

# Daily Planet

April, 2001

Vol. 26, Number 4

Official Newsletter of the San Francisco Northstars Motorcycle Club

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- MAY 4-6 Eureka "Lost Coast Luau"—*Roozbeh*
- MAY 20 Awhanee Brunch ride—*Lisa B.*
- MAY 26-28 Open 3-Day ride and camping  
DIRT Memorial weekend
- MAY 30 CLUB MEETING, SF BREWING CO.
- JUNE 9-10 Dardanelles ride—*Earl*  
Note: Lisa B's birthday weekend
- JUNE 27 CLUB MEETING, SF BREWING CO.
- JULY 21-22 Kings Canyon—*Steve Schurman*

## EUREKA RIDE! MAY 4-6

### LOST COAST LUAU WITH ROOZBEH!

Calling all riders! Roozbeh's Eureka ride will be a 3-day jaunt, leaving Friday. Folks need to make their OWN reservations in Eureka soon. Depending on the turn out from both clubs, there might be a shortage of rooms at the Best Western Humboldt Bay Inn (formerly known as the Thunderbird, 800.521.6996) if you wait too late to make yours. Lisa B. can only do a traditional 2-day ride. Are there others who can't take Friday off and will be looking for Saturday travel partners?

## MEETING MINUTES MAR 28

14 or so attendees joined together, men and women alike, all in the same room, no less, including: Mike C, Jim Patt, Gretchen, John Downey (guest), Joe Fleck (guest), Brett, Wendy, Russ (Wendy's "non paying guest!"), Earl (Julio Hot Stuff Sanchez...ooohhhh), Pat M & L, Alan P & L, Pete Boliare (guest), Erik Schaffer (guest), and Bradley Morris (guest) ☆ Class Act at the SF Brewery: the "Rose Man" wandered into the Northstar meeting and gave Wendy and Gretchen roses and left. Hhhmmm... ☆ Russ ("the guest") told us about Barry's Ranch Ride at short flat track... great berms!... Mike and Russ played "cat and mouse" all day... KDX250 with fresh piston rocked. ☆ Pete mentioned a dual sport ride with the Oakland Club May 19-20. ☆ A big **thank you** to Gretchen for taking these meeting notes. I owe you one! ☆ NEW BIKES: Earl's KTM. ☆ Barb Moorshead bought a new Yamaha 225 dirtbike—Go Barb! ☆ Joe Fleck has a "sweet" new GSXR1000. Gretchen rode it from the dealership and testifies it deserves to be the bike on every motorcycle magazine for the next 6 months let alone the past 6 as it has been. ☆ Matt scored a great deal (Pat M. told us this but is sworn to secrecy as to how much so ask Matt!) on: 1996 Ducati 900SS (8K miles) and 1995 R1100GS (4K miles) ☆ A handful of FZ1's (Tony T, Angela, Steve H).

## Pay Your DUES!

I'm going to have to resort to mentioning names if you don't pay up. Plus, you won't receive a newsletter. Remember: no dues no news!

## FOR SALE!

2000 RM250—\$4500. Extras include top end kit-gear bag-new graphics. Contact Earl Minkler @ 925.443.4004.

**STONYFORD**-----

**E**arl's encapsulation of the Dirt ride to Digger Pines/Stonyford was full of 3 desserts for 3 birthdays...75 miles on the XR400...big white man fires...great dirtbike riding...broke, new snow covered trails...(memory interlude: Hans, "The Crazy Dutchman", rode naked to celebrate his birthday and came back "butt lubed" when his (bike's) rearend went lose...river crossings...new trails...Earl's new KTM complete with the front wheel packed in snow.

—*Gretchen*

**DIRT RIDE MARCH 11—TEAM FIBULA!**

**Denise** (Neophyte Northstar aka Ruby Red) experienced threshold pain while practising threshold breaking. She is now sporting new hardware in the fibula of her right leg. Same old drill—cast, crutches, weeks of recovery and metal screws for a souvenir. She got the screws and is in good spirits and looking to a speedy recovery. She is not very mobile at this time but my bet is she will be hell on wheels in no time. The XR200 was the bike of choice that day and we think the bike has spent to much time around the jet fighter planes in the desert. It seems it (the bike) was practicing touch and go's and decided to land on top of Rubys pretty leg all clad in the best Fox motocross boots to no avail.

Denise and **Angela** will be comparing scars and screws at a later date. Anyone care to watch? Angela gets the metal and screws out of her fibula on the 17th of April.—*Earl*



"We drive on the left in England" says Tony of his new FZ1.

## MORE DIRT -----

Hans led the way Sat. for the shorter ride in the desert. His co-hertz included his son **Sam**, **Steve Hursch** and his date **Debbie**, **Gretchen Hoffman** and her man **Joe Fleck**. Bush dodging together was fun, but once the first real hill hit, Gretchen's DR125 would not cooperate so she and Joe took alternative hilly routes. Ohhhh... where's the power when you need it? After that Gretchen rode her XR200 while the lighter Joe rode the 125 up the hills with more finness... maybe even a few more wheelies! Hans' co-horts had a great day, too. All were grinning ear-to-ear upon returning. And then there was the rush to the new outhouse...

—*Author unknown*



## NORTHBAY -----

Pat Moriarty's official Northstar ride had 11 riders covering Marin County/North Bay. Guest John Downey came up with quite a flat at the top of Mt. Tam. Fellow Northstars tried to help to no avail so they left him. But a Porsche came along with a "vulcanized rubber tire repair kit." This and the 3 air canisters managed to repair three TWO holes enough to get John down the Mountain and home safely. (Maybe the Northstars sent the Porsche his way to help?) As for the other ten riders who did the planned route, it was a smooth, fun ride to Occidental for lunch, but THEN

Pat, our fearless ride leader was surprised by unmarked loose gravel on Fairfax Road. Thanks to Pat's dirt-bike skills (and ability to manage his testosterone to his benefit), he was able to save the bike in a sideways slide. Then he exclaimed into his helmet (but aloud for all at the meeting), "Oh Fuck. The guys won't see the gravel either. I better turn and tell them. (He turns.) Oh Fuck..." There was Mike Chaplin—our other fearless leader—sliding on his right knee and elbow, then his back. Mike went down ever so gently (can you picture it)? The XR only got a few scratches on it and Mike was okay. The rest of the crew was warned to slow and made it thru Fairfax Road safely.

Rob Brown's new Petaluma motorcycle dealership had a great party to wrap up the ride while all watch the Daytona.

—*Gretchen*

## I FUCKED UP!-----

On Patrick Moriarty's March North-Bay Ride, the president of this noble club had the audacity to throw his motorcycle to the ground right in front of his guest. What a dumb SHIT!

We were coming down the backside of Mt. Tam and turned onto Ridgecrest Blvd. Its a bright sunny day on the mountain and I have my sunglasses on. As this incredible stretch of twisting roller coast approaches the Bolinas-Fairfax Rd., the trees thicken as we enter the lush coastal forest.

I say to myself, "Its DARK in here. I better change my glasses." Then, that other voice in my head sez, "You're 3rd in line. If you stop, you'll be last behind that Harley again that can't lean." Guess who won. As I continued towards Alpine lake, I began to notice the gravel lines through the corners and that staying in a car-tire track through the corners yields a clean line. As

every corner continues to echo this same scenario, I start cornering a bit faster while staying in my car-track. As I enter this particular corner around 30-40 mph, I can't see the obvious gravel and no-gravel lines of the previous corners and mistakenly assume the whole corner must be clean.

Nope. The whole corner, side to side and about 15-20 ft. beyond it, was covered in this crumbly, marbly gravel the same color as the underlying dark asphalt. I didn't see it. I countersteered near the apex to lift the XRL back vertical and the front tire pushed right out from under me. Instantly. I low-sided, landing initially on the side of my left knee and left elbow; both well padded inside the Darien. As I slid, I rolled onto my back and butt, and finally came to a stop at the edge of the road. I got up and waved at those coming up behind me.

I was LUCKY. The Darien and its padding absorbed ALL of my impact and sliding. I didn't slide into anything immovable and break stuff. My helmet never touched the ground. After bending the shift lever back straight, we finished the ride with some new scratches on the Darien and the XRL.

Could I have seen the gravel without the sunglasses? Who knows. I like to \*think\* I would have seen it and taken a different line through that corner.

We need a new "I FUCKED UP" jersey and I should be wearing it! Be careful out there, and don't pay any attention to those other voices in your head. They'll just get you in trouble.

—*Catfish*

*Photos can be found at*

<<http://photos.yahoo.com/sfnsmc2001>>

## NICOLE TURNS ONE!

Mark and Dena Anderson, parents to their beautiful daughter, Nicole, will be celebrating her 1st birthday. I can just feel the grin on Mark's face right now, beaming with pride. Hmmm, I wonder whose smile she has?



Nicole's  
first  
birthday

What: Open House

When: Saturday, April 28, 2001  
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Where: 1587 23rd Ave.  
San Francisco, CA

RSVP: Dena Anderson  
415 665-3362

No presents,  
please



## A U S T R A L I A

They call Sydney the sister city of San Francisco, an all too true statement as I felt so at home spending 2 weeks there hanging out with friends. I'd been off a bike long enough, longing for a trip each time I saw a motorcyclist zoom past. After seeing my friend's bike sitting in his garage, a Superhawk Australia calls a "Firestorm," I could hardly contain myself. Funny how I miss my bike if I haven't ridden in days.

Taking the first flight to arrive early the day after my friend's wedding, the twin engine landed in the fog-blanketed airport of Canberra. Michael Thomson, team mechanic for an Australian road racing team, greeted me at the gate with three young children in tow; the 4th was at home with mom. I had "met" Michael over the Internet after Tony Tugwell had posted a message on his TZ250 site, asking anyone for information on motorcycle hires in Australia. Michael responded and after several e-mails back and forth, offered to lend me his '98 VFR800 for a jaunt around New South Wales and Victoria, Australia.

When Michael rolled open the garage doors, in amongst the pedal bikes and kids toys sat a beautiful TZ250 on its pedestal. Donned with race stickers, there across the front fender stuck Tony's TZ250.com sticker. That was a story within itself as to how Michael had come across the TZM frame. Someone else owned the engine. Nevertheless, there it sat in all its glory.

Michael refers to his race team as "HRC" (Homer Racing Collective). The team's official name is Impact Racing, lead by Earl Lynch, GP250 racer with a well-known following and career in Australian road racing. Earl's racing career is impressive, consistently placing in racing events throughout the seasons. He recently placed 3rd in the 250cc GP class and his 4th in the Formula OZ

class. His team has qualified as a wild card in the Australian Grande Prix.

I loaded my Rev Pak on the VFR, and as Michael lowered the suspension, in rolled Ashley Behringer on his R100GS. Ashley owns and operates CountryWide Motorcycle Tours Australia, owning over 10 BMWs ranging from GS's to a K100 complete with sidecar. He and his partner have taken tourists on rides through the outback, including fifteen Italians from a BMW Club as well as showing the roads to a five time Paris Dakar rider. Ashley is a legend as one of the leading motorcycle tour guides as well as a mater of leading you down the right roads. I never did experience a bad road in the two days we rode together. A historian with a vessel of knowledge when it comes to motorcycling as well as the history of the country, he's fifth generation Behringer to settle in the small coastal town of Maruya, as well as a keen and successful business man who considers his location a nearly perfect spot thanks to the airport just up the road. A smart location, especially if you book international tourists for trips throughout Australia.

As I was doing some research into motorcycle rentals, I found CountryWide Motorcycle Tours on the web, and contacted Ashley who only provided had bikes of the tall sort. (After my KLR experience I knew I'd never be able to put my foot down, so opted against the GS. Right... like I had the choice.) Ashley and I stayed in touch, and after scoring the VFR from Michael, I invited him to join me on a ride to Melbourne. He said "yes, glad to oblige," and there we met for the first time in Michael's garage.

From Canberra, Ashley escorted me along the roads toward the coast of Moruya. We rode the main thoroughfare through town, but he was quick to hop off the black top and onto dirt. After about 25kms through the bush we were back on

paved road. Suddenly, Ash pulled over telling me we had just passed his Auntie and Uncle working their 500-acre sheep and cattle ranch. So we decided to turn around and stop by for "a cuppa." Both in their 70's, Bob and his wife still work the land that's been in their family for generations. We had a nice chat over homemade muffins and a cup of tea. As the rain came down quick and hard, we left their property, forging the river, and headed for the Kings Highway over Clyde Mountain. We enjoyed a warm wet ride taking in the smell of rain and gum trees.

Traffic was going against us as luck would have it, so the ride down the twisty open curves of the Kings Hwy was pure joy. Closely resembling Skaggs Springs Road, it was even better as it went on for miles. Just as I caught up to a slow moving vehicle, there came a lane for overtaking. The timing was always perfect. The road twisted and turned, open, easy to see through curves with very little traffic. I was in heaven.

At dusk, the sun just setting on the horizon, we turned down a gravel road, stopping at a gate which declared our entryway to Ashley's property, 50 acres with a Flagstone barbeque perfect for outdoor parties, and a beautifully maintained rose garden. With huge grins on our faces, we pulled into his home where his girlfriend, Lisa, had a home cooked meal warming on the stove. 140kms later, it was a perfect first day in the life of an Australian motorcyclist.

**Monday, April 2**—After a 420km-day ride we pulled up to the only watering hole in the tiny town of Tooma, ready for a beer and a good meal. It was a stellar day starting with a short ride along the coast from Maruya to the breakfast spot. With a belly full of eggs on toast and morning coffee, we made our way over tight twisty mountain roads, climbing to the tallest point in Australia. "Dead Horse Gap."

sitting at 1500 meters high ??????. We took a few dirt roads to stay away from cars and catch some open range scenery.

We road past one of the National Parks, hopping with tame Kangaroos waiting for their next meal of discarded food dropped by tourists. The roads around the Snowy Mountain Highway consisted of acres of rolling ranch land as well as sheep country peppered with buildings for shearing. At one point, we came around the bend only to find ourselves smack in the middle of a flock of sheep being herded through the fence and off the road by than agile and talented herd dog.

We pegged the throttle at 130km steady, rarely needing to back off from the open sweepers yet still staying within the “no faster than 20km over the posted limit” zone; a good suggestion which I followed throughout the rest of my trip. There are road signs everywhere with the reminder of speed cameras.

After finishing our day, we sat at the bar drinking Carlton draft, playing pool and having a chat with the owners. Early in the evening, I was taken outside to feed apples to a possum and her baby. As the evening progressed, accents became thicker and beer was partnered with shots of Wild Turkey. Around midnight we were technically kicked out by the owner, a sour-faced woman who made a good meal but stopped short on personality. Ash and I were the only patrons all night. I don't think he'll be taking any of his tour groups back there for a visit.

Ashley told stories of two mates who had nearly met their fate with a kangaroo. Both were seriously injured and had to be off their bikes for long recovery periods. My Ken Hendren bear story compared impressively. They told me that wombats are the worst, with a body as solid as a brick. When cars hit 'em, they're notorious for taking out

an axle. Never saw any live wombats, only the few as roadkill on the side of the road, one in particular lying flat on its back, all fours stiffly sprawled in the air. Sorry I missed that photo op.

The next day, after a sad farewell over breakfast, Ash and I parted ways where I traveled down the New Cuyama-esque roads for 200kms climbing up a few mountain ranges, then down along the Lake Hume River snaking its way through to Albury. The bizarre canvas of tree trunks and branches scattered in and through the river was a scene out of a science fiction novel.

A few hours later, I pulled into the small Alpine town of Bright. Seeing two KTMs parked in the CALTEX petrol station, they drew me to the pump where I filled up. The manager had me roll the VFR into his garage, keeping it safe and secure so I could do a bit of sightseeing among the shops.

I then headed up the curvy road leading to Mt. hotham. Winding through the eucalyptus trees, it was a similar sensory experience to that of Mt. Tam and Highway 1. As I throttled through a tight right hander, I spotted a lumber truck barreling down the road, target fixating right on me. I found myself pushed as far to the left of my lane as was possible; any further and I would have been in the ditch. Damn if that truck wasn't driving as if he was in the States in the left lane heading down the mountain. Wait, I thought they drove on the other side of the road in Australia. I suppose no matter what country you're in, drivers still find it difficult to stay in their lane.

At the top of Hotham Heights not surprisingly sat a ski resort. The views were spectacular. Riding down off the mountain, keeping my eye out for cattle and kangaroos, enjoying the road, weather, and freedom of riding. Clearly a motorcyclists road, I passed a handful of

sport-bike riders traveling at speed heading in the other direction. On my way to Melbourne, the rest of the road was freeway, dull and like any other I've ridden.

Pulling into Melbourne, I had an outdated map, which lacked a few roads and would have made the arrival to my destination an hour shorter. After splitting lanes into the city, not knowing how “legal” it really was, I pulled into downtown Melbourne, outside a Scottish pub called “The Mint.” I was ready for a pint, but needed to find my way to Box Hill suburb where I was staying with friends. I made a phone call letting them know I was lost (surprise surprise), burt when I got back to the bike, it wouldn't start. I pushed it onto the sidewalk and headed directly for the bar. It was a perfect time for a pint. After enjoying the beer, the bike started and I finally made my way home. After a 550km day, I slept like a log that night, waking up at noon the next day. Ahhhh, vacation!

On the last day of my ride to return the VFR, Ashley, Lisa and his partner Fergus met me a few hours outside of Canberra, escorting me home to Michael's. I had ridden about 1,500 miles through parts of Australia, never even hitting one tenth of the roads. Guess that gives me an excuse to return for another trip. Anyone interested?

## EPILOGUE .....

*Note: This last journal entry was written on a motion sickness bag during my flight home.*

**9 April—Flight 862 Sydney to SFO:** It's noon Australia time, about 7:00 p.m. San Francisco time. Never too early for a cocktail! Eating what I guess is United Airline's version of Gnocchi, going on my second glass of a bad version of Chardonnay, my trip is literally on its last leg.

After my ride on Australia's Hume Highway, scenery resembling the

with any indigenous animals; no wombats, kangaroos or otherwise. Very few cars shared my road and as I rode I thought to myself, "this is what the American roads used to be like 30 years ago. You don't have to travel far out from the cities and town in Australia to "get away from it all." I only had to pass cars every 15 minutes or so.

After escorting me back to the VFR's home, Ashley and his business partner presented me with a sheepskin to place on my seat for the long rides ahead. Good on ya' I said.

### ENDINGS

It's always difficult coming home from vacation, having to deal with responsibilities that have been easily forgotten. I arrived home only to receive some devastating news that my friend, Leslie Barton, had been killed in an automobile accident.

Some Northstars had actually met Leslie a few years ago on George Perica's "Three Splash Ride" in Sonoma County. The group stopped by Leslie and her husband Jim's creek-side house in Cazadero, hanging by Austin Creek, taking in the scenery.

Death seems to sneak up on us when we least expect it. Leslie's loss is tragic, as she leaves behind her seven-year old son, Jessie. Her spirit will be missed, and her death has forced a bit of perspective on my life and its priorities.

Let's all ride safe and smart. Appreciate and enjoy each day.

Rubber side down.

—Lisa B.

*John Lewis, a Northstar we haven't seen since last year's two Mountain ride, sold his scooter shop in S.F. and has been in Thailand recently looking at places that would make good off-road tour areas. Below is a cool story John sent to a mutual friend, who forwarded it on to me.*

—M.C.

Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2001

From: John Lewis  
motojohnny@yahoo.com

Subject: Yo Bro, don't phuck  
wit dat 'phant!

I left Mae Sariang to go to a killer guest house in the middle of a national forest. The plan was to use it as a base for my offroad excursions. So that's what I was doing. Hanging around the river doing yoga in the mornings on a bamboo raft tied to the riverbank, reading, relaxing, then motoring off up the little trails in the afternoons, seeing the hill tribe villages, and taking in the forest. Got home after dark several evenings.

Found a great dirt road off the main highway, and headed on up. Over the ridge, following the beat up road, I spied a well worn footpath that looked do-able. Came around the first bend, and "WOAHHHH". There's an ELEPHANT on the trail about 100 feet up." Cool", thinks I, noticing that it's front feet are tied together, so it must be used to humans, "How lucky is this, I get to chill with an elephant for lunch."

We just looked at each other for a few minutes, I pull out my camera just about the time he starts walking over. Then he starts coming a little faster, then he starts running, something I didn't think he could do, feet tied and all. But I assure you, a bound elephant runs pretty well, kinda galloping like a horse. Another thing I can tell you with certainty is that elephants are very large, and their size increases alarmingly when they run directly at you. Lucky for me I had kept the bike running, so I slammed it in gear and shot down the trail. RETREAT!!!

I looked over my shoulder, and ellie had stopped, so I stopped too. I hadn't got my picture yet, and I was still thinking maybe we could be friends. Got the camera back out and Ellie starts grabbing little trees and tearing them out of the ground, and scooping up dirt and throwing it around. Hmmm," I thinks, "He may be having a bad day." I put the camera to my eye, and kinda do a little cluck sound like you would to a horse. That did it! He CHARGED! OH SHEEEET!

It's strange seeing a charging elephant in a little camera viewfinder. Knowing it's real, and really wants to flatten you, but somehow it looks kinda unreal in that little box. I suppose people have died from that little illusion.

Not I though, not this time. I heard him trumpet as I ripped out of there, 10 tons of gray flesh on my ass. I imagined I could feel his breath on my neck and the ground shaking under me. Maybe it wasn't imagination. He was CLOSE!

But my trusty steed saved me again, outrunning the biggest living thing on land. I shot off up the road towards the next village, my heart pumping gallons per second.

Once I got a few turns up the road, I realized how much adreniline I had goin', and I slowed a little. Damn! That was INTENSE!!!!

I get to the next village, still shaky, and all the kids and teens surround me. I get off the bike and tell my story in body language and elephant sounds. They are cracking up at the crazy white boy who sounds like a dying cow.

Right about then I realize that the village is the end of the road. That means I have to go BACK the way I came. I had thoughtfully led the elephant off his trail and onto the same road I had to leave by. Yipes!

The trip back was a slow affair, John meekly creeping around the blind corners, ready to be made a pile of blood and bones and twisted metal at the next bend. Hoping and praying that ellie had gone some other way. Any other way.

Well, I guess my prayers worked, 'cause I never saw ellie again. I really can't say I'll miss him. If I ever do, though, I've got that picture!



***“..Through the stringybarks and sapling, on the rough and broken ground, down the hillside at a racing pace he went...”***

***—B.J. “Banjo” Patterson, The Man from Snowy River***

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