

The Norton Notice  
is now available  
in full color:  
[nortonclub.com/Newsletter/](http://nortonclub.com/Newsletter/)



Entire contents ©2007 Northern California Norton Owners Club • 907 FORTUNE<sup>®</sup>



No. 341

# Norton Notice



Sept. 2007

The Newsletter of the Northern California Norton Owner's Club



*Rallye 'round the Flag*



**THE NORTON NOTICE**

is published by the Northern California Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain the club members. The Norton Notice is a reflection of the readership who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, photograph (original or otherwise) as long as it is in good taste so that other Norton enthusiasts will enjoy it. The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 18th of the month preceding the issue. The Norton Notice prefers contributions submitted electronically. Articles and high-resolution photos can be sent in almost any format generally common to most computers. Send submissions or comments to LorinGuy@yahoo.com.

**MEMBERSHIP**

in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20 per year and open to all Norton motorcycle enthusiasts. Membership dues are payable to the Club Treasurer (see right). Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, which is designated by the last digit on the mailing label of your Notice, or on your membership card. All changes of address, membership or dues questions should be directed to the Club Treasurer.

**ADVERTISING RATES**

are \$100 per year for a 1/4 page ad. Contact the Editor for larger ads and rates.

**VISIT US ONLINE** at <http://www.nortonclub.com>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NorCalNOC/>

**AFFILIATIONS**

The Northern California Norton Owners Club is affiliated with both the Norton Owners Club of England (NOC) and the International Norton Owners Association (INOA)

**2007 CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President/Tech Advisor - Alan Goldwater**  
1780 Chanticleer Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062  
(831) 475-7505 [magicsound@aol.com](mailto:magicsound@aol.com)

**Vice President - Dave Crader**  
83 Palm Dr., Brentwood, CA 94513  
(925) 513.3148 [dpcrader@comcast.net](mailto:dpcrader@comcast.net)

**Secretary - Mike Sullivan**  
20 Bayview Ct., Milbrae, CA 94030  
(650) 872.3336

**Treasurer/Membership - Ray Pallett**  
462 Del Madio#2, Mt View CA 94040  
(650) 947.9780

**Rides Coordinator - Tom Dabel**  
730 Linda Flora Ave., San Jose, CA 95127  
(408) 272.0369

**Norton Notice Editor - Lorin Guy**  
2329 Cimarron Dr., Santa Clara CA 95051  
(408) 961.3468

**WebMaster - Ian Reddy**  
5114 Devon Park Ct., San Jose, CA 95136  
(408)226-9574 [ian\\_reddy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ian_reddy@sbcglobal.net)

**Web & Norton Notice Design - Fred Fortune**  
[FORTUNE2.com](http://FORTUNE2.com)

**Honorary Members**  
Brian Slark, Dick Slusher, Jodi Nicholas

The object of the Northern California Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop motorcycle activities. The Club's members are owners or enthusiasts of Norton motorcycles and often submit for publication in the Norton Notice technical tips. These tips are reviewed for technical content and are believed to be both correct and workable, but no guarantee is made or implied that these tips or articles will work for your particular application. The Club or membership assumes no liability or responsibility for any issues or problems that may arise, or omissions or deletions in connection with the technical information. The Norton Notice articles or other materials contained express the authors' view only and are not necessarily the official policy of the Northern California Norton Owners Club. The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject, edit or alter all editorial and advertising material submitted. The Editor serves at the discretion of the Club's Board of Directors. Materials may be published both in print and/or electronically on the NCNOC web site at [nortonclub.com](http://nortonclub.com). ©2006 The Northern California Norton Owners Club. Not to be reprinted without permission.

- RESTORATION
- REPAIR
- TUNE-UP
- INSTRUCTION
- 25 Yrs Experience
- Factory Trained

Call for Quotes  
**Jim Carton**  
(510) 483-2045

**Williams Welding**  
**Shop and Mobile**  
Braze to Heliarc, we weld ANYTHING

We will work with aluminum, stainless steel, cast iron and more!

Also we do rust repairs, fabrication and painting.

**9 to 5 weekdays**  
**2056 Clement Ave**  
**Alameda, CA 94501**

Kim Williams (510) 521-5514  
Cell phone (510) 541-8012  
Fax (510) 521-0965

Genuine Norton parts means  
**FAIR SPARES AMERICA, INC.**  
NORTON TWINS SPECIALIST

**Phil Radford**  
(408) 292-6563 shop  
(408) 292-8514 fax  
P.O. Box 8224  
San Jose, CA 95155

- Full range of stainless parts & fasteners
- Norvil Production Racer parts
- VISA Mastercard and AMEX accepted

[www.fairsparesamerica.com](http://www.fairsparesamerica.com)

Send two first class stamps for current lists

[www.rabers.com](http://www.rabers.com)  
[ukspares@rabers.com](mailto:ukspares@rabers.com)

Large Stock of  
**NEW & USED PARTS**

9-6 pm Tues-Fri 8-5 pm Saturdays

**EXPERT SERVICE**  
Major Credit Cards Accepted  
Mail Orders Welcome

1984 Stone Ave., San Jose  
(408) 998-4495 (408) 998-0642 fax



**Oil pressure gauge:** Center or Side Mount. Both include all parts necessary for installation. No modifications to bike required.

**Side or Center Mount:** MSRP: \$182.00 each  
 MCB part **NOPGSMNT** or Part **NOPGCMNT**

**13mm master cylinder upgrade:** (exchange): 750, 850 or Mark III. 33% more stopping power. Black powder coated. Includes, bleed kit hardware and instructions. No modifications to bike required.  
 MCB part **NORMC750** or **850** or **MK3** MSRP: \$192.00 each



**Brake caliper** (exchange): rebuilt using SST pistons, plug, bleeder & Andover Norton seals. **Assembly:** MCB part **NORTNCAL** MSRP: \$230.00 each

**Separate part price:** **Pistons:** MCB part **NORPISTN** MSRP: \$26.00 each  
**Plug:** MCB part **NCALPLUG** MSRP: \$32.00 each  
**Bleeder:** MCB part **NORBLEED** MSRP: \$11.00 each  
**Seal set:** MCB part **NCALSEAL** MSRP: \$12.00 each

**Rear Mark III master cylinder assembly:** new 13mm SST body master cylinder attached to powder coated billet mount. Includes both boots and #10-32 SHCS that attaches master cylinder to mount. Assembly: MCB part **NRMCASSY** MSRP: \$235.00 each



**Separate part price:** SST master cylinder: MCB part **NRMCBODY** (also fits Triumph front and rear) MCB part **TSMCBODY** MSRP: \$155.00 each; Master cylinder mount: MCB part **BILETMNT** MSRP: \$61.00 each;  
**Boots** (external or internal) MCB part **NMCRBEXT** or **NMCRBINT** MSRP: \$10.00 each

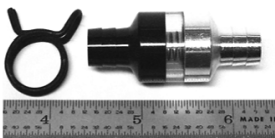


**13-inch SST rotor:** Includes disk, hub, caliper adapter, SST brake line bracket, SST screws, and Instructions. Bolts on directly. Fits stock fender struts. MCB part **NROTOR13** MSRP: \$395.00 each

**11-inch SST rotor:** Direct stock part replacement MCB part **NROTOR11** MSRP: \$323.00 each



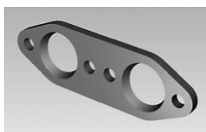
**Caliper plug tool:** SST with hardened pins. Use with 1-1/8" socket or adjustable spanner. MCB part **PLUGTOOL** MSRP: \$32.00 each



**Anti wet sump valve with view port:** Attaches to engine oil supply line. Includes clamps. MCB part **ANTISUMP** MSRP: \$72.00 each



**Acid trap:** Collects acid, replacing tube that deposits wind blown acid on to the rear rim. Attaches with an adhesive pad and clamp. MSRP: \$15.00 MCB part **ACIDTRAP**



**Manifold adapter:** transitions Mikuni manifolds to Norton heads. Allows smoother running by reducing turbulence. Two sizes: 32mm-28mm and 32 mm-30 mm. MSRP: \$51.00 each MCB part **MADAPTER**

Available from: Baxter's - BBC Triumph - BJ's Cycle Service - British Bike Conn - British Cycle Supply Brit Bikes of TN - British USA - Classic Cycles - Colorado Norton Works - Cook's Norton Service - Cycle Craft Clubman Racing - Domi Racer - Doug's Norton Works - European Motorcycles - Expert Motorcycle Works Fair Spares America - Frank's Brit Bike Barn - Ken Armann Restorations - Job Cycle - JRC Eng - Klemf's MotoParts - MotoMontreal - Old Britts - RPM Cycles - Raber's - Rask Cycle - Relic Cycles - Rocky Point Thoroughbred Motorcycles - TT Cycle - Vintage Brake - Walridge Motors - Wes Scott - Xander's - Zap Cycles

All products are manufactured in the U.S. by Miles Classic Brake LLC  
 Contact [milesplace@sbcglobal.net](mailto:milesplace@sbcglobal.net) or (831)684-1202 for full color brochure

**ALAN'S WRENCH** — September 2007

The INOA National Rally in Utah was excellent. Great roads, cool weather and fantastic people and bikes. The NCNOC volunteers served almost 300 breakfasts, getting up early without complaints and working together to get it done. This hard work by our members supplied an important and needed service to the rally, and added a good sum to the Club party fund. Chuck and Stella Bohn, Gar and Louise Jorgenson, Leo and Pat Christianson, Ron Bastiaans and Harry Bunting all deserve special thanks for this contribution to the NCNOC and the Rally. INOA President Suzi Greenway also stepped up to cook almost 1000 eggs to perfection. Thanks Suzi, you're the best!

We had yet another great weekend at Dardanelle, with 12 bikes on the ride to Markleeville. There were 20 people at Ian Reddy's second annual birthday feast, cooked by our master chefs Harry and Pat, with help from Cindy Armann and several others. What a treat, and to cap off a fine weekend, our favorite viking Tarmo was there, with his Commando cleverly stuffed in the back of a Mercedes 300TD wagon. To those regulars who couldn't make it this year, you missed a good one, and we missed you too.

Last month I talked about a kit to add adjustable damping to the stock Roadholder forks. In the course of installing and testing this kit, I noticed lots of stiction, so I checked the alignment of the fork tubes and found them slightly twisted. I use a flat, surface ground piece of 5/16 inch aluminum as a gauge plate for checking alignment. You could use a piece of plate glass or any really flat, stiff material of the right size (but not wood). Just lay it across the tubes, with the bike on the center stand. If the tubes are perfectly parallel, the plate will touch at both ends on each of the tubes.



See if you can rock the plate a bit and note where the gap is.

After finding the tubes out of parallel, I loosened both the clamp bolts in the lower fork casting and wiggled the tubes around a bit, checking with the gauge plate until they were straight. Then I tightened one of the clamp bolts, and found the alignment changed back to non-parallel, convincing me that the casting was bent.

After trying everything else, and thinking about it for a while, I came up with a way to un-bend the part, without removing it from the bike. These kinds of crazy schemes often backfire, due to the Law of Unexpected Consequences. But this time it worked and I was able to remove the twist without breaking anything or hurting myself.

The picture shows the basic setup, with two ratcheting tie-down straps and an old fork tube as the basic tool kit. A couple of strategically placed car bumpers provided the anchor points for the straps, with the bike itself positioned at an angle, on its center stand.



This technique was used to correct minor amounts of misalignment, or about 1/16 inch gap at one corner of the five-inch high gauge plate for my forks. I think any more than that would require the use of a hydraulic press and a solid steel bar. If you try this yourself, please keep in mind a couple of important points that aren't obvious from the photo:

- The fork tube you're using as a tool will probably get bent and so it should be an old one, not the one you plan to use on the bike.
- You should insert the junk tube just through the bottom

triple-clamp, about two inches. Then tighten the clamp bolt tight (30 ft-lbs.). You will be twisting the lower triple-clamp on one side only, so the other fork tube can remain in place.

- The setup shown will move the bottom of the right side fork tube forward, as that was the direction the gauge plate showed it needed to move. Check again before you start ratcheting, but remember the old fork tube you're using may be crooked itself. Drawing a picture may help you visualize and remember which fork tube has to go forward.

- Use the top strap to set the angle of the forks to be perpendicular to the line of the straps. Make sure the bike is positioned such that the forks don't contact the stops.

- Use the bottom strap to pull the bottom of the tube forward. You will have to go at it with close to the maximum force the strap ratchet will allow, because there is 'spring-back' when the strap is released. **PLEASE be careful and keep out of the way of the strap hooks, in case something does break and go flying.** It wouldn't hurt to protect or remove your fuel tank and side covers to prevent possible damage to them, although I didn't.

Once I straightened the twist in the lower clamp, the forks are straight and so are the handlebars when going down the road. The stiction is better, but still there. Last time I had the springs out I felt the sliding friction over the full range of fork travel, and it was definitely more at the fully-compressed end than fully extended. I think this is a result of the combination of new bushes and slightly worn tubes. Or it could be the steel lower bushes binding and galling on the worn alloy slider bores. Hopefully it will ease up as the new bushes bed in. Or I might make some out of the kind of oil-filled nylon used in many modern applications. In the mean time, it's not possible to set up the damping properly, so I've put that project aside, in favor of putting some more miles on the bike.

Seems like a good idea to me...

## MINUTES OF AUGUST MEETING

There are no minutes from the Dardanelle meeting

## NCNOC DIARY

### SEPTEMBER

**09/08** BSAOCNC "Vintage Trial" 408-578-1936  
**09/13** Club Meeting NCNOC Monthly Club Meeting. Food, drink, bench racing ... 19:00hrs ... followed by meeting called to order at 20:00hrs Harry's Hofbrau in Foster City Address: 1297 Chess Drive  
**9/16** Goldwater Ride Alice's Restaurant  
**9/21** BSAOCNC "North Coast Ride" 415-488-1519  
**9/29-10/03** Giro d'California, Paso Robles Ca.

### OCTOBER

**10/07** NCNOC AGM meeting and ride, Starting location for the optional ride is typically Alice's Restaurant. BBQ and AGM will be at noon at Huckleberry Flats.  
**10/12** BSA California Rally 415-898-0330(North) 661-273-7005(South)  
**10/14** La Ducati Days, La Honda Ca. A benefit for the volunteer fire brigade  
**10/21** Mt. Hamilton ass-backwards ride, Tom Dabel will lead a reverse-route version of the Mt. Hamilton ride. Meet at The Florence in Niles at 10:00am.  
**10/27** Southern Sierra Ride out of Kernville. Two days in the High Sierras. I'll also be doing a couple of Dual Sport days October 29-30 in the high country around Lake Isabella with lots of single track trail riding. Join me!!! Contact frank.forster@sbcglobal.net 831 688-2120

### NOVEMBER

**11/03** The Annual All-British Ride departs from 7th Street and Grant Avenue in Novato at 10:00AM sharp. Take 101 to Atherton Ave/San Marin Dr Exit. Go west, then left on Redwood Blvd. Right on Grant Ave, then left on 7th Street. Details TBD, but likely to be similar to previous years. This annual ride is organized by the BSAOCNC: <http://www.bsaoenc.org/calendar.asp> ... Note the standing rule for this ride is "All British", no other bikes on this ride please! Downtown Novato Address: 7th St & Grant Ave. Novato, CA 94945  
**11/04** Hanson Dam Ride ... leaves Novato, Ca. 11/03 at 4:30 pm arrives in Southern California at mid-night, Ride starts from the dam parking lot at 10am



## THE FEATHERBED — Lorin Guy

I was reading a few days ago about the fantastic Norton/McCandless Featherbed frames. It's an amazing accomplishment and here's some of the background on this marvel.

In 1949 Ulsterman Rex McCandless offered Norton a new frame to support their successful but now slightly elderly 500cc single. Rex was an acknowledged innovator in frame design. He had made a new frame for his Triumph a few years before, with a swinging arm fitted to a duplex cradle. This bike was christened the Benial. Rex really was some way ahead of the pack in his use of a swinging arm and shock absorbers; he was running a bike with rear suspension when rear rigidity was still the norm, and his talents were recognized by BSA, who bought several of his conversions. At a time when, for most bikes, state-of-the-art suspension meant plunger rear units, this was revolutionary stuff.

It was Norton who really grabbed him though, and from '49 onwards he worked for them alone. They asked him to produce a complete frame for them, incorporating a swing arm. He must have had all his best ideas already buzzing round his head, and he came up with the finished design for the featherbed frame in no time at all. It was to be a twin loop, all-welded jobbie, with a swinging arm — fitted, at first, with Rex's own design of shock absorbers — and featuring that unique, heavily braced, cross-over arrangement behind the headstock.

It took Rex just two months to get a running prototype onto the track, and it was tested on the Island over the winter of '49/'50. Everyone could see that they were onto a winner, and the decision was made to equip the Norton team with new bikes — or at least, old engines in new frames. There was a hitch though. The frame needed Sif-bronze welding; the Norton bosses realized that neither they nor their steel suppliers, Reynolds, were set up to do that. No problem, said Rex; he would take care of it. And so he did. They needed eight frames for the works racing team so Rex and his guys simply hand-made all eight.

The Featherbed-framed Nortons made their first outing on April 29 1950 at Blandford, and they effortlessly crushed all opposition. The bikes won again at Wicklow in southern Ireland a few weeks later, and again soon afterwards, up in the north, at the North West 200. Norton now knew for sure that they had something truly phenomenal at their disposal. The man who really brought the Featherbed to the attention of Britain's motorcyclist — the man who made its reputation — was racer Geoff Duke, who was not only a hugely talented rider but was also in the right place at exactly the right time.

Born in St Helens in Lancashire in 1923, Geoff first became a real motorcycling hero when he won the Senior Clubmans TT and the Senior Manx Grand Prix in 1949. The following year Norton drafted him in to test the new

Featherbed-framed race bikes. He had no doubt that these were winning machines, and in the 1950 Senior TT Geoff proved his point by stomping on everything else to come in first. He set a new lap record of 93.33mph and also broke the overall race record, finishing in two hours, 51 minutes and 45 seconds. He then went on to finish second in the Junior — behind Artie Bell's Norton. Another Norton that of Harold Daniell, was third. The Featherbed-framed machines had very definitely arrived. As I say, the 500cc Norton single-cylinder motor was fairly long in the tooth by this time, and other bikes — particularly the Italian multiis — had no trouble thrashing it on the straights. When it came to the bends though the Nortons more than made up the difference; they simply walked round the opposition.

—Permission from Classicbike guide

## SPY PHOTO

### Queen's Gate Mews, London, England:

This just released SPY photo shows the New Norton collapsible full size motorcycle, based on the ever-popular Norton Commando of the seventies.

With transportation costs rising and commuting becoming crowded and slow, this could be a viable alternative.

Norton officials would not confirm or deny the existence of this motorcycle, but the idea is not new, back in World War two, British motorcycle companies made small collapsible bikes for the military, the most famous being the Excelsior Welbike. Now considered a collectable the Welbike was developed for clandestine operations in Europe.

Could this new Norton be the answer to fuel and commuter's woes? Shown here with co-designer Tarmo and stuffed into the back of a 1988 Mercedes Benz 300TD (that runs on veggie oil), is the fuel alternative answer is just around the corner?



**North Bay Ride Report** — Terry & Donna Morrison

It was a wonderful summer day in San Francisco, a foggy 60 degrees as the NCNOC members began to arrive.

Coming in on Nortons were Keith Karn and Jerry Grainger on Roadsters, Alan Goldwater /Commander Rotary, and the Morrison's Interstate. In the other bike category Lorin and Kathryn Guy/BMW R1100RT. In the showing up for breakfast but not for the ride category was Dan Bockmier /ST Ducati, Carl Tyler /Ducati, Dan and Carl needed to meet an E-Bay buyer for Dan's Norton. Mike Sullivan/ Honda. Grandpa Mike who rode up the Peninsula on his Honda 90 (with an expansion chamber), making the entire journey on the Old Bayshore Boulevard with a top speed 40 miles an hour, headed home to keep his grand kids for the day. Tom and Liz Dabel didn't ride at all but came by car so they could take the house tour and deliver two of those great "Heels on Wheels" shirts that Liz makes. Tom had his right shoulder successfully operated on last week and said "Not only did they repair the recent accident injury, but damage from previous crashes, It will be better than new."

The ride left promptly at 10:30 give or take a few minutes went down Union Street where all the shops were having a sidewalk sale, prompting Keith to remark "Those ladies, they get that dazed look when they've seen too many dresses."

You couldn't see the towers on the Golden Gate Bridge from the heavy fog the road was wet and the bridge was crowded with tourists. It was slow following a Muir Woods shuttle bus down to the beach in Marin, but the scenery with fog rolling in over the valleys right at the tops of eucalyptus trees and the blue of the ocean as it appears through the mist spectacular. We do live in a special place.

My bit-o- grief on the ride happened just after the tour bus turned off I accelerated in to a left hand turn the weak side-stand spring allowed the side-stand to drag.. upsetting the bike pretty hard. I tried to correct, but before the side-stand could reset Donna and I were off the road in the brush and dirt.

My bike is too pretty to crash so I was praying I could get it back on the road again when suddenly my prayers were interrupted, we WERE back on the road again! Riding right behind me Jerry Grainger said, "Good recovery." The spring was long gone and the bronze tab on the side-stand was cleaned off and I picked off the weeds after a stop to regain our sense. As Keith has done for many of us, he rummaged around in his saddlebags and gave me two wire ties to hold up the side-stand. He's got an entire hardware store in those bags!

On up Highway 1 the ride was pleasantly uneventful to a great lunch at Tony's. I love those barbecued oysters! Jerry Kaplan, on a new cool Fastback, and Bob Caulk, on his '70s Roadster, from Sacramento, met us at Tony's Oyster Bar at 1:00 pm for lunch.

If we host the North Coast ride next year we are looking into a tour of a Nike Missile Site SF-88 in the Marin Headlands and we owe thanks to Jerry Grainger for the tip. Well, keep the road thing down...or is it up...or pedal to the metal...or the wheels down or at least greased...and get a new spring for the side-stand!

**CHP GEAR TIPS** — Lorin Guy

It's our pleasure to offer some CHP tips for motorcycling from Officer Bindar Dundat of the California Highway Patrol. Officer Dundat has been with the CHP for almost five years. I had the pleasure to stop and talk with the officer on highway 35 recently and his appreciation for vintage motorcycles and the speeds they can achieve was clear from the start. Having been raised in India he was familiar with British motorcycles specially Norton and Triumph. He said his dad had owned an Atlas when they lived in Chennai and they would ride to lake Pulicat on the Eastern coast. I asked the officer if he would submit some riding tips for the Norton Notice, he was all too happy to comply. I look forward to chatting with Officer Dundat when we meet again at the end of the month at 935 Ruff Dr. in San Jose.

**Officer Bindar Dundat's Tips:**

Proper gear is essential to safe riding; wearing the right clothing always makes the sport more enjoyable. And more comfortable, too.

**Helmets:** Always use DOT (Department of Transportation) approved headgear around the block or around the world it makes sense to never leave home without a helmet on your head. It's one of the best items of protection you can use.

**Eye Protection:** Riding with bare eyeballs is a gamble. Your eyes are precious and it does not take much to injure one. Proper eye protection means an approved shield on your helmet, a pair of goggles, or shatterproof glasses. Settling for less just isn't worth the risk.

**Jacket:** Motorcycle jackets are made of many materials, Denim, Nylon Corduroy and Leather. The hide of a cow, or any other leather offers you the most protection when it comes to abrasion.

**Boots:** Over the ankle boots, please. Preferably made of strong leather. Your ankles are very complicated: protect them.

**Gloves:** Always wear gloves, even on a hot day, your hands were not designed to withstand abrasion or accidental contact with hot motorcycle parts.

**Pants:** These should be made from thick material, like leather. They resist abrasion and provide protection from the elements. A number of companies sell pants and jacket combos that zip together.

**KENNY DREER RESIGNS****To all BritBike Newsletter readers and Norton Notice, NCNOC club members**

Effective today, I have tendered my resignation to the Norton Motorsports Board. My reasons for resigning are two fold; first I have done all that I could to assist the board to find resolution in an effort to move the company to a next group. Currently this is a continuing process. Secondly, I believe I have afforded Norton not only my time but my best efforts over the course of the company's existence, and now it is time that I move on. My new company will be "Kenny Dreer Motorcycles". The focus will be Vintage and current Euro based motorcycles, restorations, custom builds, performance upgrading, custom and performance parts. I look forward to seeing a lot of old faces, and making new friends as well. My apologies for the silence.

I want to take this opportunity to once again, thank all of those many people who believed in Kenny Dreer and Norton. The 961 Norton Commando was and still is everything I dreamed a new Norton should be. Hopefully the stars will have better alignment next time around.

Best regards, **Kenny Dreer**

*"The approachable"*

# Ken Armann

*Classic & Antique  
Motorcycle  
Restoration & Repair*

## Norton

## BSA

## TRIUMPH

*851B So. McGinney Ln  
Campbell, Ca 95008*

*(408) 626-0061*

*kenarmann@hotmail.com*

**Dardanelle Camp-Out** — Lorin Guy

The Dardanelle weekend (Aug10-12) sunny sky, great roads, starry nights and a great crowd, you can't ask for more. Well, ok I could ask for a soft bed and a warm room, but I let Terry Morrison talk me into motorcycle tent camping. At Terry Morrison's suggestion we decided we'd ride up, spend a few days and ride home. It was also decided to do as little freeway as possible and Terry took on the task of route master and came up with a cool route.

The 6am start time and the relaxing pace set by Terry gave us time to enjoy the ride and sight see as we traversed the back roads, stopping a couple times to adjust our clothing and get a cuppa and chat; we made pretty good time arriving, after a lunch stop in Strawberry, about 12noon.

This camp-out under the stars in the high Sierra Mountains is not only becoming a tradition but it's also to witness to the Perseid meteor shower, the comet Swift-Tuttle orbits the Sun with a period of about 130 years. Whenever the comet comes close to the Sun in its orbit, it ejects a stream of dust particles, which are then distributed along its orbit. When the Earth passes through their path - a regular occurrence every August - we see a meteor shower, a fabulous spectacle for viewers on Earth. The last such ejection from Swift-Tuttle took place in 1992.

The Dardanelle is a private campground placed adjacent to The Stanislaus National Park; it provides tent sites, cabins and a small motel. The small restaurant and store supply all the things you forgot or did not want to carry and hot, home cooked meals.

The night air was cooling and so off to bed and the cozy tent, forgetting to bring the tent top cover, the night was anything but restful, the cold night air 'bout froze us. Something about getting older and sleeping on the ground that just does not jive. It was moans and groans,



to call next. Thus it was that I discovered the sole proprietor motorcycle dealership in South St. Louis named Motorsport.

When I rode up to the address and parked at the curb I instantly felt the aura of the place and was curiously at ease. This was not a dealership swarming with unctuous salesmen and decorated with colored lights or banners. No this was a far different place and it was crammed with exotic machines whose brands I'd never heard of. Familiar was the name of Norton but I had never seen a Bultaco, Greeves, Mondial, Ducati, Moto Guzzi or a Velocette. Even more striking was a pre-war Cotton parked in front that turned out to be one of Lee's regular rides to work.

Upon greeting me for the first time, Lee strode quickly out to the street to examine what had brought me there. He was a tall, slender man wearing a Norton T-shirt, khaki pants and a boyish smile. After kneeling down to inspect my engine number, his eyes twinkled with one of those I-know-something-you-don't-know looks. Then with an infectious grin he declared I had a 1960 model G12 CSR, an especially fine motorcycle but I needed to do something about those awful ape-hanger handlebars that had been fitted by the previous owner. I was putty in his hands. In retrospect it seems from that point forward I must have spent every spare minute I had at his shop, studying all the new and used bikes while longing to own or ride them. Like a book lover discovering the library, I had discovered my sanctuary.

That was many years ago now, yet there it was that I began my love of classic bikes and a longtime friendship with Lee Cowie. I moved away from St. Louis a few years later, but continued to drop by the shop when I would visit my home town, until one year in the early eighties I returned to find Lee had closed the Motorsport dealership. He had transitioned into a motorcycle publications distributor and moved out to the country with his wife Mary and young family.

Perhaps it was no coincidence that not long after, my passion for classic motorcycling went into hibernation for quite a few years, taking a backseat to family, work and home obligations. I still owned a motorcycle and a scooter, but they had atrophied into mere conveyance. That is before one middle-aged day I heard the "some day is today" siren's song and decided once again to eagerly engage my interest in classic motorcycles. I was utterly delighted to renew my acquaintance with Lee, under the auspices of obtaining a magazine subscription, and filled his ears with the story of my newly acquired Norton Commando. I found that Lee and Mary were well and had developed the publications business into quite an enterprise, plus they'd become vintage glider enthusiasts in their spare time.



No longer do I travel to St. Louis with much regularity, but in 2007 I found myself there and made a point to accept an invitation from Lee and Mary to stop over. They are situated on a splendid, rural piece of earth, not far from an air strip, naturally, where they made me feel right at home. Their hospitality even included a ride on Lee's 1947 Norton International. Oh how I reveled at the sound of the Brooklands can, with my shirt flapping in the breeze and the birds scattering across the sky. I can't begin to express how completely enjoyable the visit was and how my memory of those heavenly days at the shop on Gravois were recalled and new memories were created while I sped along the back roads of Missouri aboard Lee's "Eric Oliver Special". I will forever be in Lee's debt for opening the world of classic motorcycles to me and all the days of enjoyment they have subsequently brought.

How fortunate I was to meet him that summer day in 1973.



**Classic Beginnings** — By Dan Bockmier

Who knows what it is that causes a person to fall into the embrace of classic motorcycling? Is it a penchant for the mechanical coupled with a sense of nostalgia? Perhaps the spirit of adventure and romance conjured up by some defunct motorcycle manufacturer's advertisement? Could it be the sculpture like beauty of these mechanical time machines that so inspires? Maybe just dumb luck and circumstances of time and place?

For me the answer is all the above. In fact, I can even expound upon the exact moment and geographic spot I became smitten. My classic bike ground zero was located across the street from Christy Park at 6115 Gravois Avenue in St. Louis Missouri, USA. There, in a small, unassuming brick storefront, could be found the wonderful world of Motorsport and Lee Cowie. It was 1973 when I first rode down to Lee's shop piloting an old Matchless, that had practically fallen into my lap.

To set the stage for this story of how one's life can turn on seemingly insignificant events, I need to mention I was just a teenager at the time, who knew nothing about motorcycles, other than I wanted one in the worst way. That summer, my best pal Mark would borrow his big brother's second-hand Honda 305 and travel the countryside on those divine warm days when school was out, gas was cheap and spare time abundant. At some point Mark urged me on to the back and off I went unwittingly into an addiction of all things with a motor and two wheels. It soon occurred to me that if it was that much fun as a passenger, it must be fabulous to be at the controls.

One afternoon that same summer I was about my duties at the local filling station, when a stranger drove up to the pumps and asked "is that car over there for sale?". "Well, that car is mine and anything is for sale at the right price", I answered precociously. This fellow was in the neighborhood looking for an MG that was listed in the classified ads but mistakenly thought my Austin Healey Sprite might be it. He went on to mention that he had a motorcycle to trade, at which point I was all ears. After a tad of negotiation my Healey was gone and I found myself with a Matchless 650 twin motorcycle plus \$100 cash.

I had never heard of a Matchless before that transaction. I was slightly anxious as I combed the phone book to find there were few resources available for spares, since Matchless had been out of business for several years. Still resolutely enthusiastic about this new machine, I began dialing every motorcycle dealer listed, hoping someone had a few leftover bits or at least a lead or two on who



grunts and gasps as we attempted to get comfortable and warm. Perfecting your "old man" sounds is a major part of getting older and learning to grunt and gasp at just the right time helps in certain movements. I've found a good grunt helps me roll over and a gasp when getting up or sitting down is a huge help. The night was a symphony of "old man" sounds with the temps dropping into the 40's I was cold enough to open one of the "Mr. Heat" pads my wife had inserted into my pack. I'm sure it saved my life that night, warming not only my hands but also the entire sleeping bag. Terry being somewhat older than myself was surprisingly amused by my repertoire and although providing some of his own "old man" tunes slept better than I.

The nights dark was broken by the burst of a thousand flash bulbs and a streak as wide as a freeway. The Meteor shower was gracing us with a rare encounter; overhead the sound was a whoosh of air not unlike the sound Superman makes when he flies but lingering for a few seconds. The head of the earth bound meteor was three small balls of burning light heading south at a speed that can only be categorized as "Hella fast". As it disappeared from sight a boom accompanied by sharp crack, the earth beneath us took a small jump. My eyes still unbelieving, my mind still numbed, my stare still in awe, my lips utter... "damn". If all the BS and shooting stars thousands of miles up, the good food and great company had not happened also, this in itself would have made the entire trip worth it.

The morning ride meeting was at 10am and it seemed like I was waiting forever, getting up at 5:25am I had everything done way ahead of time. The meeting was brief... '9 Blah blah, nice road, Blah blah, don't crash, Blah blah, lets go. The group was a bit hap-hazard when we left, with some speeding off and others taking their sweet time putting on gloves, I waited till I could not wait any longer leaving between groups I thought I should catch somebody as I failed to listen to the part about the route.

These high mountains are truly majestic and the rock formations are the best any glacier has ever left. Climbing up the mountain the highlights are breathtaking, finally reaching Sonora Pass 9600+ ft, what a view from up there. The road on the other side of the pass is 26 percent grade down 2000 ft. and you can see all the way down, another breathtaking sight, that's a lot of twisty turns.

Lunch was at The Deli Co. café '8e in Markleeville and these people have to be given props, we descended upon this deli like a horde of locust and they helped us all in a professional manner offering great customer service and still keeping a sense of humor, as 18 motorcyclist standing in a line ordering food can be a bit trying if your head is not in the right place. The food was good and the service quick.

Back at the campsite the crew that did not go on the



ride was busy getting the big feast together. Ken Armann went fishing (something he does a lot when he's up there) and actually caught a fish, big enough not to just torture and throw back but to kill and bring home for dinner. Harry Bunting and crew invited the whole NCNOC group to their cabin for dinner and it was shaping up quite nicely, chicken on the barbie and spaghetti with salads, fresh corn (brought from the valley) a real feast. Tom Dabel wrangled some woodchoppers and we had a righteous fire, good conversation and newly opened bottle of Kentucky's finest and the evening was prefect. Motorcycle stories, good chat, some tall tales and some not so tall, nothing finer after a days ride and a good meal.

I'd have to say the NCNOC did a great job of having the most fun you can have motorcycle camping, and I look forward to next year a little better prepared, and anxious to once again ride the Sonora Pass highway.



**INOA NATIONAL RALLYE — Pat O'Shay**

**Comments on Rally:**

I might say that I think our group had a great time from Nor cal, hope I am speaking for everyone, not a big showing, but a fun group. A group that Susie commented saw the need and rose up and pitched in without being asked for the pancake breakfast. I personally had a great time, much hotter and dryer than seven years ago, but Utah did a tremendous job. We had so much fun talking with old friends and making new ones.

As you may have heard this is one of the rare occasions that Leo actually broke down. We often run out of gas, but hardly ever break down. Anyone who truly knows Leo knows that he likes the routine maintenance, but



beyond that, not his thing, especially if he is out having fun. But we were lucky enough to break down in town at the local burger place, called and asked them to send someone out for us. Barry (INOA editor) gave us a lift.

(We were lucky enough to meet the Norton Gang in town when they stopped for ice cream, and met Jack Simmons), he and his family helped Leo with the bike and Jack sat with us until help arrived, we had a very long nice chat with him). We didn't find out until much later that he had to leave the high elevation because he was having chest pains. One of the experiences I will never forget about the rally.

Leo got back in time for the 4:00 tech session where they diagnosed the problem. Alan Goldwater and Phil Radford helped him go round the camp and eventually he got everything he needed to put the bike together. Chuck has some great pictures of Leo repairing the bike. Leo called for parts the next day and had them over-nighted to everyone who assisted. So we were able to ride every day, we may have missed the group ride, but at least we got to ride all the rides for ourselves and then some since we arrived early on Monday night prior to the rally. Those two days with the rain, thunder and lightning show were beyond spectacular, what a treat, always want to return to those roads.

Cooking Breakfast - Ann (from S. Cal) Gar, Pat, Alan, Suzi Ann, Pat, Alan, Suzi fixing Breakfast  
Gar, Harry, Louise, ?, Stella  
Gar, Louise, Stella at Capital Reef Nat. Park  
Ron Leaving to return to the Bay area on Sunday  
Stella, Louise, Pat with Leo in the back

Photos by Gar Jorgenson, Chuck Bohn and Pat O'Shay

