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# Norton Notice



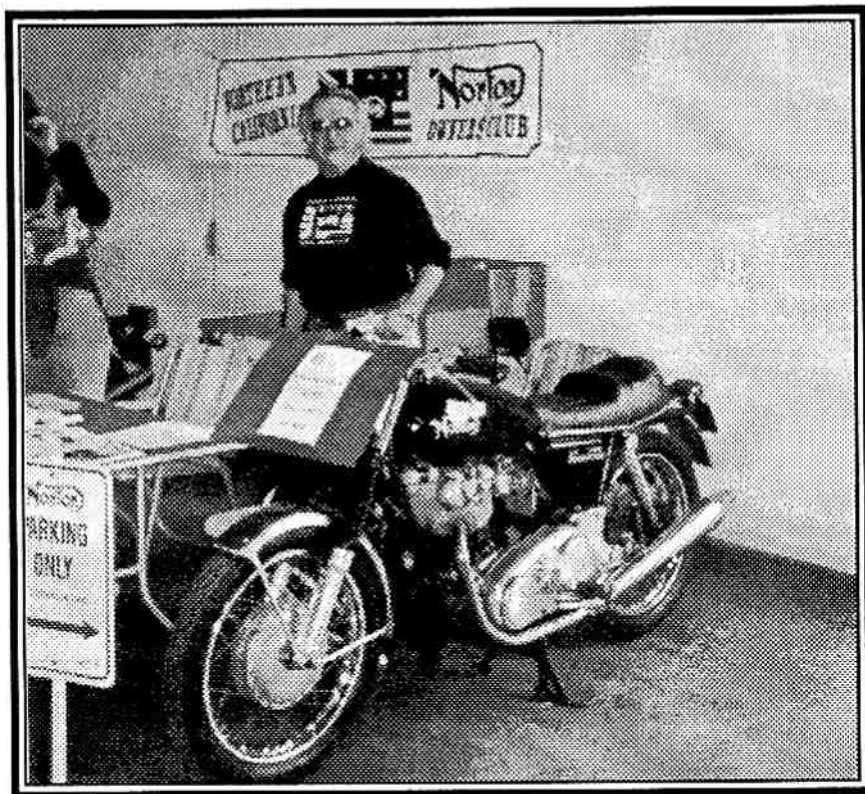
The Newsletter of the  
Northern California Norton  
Owners Club



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No. 212

January, 1996



In this Issue  
Christmas Party 1995

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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 an 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 any format placed on a 3.5" floppy disc can be read by the editors' clever Macintosh. E-mail can be sent using INTERNET to [teresau@best.com](mailto:teresau@best.com)

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

Advertising rates are \$60.00/year for a 1/4 page ad!!

Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, which is designated by the last number listed on the mailing label of the Norton Notice and the membership card.

All changes of address or questions about membership or the Notice, call the President....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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## Norton Notice

**IMPORTANT (Please note the following fine print)**  
The object of the Northern California Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage, and develop motorcycle activities. The club 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 the use of these 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' view 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 Calendar

January 14

### MT. DIABLO SNOW RIDE

(Meet at Denny's Emeryville @ 10:00)

**FEB 11** Sweetheart Ride -  
Bridges

**MAR 11** Flying Lady Ride

**APR 14** Easter Morning on  
Mt. Tam

**MAY 12** Mothers Day Ride

**JUN 16** Santa Cruz & South Coast  
Ride

**JUL 18-21** I.N.O.A Rally

**AUG 8-11** Dardenelle Unofficial  
Ride

**SEP 15** Old Timers Ride

**OCT 13** Mt. Hamilton Ride

**NOV 17** After Danmeier Ride

**DEC:** No rides scheduled. If rides are cancelled due to poor weather - plan on the ride taking place the following week - same time - same place. **Check with Jim.**

## Meeting Schedule

January 11

### PRINCE OF WALES PUB

**FEB 8** The Florence

**MAR 14** Noerth Bay(SF/S. Marin) -  
TBD

**APR 11** Harry's Hofbrau - S.J.

**MAY 9** Prince of Wales Pub

**JUN 13** Fremont Brewery

**JULY 18-21** Quincy

**AUG 8** Noerth Bay(SF/S. Marin) -  
TBD

**SEP 12** Harry's Hofbrau - M.V.

**OCT 10** Harry's Hofbrau - San  
Leandro

**NOV 14** Prince of Wales Pub

**DEC** Christmas Party - T.B.A.

#### The Florence

37349 Niles Blvd., Niles District Fremont  
(510)792-5522

#### Prince of Wales Pub

106 East 25th Ave. San Mateo, Ca (415)574-9723:

#### Harry's Hofbrau San Jose

390 Saratoga Ave(just off 280)  
(408)243-0434

#### Fremont Brewery

3350 Stevenson Blvd. Fremont, Ca

#### Harry's Hofbrau Mountain View.

399 West El Camino Real, Mountain  
View, Ca. (415)964-8455

### Photography

Alan Mueller  
Gerald Mauricio

### Press Production

John and Carrie Follett  
White Oak Press  
San Carlos, CA.

## *Maya's Minutes . . . by Maya Lat, President*

Oh, another year gone by.....  
I hope that everyone had a great Christmas and New Year! The Christmas party was a wonderful turn out. I thank all of you that attended. I also thank you Alan and Vicky for the hospitality. You two are very thoughtful. Thank you for the donations also.

The December 10th swap-meet went well, I believe we brought in

four new members and a few renewals. Thank you Shirley for the cookies. I am looking forward to a good 1996 for the N.O.C.

I will try my best for you.

See you at the next meeting at the Prince of Wales in San Mateo.

Maya

## *The Ed Speaks . . . by Jason Kidd, Editor*

**Hey everyone!  
Welcome to the first issue of the  
Northern California Norton Notice  
for 1996!**

Teresa and I have spent quite a bit of time on a new layout for the Norton Notice. We hope you like the changes made. You better...we put in some late nights working...juuuust for you. Please bare with any little misspellings or bad grammar...we're working on that..we may never reach perfection, but we'll try our best! Throughout this month and for the next Norton Notice, send any information or articles to Teresa's E-mail address [teresau@best.com](mailto:teresau@best.com). I'll inform you of the future E-mail address change in the next Notice unless you hear otherwise. We always accept snail mail too, as long as we receive it before the 20th of each month! That's when we take this puppy to the printer. Mail your articles to:

**Jason Kidd  
22333 Stevens Creek Blvd.  
Cupertino, CA. 95014**  
Pleeease...We need articles...We want to be up to our necks with articles.

After we get settled in with this Notice work, we plan on making an appearance on the Internet by designing a Web page for the Northern California Norton Owners Club. The Web page will, hopefully, draw in new members to the club and act as a big source for rally and ride information.

Teresa and I would personally like to thank Allan and Vicky for the great party

**Thanks!!!!  
and  
Thanks!!!!**

to all who brought food, drink, and gifts. I, myself, got pretty festive...who brought that brandy? Sorry Scott for taking your gift of whiskey...you'll be glad to know it was taken from me too. It was promised to be shared at the rally though. You're on the spot now..you with the whiskey must share with us all!! All the gifts seemed well thought out..everything went smoothly.

We hope your holidays were pleasant  
**Enjoy the Norton Notice...Read On!**

Jason and Teresa

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## *The Motorcycle Ride . . . by Greg Braithwaite, U.P.*

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It's morning. The trees whistle in the breeze making a perfect duo with the singing birds.

I'm jerked awake by the brightness of a new sun. My brain, not yet functioning, attempts to recall today's plan. Oh yes, I'm going on a motorcycle ride.

Meticulous preparation is always essential for a Sunday ride. Not only for the sake of mechanical safety, but it also allows one to establish a relationship with the bike. Whether it is wiping built up grime from my boots, wrenching down the exhaust system, or checking the oil; each task is done with precision and pride. And right before jumping down on the kick starter, which will surely make the beast bellow (shattering morning silence), one more thing must be done. It is not until I've caught a whiff of my leather jacket, which has a combined smell of leather, cigarettes, oil, cheap beer, and gas, that I'm ready to ride. So I head for the mountains.

Like a fish out of water, my bike snorts and spits through town. It despises the city traffic, as do I. Speeding up, slowing down, cars turning, horns honking, and police man always watching: it's confusion. However, the air rushing onto my face is becoming cooler. The hills are no longer a distant vision in my imagination, they are near! With one last light changing from red to green, I find that small road that leads me to serenity.

A dramatic change in scenery has taken place. Three lane roads have turned into narrow bridges, office complexes have become a dense population of trees, and the acute vision of the city has broadened into a panoramic view of the mountain side. With this change in scenery also comes a change in my mental state. The motorcycle begins to run stronger as I become more capable of handling it. My mind begins to wander off to events of the past and visions of the future, but my body remains steady and alert. Swooping through "S" turns I can't help but to crack a smile. It would seem the road is a medium allowing one to feel a harmony and exhilaration that can not be described.

I have reached today's destination. My bike, sparkling radiantly, rests peacefully in the sun. During this time I have a chance to gather my thoughts. As I smoke my first cigarette of the day, I think about the events that brought me here. The ride is half over (for I still must ride home). However, it feels as if the ride ends here, and in a way it does. The preparation is down, I have set out on a trek, and I have reached a destination. Here is where I wanted to travel to, all that is left is going back to where I was.

Greg Braithwaite

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## How to Perfect the Commando

by John Kula

Keep the Mark III vernier isolastics, excellent rear disk (although it would have to be switched left), beefed-up swingarm and perimeter-screw primary chaincase (if you can find a matching bottom end with the four mounting points). Dump the "electric start" (a well set-up and kept Commando will start no worse than 2nd kick 99% of the time anyway).

Get a 1964 Atlas gear cluster (the last of the case-hardened gears) and an ME outrigger bearing for the gearbox to help with the load. Five gears are unnecessary given the motor's grunt, and Quaife's set-up doesn't change the bottom or top ratios (not to mention the price). Replace the clutch plates with half phosphor-bronze and half Barnett. Then add a good belt drive (Tony Hayward's is the best to date). A clutch that is good enough for T.C. Christensen's double-engined Hogslayer should do just fine thank you.

Remove the chrome from the disks, drill and chamfer them and then copper-plate them. Use a double front disk if you like. Stainless steel hose, of course.

Hard chrome the fork tubes, replace the springs with triple-rates and put 40 weight oil in for stiffness. Then a good fork brace (Hyde's is excellent) and any wobble will be gone.

Throw away the handlebar switchgear and replace with something less medieval.

Throw away the wiring harness and do it all yourself with 10, 12 and 14 gauge wire and copper spade connectors soldered on. While you're at it, dump the regulator for a solid-state affair (get a military-spec component) and replace the alternator with a high output triple phase (it'll require an extra zener, but hey, what price electric-free worries?) Mount a Boyer, a couple of heavy-duty coils and a good (Fiamm) horn with relay. While you're at it, an 8" headlight shell will throw more light than twin 5" headlights, and look more proportional to boot. For a nice little twist, replace the side reflectors with those little battery-powered strobe lights that cyclists use.

Get a gas tank that'll hold at least 3.5 Imperial Gallons.

Get a pair of those special vibration-dampening gloves that are now hitting the market. And then think about the engine itself. The camshaft may need some work (the Mark III especially is soft and will wear in 1/8" chunks). Megacycle does an excellent job of hardening, and also smooths out the power curve so there isn't a big kick at 4500 RPM. Put roller bearings in if you're patient.

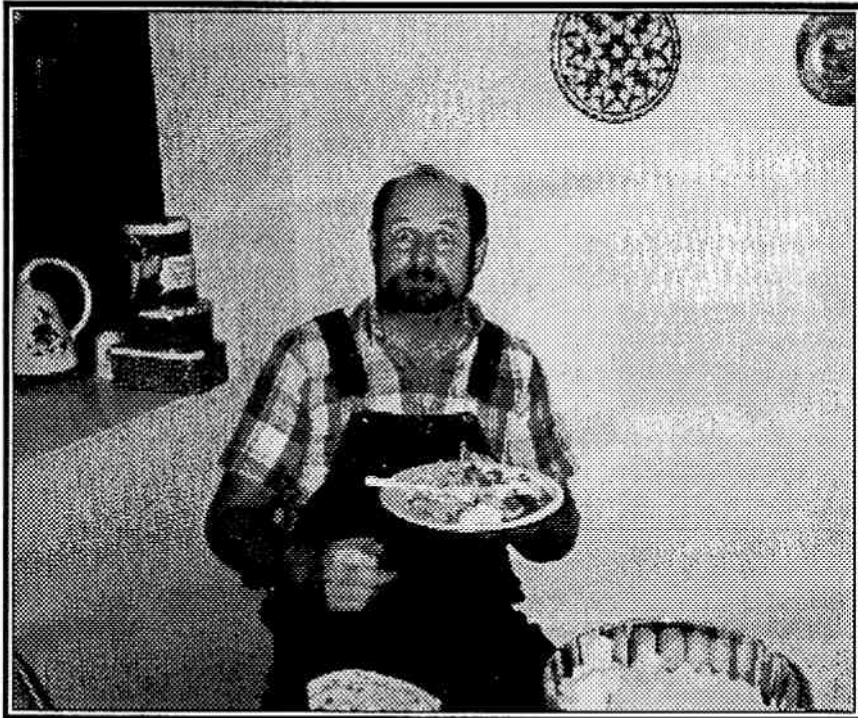
Carrillo make unbreakable rods and Arias have wonderfully slippery pistons (you should see them next to the Hepolites!). Balance the crank (ask Mick Hemmings what factor he uses :-), flow the head, lighten the valve gear, replace the mufflers with stainless peashooters for low restrictivity and use stainless fasteners everywhere. If you must add an oil cooler, get one with a thermostat because the engine generally runs quite cool all by itself and you don't want to overdo it. Add an oil pressure gauge for sure; maybe a temperature gauge too.

John Kula

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# Contest!



## **Winning Quote goes here!**

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What in the heck is going on with Ken Armann in this picture?!

We need a cool caption for this shot. Get weird. Send us, call us, and tell us what's going on. Best quote wins **PRIZE!!!**

Let us know thru the grapevine

or

Contact Jason Kidd at (408) 257-6135 or E-mail Teresa Ulrich  
[teresau@best.com](mailto:teresau@best.com)

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## Rally Stuff . . . by Joe Edwards

Well first of all I would like to say thank you to Allan and Vicki Mueller for hosting one of the best Christmas party's we have had for the Norton Club. We all owe them a big thanks...Well at the city bike swap meet we were able to show for the first time, the raffle bike, that we will have for the national rally. A great big thanks to Ken Armann for staying up late to get it ready for the show. The bike is a 1971 750 Commando. To give you a brief rundown on the bike... the engine and the transmission were rebuilt about 800 miles ago. Ken and Brad Green will be getting the bike ready to make the rounds. Now we are in need of a few items to make it perfect. Here are some of the items we need, if you can help in any way, please contact Ken Armann at his shop....

Fuel lines...chain guard...standard throttle assy...center stand with spacer nuts and bolts...handle bars...iso gators...side stand...grab rail...tail light assy...passenger pegs with rubber...rear brake pedal with switch...pair of headers...seat cover... Now you are saying well the bike is not ready!!! At the swap meet we started the bike for the folks. We were able to sell \$225.00 in tickets even with a bike that is just a little bit from being ready. We know we have a

winner. The bike is at Kens shop, please give him a call if you have some parts you can part with. I would like to take just a second to and say thank you to Jerry Joliff, Gerald Mauricio for all the help in selling the raffle bike tickets. The Prez and Bruce McGregor and the great job with the brownies, by the way we were able to make some extra cash...Gerald gave up his home-made cookies...thanks Gerald.

Now we hope you'll be making plans for the national rally. We will need any help that you may be able to give. We are having raffle printed. I would like to let you know that we all are thankful to RPM Mr. Bob Raber...fair spares..Mr. Phil Radford...Ken Armann for helping with the cost of printing the tickets. Tickets will be on sale very soon, around the first week of January. We also should be able to show the bike, as soon as we can get your help with those list of parts.

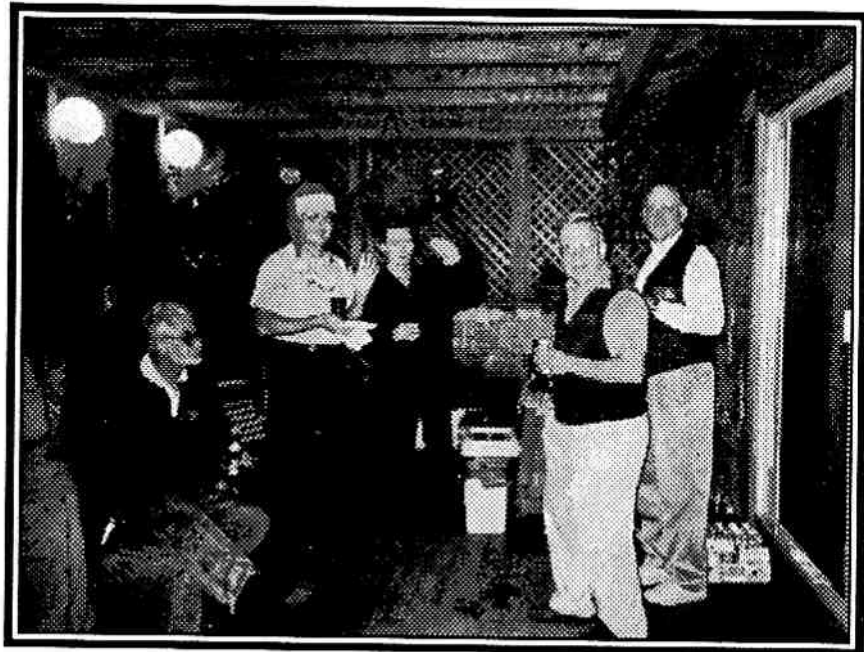
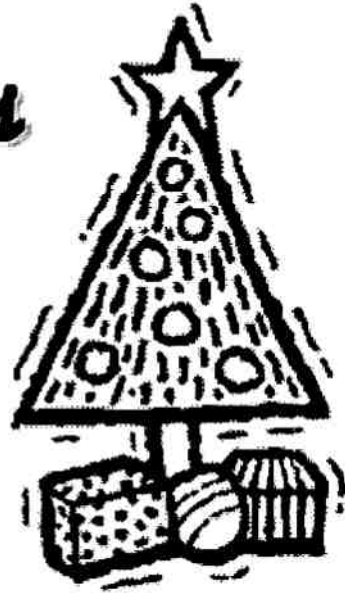
From my house to yours, we hope that the holidays were good to you and yours.

**Remember there will always be a Santa Claus!!!**

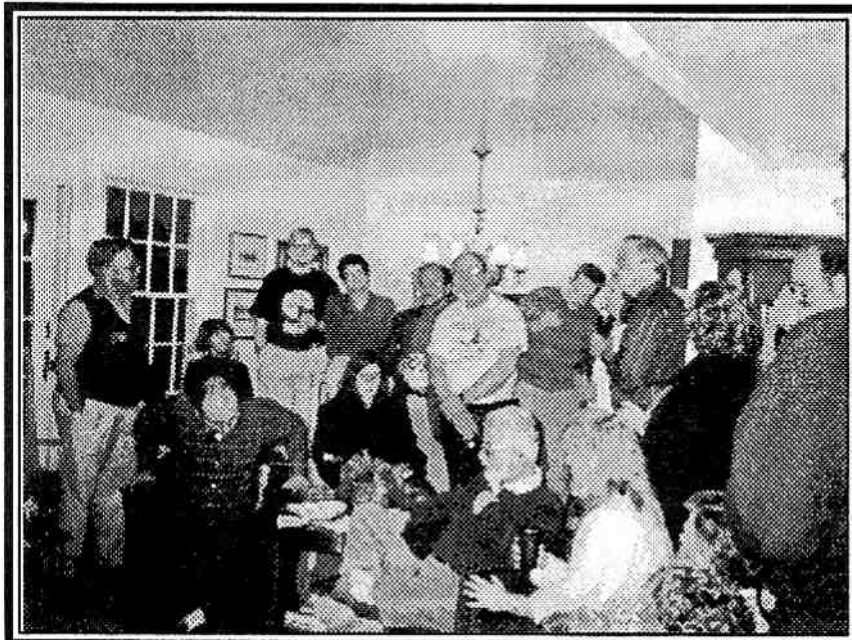
Joe Edwards



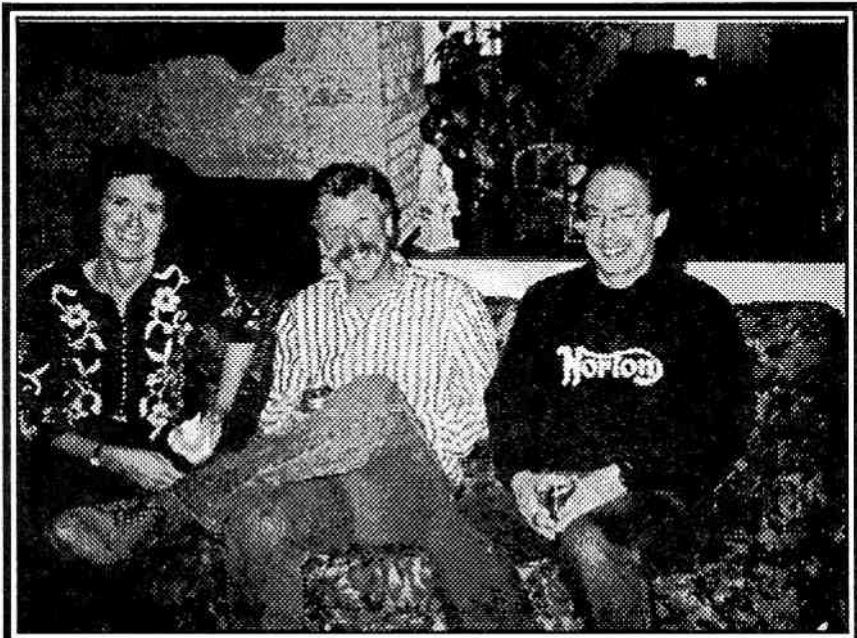
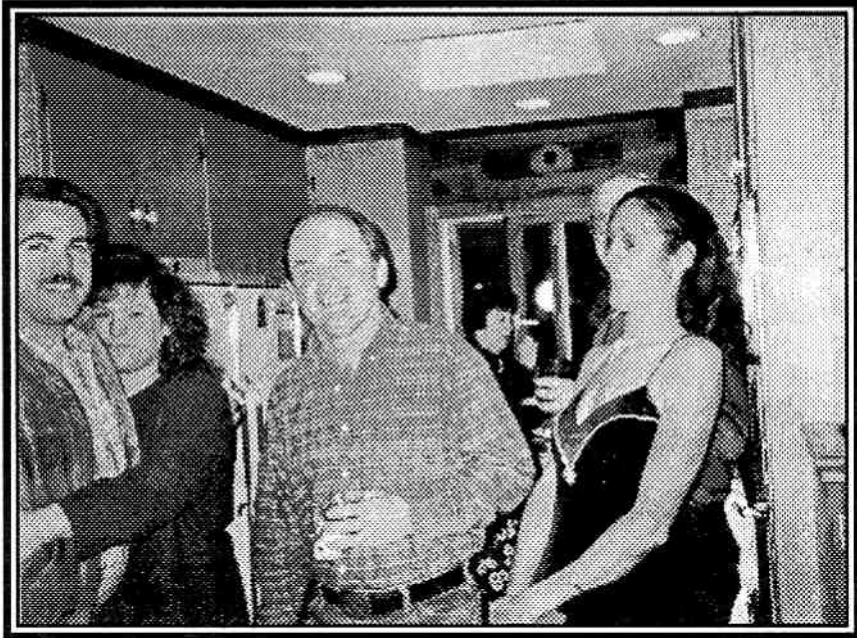
*Christmas  
Party  
1995*



*Christmas Party*



1995



## Thoughts on Deer

by Peter Snidel

Just wanted to share a few thoughts with y'all about deers:

There are two considerations about avoiding deer-smearing. I think the most important of the two is the painfully obvious fact that they are God's creatures, who happen to have found themselves in the midst of a planet full of 'way too many humans who somehow feel that they are so much more important than the rest of nature that their wish to have speed thrills, or merely to get to the next place they're going a little sooner somehow supercedes the deer people's right to survive unmolested.

Then, there is the correlavent damage problem engendered during the murder and/or molestation of the deer by virtue of Netwton's 1st Law, which often translates into pretty severely damaged machinery and/or operators. In almost every case, this is basically Kharmic damage incurred as a result of failure on the part of the machine operator to have taken the trouble to learn what You Have To Know if you're going to ride/drive in deer country.

Having lived in the comparative bush for many years now, I have seen lots and lots of roadkill. And every time I do, it makes me mad to think that so many people obviously attach more importance to driving over their head in their hurry to get to the next hassle that they don't seem to have time to take it easy on the wildlife.

What do I mean? Well, the Army taught me to drive, then taught me to teach others to drive, and rule I always was: If something gets in front of you and you hit it before you can stop, you were going too fast.

**Let me repeat that:** If something gets in front of you and you hit it before you can stop, you were going too fast. **Period.** So of course, every goof who hits something has an excuse.

"I went around this corner, and there was this trailer with a wheel off, in the middle of the road. I couldn't stop."

"I went over the top of this rise in the road, and there on the other side was a deer. Right in my lane! or, more specifically:

"I saw the dam deer standing on the side of the road, and there was plenty of room for me to cut in behind it, but just as I got close to it, it jumped right in front of me!

**What a dumb deer!**

The first two are clear-cut cases of overdriving your visibility. The last one is not knowing how deers are programmed. Yes, that's right - though people are equipped to think (though not many of them do, most of the time,) animals react to stimuli basically instinctively - genetic programming.

And a deer's programming tells him/her to react to threats of attack in a very specific way. (A vehicle approaching

at mega-deer-speed is obviously going to be perceived as a threat. Here's the basic programme:

1) When you see a threatening portable unit, (bear, cougar, Norton, etc) freeze. Don't even twitch. (deers not having a hell of a lot to fight back with, this pattern of behaviour worked the best in most cases.

2) If the thing goes away, continue what you were doing. If it comes closer, continue with 1) above, until.....

3) If the thing gets tooooooo close, and it is obviously not working, then it's okay to FREAK OUT!!!! Run! Anywhere!

The deer has not stopped to figure out that the vehicle, if that's the threat, operates mostly on that black strip with the white stripe. It hasn't stopped to figure out that the thing can actually go faster than a deer, so there's real danger in not computing its path and making sure you stay out of its way. In fact, maybe it's programmed to run across the thing's path at the last possible moment, so that it will have to make a fast 90 in the pursuit of said deer.

Either way, you have to remember that a deer standing perfectly still on the side or middle of the road is not going to stay that way when you get closer to it. And you have to expect that when you do, it's going to do just about anything. You, being a human, have the capacity to think, but the deer is operating on freaked-out instinct, and is liable to do anything. Murphy's Law also applies, of course, to wildlife encounters.

All this applies if the deer is behind a bush near the road. Or in a ditch. So that means that if you go past a bush close to the road, in twilight or at dusk, and a deer turns out to have been

hiding there, you- know\_ it's going to jump in front of you. (Surprise!) And that means that in deer country, at dusk and dawn, you have to be ready for it. If you weren't, in most cases, you were overdriving your visibility.

I live five miles out of town up here in BC's Southern Interior - very big deer country. Just about every day I go to town, I see fresh signs of a deer having been plugged - usually on a clear stretch of road, with no bushes or ditches they could have been hiding in. There are about a half dozen splotches of guts and gore on the highway from town as I speak. How some clown can make an insurance claim for hitting a deer on a straight stretch of road, when there was no cover for it to jump from, is beyond me.

Not only do these splotches represent Insurance Claims on car damage that we all pay for. (Gov't Insurance) They also represent a lot of pain and suffering on the part of one or more of God's Creatures. Lets face it; it just isn't very polite to go sailing along driving poorly and leaving a trail of dead wildlife in your wake. Sure, once in a long while, there is a case of someone hitting an animal that was truly unavoidable. But easily 95% are the result of some bozo overdriving his visibility, failing to have the sense to realize that you have to be extra-careful at dawn/dusk, and/or actually being dumb enough to think that deer's going to stay there as you zing past at 70 mph. Shee-it!

I'm sorry to hear about people getting hurt by plugging deers. But I'm much sorrier for the poor little deer.

Peter Snidel



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## SIR LUIGI AND THE NORTON

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### (THE REAL STORY) PART I THE DRAMA UNFOLDS

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As previously posted, about two months ago, my '73 850 with 50K on the motor started to lose compression (I could kickstart it with my left foot anchored to the ground.) after a vigorous run from the Bay Area to Rapid City and back last summer. Initially I attributed the compression loss to the magical properties of Mobil 1 (Mistake #1), which I had switched to in SD. But hard starting pointed to something more sinister and so I ran a compression check. Not good; there was a huge difference between the two sides. Oddly enough the bike still pulled strong, but work was needed to find out what was going on. I removed the head and discovered that my left std. piston was missing its top ring. Ring bits had made numerous gouges on the left side of the head. I never did find the bits.

With a Norton mini rally coming up in southern OR in mid June, I was eager to have the bike ready for the trip. And so I plunged headlong into the job, which by this time had come to include a rebore to + 0.020", new Hepolites, decarbonizing the head, reassembly to a leak-free condition, and several hundred break-in miles. I had installed new rings previously at about 35K on the std. pistons and with a light

honing everything had mated up nicely and broken in with no trouble. And so I plowed on, confident that this new job would be a piece of cake (Mistake #2.) Grabbing the end of the crankshaft with a large pair of visegrips and trying to move it up and down yielded no movement. The rods seemed to have no play. I was encouraged.

I worked too fast. At one point, instead of keeping track of all the studs and nuts and washers, I simply placed them on the workbench in a pile (Mistake #3.). I was determined to decarbonize the head myself, in the spirit of British shed wrenching. I used a Dremel with a wire brush to begin the work (later abandoned due to the numerous wire strands which got everywhere) and along the way used stones in the tool to smooth out the irregularities in the head. A suggestion from Brit-iron had me trying a scrap piece of aluminum with Simple Green, and then Scotchbrite (both worked well). Took awhile but came out OK.

Lou Caputo

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*Bob DiMascio*

*Carol DiMascio*

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## Harleys Vs. British Bikes

by Allan Johnson

Why the antagonism between Harley and British bike riders in North America? The reasons are well documented in Harry Sucher's recent book, "Inside American Motorcycling and the American Motorcycle Association." Sucher (and he is an American) is very critical of the long-term practice of discrimination by the AMA (controlled by H-D) against any foreign and especially British makes of motorcycles in competition events. Canadian racers who rode British motorcycles in American events, including national championships such as Daytona from 1934 on to the 1970's were continually discriminated against, harrassed and illegally disqualified from entry and qualification in order to try and prevent their competing and winning. Reports of races did not mention the names of British makes or their riders unless they were the actual winner.

As early as 1935 Harley-Davidson applied to have the 500cc Norton International motorcycle banned from competing in Class C AMA racing against 750cc H-Ds and Indians. They kept this up and finally after Norton Inters, tuned by Francis Beart, won three Daytona 200 races in a row (1949,50,51) H-D got their wish.

This discrimination against British motorcycles extended to Classic and Antique motorcycle events until recent times. In 1981, I

attended a meet of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America and entered a British bike in the Concours. To my pleasant surprise, it received an award. I was amazed, though, when an American (who turned out to be an enthusiastic collector of British motorcycles) came up to me afterwards with tears in his eyes, thanking me repeatedly and claiming that I had finally broken the "British Ban" and that after 25 years the Antique Motorcycle Club of America had finally awarded a trophy to a motorcycle other than an American made one. Some things never change.

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# CLASSIFIED ADS

**Editors Note:** All ads will run for 3 months. Please notify the editor if your item has been sold. Your add will automatically be removed after 3 months unless I am notified to extend publication. Note the expiration date at the end of each ad.

**HOUSE-CLEANING SALE:** '74 J.P. Special, '72 BSA-B50T, '66 Norton 650SS, '70 BSA-B25, '78 Tr. TR7RV, Several project bikes...call Ken Armann (408)371-6786 (12/95)

**FOR SALE:** '72 Commando 750, 8500 Original miles, Corbin seat, Hyde rear sets, Avon Super Venoms, Stainless brake and oil pressure gauge, All Original...not a restoration, have all original parts...\$3800 or B/O...call John (707)577-0101 (day) or (707)824-1226 (1/96)

**FOR SALE:** BSA B-40, 350cc single street bike, new motor & tires, Ron Freeway, \$1850: BSA B-40 350cc Trials Single, All tricked out, \$1850: Both for \$3000. Call Ed Meager (415)457-5423 or (415)459-9947 (10/95)

**FOR SALE:** MK3 Drive Star - New - \$30 MK3 Rear wheel seals - New \$6; 21 tooth G/B sprocket - New - \$40; Lightweight tappit adjusters - New - \$15; Locking gas cap - New - \$35; Sifton 460 track cam - New - \$135; Bracket set for Norvil fairing - New - \$60; Rubber mounted intake manifold - \$75: **WANTED:** VM34 Mikuni Carbs - 1 pair...call Chris (415)965-4611

**FOR SALE:** 1968 Commando Fastback, excellent condition, 2nd owner, very low serial number 126178 - the 54th Commando off the production line!! \$2,800. Call Howard at (408)298-6850

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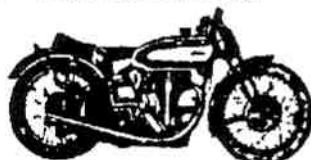
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