



The Daily Planet

Official Newsletter of
**The San Francisco Northstars
Motorcycle Club**

Volume 12, Issue 9

December 17th, 1999

Calendar

- Dec. 22 **Club Meeting, [S.F. Brewing Co.](#)**
- Dec. 26-30 **Mojave Desert Ride & Camping**
- Jan. 8 **Ride Planning Meeting**
- Jan. 15-17 **Mojave Desert Ride & Camping**
- Jan. 22 **Club Dinner (& Jan. Meeting)**
[New Pisa Restaurant](#)
550 Green St.
San Francisco, CA
- Jan. 30 **The 2-Mountain Ride on Super-Bowl Sunday**

Nov. 24th Club Meeting

Members present: Mark Anderson, Mark Boyd, Matt Brockway, Joel Buck, Mike Chaplin, Roozbeh Chubak, Gretchen Hoffman, Hans Koolhoven, René LaPrevotte, Patrick Lydon, Alan Macias, Jim Patt, Allan Paul, Steve Schurman, and possibly another one or two I forgot since I didn't remember to write this list down during the meeting.

Guest(s): Steve "Ash" Peltier.

Old Business & Ride Reports

The President's Ride, by René LaPrevotte was last Saturday (11/20), but the bad weather (& the flu) conspired to severely limit attendance. **Mark Boyd** was on his recently acquired XS650 and my **guest, Steve Peltier** on his VFR, brought the total head count to a *whopping* three (3). René gave an interesting description of Mark's moto for the day that included smoke, oil & gas leaks.

With some rather gruesome-looking storm clouds on the horizon, the route was modified numerous times through the day to skirt the heavier rains.

Somewhere above Vallejo, the group stopped as Mark's XS wasn't handling quite right. Upon closer inspection it was determined that the swingarm-pivot bolt had backed out about half way, and the rear tire was kinda caddi-whompus with respect to the front. With the best tools available, a large rock found on the side of the road, they pounded the bolt back in. Mark then high-tailed it back home before fate had a chance to catch him. René & Steve continued on with a fun ride for the rest of the day.

Mark Anderson attended one of Rob Brown's Sears Point Trackdays on his R1. The 1st two sessions in the morning were cold enough to require use of the electric vest & the track temperature wasn't high enough for good traction. Had 2 *really* good sessions after lunch though & got the bike loaded into the truck just as the rain started. A fine day at the track for \$150.

Mark also told us about 2 days on the dirt riding out at Carnegie with his guest - **Steve Demopoulos, Earl Minkler, Brian Halton**, and others. Evidently, Steve-D has been entertaining the group with his vintage CR250 & his dirt shenanigans. One story relates to the group coming out of the hills & Steve racing towards the dry creek bed, only to realize at the last moment that the ledge he was about to charge off was about a 4-ft. down. He braked, nosed over the ledge, & pivoted into a classic flying-W face plant over the bars. *I hate it when that happens!*

The 2nd Steve moment occurred when he nails a set of whoop-de-dos WFO, it stands straight up in a monster wheelie, and squirts out from under him into a major set of endos before finally coming to a rest. The expansion chamber was knocked off in 3 pieces and many other parts

were scattered across the trail. According to the story, Steve rounded up the escaping parts, gathered more from the back of his truck, and was back on the trail and ready for *more* in no time flat! If he lives, he'll make a hell of a Northstar! With the recent rains giving the hills some much needed moisture, Mark & Earl both commented that it was some of the best riding ever at Carnegie.

Earl Minkler has been busy on his XR100 at the [Club Moto](#) 1/8-mile oval most Thursday nights and has even competed at a recent race event out there. Rumor has it there were some good finishes and one trip to the podium.

So, when Earl offered to bring Lee's XR200R out on a Thursday evening for **Catfish** to play on, I remembered to bring my ridin' gear to work with me. There were only 4 others on the oval all night and they were all on XR100s. Well, 2 of 'em were pumped 120s with young, fast riders aboard.

What an absolute kick in the pants! ... and WHAT a workout! Man, if you're not careful, a guy could lose some *serious* weight doing this! The track was pretty hard packed with no cushion to speak of & *very* fast. The XR200 has knobbies front & back with WAY better traction than I wanted. The high speeds & steep lean angles required to get it sliding were QUITE exciting! Only low-sided twice during the evening when the rear tire successfully passed the front.

It would take me 4-6 laps to get in my groove & then I'd run 6-8 good laps on a fast line. I'd only last about 20 laps total before arm pump and/or serious panting set in and I'd have to park it & rest a bit. By the last couple of sessions I could string together 6-8 laps as fast as anyone on the track. Its impressive watching the young guys run that kinda pace consistently for 20-30 laps at a time though. A fun evening for \$15.

Since Chris needed a larger dirtbike to step up to & I need a flat-tracker to practice on, this cute little Y2K XR200R made a daring escape by jumping out the window at Mission Motorcycles in Daly City and leaped on my trailer last Saturday! Salesman **Russ Northstar Johnson** & owner **Wendy SideHack Epstein** were last seen chasing a light-blue Toyota 4x4 with a rusty red trailer down Mission boulevard.

My 1st Mojave Desert Ride

by John Mulvihill

MY DEEPEST SYMPATHIES go to the dirt riders among you who opted not to hang with **Earl Minkler**, **Catfish**, and Catfish's son **Chris** in the California City region over the Thanksgiving weekend. You missed a desert riding experience that can only be described as idyllic.

A self-professed dirt-phoebe (after numerous tumbles from my overlarge KLR, aptly named Swamp Thing), I had nevertheless harbored a decades-long desire to ride in the desert. "On Any Sunday" probably had something to do with it.

So, when Earl suggested I stop by his trailer (which, by the way, is more comfortable than some apartments I've lived in), he only had to ask once. It was nestled, along with Mike Chaplin's rig, on a hillside 15 mile outside California City, overlooking a spectacular vista of desert scrub and distant mountains.

I showed up Saturday morning bright and early. Earl took one look at Swamp Thing, whose weight with touring gear had ballooned to 400+ pounds, and pointed me to his ultra-trick XR400, complete with fresh offroad-only knobbies and about a zillion dollars' worth of suspension and tuning modifications. He indicated a hill about five miles distant and said, "Ride around that thing and get yourself familiarized while we have breakfast, then we'll all head out."

Offering your cherry XR to someone who'd never left a tire track in the desert for a solo ten-mile excursion is more than an act of generosity, it's a goddamn leap of faith.

The distance between trailer and mountain looked like flat, brushy desert, but that was, of course, illusion. The country is actually rolling, and constantly broken up by roads, trails and washes. Go into one too fast and you could end up smack against a wall of dirt, or nose-diving into a four-foot ditch. Both scenarios involve a sudden stop and the strong possibility of injury to both bike and rider.

So I took it easy, but not too much so. The Honda's power and quick steering were a revelation. I could dart around the sage brushes without conscious effort, as my eyes sought out a route among them. I even chased a jackrabbit, though I swear it was toying with me.

The most challenging aspect of this inaugural the ride was keeping my bearings. I had to look ahead on three levels: right in front for immediate obstacles, like those little cacti that can blow a tire; a little further ahead to choose a route and watch for washes and roads; and way ahead to my destination, so I could stay more or less on track. The constant concentration required, and shifting of vantage points, were more tiring than the actual riding. Add to this the loss of all bearings when I found myself in a valley. I'd go along for a while, then ride up to the top of a hill to discover that I'd veered 90 degrees off-course within just a few moments.

Still, I made my destination and whipped right back to the trailer, its bright white paint visible from far away across the clear desert air. The bike's responsiveness and the freedom to head off in any direction were an intoxicating

combination. I could see how someone could really get into desert riding.

Then the four of us headed out, Earl, Mike, Chris and myself, riding a 250 two-stroke hot-rod (*CR250*), an XR650L, an XR200, and an XR400 respectively. We headed for a different mountain, and once there, another one after that. The weather was ideal -- high, light clouds and cool. There was no wind. At one point Earl let me try his 250 two-stroke. After the XR400 it felt like a grand prix racer, with scary power and nervous handling. An experts-only machine. I quickly asked for the Honda back.

This went on for 50 miles or so, until Earl suggested we head for a dry lake he knew of but hadn't yet ridden. The journey involved several miles of soft sandy dual-track, my nemesis. Even the featherweight XR400 was a handful as I struggled to keep its front wheel from snapping to one side or the other. By the time we reached the lake I realized I was getting tired.

But all fatigue was dispelled by the vision that awaited us. Miles of pancake-flat, firm and grippy surface in all directions, and we had it all to ourselves. The top speed of our various mounts was achieved in record time, and we spent the next fifteen minutes doing loops and circles and straight-out runs across endless space, the distant mountains seeming to get no nearer no matter how quickly one raced toward them at top speed. This was an experience I'd fantasized about ever since I was a kid, watching footage of Craig Breedlove's dashes across the Bonneville Salt Flats, and unlike so many anticipated events, its realization was fully as exciting as I thought it would be.

But the most intense experience was yet to come. I stopped to rest in the middle of the lake and was buzzed by Catfish on his massive XR650L at the better part of 100 mph -- a frightening moment, I can assure you.

From the lake we went deeper into the hill country. The terrain was sandy and sloped, and for the first time on the ride I started to fall behind. Finally I whined about wanting to get back to the trailer and everyone headed in that direction to accommodate me. By the time of our return it was half an hour past noon; our morning sojourn had taken us some 75 miles.

We lunched on Thanksgiving leftovers and, as the three campers prepared for an afternoon nap to be followed by yet more riding, I launched Swamp Thing in the direction of my motel in Mojave, knowing my desert riding for the day was done. I'd escaped unscathed so far, and didn't want to subject Earl's XR to the risk of a fatigue-induced get-off.

And anyway, why risk spoiling the memory of a perfect desert ride? My first, and even if I continued to ride in the desert for another couple of decades, maybe my best.

New Business

A motion was made, seconded, and voted into LAW as follows: Starting next year, all club members who sponsor a guest who qualifies & is voted into the club, will get a FREE dinner at the following January's Club Dinner. That's *one* sponsor per guest.

Sensing the crowd was in a *Yeah* mood with respect to motions, Patrick *the Socialite* Lydon talked up & made a motion to return the club to its former bi-weekly meeting schedule. The motion was seconded and SOUNDLY defeated.

Officer Candidates for the year 2000!

Many nominations were made at the past two meetings, but a sizable number of them withdrew their names during the previous couple of weeks. For example, we started with 4 nominees for word steward, but 3 of the 4 backed out. We can only speculate that numerous tawdry sex scandals might have become public when the relentless press started investigating their former lives.

After numerous phone calls, arm-twisting, blackmail attempts, and coercion in the background, here are the candidates for the 2000 Northstars Officers:

President	Mike Chaplin Gretchen Hoffman
President of Vice	René LaPrevotte Allan Paul
Ride Steward	Roosbeh Chubak Earl Minkler
Word Steward	Alan Macias Steve Schurman
Dirt Steward	Joel Buck Steve Hursh
Treasurer for Life	Alan Macias
Sergeant at Arms	Gretchen Hoffman

For the Northstars who are current in their dues, your ballot for voting is on the last page of the newsletter. Votes will be counted at the Dec. 22nd meeting at the S.F. Brewing Co. Ballots can be emailed or snail-mailed to Catfish, or better yet, hand-carried by YOU to the December meeting.

Quotes from the Candidates

"Can I borrow some spare ribs?" - Joel

"Does this mean I gotta get a real dirtbike?" - Steve H.

"I don't have a computer at home ... but I guess I could do it at work." - Steve S.

"I have a computer & I'm not afraid to use it!" - Alan M.

"I have a high-maintenance teenager that's going to keep me from most meetings, but I'll make the rides I can. HEY, Roozbeh would make a great Ride Steward!" - Earl

"... I have some experience in this area and I believe I can do a good job." - Roozbeh

"Vice? I have plenty, Thanks!" - René

"This doesn't mean I gotta buy MORE beer, does it?" - Allan P.

"Pssst - did I tell you about that penis cake I bought?" - Gretchen

"Hmmm ... how many interns would I get?" - Catfish

The 2000 Club Dinner

The Club Dinner and Awards Presentation is set for January 22nd at the New Pisa Restaurant in North Beach. We have the upstairs banquet room as usual, with no-host bar & a bartender. The **bar opens at 5:30pm** and **dinner will begin at 6:30pm**.

With a sizable bank account to blow yet, this event will be *heavily* subsidized. The cost of dinner (with wine) will be **\$10 per person** for members, old members (*who somehow forgot to pay their '99 dues, but we won't tease them TOO badly*), & guests. See the mail-in coupon on the last page for dinner choices. Your check (made out to **S.F. Northstars M.C.**) & the coupon are due by Saturday, January 8th to the treasurer & dinner coordinator;

Alan Macias
64 Ventura Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94116

Dinner at:
New Pisa Restaurant
550 Green St., S.F.

The **awards committee** (Lydon, Hoffman, Chaplin, & Minkler) will be working in email over the next few weeks. If you have any recommendations or awards that *you* want to present, please contact one of the above.

So round up the family, the old members we haven't seen in ages, or that hooker on the corner you've been drooling over and get yourself to the Club Dinner in January! Guests are always welcome, but particularly those who have made rides and/or meetings this year. Parking in this area of North Beach is *tough*, so plan accordingly.

Old Northstars & the Roster

And speaking of old members, I am trying to gather contact information for the old Northstars still around the bay area and those who have moved away. For example; **Steve Heaney, Harpo, Tim Burke, Don Singer, Bob Volberg**, and a host of others that I'd bet some of you have

addresses and/or phone numbers for. Please forward any contact info you have on old members to Catfish.

A rumor, from **Lisa Brazieal**, is that **Ken Hendren** will be back in town around the 1st of the year and would like to see some fellow Northstars. Show up at the Dec. 22nd meeting & let's discuss a get-together with Ken.



Mr. Hendren modeling one of his employer's new convertible sport-riding and strapless straight jackets.

(2) Desert Rides & Camping

Earl Minkler, Mike Chaplin, & our sons will be at the secret Northstars **Mojave** riding area again over **Dec. 26-30** chasing wabbits & coyotes across the desert. Bring lotsa firewood and come join us!

Hans Koolhoven & Joel Buck can't make the December trip, so they have another one planned for **January 15-17**, the Martin-L-King 3-day weekend. The usual suspects are expected to show up again.

See <http://silcon.com/~catfish/ns/Mojave.html> for the latest maps & directions to our secret desert location and contact one of the names above if you need more info.

Send all editorial comments, classifieds, ride/race reports, etc. to; Mike Chaplin
3235 San Gabriel Dr.
Concord, Ca. 94518-2806
<catfish@silcon.com>

2000 S. F. Northstars Club Dinner

When: January 22nd

Bar opens at 5:30pm

Dinner service begins at 6:30pm

Location: The New Pisa Restaurant

550 Green St.

San Francisco, CA

Make checks out to "S. F. Northstars" and are DUE by January 8th to:

Alan Macias

64 Ventura Ave.

San Francisco, CA 94116

fill in names next to food choices below & mail in

Food choices: Roast Beef in red wine sauce _____

Roast Chicken _____

Seafood Cannelloni _____

Eggplant Parmesan _____

Total count x \$10 each = \$ _____ enclosed.

Official S. F. Northstars 2000 Officer's Ballot

Snail-mail (*immediately*) to: Mike Chaplin
3235 San Gabriel Dr.
Concord, CA 94518

or, send email version to: <catfish@silcon.com>
or, BRING to the Dec. 22nd meeting.

Voting Member: _____

President: _____ Mike Chaplin
 _____ Gretchen Hoffman

Vice President: _____ René LaPrevotte
 _____ Allan Paul

Ride Steward: _____ Roozbeh Chubak
 _____ Earl Minkler

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