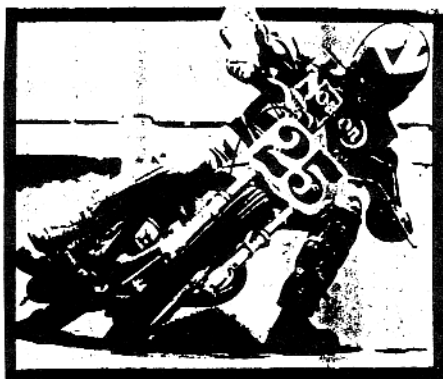
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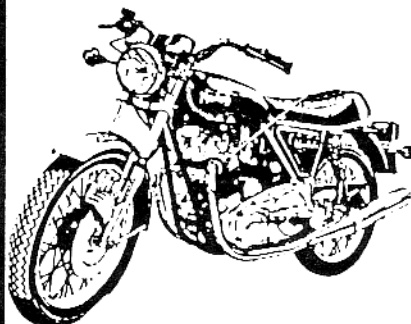


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