



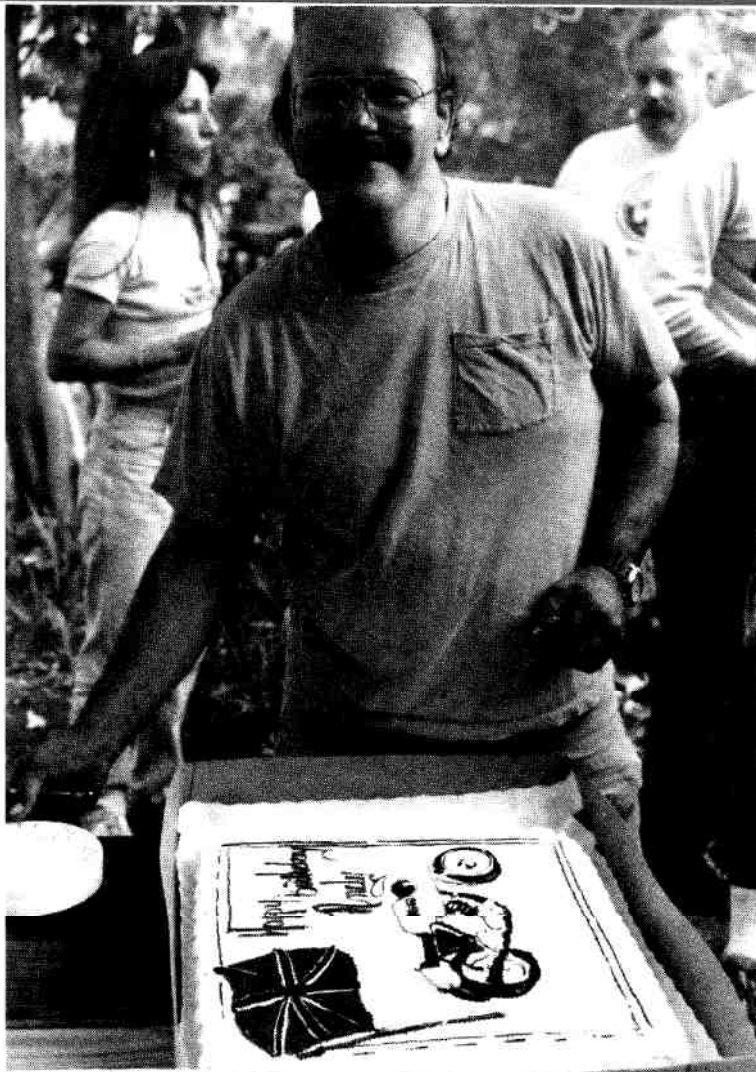
# Norton Notice



The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club

No. 163

November, 1991





is published by the Northern California Branch of the 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.

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. For Branch members who cannot attend club meetings or club rides, the NORTON NOTICE affords an opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership of the Branch and to bring the Branch members closer together.

The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 20th of each month.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is available for \$15.00 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. For example, 745/2 denoted member 745 with dues expiring on the 1st of February.

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

The Northern California Branch of the 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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**NORTON OWNERS CLUB**

**IMPORTANT** (Please take note of the following fine print):  
The object of the Northern California Branch of the 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.

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## Upcoming Events

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### Club Rides Schedule

**November 3rd:** The All-British Ride/The Don Danmeier second annual 50th birthday ride.

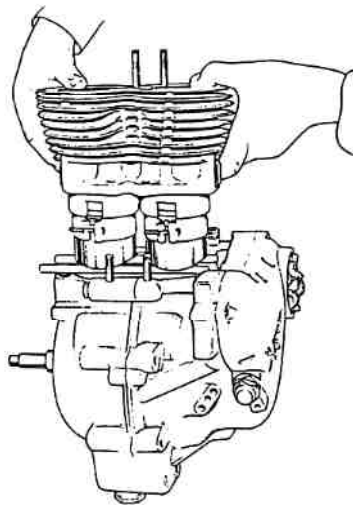
**December...** the Christmas sleigh enduro race, starting at Alices and finishing in Nome, Alaska. BE SURE TO GO ON THIS ONE. The Ride leader will be Susan Bucher. In honor of the event, she has renamed all of her dogs "Norton" (...better check with Mike Burnham on this one...)

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### Events Calendar

**November 3 (Sunday)-** The Northern California All-British Ride and (the second annual Don Danmeier 50th birthday) Party

**December 7 (Saturday)-** BSAOC Off-Road Playday, in conjunction with the PITS "Geratol Trial", December



### Meeting Schedule

The Club meets on the second Thursday of each month, at 7:30 P.M. (don't take the time seriously, folks- we always start a half-hour late.) Meeting locations rotate between the Peninsula, the South Bay, the East Bay, and San Francisco.

**November 14th:** East Bay  
**Brew Pub On The Green**  
3350 Stevenson Blvd., Fremont  
(510) 651-5510 Please note that this is a trial venue change. Try to arrive early in case you're unfamiliar with this area.

**December 12th:** San Francisco  
**Tonto's Mexican Restaurant**  
3155 Vicente Ave., San Francisco  
(Sunset District- cross street is 43rd)  
-generous portions of food at great prices, and the margaritas are killer!

**January 14, 1991:** Peninsula  
**The Prince of Wales Pub**  
25th Avenue, San Mateo  
A private meeting room, a great selection of beers, and dart boards!

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### Graphics Contributions

*Photography:*  
Gerald Mauricio, Andy McKerral

*Technical Illustration:*  
Haynes Owner's Workshop Manual  
1986 Edition

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## Over the Bars...

by Lynne Miller, President

I sincerely hope that none of our East Bay Members were affected by the Oakland fire. It was a horrible tragedy, and if you are a victim of this conflagration, please let us know as soon as possible. Perhaps, in some way, we can be of assistance.

October has been a great month for riding. I was able to spend some time on my Commando covering the usual routes... The Office, Alices, and up and down The Coast. Great weather!

Art Sirota's Annual Norton Club Picnic was even better than last year- good weather, good food, great bikes, and great people. It was very impressive to see that long line of Norton motorcycles in Art's 1/4 mile-long driveway. It was also nice to see the increased family participation in this event this year.

I must confess that by stacking a box on top of a barrel, I was just able to see into the window of Art's shed. *Nice bike, Art!* A navy blue frame?!

Thanks to Anne and Art for another great Norton Club Event..

I would like to extend a note of apology to C.J. Jolliffe, Joe Edwards, Brad Green, and Grover. At our September meeting, we set up a committee to find a new place for our Christmas Party. I forgot, and started to explore a place with Art and Tim and made a statement at our October meeting to that effect. After talking to C.J., I realized how much effort the committee had put into their job. I think that

we will all appreciate the result of their work. Read all the details below. Thanks again to the Committee, and please accept my apology.

The NOC Annual Christmas Party

Sunday, December 15th, 1991

Time: 5:00 PM

Place: The Farmhouse- Redwood City

Take the Whipple Avenue exit west from US 101 (north or south) to Veterans Boulevard and go one block to Convention Way. It's the large yellow and white Victorian farmhouse with plenty of parking.

The cost is \$14.00 per person, including tax and tip! The entree choices are Prime Rib, Breaded Shrimp, or Broasted Chicken.

All dinners include minestrone soup, tossed green salad with house dressing, hot French bread, rigatoni with meat sauce, fresh sauteed vegetables, coffee, tea, milk, and dessert.

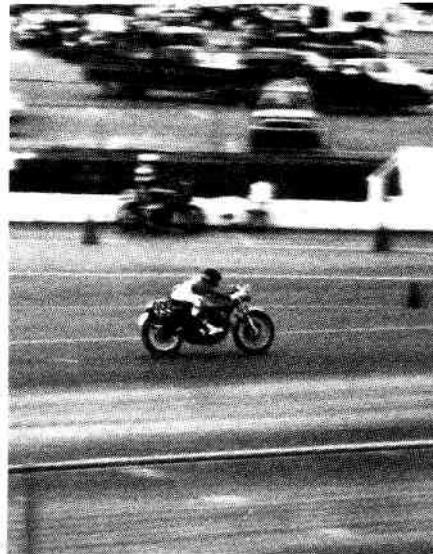
Sounds like a fantastic deal to me... the only catch is that you need to RSVP C.J.

Jolliff at (415) 637-1123 by December 7th.

By the way, there is a full bar adjacent to OUR room.

I offer a black tie option and challenge to any Norton Clubber brave enough to do so. (Ed.s' Note: sounds interesting, Pres... but won't it be a little chilly for showing up in a tie, and nothing else?!)

Well, that's enough, and I hope to see you all there. Thanks for the chat *Over the Bars...*



## Minutes of October Meeting

### The October bonding session

of the Northern California Norton Owner's Club commenced at 8:00 P.M. at Harry's Hoffbrau in Mountain View, California. Fourteen bikes were corraled out front, with thirty-four members present inside. (Ed.s' Note: This works out to 2.4285714286 riders per bike. Assuming that everyone rode up with their Partner...if every attendee's female "Significant Other" Unit were into their second trimester, this figure would be feasible... but highly unlikely.)

President Lynne Miller announced that Art Sirota had checked out and confirmed Gus's in Redwood City as the location for our annual Christmas party... much to the surprise of the assigned Committee which had already secured an appropriate location. Much heated discussion ensued thereafter, and the issue was left with the dictum that both venues will be analyzed. (Ed.s' Note: As of this latest concensus, it has been decided that the Christmas Party will be held at the Farmhouse Restaurant at the Whipple Exit of 101 in Redwood City.)

Lani Beneveds reported a \$1500 balance in the Club coffers after the purchase of the Raffle Bike, slated for a new home at the All- British Clubman's Show in San Jose next year.



Brad Green, the Club Scribe, reported the manufacturing of an upgrade wire harness, custom-made to modern specifications, and less expensive than a Lucas unit. Interested parties should contact Brad Green.

Andy McKerral, the Norton Notice Editor and Publisher, stated that the recently mandated 20 page format for the Club Newsletter requires a significantly increased level of articles, photographs, and other Club-oriented material for publication.

Mike Burnham stated that the Lodi

T-T Vintage Event Ride be organized at the local geographical level. Groups are encouraged to form their own rides.

Mike also reported on the Raffle Bike progress. The bent frame has been repaired, and is destined for baked enamel. Mike opened up the motor, and "...some foreign substance" came pouring out. Mike's wish list for this project will be published in a later edition.

The November Meeting will be held at Brew Pub On The Green in Fremont. Next year's nomination of CVlub Officers will also be held at this meeting. (Ed.'s Note: Alan Goldwater has indicated that he will conspicuously avoid this meeting.)

The proposed idea of an international Club Pin exchange was briefly mentioned, with characteristic apathy.

The meeting ajourned at 8:40 P.M.

*Brad Green, Club Scribe...*

## Side Trips...

by *Andy McKerral, Editor*

I want to take this particular opportunity to thank everyone at the October 13th get-together at Art's home for the wonderful surprise! Believe it or not, it actually did feel like a 440-volt jolt in a copper bathtub. I was that shocked. As for the party, Art and his wife demonstrated once again what a class act they are. Thanks, you two.

The main thrust of my narrative this month comes from several people who have approached me since the Rally Issue and asked me to elaborate on the Isolastics matter. Now is as good a time as any... and, what the hell- we're staring straight down the maw of another wierd winter, so it's time to start getting ready for next spring. (Frankly, if I could prioritize other matters in my life as far ahead as the bike, I'd probably have replaced Clarence Thomas on the Court- but there are far more important things to think about.)

If you know anything about vibration, and the physics of things in motion, the principles of the subject are pretty complex. A guitar string, for example, vibrates when struck between two fixed points... the dynamics of it's motion show it to have two general properties: 1- pitch, and 2- frequency. The overall effect of the way the string actually sounds is further affected by a phenomenon called "harmonic vibration", where the string can vibrate at a different pitch along small parts of it's length, while vibrating simultaneously along it's entire length along the two fixed points.

Yeah, it's a brain-burner, but this idea got me to thinking about Isolastics at the Rally, when my bike was vibrating so badly that my fillings were starting to pick up KCBS in Nevada. I asked experts. They said, "Do this" so I'd go and do it, and it'd be better, but not right. Then, I'd read technical publications

which said "Do this" so I'd go and do it, and the results would either be negligible, or make it worse. I started out being worried, and wound up getting pissed. So, with lots of fresh air, time, and Bass Ale at my disposal, I decided to ***FIX*** the damn thing by doing my own brand of analysis.

With petrol tank off and floatbowl full, I started the engine a few times and watched how the engine behaved in the frame at different RPMs, between adjustments. Although front and rear mounts seemed to respond very little to adjustments in terms of vibration damping after they became VERY loose, I noticed that the top head steady did vibrate wildly when everything was loosened up below. As I tightened the lower isolastics and left the upper spring suspensory device alone, the vibration at the top of the engine decreased.

Now most of us know what a Norton feels like when the lower isolastics are too tight- the vibration is so perfectly transmitted through the handlebars that you can feel the lifters scraping against the camshaft in your sinuses... so I deduced that loosening them to the maximum allowable tolerance would provide for adequate dampening. But, for some strange reason- after doing this procedure- I still got brain-rattling vibration at my feet between 3-5000 RPM. So it seemed that the next question to ask would be, "What does that spring suspensory device do, anyway?"

Pre- Mark 3 bikes didn't use this thing (750 Commandos, anyway), because the earlier engines were lighter. They instead relied solely on two isomer mounts that had a fixed position between two plates. Evidently, when Dr. Bauer's design team created this setup, he was working with a much lighter engine, which is why earlier Commandos ran so smoothly. Then, with the later addition of 30 pounds of E-Start hardware, they needed some reinforcement to those little isomers. (Norvil made adjustable upper isolastic head steadies that proved, by most accounts, to be stiff at low RPM ranges, but just fine for screaming around Daytona) There had to be a reasonable

I found that compromise when I watched what happened as I TIGHTENED- *not* loosened the head steady spring length. It appeared that when I tightened the spring, with the lower isolastics adjusted at their maximum specs, that the actual vibration transmitted to the frame reduced greatly. Huh. How could that be?

Well, let's go back to the guitar string analogy- you've got your frequency (RPM range vibration), and your pitch (1K against 2K RPM, 2K against 4K RPM, and so on-) So what's missing, in terms of vibration absorption? Yep, the *harmonic frequencies*. After much reading, study and observation, I figured that the reason why they made the spring adjustable in length was to provide for a way to offset the harmonic vibrations that the small isomers couldn't absorb... kinda like padded bras- to enhance the effect...

I decided to give the accompanying illustration some serious study. Notice how the spring length is stated to be around 1.5", while the adjustment bolt length is supposed to be between .2 and .5 inches from the plate to the barrel. AHAH! That was the clue. They

gave us those tolerances without telling us why they were different! By nature of Life, springs stretch, get brittle, and even lose temper. Adjustment tolerances are generally an engineer's way of admitting to the public that even he can't change the laws of physics. (because I am one, I can get away with saying that). So, it follows that if the spring is either incorrectly adjusted, stretched, or otherwise not doing it's job, the undampened harmonic frequencies from the vibrating engine get transmitted to the hapless NOC'er who then becomes sterile after a half hour ride.

I then adjusted the head steady spring to the maximum spring length using dial calipers, and ensured that the remaining adjustment nut tolerance didn't max out. The result: smooth as glass- the lower isolastics were doing their job by absorbing the primary vibration frequencies of the engine against the moment of torque (physics jargon that means they were absorbing vibration while supporting the engine under power), while the head steady was absorbing the leftover harmonic frequencies (more physics jargon that means the head steady was taking up the leftover slop that could keep you from becoming a daddy)

Because I had to max out the adjustment, this told me that I needed a new head steady spring, 'coz it was old and stretched out. This

also told me that the actual, meaningful tolerance here is the plate-to-barrel bolt length because spring length is a far too subjective measurement, given the nature of springs, and because the spring mounting position on the frame tube could be either in the forward or rear position.

After all this work, I learned a valuable lesson- just because you're stretched out to

the maximum length doesn't mean that you're comfortable...

#### ...Some important hints-

1- Be certain that when you're adjusting the isolastics, the bike is NOT on the center stand. If it is, you're attempting to adjust them with the preloaded weight of the entire bike on the engine mounts. Not a good option. Either put the bike on the kick stand, or get your Significant Other Unit to sit astride the bike while you make the adjustments. Offer them a beer (or a frozen Snickers bar) while they're sitting there. It'll be worth it.

2- Mark 3 isolastics can be easy and yet

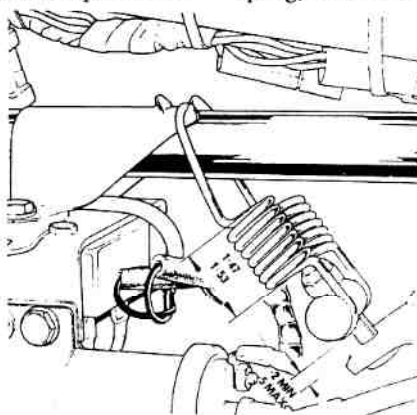


Fig. 9.8 Suspension spring device; fitting dimensions

frustrating as hell all in one hour's time, if the front adjuster ring has seized because water intrusion under the rubber boot has seized the threads. I watched Ed Brooks apply an oxy-acetylene torch to my front mount in a vise, then put a pipe wrench to it with an extension on the handle and apply the full weight of his body on it to get that goddamn thing to budge with no effect. All I can say is that it was a wise investment of \$120 in parts after I got the thing to work right.

3- Get a caliper. Tool Land in Redwood City sells Taiwanese plastic ones for \$5 that are pretty accurate for the task at hand, and having this little guy will make your job much more accurate and faster.

4- Be meticulous in your adjustment accuracy, by using the feeler gauges correctly and keeping your cool. Remember that "maximum" adjustment on the lower mounts means .008" - so if a .009" gauge won't go, but a .007" feels loose, then you can be pretty sure you got it right.

5- Finally, take it out on an enjoyable putt somewhere after you're finished. Nothing feels quite as satisfying as knowing you've conquered the insurmountable...



### *They call me "Johnny Norton"*

(or How I shirked the shrink)

By John and Carrie Follett

It had been over a year. I thought I had it licked, but the craving was coming back. I was jonesin' for it. My wife thought I was losing it... the shrink was looming large on the horizon. I broke down and gave in to my addiction.....I bought a bike- not just any bike, but a Norton. Talk about an addiction.

There it was sitting there oreo'd between a bunch of crashed Jap bikes with ten or twelve miles on them. A grown-up bike among the

kiddie bikes. A man's bike (grunt), at least this man's. It was butt ugly- I hated it the first time I laid eyes on it- what a dog!

I bought it anyway. What can I say? I was a desperate man on a mission. I needed a bike fix and I needed it fast. Hey, wait a minute, I said bike fix, not a fix bike!

It sits in the garage calling me... seductively whispering, "Come, now, I won't hurt you, come fix me. I'm the one for you." I'm hypnotically drawn to it, at all hours of the night. I dream of it. Elbow grease a go-go, layer after layer the metamorphosis is happening. I like my bike now. Hey, it's pretty nice looking. Maybe I didn't make a mistake. I'm not in need of the frontal lobotomy recommended by anonymous friends and family members. Underneath the dirt, sway dust and lizard turds is a classic 1969 Norton Commando Fastback just waiting for me to release it from it's bondage. But does it run?

People are trying to buy it from ME now. They can't believe it's the same bike. Neither can I, I love my bike. Serious blood, sweat and tears later I'm ready for the first big test- DOES IT RUN? It has only 10,000 miles on the it.....promising. It hasn't been started in ten years.....questionable. I put oil through it, and head out for the run... up and down the street (pushing it of course).

Back to the garage for a quick oil (or is it) change. Back to the street, to prime and kick, prime and kick (a new Olympic marathon event coming soon). Nothing. I'm seeing a very long parts list fluttering in front of my eyes, and my wallet is beginning to feel suspiciously light in my pocket. But with the next kick comes a pop. A small pop, but a pop none the less. I am buoyed with super human strength, and kick and kick again.

Va varoom! Blew the rotted foam air filter clear across the driveway and spewed unknown black residue from the aftermarket mufflers. I put it in gear, it dies, but starts immediately with the next kick. I turn it around, put it back in gear, after judiciously letting it warm up this time, and burn a three foot section out of my front lawn (man, that's



foot section out of my front lawn (man, that's one cold clutch). But I'm off, up and down the street, the Norton vibrating between my legs. I'm ready to start singing "Born To Be Wild", when I come to my senses.

This bike needs to be fully gone over before I head up the hill to Alice's. It might be nice to know if it has any brakes (Ed's Note: Naah!- with a Norton, you don't need no stinking brakes- just use the engine compression and downshift!), or if the rattling I hear comes from any significant mechanical parts. So with great reluctance, I pull it back into the garage, turn off the engine, and proceed to strip it down to the frame. Well, I had better get back to work (my paying job) so I can afford the restoration.

Until next time, this is Johnny Norton signing off (... off my rocker, that is - mcthinks).

*Next Month:: The Restoration (...or, The Other Woman In My Life lives in the garage.)*

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## October Ride Report

by *Mike Burnham, Rides Marshall*

Without a doubt, it was one of the nicest days for a motorcycle ride. Autumn is unquestionably my favorite time of year, both on or off a motorcycle. Perhaps it has to do with the angle of sunlight and the smell of the air. I must say, however, the day proved to be a bit disappointing. The turnout at the Lodi West was a bit small, the vendor stalls were, I guess, only 60-70% filled, and the big names for the racing were not there. Still, it was nice seeing old friends and hearing the sounds of vintage short track.

Gerald Mauricio and I decided to leave about 1:30. I thought it would be nice to take te back roads to Clayton and have lunch at the Royal Oak. It just didn't happen that way.

I took the wrong turn from 99 and we fooled around for about an hour trying to find the correct route. Realizing that my only source of nourishment all day- not even coffee- was

two small beers at the track, it soon became clear why I had gotten lost. Consequently we stopped at the first restaurant in sight. It was called "The Spot". The staff outnumbered the customers. When we got back on the road, it was three o'clock... plenty of time to get home by 4:30, I thought.

Except for stopping at the Royal Oak, we continued as planned, back roads to Clayton, head south through Antioch, and on to Highway 24. At about 4:00, after a very short distance. I noticed what appeared to be fog rolling in over the East Bay hills. Very shortly thereafter, I also noticed all of the cars on the highway were lined up single file in the slow lane and further down the road were those blinking arrow trucks and several CHP cars all parked and blocking all but the slow lane. I about two miles, all traffic was diverted off the freeway at Hidden Valley Road and into Moraga. We stopped and pulled out the maps for alternate routes. What the fuck?! Then I recalled the news from the day before... there had been a fire at the Caldecott Tunnel. But, I had gone through it that morning. Nothing seemed to make any sense.

We foolishly looked for a way over the East Bay hills, and wasted another hour. At last, after finally talking to some people and hearing a radio in a service station, we realized that there was a fire- one helluva fire. After talking to a service station attendant, it was plain to us that the only way out was to go back all the way to Hwy. 24, head east on 680, and take that south to 580. To be safe, after our ordeal, we decided to take 880 south and cross over the bay on 92. By the time I got home to San Francisco, it was 7:20. Crossing the Bay never felt so good, and I realized the drawback to riding a motorcycle... no radio, no information.

As far as upcoming rides are concerned, I am writing this report the night before the Don Danmeier ride. The December ride schedule has been changed to the 8th. A ride to Santa Cruz is in order. Let's meet at Alices, and leave at 10:00 AM.

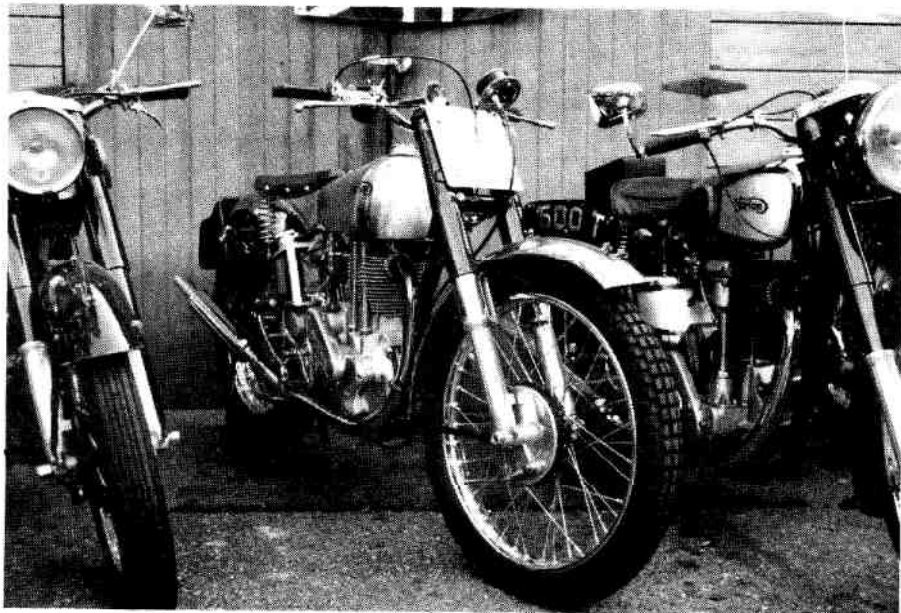
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A few examples of Art's Collection...

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**...And Onto The Asphalt**  
*(...or, "Hey Rocky! Watch me pull  
 some gravel outta my helmet!")*

By Todd Kennedy

**Editor's Note:** This article was originally submitted by Todd Kennedy in March. Because of the length and the subject matter, I waited to publish it until the time was appropriate. Now that summer is over, and we're starting to go into Motorcycling hibernation, we can all read about Todd's experience and thoughtfully apply his lessons to ourselves.

It's about time to knock out a little piece about my experience with motorcycle-powered, self-inflicted acrobatics. The subject, in particular, was my crash during the Club Ride on February 24th. It was a ride I'll never forget- nor will the others who watched me take a surprise trajectory across the road and into the dirt at 65-70 MPH. Sorry about that, guys.

Though this is overdue, I want to extend my appreciation and thanks to all of you who stopped and helped me. I was barely aware that I had stopped sliding, or was even conscious when I heard people asking if I was okay. Forgive me for not remembering all the names of those who helped me get back on my feet, but since it was my first ride with the Club, I wasn't familiar with all of you (not to mention that at the time, my cerebellum had all the retentive qualities of soup). But I do want to extend special thanks to Lynne Miller, Lawrence Gill, a very helpful woman who happened to be a nurse, and to Stan Beneveds who left the ride and escorted me back to home turf. Thanks again to all.

The days and weeks following my "asphalt mating ritual" produced recurring visions of how the whole damn thing happened. The one thing that hurt as much as the badly sprained ankle (X-rays showed zip) was the 6 inch long road rash on my hip, was EGO. It was probably the Big E that got me into this

spot, so it's just punishment for this inflated problem maker to be sore, too. You old timers write about those "polish and ride" owners who don't know the bike in and out. Well, I guess I'm one of those. I know the mechanics of the machine, and how to fix just about anything, but since I bought my Mark 3 last September, my biggest concern was to get "Snort's" rusty, dirty, dented hulk looking like he did when he was new. Mechanical work could mean a lot of down-time, and that would cut into any available riding time.

Snort got his name from my buddy, Paul- the original owner. A new paint job, pinstriping and decals by Rich (behind Raber's), lots of SOS pads, and a few new parts (chrome stuff, new rubber pegs, and a Boyer Ignition) and I was ready to rip the roads. Or so I thought.

I hadn't really ridden since 1977, but since I got Snort, I had been on a couple of short rides from Mountain View to La Honda and through the Coast woods. I hadn't taken any rider courses, or even watched videos on handling techniques. I tink the only correct preparation was to buy a good helmet (BMW System II). It WAS a good helmet, while it lasted, and I must say that besides all the comfort functions working well, my writing this story proves that a good helmet only has to work right once.

As I turned into the Emeryville Denny's my eyes bugged out when I saw the gathering of Nortons that I would be riding with. I was completely jazzed to see all the different models, years and modifications, hearing tales, etc. My gaping turned to conversation as I met Lynne and others. I even recognized some faces I had seen at the club meeting I attended. I was beaming with pride when I got to show Snort off. He was clean, shiney, reasonably oil free; I think he was the only Mark 3 in sight. Wow! This was really worth all that polishing. Soon, it was time for the real thrill... riding with the pack!

After some preliminary exhilaration, my thrill diminished at one stop sign as a rider informed me about my sagging kickstart lever. He also described the mechanical misery I

would encounter if I didn't take care of it (Ed.'s Note: see N.N. #151- November, 1991- page ten.) As the gang went on, Lawrence Gill stayed back with me to figure out a fix. It turned out that all of the screws on the right side of the gearbox case were loose, and a piece of the gasket had broken away... precisely on the bottom, of course. We jammed in the dangling piece of gasket, tightened the screws and filled the gearbox with some 110/140W oil. It seemed to work, and we soon caught up with the Club at the Royal Oak.

The bangers and the chips really hit the spot. So did the half-pint of beer. I thought that even though everyone else was having a fuil pint,

I'd have only half since I was not as experienced. I also remembered a bad fall I took in 1974 that probably happened because of too much liquid fun. The memory of driving over the guardrail and winding up with a 1/4 ince gouge down the middle of my helmet should have made me rethink having any ale at all... it's been said that if we don't learn the lessons from our mistakes, we are doomed to keep repeating that mistake until we learn-

Lunch was finished, and we were back on the road. We'd probably gone five miles when the rural route turned into winding foothill roadway. Right then, my mishap started.

My train of thought may have lagged for a moment, possibly thinking how great it was to blitz along through the turns of country roads. My next realization was that I was too far on the outside of the turn. I started to tighten up, apply front brake, force the bike back to the center of the road. Suddenly the front end started to shimmy, and I may have applied the rear brake, too... and then the rear end started to squirm and shake. Meantime I slid off the edge of the pavement into the gravel. I knew it was a place I didn't want to be, so I began to force the bike back onto the asphalt. This became especially important, since I was heading towards the guard rail put there to prevent drivers from dropping into nothingness. (I was too busy to notice the fallen barbed wire

fence hanging out into the berm, 3 feet from the edge of the pavement) Fleeting memories of getting back onto the road at a radical angle, with high speed blurs and bumps are the last thoughts I had of the event.

Nurse "M" (Marion? Marie?) was one of the first people I met in my waking moments. She did the "How-many-inngers-am-I-holding-up" test and a few others, then recommended I sit still for awhile. I liked that diagnosis. I watched in disbelief as the impromptu pit crew picked up my bike and started pulling and tweaking to get it running. After straightening the bars and pegs, they started to align the rear wheel.

To everyone's amazement, the pit crew discovered that every spoke in the rear wheel could be finger tightened.... a lot. There was no evidence of the rim hitting the ground so the stretch-due-to-impact theory was out. The best idea of how the stainless steel stitching of the rim came to be loose was that it had never been checked.

The bike had over 17,000 miles on it, and possibly the original tire. By guessing about how I had checked out the bike or how the previous owner maintained Snort, a plausible conclusion emerged. In trying to keep up with the pack, I had never ridden the bike as hard as I did that day. It hadn't been difficult for me, but I'm sure it had limbered up ol' Snort, who may have been holding his own until the corrosion on the spoke nuts that had been just "holding", loostened up. It's just a theory.

Other noticeable defective things: one missing cowboy boot heel (better get real riding boots), one ground-up leather jacket (my good one- better get a riding jacket) and a 3 inch crack in my new helmet (glad I had it, think I'll buy another one).

The bike carried me home safely to Mountain View. Even though my twisted ankle was aching and throbbing,, I occasionally nodded off (!) due to the concussion. When I managed to get my boots and gear off, I had a friend drive me to a clinic where I got x-rays that showed no breaks. The next week was full of sleepless nights, painful days, and phone

calls to get people to cover for me at work.

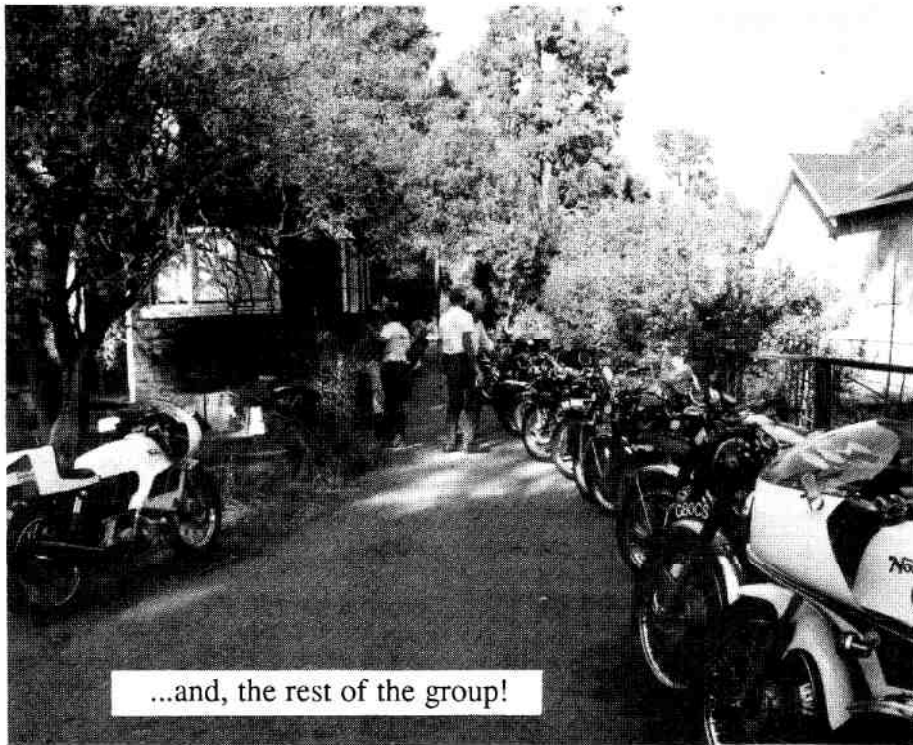
Four weeks later, my friend Steve and I dropped by the Royal Oak for lunch. He was riding his BMW K75S and I was riding his Honda 650 Hawk (a likeable twin that offers a nice familiar vibration between the legs and handles well). Steve is an experienced rider-desert riding, a two-time graduate of California Superbike School, a two-time graduate of Reg Pridmore's school, and owner of a wide variety of motorcycles. He offered me his Hawk, which he thinks is a bike that could have been a present-day Norton evolution, had they continued. The purpose- to ride through my crash site again.

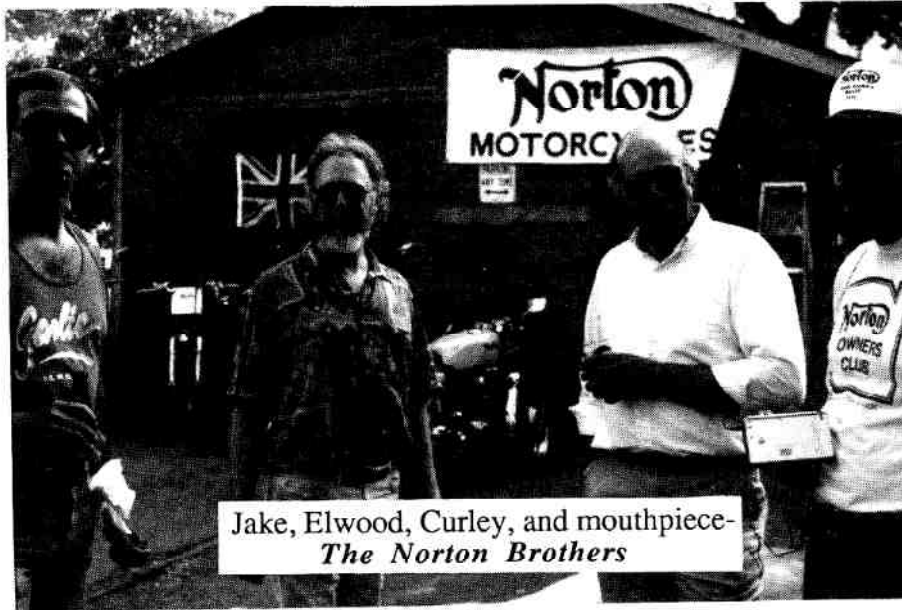
After lunch, we rode there, stopped and walked through the turn, talking about the event- how it happened, causes, how it could have been avoided. Then, we backed up a ways, and rode through the turn. I was edgy as we approached "dead man's turn", even scared. But I instantly found my decision point and-

just as it was an old favorite course- banked into the turn and continued to zip on down the road for a few miles. We stopped at Morgan Territory Road and talked about my triumphant moment and what I had learned. It was an exciting feeling to know that I could handle the turn if I just kept my mind on the task.

I think that this experience is an important part part of accident recovery and helped me improve on judgement, style, and capabilities. This proved out at the Monterey European Motorcycle Rally. The ride was a real thrill and I even managed to get ahead of Steve now and then. The cards dealt to me on the poker run didn't bring me any prizes, but the ride that day left me feeling like a winner.

Snort and I will see you on the road again...real soon.





Jake, Elwood, Curley, and mouthpiece-  
*The Norton Brothers*

### Alan's



### Mini Wrench

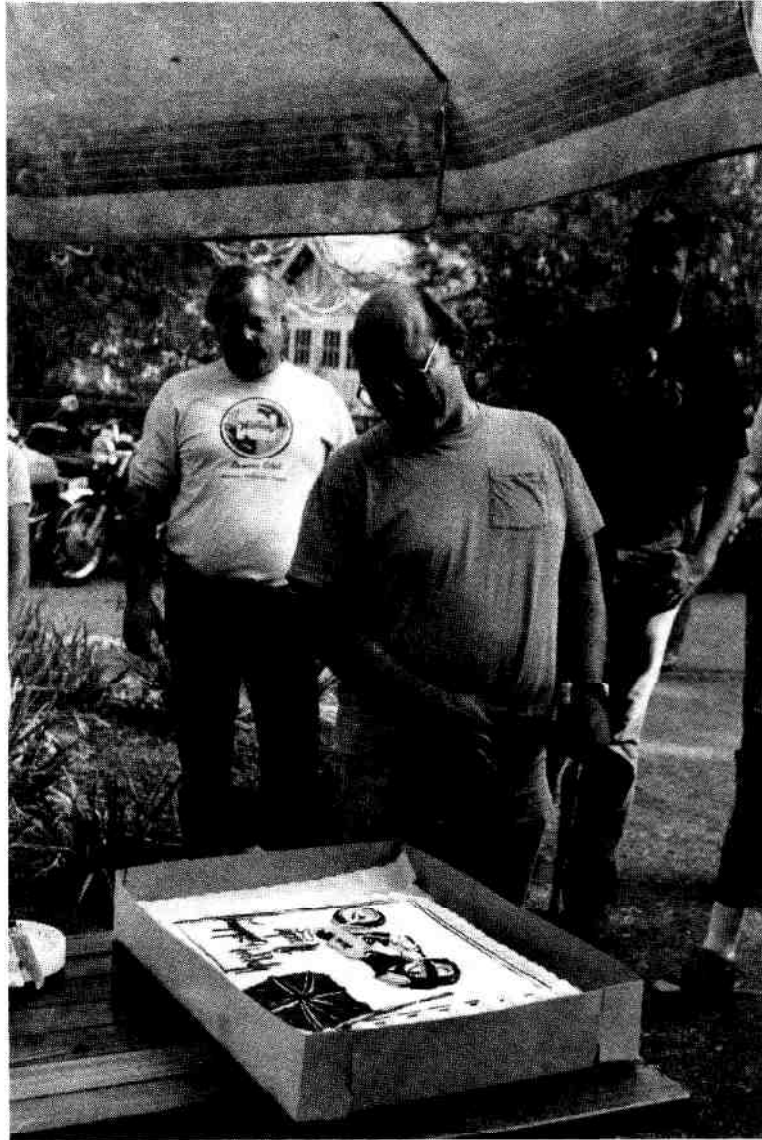
I just got a call from Bob Marrin (Chicago NOC). An old friend of his, Tom O'Donald is a new member of our club. You might have met him at Art's party last month. Tom owned an Atlas many years ago and recently bought a nice low-miles Commando. On his first ride to Alices in about 20 years, last weekend, Tom had the misfortune to hit a deer on Skyline. He broke his collarbone and some ribs and the bike bent its forks but both will ride again. If you happen to have a spare set of nice wheels for a MKIII, say with Borrani rims and stainless spokes, Tom is looking to upgrade as he rebuilds. Or just give him a call to cheer his recovery (408) 356-9353.

Tom was told by the CHP that there have been a lot of deer coming out of the woods along Skyline because of the continuing drought. This is a serious hazard which has killed or injured many motorcyclists, so please be alert and take it easy on skyline and other rural roads where deer might be lurking.

### October Ride Report cont'd from Page 8

And then there is the Raffle Bike. I had originally planned on having it ready in December- but I'm now thinking it will actually be completed in November. It is now November 2nd as I write this, and now have the engine and gearbox back from Phil Radford's shop. The frame is back from the powder coaters, and if all goes well, the fasteners will be back from the platers on November 4th or 5th. From here on, it's just nuts and bolts, save for one or two items. It's missing the fastener for the tool box cover peculiar to the early fastbacks. Other bits, such as an air cleaner front plate are easier items to find. As a matter of expediency, I picked up several bits and pieces at Raber's. If you'd like to help in reassembly or parts, don't be afraid to call... but it may be back together by the time you read this!

I did say that I wasn't going to screw around...



Burnham, and his near-twin brother contemplate hypoglycemia

---



## Good Folks and Modest Proposals Dept.

by John Covell

**Name:** Mike Burnham

**Age:** 41

**City Resident:** San Francisco

**Marital:** Single. No known offspring.

**Occupation:** Proprietor of an auto parts store (*Auto Spring and Wheel Service-2401 Bush Street, S.F.*)

**NOC Member since:** 1988

**How first became involved with NOC:** Lynne Miller dragged him to a Club meeting one night, plied him with beers, and one thing led to another...

**Club Offices held/years:** Ride Coordinator, 1991

**Norton(s) owned, described:** '70 Commando Special, '75 Mark 3, '56 Model 99, '59 Model 99, '67 P-11, '69 Ranger 750, '71 Roadster (currently owns all except the last mentioned)

**Other types of Motorcycles owned:** Triumph, BSA

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

"When I was a kid, my first ride on a big British Twin was a friend's 1967 P-11, and I was hooked."

**Other Hobbies/Interests of note:** Wine (oenology to you Vincent owners)

**Favorite Motorcycling Road or Ride:** Hwy. 49 to Downeyville, and beyond.

**If you could redesign the Norton, what one thing would you most want to change? How and Why?** The Isolastics-make them a bit more solid.

**Favorite or most embarrassing episode on a Norton:** My first ride as the Ride Coordinator, I ran out of gas. Or earlier, on my first Norton, I tried to remove the left threaded locknut using the right-thread mentality; finally took the bike down to

Monroe Motors, where they looked at me like I was goofy...

*...Thank You!*

### *A Random Thought-*

If American Society, especially in California, is becoming more and more environmentally sensitive, why not a natural alliance developed between the so-called "green" movement" and the community of motorcyclists? Bikes are much kinder to the environment than 4-wheelers are, and yet we are painted with the same broad brush when the time comes to lambaste motor vehicles for their impact on the world we live in. Is it only because dirt riders have torn up the precious desert? Or, have we simply not reached? Perhaps we should take the initiative and try to reverse the recently oppressive direction that developments have taken.

Readers who have ideas on this matter are encouraged to write the Editor and get the discussion going.

- John Covell

### **Fanatic Pleading Plug...**

I realize that everyone in the Club is busy, what with the 49er season in shambles, and the Recession (depression) in full swing in the Bay Area...

But gimme a break! We had a mandate to go to 20 pages in this publication- and everyone seemed very eager to add more workload to this Editor. Yet, in every single damn case where material was submitted by regular contributors, I got it *one week late... or later!* This is "maximum bogacity". Get it together, people... or get another editor. I don't cotton to this kind of bullshit.

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For Sale- '75 Commando 850- John Player colours, 5300 miles. \$3200. Also, a Royal Enfield, '67 Interceptor- \$3300. Call Jerry at (408)263-7428, after 6:00 PM.

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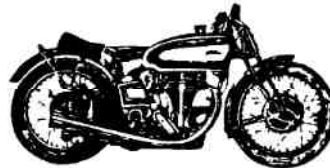
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