



The Daily Planet

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

Volume 12, Issue 7

October 8th, 1999

`99 Calendar

- Oct. 22-24 **Death Valley**, Matt Brockway
Oct. 27 **Club Meeting**, S. F. Brewing Co.
Nov. 14 **President's Ride**, René LaPrevotte
Nov. 24 **Club Meeting**, S. F. Brewing Co.
Dec. 12 **Surprise Ride**
Dec. 26-31 **Desert Dirt & Camping**, Earl & Hans
Dec. 29 **Club Meeting**, S. F. Brewing Co.

Sept. 29th Club Meeting

Members: Mark Anderson, Mike Chaplin, Russ Johnson, Patrick Lydon, René LaPrevotte, John Mulvihill, Jim Patt, Allan Paul, Steve Schurman, Gary Thomas, & Mark Wurtzel.

Guests: Mark Boyd, Roozbeh Chubak, Wendy Epstein, & Gretchen Hoffman.

René declared a quorum & called the meeting to order about the time my dinner arrived. I hate it when that happens! The **Club Picnic**, coming up on Oct. 2nd at the Paradise Beach Park on Paradise Dr. in Corte Madera, was the first item of discussion. Since it has already occurred, see next month's newsletter for a rousing review & pictures.

Ride Reports

John Mulvihill, with his KLR *Swamp Thing*, traveled 800 miles to Park City, Utah in a single day for the **AHRMA Races**, see <<http://www.ahrma.org/>>. This was the 1st annual event there to replace the old Steamboat

Springs street race weekend. Lots of events besides the road race through town, like the Saturday night flat track, but it was the Stadium Trials event with numerous national champions from around the world that was the most impressive for John. He then returned home, all 800 miles again, in a single day. So John, are you training for the `01 Iron Butt?!?

René talked about he & **Susan** going up to Union Valley Reservoir in the Sierras for some camping & dirtbike riding. They spent the day riding the Rubicon Trail, but on the way back to camp, she passed him in the dirt without her bike. Broke her leg in the process & didn't get to an emergency room til the following day.

The BBQ & Club Moto Night, Sept. 23rd, was well attended by: Mark Anderson, Joel Buck, Matt Brockway, Mike Chaplin, Roozbeh Chubak, Steve Hursh, Hans & Sammy Koolhoven, John Lewis, Patrick Lydon & Kelly, Earl Minkler, John Mulvihill, Pete Silva, Wendy Epstein, Al Vila, a few others, & Kevin from HK Cycles on his YZ400F. The BBQ was at HK Cycles & Valley Machine with Hans providing grilled hot dogs (rumor has it that some were even served with buns) & Earl providing the beverages. Thanks, Hans & Earl!

At Club Moto, we had the Motocross track & the 1/8th mile dirt oval available under the lights to us & the regular Thursday night crowd. Well, it was only a *few* lights, so it was kinda dim. The MX track was a bit intimidating for some of the dirt newbies, especially with the rather poor lighting & some very fast riders out there. The dirt oval was pure clay with the slightest cushion on the outer edge. It had been watered down earlier also. Depending on who you asked, it was either too slippery & treacherous, or too tacky & you couldn't slide. Earl appeared to be having the most fun on his XR100, but Matt should be mentioned as

the person trying the hardest, as his low-side count was the highest. 3 - 4 other folks on the track were flying & not having any problems backing 'em in the corners & sliding their way out. Wendy Epstein was having fun on her old Honda SL350 & even brought out her road-racing sidehack rig for a little dirt track action. It was actually very little as it broke the third wheel's axle trying to complete its first lap. A great time was had by all.

Russ talked about 2 rides with some friends on his '75 Z1. They did a north coast ride with some serious CHP action on Hwy-1 up to Stewarts Point. After a little of Skaggs Springs, they took the gnarly little Tin Barn Rd. & others around Cazadero. One road had some pretty nice dirt whoop-de-dooos & the finest powder he'd ever seen. Also went to the Sacramento Mile & got to see Springsteen ride Kenny Robert's old TZ750 flat-tracker around 4 laps.

Two reports follow on a **Cow Mountain Dirt Ride**.

Patrick Moriarty's Report

In the finest Northstar tradition, new Northstar Steve Schurman was inducted properly into real dirt riding, enduro style, with a real grovel, sweat, pant and moan routine at the infamous Cow Mountain. Member Mulvihill and guest Chubak gracefully bowed out of this engagement, citing fear and intimidation as their reason. And of course they didn't want to scratch up those girlie dirt bikes of theirs!

Steve Sherman, Mark Anderson and I made the trek to the Ukiah venue and found it really hot on the mountain. Steve's KTM (KICK TWENTY MORE) "got hot and wouldn't go no more" (circa 1959 Chuck Berry). This fucker just about killed all of us trying to get it started.

I led our trio on some nice two track and eventually single track that was pretty beat up and tougher than I had remembered. Steve did OK for a virgin, but the stalling KTM really put a damper on the action.

My newly acquired XR400 was great and was nearly as good as my KX250 on the tight stuff. With some adjustment and suspension work this puppy will rail in the dirt.

Steve eventually got stuck at the bottom of a ravine with steep switchbacks the only way out. Seems I had forgotten about this part. In the end I just rode the KTM out for him and Steve rode my XR400 back to camp. The KTM isn't a bad bike, just needs a carb. Mark did fine, but was overheated and dehydrated, as we all were after trying to kick start the stubborn KTM.

I think Steve kind of got the wrong impression about single track and dirt riding in general. Hoping we can lure him up to Fout's on Oct. 9th and 10th for a rematch with mother trail.

Steve Schurman's Report

Mark Anderson, Patrick, and I loaded up Patrick's van and Mark's pickup for a day of dirt riding. I was doing this with some trepidation, having been warned by Mike Chaplin: "be careful following Patrick around Cow Mountain." This was not eased by listening to Patrick's description of the place on the way up. Trails that are "too difficult for Jeeps" and "used for ISDE enduro tryouts" were not quite what I had in mind. Oh well, how bad could it be, I'd be with two experienced riders on light, dedicated dirtbikes (a KDX200 and an XR400) after all...

It was cool and overcast until we got to Cow Mountain; then it was sunny and hot. After suiting up and dropping my tire pressures to 14 lbs., we were off. After the first turn in the road, I could see no more of Patrick and Mark than flying dust, but the trail was fine. As the trail got harder, their dust trail got progressively more distant. Somehow, I followed the distant dust in the air through several turns and trail changes and caught up to them after they had turned around, just as I was about to go down a steep rocky downhill section of what I subsequently learned was a "most difficult" trail. This was single track, right Patrick? Anyway, here the bike stalled, without provocation, for the first of many times. We kicked and cursed and sweated and wished for a button until it finally started. That bitch doesn't run right when it's hot. I'll get a new carb before I go offroad with it again. I'll leave out the rest of the specific stalling and hard starting incidents, but suffice it to say there were several.

We turned around and went did some fire roads on the way to what, for me, was quite a challenging single track. It was deeply rutted, with loose sand and some sharp switchbacks. I told Patrick about 3/4 of the way down this trail that this was about as much of a challenge as I was looking for the moment. He just nodded and led me further down the same trail, to the difficult section towards the bottom of a ravine. I made it to the bottom and up about 50 yards on the far side when I couldn't make it any further. I hadn't carried enough speed and I couldn't get the bike the rest of the way up. Well, the bike stalled again and my heart sank. When we eventually got it started, Mark agreed to try to bail out the rookie and get my bike up the particularly steep section ahead. My frustration far exceeded my consolation when Mark was also unable to get my bike up that section. We finally headed back the way we came. Now with Patrick and I having traded bikes, to make life easier for the rookie, though harder for the veteran with the bad leg.

We traded back after getting up the steepest part without incident, only to have me drop my bike on the exit of a switchback. At this point, we were all exhausted and possibly suffering from heat frustration. But I continued on my bike until the next stall, when Mark and I traded bikes for the remainder of the trip back to the van.

My conclusions are that lightness is indeed a virtue off-road, though I think my bike, if not it's rider, will be competent, once it's running right and that these trails are too hard for me for the time being.

I haven't pondered the philosophical implications of this ride or my motivation for dual-sporting as deeply as have John and Roozbeh. However, I too am pleased with both my introduction to dirt riding and my bike (though not the way it's running now). I wouldn't call it a "debacle" by any means. I'm not really driven to get back out and try trails this difficult any time soon, but maybe when (if?) fire roads and two-tracks get boring and easy. In the mean time, it seems to me like we all have at least some overlap in our dirt riding intentions.

Thanks for the reports guys & congratulations Steve; you not only got out of there alive, but also without any broken bits! You done GOOD! Catfish...

Steve announced at the meeting that the quicksilver carb had just been replaced by a Del'Orto.

The Lost Coast-Trinity Alps Ride was the weekend of Sept. 25-27. John Mulvihill & Roozbeh Chubak met me in Concord for the ride to breakfast. We rode to Napa, took the Silverado Trail up to Calistoga, and Hwy-128 up to Boonville. The twisty section of Hwy-128 between Cloverdale & Boonville is slowly being straightened out by CalTrans. I assume its because of the increased traffic that the new area wineries are bringing in. We got through early enough that traffic was light.

At the Horn of Zeese in Boonville, John confided that his recent attempt at suicide, eating some 2-week old leftovers in the frig, didn't work. However, his digestive tract was seriously wounded though and his riding would probably suffer. Hmmm, sounded like some excuse for riding that KLR Girlie-Bike™ to me. After we ordered, Earl Minkler, Matt Brockway, & Patrick Moriarty joined us. Matt had only gotten permission from *you-know-who* to come out & play with the boys for the day and had to be home before dark.

We headed out Hwy-128 towards the coast & ran into a great deal of traffic. We re-grouped at the Flynn Creek Rd. turn and headed north for Comptche. This road is always fun, but it became particularly exciting near the end as numerous road-repair patches were covered with mass quantities of loose gravel. Matt told us later that his 2-wheel slide through the 1st one was a little TOO exciting for him. The Comptche-Ukiah road to the coast was its usual *ancient asphalt with layers & layers of patches* til the final 4-5 mile stretch. Then a true miracle was witnessed; the 1st NEW pavement on this road in over twenty years! I was so shocked & amazed I nearly ran off the road! I sure hope the rest of it gets new pavement soon.

Highway-1 through Fort Bragg was a little congested as usual, but the coast had beautiful clear skies without a trace of fog. As we approached the wonderful twisty section of road towards Leggett, I was blinded by this huge bug that splattered across the center of my face shield. I pulled over to clean my face shield with John & Patrick pulling over just ahead. As I pulled away, John & Patrick did so ahead of me & were both wanting to lead me into the woods. Patrick was playing with John. He'd let John get close, & then use his horsepower advantage to open a small gap back up.

As we got into the real twisties, the two of them were really flying for a couple of Olde Farts. In a long left-hander, John's KLR stood up abruptly in mid-corner, but he did a nice job recovering without getting too close to the Armco around the outside. When I told him later "nice recovery back there", he said he dragged the undercarriage, which stood him up, and started whining about my comment. John, it wasn't a cut. We all get surprised from time to time; its part of riding. My comment was a *compliment* about the nice way you handled that surprise and the fact that we weren't presented with an incident to deal with afterwards. Thank you for being a good rider.

As we got into the more open section of woods, Patrick & John held their speed down. Courtesy, out of breathe? Who knows. I zipped by 'em and got to play through the second half of the twisties without being led. Thanks guys! We stopped at the Leggett turn off, bullshitted for a while, & said good bye to Matt.

We cruised up Hwy-101, getting gas in Garberville & passing up the Avenue of the Giants this time, to our turn for the Lost Coast. Mattole Rd. through the Humboldt Redwoods State Park was its usual dark, shaded self as we dodged the trees & occasional car along the narrow road. Then we climbed up the ridge over Panther Gap (el. 2744 ft.). The road was noticeably cleaner than in recent memory. We then plunged down the steep side towards that little community still time-warped in the 60s, Honeydew.

Stopped at the store for some ice cream, a smoke, and socializing with the locals. One of them I was introduced to many trips ago, known as "*The Big Indian*", was there as always. We saddled up after a while and headed for the coast. There was some strong wind by the ocean, but clear skies & no fog. As we climbed up the ridge at the north end, Earl was feeling pretty frisky & filling my mirrors with his presence. I didn't ride this section as well as I usually do. I don't know if my line selection was off or what, but I seemed to find every one of those hidden bumps in the braking areas. We continued through Ferndale & up 101 to Eureka & the Ramada Inn.

After we got cleaned up, Earl decided to take us to the Waterfront Cafe & Oyster Bar for cocktails and oyster shooters before dinner. He had to arm-wrestle the *femme maitre'd* for a table though, as she wanted us obvious low-

life biker-scum sons-o-bitches without reservations to sit at the bar. Sheeesh, some people's kids! The shooters were GREAT and we'd've had more if they'd not taken so damn long to make 'em! We had dinner at the Sea Grill and it was simply wonderful! 'Course, I'd had my 4th (or was that 5th?) tall Absolute & tonic by then and thought the whole stinkin' world was pretty friggin' wonderful!

Sunday morning was breakfast at Denny's down the street and then south on 101 lookin' for that elusive turn off to ... Highway 36 ... what can I say. The new pavement through the coastal forest and over the 1st ridge line. We were in motorcycle heaven. I stopped at Moriarty's Corner (not far past Mad River) to re-group, pee, & pay our respects to the great moto-deity that Patrick is still with us today. Everyone stopped except John, who I was told was not feeling very well that day & had decided to head directly for his room at the motel in Etna for a little R&R.

After some noticeable fire smoke near Forest Glen, the rest of us turned north at the Wildwood store on Wildwood Rd. This great little road took us up to Hwy-3 and the great twisties of Hayfork Summit before lunch in Weaverville. Next, we continued up Hwy-3 and its great curves along the Trinity Lake, and then over the fabulous switchbacks of Scott Mtn. Summit up to Calahan.

I let Roozbeh lead us out Cecilville Rd. and its wonderful sweepers down to Cecilville. We got gas at the back of the truck there and continued on to Forks of Salmon. Here, I faced a rather serious mutiny from all of the remaining riders with me. Not a single one of these pansy-ass wusses wanted to run the Salmon River Rd. to Somes Bar and back. Even when I offered a compromise solution of only running part way out the canyon & back; not a single one would do it with me.

So, I pointed them east while I headed west. Just past Forks of Salmon were 2 major fire fighter camps. I've never seen so many blue tents in all my life. The 2nd camp had 2 big makeshift helicopter facilities. As I finally cleared the camps, the canyon opened up and reminded me of why this route was so special. I rode the narrow winding ribbon along the steep cliffs for about 6 miles, and then turned around to head back east.

Sawyers Bar Rd. between Forks of Salmon & Sawyers Bar was the gnarly little rough road I remembered from many years ago. However, after Sawyers Bar, the road was in much better condition & I flew through there & over Salmon Mtn. Summit with a really big grin on my face. I caught up to them snivelin' wusses as they just got to Etna for the evening. Yeah, it had been a long day of incredible twisties and I was getting tired too.

Took a nice shower & was ready for the bustling night-life of downtown Etna. We settled for a little walk to Bob's Ranch House Restaurant. As we were ordering dinner, Earl <dessertfirst@home.com> Minkler living up to his moniker ordered a piece of homemade cherry pie ala-

mode as an appetizer. This brought strange looks from those around the table who hadn't witnessed this before, not to mention the hairy-eyeball the waitress was giving him either. Roozbeh ordered a piece of cherry pie too, but wanted it served *after* dinner as dessert should be he said. He about had a kitten though when she returned to the table shortly with the only piece of cherry pie left in the place. He whined, but grabbed a fork and joined us in sampling this most treasured reward for the day's journey. The rest of dinner was pretty good & we decided to return the next morning for breakfast.

Earl slipped out about 5:30am Monday morning as he had kid duty that afternoon when Lee got out of school at 3pm. Following the original route, he made it in time too. After breakfast, John stuck around to later drone down I-5, as Patrick, Roozbeh, & I headed south towards Calahan on Hwy-3. I hadn't mentioned any thing about CHP or other cops the whole trip because we really didn't have any to deal with. They were obviously saving themselves for Monday. Just before getting to Trinity Lake, we met a CHP as he came down a curve into the straight we were in. As soon as I recognized the car, I hit the brakes and was legal. About this time, my radar detector went full TILT, but he turned it on a little too late.

About 5 miles before Weaverville, still on Hwy-3, we came into a really long straight with the left side of the road heavily shaded. My detector was emitting a single beep about every 2-3 seconds. Hmmm ... we slowed down & sure enough near the end of the straight, hiding in shade, was another CHP with radar ... and we were legal again <snicker-snicker>. We back tracked down Hwy-3 & Wildwood Rd. to Hwy-36 and ran the rest of it to Red Bluff. The roller coaster sections were their usual fun self.

After lunch, Patrick headed south on I-5 as Roozbeh & I headed down Black Butte Rd. and the usual route towards Stonyford. They had just chip-sealed the roads above Stonyford and had them marked as 25 mph construction zones and had the signs that said double fines in construction zones. We were cruising along at our typical sub-sonic velocities, minding our own business, when we met a sheriff's Suburban at the crest of a hill with a gentle sweeper. He obviously wasn't expecting to meet anyone as he was using the middle half of the road as his own. We musta startled him pretty good judging by the instant & severe body-roll the Suburban exhibited when he returned to his side of the road. We slowed for a mile or so figuring he would be very pissed at us, but never saw him again.

We continued to Lodoga, some backroads to Hwy-20 & Hwy-16, & down Pleasants Valley Rd. towards Fairfield. We caught up to a Police car on that last road, but didn't draw his attention. It was the final freeway section to get home & I arrive just in time for dinner. WHAT A RIDE!

More New Business . . .

The Fout Springs/Stonyford Dirt & Camping

Trip is October 9-10, as I'm finishing this newsletter as a matter of fact. Hope everyone contacted Hans and are having a great time. I fully expect numerous ride reports to be written & sent in for the next newsletter folks.

Matt Brockway's Death Valley Ride has been changed from October 23-25 (Sat.-Mon.) to Oct. 22-24 (Fri.-Sun.) He has reserved a campsite at Furnace Creek for both nights and said rooms *might* still be available at the Ranch (800-236-7916) or the Amargosa Hotel (760-852-4444) in Death Valley Junction, about 23 miles east on Hwy-190. Call them if you prefer a room. Call Matt at 510-236-3454 for meeting time/place & further info as this is all I've gotten.

The President's Ride by **René LaPrevotte** was moved from December to November & is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, Nov. 14th**. More info will be available at the next meeting.

Patrick Lydon made several announcements that included; (1) he had sold his house, (2) Kelly, his Canadian Rose, and he were engaged (*in something illegal, I'm sure*), (3) there was going to be a party at 574 Diamond **this** Friday night (*that was Oct. 1st & yes, you're already LATE*), and (4) his son Josh was drafted by the Boston Celtics to play center! Well, I may have misheard that *last* item, but congratulations to Patrick & Kelly anyway!

Last, but certainly not least, for the September meeting was the consideration of 3 guests who had recently completed their requirements for membership in the Northstars; **Mark Boyd, Roozbeh Chubak, & Gretchen Hoffman**. All of the guests were requested to leave the room so secret club rituals & practices would not be disclosed to the unwashed. I think the waitress took another round of beer requests.

Discussion about Roozbeh & Mark went smoothly with only a couple of members claiming to not be familiar with these guys. Those particular members were reminded though that if they'd actually made a ride or meeting earlier this year, that they would have had the opportunity to get to know these gentlemen. Both were voted in with little adversity.

This could not be said for the consideration of Gretchen. It was little more than a year ago that this club voted to allow women to attend meetings & consideration of membership into the club. This set the stage for the eventuality

that occurred on this potentially history-making night at the S. F. Brewing Co.

Some of us have known & rode with Gretchen for nearly 10 years now. She has always been a motorcycling enthusiast and took up dirtbiking & camping during this time also. However, the Northstars have had some 25-years of tradition as strictly a men's-only club; i.e. "No member, NO membership!" was one of the old adages.

There was much heated discussion about traditions, women in general, Gretchen in particular, and the health of the club. Some of the newer members requested clarification on the voting rules. René finally called for the vote. It was close, but ...

The guests were called back into the room, and all three of the prospects were congratulated as becomes the newest members of the San Francisco Northstars Motorcycle Club! René stood & declared, "and it happened on my watch!" The meeting was adjourned.

Misc. Items

John Mulvihill has changed his email address YET again and back to what it originally was: "John Mulvihill" <john@john-mulvihill.com>.

Send all editorial comments, classifieds, ride/race reports, etc. to;

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Catfish . . .