

# Daily Planet

July, 2001

Vol. 26, Number 6

Official Newsletter of the San Francisco Northstars Motorcycle Club

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- JULY 6-8 Laguna Seca World Superbike
- JULY 21-22 Eureka Canyon—*Steve Schurman*  
NOTE: Catfish's birthday weekend
- AUG 25 Minden, Nevada—*Gretchen*
- OCT ?? King's Canyon/Death Valley—*Matt*

## FOR SALE!

**1990 Honda GB500—\$4000.**  
9,500 miles. Perfect condition.  
Contact Lisa B. @ 415.377.0134.

## KING'S CANYON RIDE! JULY 21-22

With his personal distaste for crossing the central valley at the peak of summer, Steve Schurman is thinking of taking a very liberal interpretation of the "King's Canyon" ride, and making it a two-day Eureka ride.

A block of six rooms have been reserved at the Best Western Humboldt Bay Inn in Eureka. By dropping our Ride Steward's well known name, he was able to get rates of \$62/67 single/double occupancy.

If you plan on coming, please let Steve know, so there are enough rooms set aside.

## GRETCHEN'S MINDEN NV RIDE! AUG 25

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25's** Northstar ride will be heading to Minden, NV, where we'll be staying at the **Best Western Minden Inn (775.782.7766)**. I've blocked ten rooms on my credit card under "Gretchen Hoffman."

**\$84** for two beds in one room and **\$73.70** for rooms with one bed.

The cut-off date to book is **Wed. Aug. 1**

Joe Fleck will be in charge of the route. If you want to give him any suggestions of your favorite roads, feel free... his email is **spirit10@pacbell.net**; or let me know.

Bring your fellow Northstars and friends!

Questions? e-mail me at **ghoffman@docent.com** or give me a ring @ 415.587.2335.

## MEETING MINUTES JUNE 27

It was a dark and stormy night. Well, muggy and stormy, anyway. We started the meeting on time with few faces, but members slowly trickled in, two by two. Present and accounted for included Gary T., Lisa B., her guest Erik Schaffer; Steve Hursh and his guests, Joe Pardo (AFM 250 racer) and his wife, Saskia; Allan Paul, Bret M., Jim C. and his guest, Frances; Tony T. and his guest, Angela; Patrick L. and his son, Josh and a friend of his. ☆ Regulars who were missing included our busy fearless leader, Mike C. as well as Mr. Minkler

who was out sick. ;-( ☆ **RIDE REPORTS:** Allan Paul did nearly 1,000 miles: Rode to Ramsey then Chico; 132 to Lake Almanor (see story below). To Quincy, Buck's Lake Rd.. 49, 89 down to Donner Summit, and finally Virginia City. ☆ **NEW BIKES:** Read Denise's story on her new ride. ☆ **The Ride 'aint Over 'Till You're Home:** Gary had an entertaining ride home after we had all departed at the end of the Awahnee Brunch ride. It was about 100 degrees out, and while on the five-lane section of 580, goin' about 80 in the fast lane, there's a tractor trailer in the slow lane who blows a tire! Gary sees a debree

field, while a chunk coming off at the speed of a bullet and about the size of a softball hits him dead center of his Arai. Thank goodness he was four lanes away, and wearing his full-faced helmet (*that's me, the motorcycle safety instructor talking. What a perfect story to tell in my classes, thanks Gary!*). Now you know what that squirrel must have felt like on the Dardanelle's ride... ☆ **Mike Green has moved!** He and his wife, Stephanie, are now living in Manhattan, New York. Address and contact information to come.

## Tickets a Go Go!

Numerous encounters with CHP, Sheriffs, even the Victorian Road Authority (gee, I wonder whose ticket that was...) were reported by members at this month's meeting. Fortunately none occurred on an actual Northstar ride.

**CHP: One; Tony: Zero** Tony T. got nailed on 101 doing 90mph. CHP saw him coming thru Waldo tunnel Northbound. Tony sees him, CHP immediately pulls off the hwy. on Spencer Dr. Tony thinks, "ha, he's going to come back on and follow me..." ☆ Goes down the hill nice and easy, no CHP; Stinson Beach turn off, still no CHP. Rolls on the gas nice and easy, looks in his mirrors, CHP RIGHT ON TONY'S TAIL! ☆ Hasn't turned on the lights; they're doing 55mph. As soon as they get to Corta Madera, on come the lights. ☆ Game over. Insert more coins to continue. ☆ He said Tony was doing 90mph. The kind officer wrote him up for a mere 89, as 90mph means an instant ban. Glad he didn't see Tony come through the tunnel. ☆ (Why didn't you tell him you were Mick Jagger's brother? Don't know if that would have helped, but it was worth a try...)

**Sooo close to a clean getaway!** Silly me, thinking I actually got out of Australia without an encounter with the law. I received an e-mail from Michael, who had lent me his VFR, saying he received a notice in the mail from the **Victorian Road Authority**. It seems they had a photo of the VFR doing 67 in a 60 zone from April when I was down there. He has to fill in a form giving all the rider's details and address, etc. so they can send the fine/infringement notice etc... He thinks the fine is \$100 but they also take points off your license. We suspect they will not bother to chase me as I'm not a local. It will be interesting to see if they even bother once they discover it's an oversea's address. They call 67 in a 60 speeding?!

See what happens when you get out on your motorcycle? Allan Paul had words with a Sheriff outside of Lake Almanor, claiming Allan's speed showed up on radar as 78mph in a 55 (hey, that's a pretty good clip for that Beemer, isn't it?). He wrote 'im up for 70.



**They start 'em young as Northstars.**

## DARDANELLE'S -----

About 900 miles altogether for me—5:30am Saturday the alarm goes off and 15 minutes later I'm heading south on 101 from Petaluma towards Livermore.

Hook up with Lisa and Erik on 580 and we all roll into the gas station around 6:50am where the group is waiting. Jim shows up just as we're leaving at 7:10am. 9 bikes, 10 bodies. Earl's two-up with Denise.

Take the back roads out of Livermore, pass Kenny Roberts' ranch and into the mountains. Breakfast, lunch and the bar at Markville and before you know it, we're at Dardanelle's. Good days riding. No tickets, no crashes. Not that I noticed much of the scenery, but what I did see was truly, Oooohh, aaaahhhh and a few, 'Wows!

### Matt "Critter Killer" Brockway

Matt seemed to attract wildlife from both sides of the road. We all consoled him over the death of a mother quail and the squirrel that's still staggering around the desert unaware of its identity prior to its encounter with Matt's wheel.



Nice digs at Dardanelle's.

BBQ deal for dinner with only one trip allowed to the salad bar. Between the two of us, Jim and I finished the croutons.

Stayed in some rustic cabins that smelt a bit funny, but had comfy beds.

Earl tempted us out of bed early (7:30am) with an offer of a FREE breakfast. The breakfast was really good. I was expecting a greasy Denny's deal, but was quite palatable.

Lisa and Eric no-showed —They had made other plans for an intimate breakfast. They then bailed from the ride and decided to head to some hot springs and bath away the aches and pains of the previous days riding.

Sunday was all about Hwy 120. We hammered over the pass to Benton and back and drained a tank of gas.

I had an indicated 155mph out of my FZ1! Amazing. We all got some serious air on the "Dip" section. Scary "oh s\*\*t" stuff.

Back thru Yosemite park (\$10 toll) nice and easy and then hit 4 for a while. Jim and I headed to the Marin Brewery for fish & chips and emptied a pitcher of Mt Tam. Perfect end to a great weekend.

Thanks for a great ride Earl.

—Tony Tugwell



Unicycle man



The ride to Benton requires a rest in the shade.

DARDANELLE'S.....

To you all, I must say it was one to remember :-) :-) :-)

Ruby Neophyte Northstar: you were Hot and Stellar. Bret's second personality that Barb introduced us to was just fun. Barbara's clear recollection of my past lives as a ride leader and participant playing with the Northstars was enlightening. The Birthday Girls and Cherry Crunch birthday cake around the camp fire yum yum. Lesa B. for Happy Birthday surprises at dinner and that smile. Erik you is just a wheelieing Bad Boy and I see why Lisa likes you so. Tony treated me to a fine Blue Fazer for two days. You showed me all angles and its a great Looking Yamaha. Jim-the new guy-Cairnes who told me of life on the wild side across the pond aboard a RZ200. Your fishiness Mike, thanks for another great week end as our Eminent Leader (only six months to go). Hwy. 120 was a gas again with you out in the lead Prez. To you all it was special for me to play on some of my favorite California back roads with some of my favorite friends.

—Julio "Still Buzzing" Sanchez

MORE DARDANELLE'S.....

The Ride Leader and his Lady mounted the gleaming black steed (ZX-10) to greet the slightly bleary-eyed band of merrymakers at 6:30 am on Vasco Rd. in Livermore. Brett, Barbara, Mike, Lisa, Erik, Matt, Tony & Jim set off on an adventure that would keep surpassing itself!

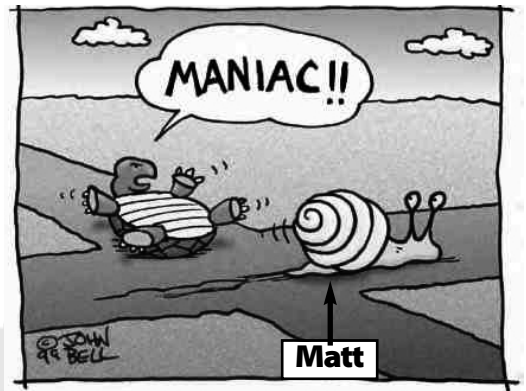
Morning sun, crisp, cool air and the guy who thought he was riding a unicycle accompanied us to breakfast. Good food, better company, complete with Matt's entertaining tale of the menacing ZX-12 lurking in the darkness of his garage.

Rolling roads, kamikaze grasshoppers throwing themselves at Earl's boots and front wheel (along with a squirrel with poor judgement further down the road). Cherry Lake road proved to be irresistible; many smiling faces afterwards.

Birthday Girl, Lisa, graciously shared large piece of chocolate cake at lunch. Birthday Girl, Barbara and I politely declined and wished we hadn't later that night when Earl gallantly served up a granola cherry roll bar to celebrate the occasion.

Hwy. 4—pure ecstasy! Mind-numbing scenery and speeds, experiencing The Mike and Earl Dance as I marveled at how natural 120 seems....

Monitor Pass/395/108, well I've decided this must be God's Summer Home... This was a first for me and my senses went on overload!



Wonderful, all-too-short stay at Dardanelle. Great company, conversation and campfire.

The morning found Lisa and the Unicycle Guy choosing another route as did Brett and Barbara. All we could say was 'Neener-neener-neener' after we experienced Hwy. 120 to Benton TWICE the next morning. My whooping on becoming airborne penetrated Earl's helmet and ear plugs!

Yosemite. Need I say more?

Knights Ferry-sitting on the porch, eating ice cream, Jim and I comparing scars (you should hear HIS story...) El Presidente managed to separate from our group after Yosemite, but zipped in within five minutes of us, muttering something about directing traffic at Half Dome.

As we crested the Altamont Hills, we were embraced by surprisingly cool temperatures. Blissfully satiated, we knew we were home.

—Denise aka: "Ruby" Neophyte Northstar



The Usual Suspects, resting up before their next assignment...



## STONYFORD

The weekend at Little Stonyford was attended by Joel Buck, The Prez' Mike Chaplin who brought his eager and able son, Chris, and myself with Travis the "Young and Restless." Travis and I arrived on Saturday morning to see Mr. Buck and the Chaplins suited up and ready to ride. They gave us a location to meet up with them and headed out. It wasn't long before we all were tearing up some great single track and some fast fire roads. The rest of the weekend just got better with some cooler temperatures and cloud cover on Monday. It was another great time with good appetites and friends enjoying some simple things in life. Live to ride and ride to EAT!

—Steve "Dirt Steward"

## NEW BIKES

Adrenaline, sweat, ecstasy, anxiety, love/not-so-love=one happy Neophyte.

Sunday morning found me hungrily eyeing our latest addition, Sweet Rocket J, the VTR250, wanting desperately to ride, but not so sure. The screws in my ankle seemed to be talking a little louder that morning...?! Earl gently smiles and says Let's just go for gas and see how you feel, then maybe we'll do Altamont Pass road. I give him the "Yeah, sure" look. Fifty miles and buckets of sweat later, I find myself in beautiful, downtown Ripon...

The learning was intense and satisfying. The Ride Leader patiently worked on braking, safety and provided hand signals to help me improve shifting patterns. Although I couldn't quite stay close enough to him, he managed to assist with rear-view mirror observations! Frequent opportunities to stop were offered and gratefully accepted!

The much-discussed '86 Fazer was the Ride Leader's bike of choice this day. He found her so well-suited for

## HOT SPRINGS AGENDA ITEM

Yes, the Dardanelle's birthday ride was one to remember, as you've just read. However, after a 480-mile day of ridin' with the best of 'em, I felt it was time to take a detour on our way home.

Keeping in mind the fact that a 450-mile day on a Daytona is a completely different experience than a 450-mile day on an XR650, my body was sore and tired and in need of a good soak in a hot spring. I could only guess what Erik must feel like. Especially after those mile-long wheelies throughout the day.

Does everyone know about the hot springs outside of Bridgeport? Erik and I rode up the short one-mile dirt road to the springs. With virtually no one around, there we sat with the snow-capped mountains in the background, exclaiming with a great sigh of relief as our muscles relaxed, while the minutes ticked by all too quickly.

A not nearly long enough soak, we knew we had to leave or we wouldn't be home until 10p.m. We barely made it by 9:00 Sunday night. But our excursion was well worth it.—Lisa



## MOTORCYCLE BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

I returned from an unforgettable birthday weekend ride to discover 18 phone messages from family and friends, including one from Laura Sharek who, in unison with my motorcycle safety class that weekend, yelled a big "Happy Birthday" into the phone, complete with the sound of motorcycle horns "meep meeping" in the background.—Lisa

"training" (as opposed to R-1 or ZX-10) speed, that we may keep her after all. :)

Speaking of screws, I applied moderate-to-severe pressure on the ortho

doc yesterday and he has agreed to remove said screws three months early; June; the 29th, to be exact! YES!!!!!!

Life is GOOD!—Denise

## BUYING A BIKE IN ENGLAND

I had been thinking about heading over the pond for a riding vacation for quite a while. Then last April I got the incentive I needed: Unemployment. The TV series I've been working on for years finally got the ax. So, without much real planning or preparation I'm off to Merry Old England.

I decided to buy a bike over there instead of renting one or shipping one over from California. Two reasons: I would be in Europe for over a month and will do several future trips; free storage in France. Shipping my own bike would be expensive, time consuming and generally a PITA.

I based my bike search out of London, given I hadn't ever really seen London and thought it would be a good central place to find lots of bikes. Well, yes and no. The London area is huge. Like HUGE huge.; and crowded; and expensive. Turns out I would have done better working out of a small town and checking out the local bike shops which almost every medium sized town in the UK have and most have good used bike stocks. Additionally I could have rented a car to get around, whereas in London a car is insane for a stranger. Live and learn.

London was great for the sights, theater, pubs, and museums, but a major headache for a visitor to try and get around to bike shops and private parties whilst searching for a good used bike.

I used a Cyber Cafe at Victoria Station near my B&B called EasyEverything, a chain that has cafes all over the world. Great place, cheap. In fact, about the only thing that was cheap in London. From here I emailed and called about bikes for sale. I also scoured MCN's classifieds. Early on I was open to several bikes besides Tigers, but the more piles of crap I rode and

listened to the more convinced I became the Tiger would be the right bike and believe it or not, the prices for Tigers are pretty cheap in the UK (cheap being a relative term of course)!

From London I ventured far and wide in my search. I went to Cambridge and Oxford and near Dover and all over London. Talked to guys in Liverpool (too far) and guys up north. Before I left the U.S. I had shopped extensively on Britain's Auto Trader site (motorcycle section) and emailed a lot of potential owners and dealers. So when I arrived I had plenty to do.

After one week of intense work I finally scored. I found a yellow '99; Tiger owned by a police officer (not a bike cop) who commuted to and from London everyday. So for a '99 it was high mileage at 24K. But it looked great and had been serviced by a dealer. It needed a couple things so with some negotiations we finally settled on £3800 UKP. That's about \$5,430 USD. Pretty good price, and believe me, I earned it!

My Internet buddy Jeremy was kind enough to offer a place to stay and do a little work on the new bike. This was great, as I was exhausted by London. But first I had to get there.

Welcome to my first experience on an English Motorway. Sounds civilized don't it? MotorWay? Forget it! Ever see Ogrin on the motorway? That's more like it. So I'm on this Tiger I really know jack shit about and I'm going 90mph and hoping the wheels don't fall off the thing at this speed and the moron drivers are right up my bum and pushing hard. So you just get over and let 'em by, doing about 110mph. Crazy but fun once you get past the terror!

Jeremy and I did a chain, brake pads, wheel bearing, tires and a bunch of little things, but overall the bike was in good shape and everything worked just fine.

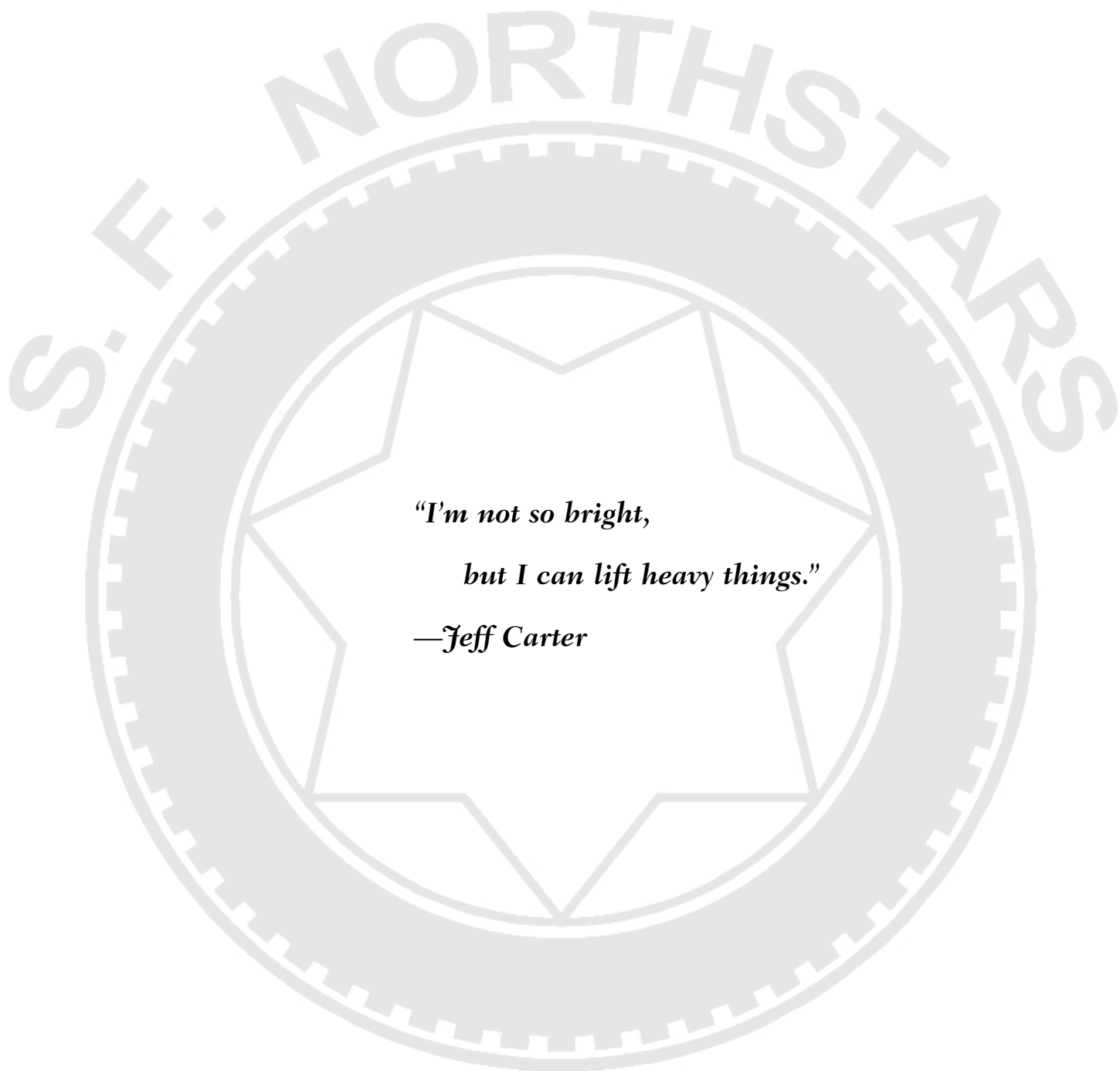
Conclusion: The Buying Process. If I had to do it over again this is what I would do: Find a bike you want at a dealer via Internet, classifieds or whatever before you ever leave the states. Call various dealers until you find one you like and trust. There are many good Triumph dealers. Of course you will pay a bit more buying this way. **TOTALLY WORTH IT!!** Let the dealer know you plan to tour Europe on the bike and that it must be totally road ready. This means new tires, chain, or whatever else it needs. Sure, you're buying sight unseen, but you just gotta trust the guy!

You may be able to even pay for the thing before you leave home. I recommend this method if you can pull it off. I had to convert Travelers checks and of course took a little loss on the conversion and had to ride the London tube with five grand cash in my pocket! And nobody wants to cash five grand worth of T-checks. If you pre-pay, the bike is waiting for you upon your arrival. I spent a lot of time and money in London during my search. But time was the real killer, and the effort to find a good bike. Not easy, and not much fun doing it day after day.

Had a great time too of course, but did spend a lot, around \$1000 in a week. Plus I had to buy tires, chain, brake pads. Pricey stuff in England. You avoid all this by buying via a dealer over the phone or email.

Probably not many of you would ever do a deal like this, but if you're planning on spending a long time on vacation or doing multiple trips, then it works out financially over renting. Insurance, another thorny issue, is doable. Oh, and BTW, you should really buy your bike in either France or Andorra, but we'll get into that later! ;-)

Part Two next month.—Patrick



*"I'm not so bright,  
but I can lift heavy things."  
—Jeff Carter*

Northstar Publications  
c/o Lisa Brazieal  
3861 Greenwood Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94602

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