

Daily Planet

June, 2002

Vol. 27, Number 6

Official Newsletter of the San Francisco Northstars Motorcycle Club

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

JUNE 12	Ride Planning Meeting —S.F. Brew Pub; 7:00
<i>Come to the ride planning meeting June 12 to plan some rides for the remainder of the year.</i>	
JUNE 15-16	Carson City—Gretchen (was the Minden Nevada ride)
JUNE 26	Club Meeting—S.F. Brew Pub

Treasury report: Seven hundred some odd dollars!

CARSON CITY June 15-16

- Meet:** The Buttercup Pantry in Pleasanton (right off Hopyard exit and then left at first lights)
- Time:** Ride leaves at 8:30—bikes and bodies fueled up ready to ride. Get there earlier if you want breakfast.
- Fun:** Saturday's route will include about 350 miles from Pleasanton, including backroads to 120, Cherry, Cottonwood, 108, Sonora Pass (lunch in Sonora), 395, Monitor Pass, 89 with a beer stop (for a half a beer) in Markleeville at The Cut Throat Saloon—Diamond Valley Road, 206, Jacks Valley to the Genoa Bar (for the other half of our beer), then 395 to Carson City.
- Rez's:** Call Best Western Pinon Plaza @ 1.800.528.1234.
- Cost:** \$81 (+tax). Ask for the "Manager's Special"

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Win a free beer!

Answer the following question and Earl has offered to buy the winner a free beer:

*Who came up with the title:
the "Daily Planet?" for the
Northstar newsletter?*

Send your guesses into me, or show up at the next meeting and announce your answer proudly amongst your peers. Oh, and claim your free beer.

MEETING MINUTES

Man oh man have we had major turnout at our meetings lately. Chicks are even showin' up. Times they have uhhh changed. So there we all sat, happy and proud to be Northstars: **Catfish, Wendy, Patrick, Earl, Allan, Lisa B., Gretchen, Jim** and **Craig**. **Jim Pat** showed up and paid his dues. He even sat next to some of the women. Guests included **Kari, Denise, Ken, Brad, Dave, Bob,** and **Bill**. ☆ **New bike reports:** Wendy has her pick of bikes on the showroom floor, so she proceeded to tell us how many motorcycles she'd ridden in the past few days. Jealousy spread throughout the attentive crowd as she threw out numbers like RC51 and 929. ☆ Ken Ennor traded in his ZX9 for the 12. "It turns," he confessed, as he didn't feel comfortable on the 9. ☆ **Catfish** boasted having 4,900 miles in two months on his "new" Caponord, including a seriously bald tire. ☆ Earl mentioned an important detail to all members and guests who attend any Northstar ride: Come prepared! Be fueled up and ready to ride, which includes a motorcycle in good working order. Follow these simple preparational rules and you'll enjoy the ride all the better. ☆ **Ride reports:** I'm proud to say that we're a club whose members actually go on rides, so ride reports were everpresent. Jim bragged of riding on 14,000 acres all to himself on MCMA private



property. It didn't matter that he had a broken clutch cable the entire ride; he only stalled it once. ☆ Patrick painted the tale of several Northstars' California City/Death Valley/Guggenheim ride and the boys' brilliant idea (which he quickly admitted wasn't his) to tow Matt's broken down GS for many miles (apparently his ignighter coil needed replacing). Read the ride report in the following pages. Apparently Patrick, spent a challenging ride home over highway 50 in a blizzard which took the coating off his \$100 faceshield. ☆ Earl reported on the desert ride, which included about six people riding in Redrock Canyon. The park allows motorcycles if you stay on the marked trails. Sounds like it was great riding thanks to the comfortable desert temperatures that weekend. ☆ Catfish had us all howlin' as he wove his tale of riding with his friend Ricky to have dinner with a few WetLeather friends up in Oregon during the last weekend in April. The first night he wanted to reach Joel Buck's house in Selma, but about ten miles outside of Indian Creek he lost site of Ricky in his mirrors. Turning around and riding back for two miles along the tight, nasty, windy wet road that included no guardrails and a steep cliff on either side, the ST1100 was nowhere to be found so Catfish began searching for evidence, where he spots fresh skid marks going straight, then three deep gouges that disappear off the road. He shuts the motor off and immediately hears Ricky's voice exclaiming, "Mike, I'm okay!" Catfish looks down to see Ricky climbing up the steep rocky outcropping. Down below Mike notices handlebars sticking

straight out of the creek, most of the bodywork gone off the bike. Apparently Ricky had gone off the edge feet first, sliding on his butt, motorcycle tumbling through big boulders in front of him, until Ricky came to a stop right at the creek. Mike was able to pick up a signal and dial out on his cell phone, trying to calculate how long the cable needed to be in order to tell the tow truck driver. Ricky goes back down the mountain to get his camera, trying to rescue one saddlebag as it began floating away, then proceeds to snap photos of Mike talking on his cellphone, wav-

***"Paramedics throw
Ricky in the back and
have their way with him.***

ing, looking slightly annoyed. Soon up pulls the Sheriff, then the ambulance. Paramedics throw Ricky in the back and have their way with him. Up drives Big Foot Towing Service. The driver, in his 60's, grabs a dry suit, takes the cable with him marching down the steep embankment to the creek, attaches the cable to the bike, then Mike hears the horrendous sound of the motorcycle being dragged back up the hill. What wasn't broken on the way down is now in pieces from the trip back up. After the ordeal is over, Ricky's girlfriend picks him up and Mike is back on the road by himself. Riding down 96 to 5, half frozen, Mike pulls into a rest area and has to get on weather.com before he heads up 5 through horrible blizzard conditions, riding 15-20 miles an hour on a one lane road with a good six inches

of frozen snow except for two tire tracks. He eventually makes it to his destination where he can put his nickname to practice and partakes in Martin's annual fish fry, consuming large amounts of catfish, crawdads, salmon, hushpuppies and ale. Now all those scrumptuous fixin's must have been worth it, aye Mike?! ☆ Denise had an excellent ride report, as her claim to fame was keeping up with the R1s on the ride to Vegas as she was chirpin' the tires on the Accord. Atta' girl! ☆ Then there came the Eureka ride report about Roozbeh's Village Idiots and the fun had by all. The route included Pleasant Valley, 121, 128, 16 to 20 to Winters. Catfish did Leeville Grade by himself. A high crowned road, it's one of the roughest paved road surfaces in California. Lunch in Red Bluff, then 366 to Wildwood Road to 3 to Weaverville and across to 299. Patrick and Gary's ride up the following day included sharing the road with over 1,000 bicyclists who took up more than their share of the road. A bit of an annoyance, Gary and Patrick arrived in time for the barbecue. The day they all road home, Roozbeh ditched the Northstars, separating from them early on, which prompted Pat to call his house later that afternoon, concerned that something may have happened to Roozbeh, as they never hooked back up with him during the day. Roozbeh happily answered the phone, home from a wonderful weekend of riding, with not a care in the world.—Lisa

MENDOCINO MADNESS

11 of us met and set off around 8:00 am and headed out Lucas Valley and Marshall Petaluma to meet up with Tony over at the Bakery in Tamales. The Greasy Spoon Option for breakfast was closed much to everyone's dismay (except Craig who gets in a bakery state of nirvana when the Tamales Bakery is mentioned.) It was a very skeptical Catfish standing in line who soon came round after tasting those cream cheese and strawberry danishes.

Craig now showed us some really cool alternatives to 1 by heading toward Dillon Beach and taking Middle Road to Valley Ford and then the super fun Bay Road dropping us down onto Bodega Bay. At the gas stop in Jenner we were advised by a certain pit bull owning, crack head local that all our bikes were unsafe and we should all buy Harleys, to which Patrick made a swift comeback something about the similarities of humping his pit bull and riding Harleys. Any way it did the trick nicely and we were on our merry way.

Now the fun really began with Meyers Grade, Hauser Bridge and Tin Barn leading us back to the coast at the Stewarts Point Store. Stopping to check out the Buddhist Temple en route we realize Bob and

Ken are not with us. Craig and I go back and find them. It turns out Bob had decided to christen his new bike with its first gravel slide and tumble, no harm done and back to the ride. Coast road to Point Arena and then the legendary Manchester Booneville road; my favorite part of the ride. Now you know why the ride was called Mendo Madness as we never go any where near Mendocino!

Lunch in Boonville at the brewery and then on to Ukiah and then Middletown. I had a close call when a Harley, two up, comes flying out of control round a corner and into my lane, feet out, girlfriend screaming—the works! But again no harm done, (cuz those harleys are safe—remember, the guy in Jenner told us that). From Middletown, Tony, Craig and Ash headed down the Silverado Trail and the rest headed for home. All in all a blast of a ride, glad so many came. The rest of you missed out. Cheers.—*Jim*

After telling us all to lose the Jap Crap and buy a real bike

“Billy Bob Harley” jumped in his beatup rice box and grabbed his dog telling everyone that “This is my Harley!” To which Patrick replied “I guess f**king a dog and riding a Harley are pretty much the same thing...”

The Intrepid Crew

Jim Fearless Leader	CBR
Catfish	CapoNord
Tony	FZ1
Patrick	VStrom
Gretchen	GSXR
Steve	GS
Craig	SV
Ash	SuperHawk
David	New GS
Francis	Duke 851
Bob (Port)	Kawa Powa
Ken (Starboard)	Kawa Powa

What Does the Saying, “Riding Within Your Limits” Mean to You?

There have been a lot of crash reports at the meetings lately, so Earl proposed that I introduce the topic of motorcycle safety in this month's newsletter. Coincidentally, the timing was crucial and hit home after Rob Brown was killed on his motorcycle this month. Rob had a reputation as being a smart rider and was well respected in the motorcycle community. In general, as riders ourselves, we need to be smart and proactive and think about what we're doing before we go on a ride, as well as during the ride itself. Yea, there's the fun factor, and it's the reason why we all ride. But it's not humorous nor smart to fall down on the street. Ideally the goal is rubber side down.

As a motorcycle safety instructor, I am constantly reminded of this topic “riding within one's limits” because I teach it in my classes each month. After Rob Brown's death I thought a lot about this subject, and realized that for me the challenge in motorcycling doesn't lie in the physical, but rather in the mental. Important details to take into consideration include, should I be on my bike right now? When I've had a long hard day at work, and am riding home, feeling exceptionally tired, should I be lane splitting? What affects do a head cold have on concentration? Being sober is always a necessity when it comes to riding. And what about lack of sleep... statistics are phenomenal as to how many vehicle accidents occur due to the effects of sleep deprivation. Sometimes the decision to not push myself so hard to “keep up with the guys” is a tempting and difficult lure—like a moth to a flame. Putting that decision into action is what makes a rider responsible. One can “think about” slowing down, not pushing oneself beyond their limits in order to “keep up with the gang,” yet until you put that into practice—actually slow down—it won't do you any good to just think about it.

While teaching my students advanced turning and braking techniques, I discuss the two elements of proper entry speed when it comes to taking a turn: **1** Constant acceleration to stabilize the motorcycle, and **2** Completing the turn safely. Yep, that means staying on the road! Riding within my limits means not only staying on the road; but making it home all in one piece. What does it mean to you?

“Well, I’m still alive!”

—Pat Munroe

FOR SALE!

1998 Honda SuperHawk (VTR1000F) VIN#...000015—\$5,400 (obo)

It's the sweetest-handling bike I've ever ridden. However, I've always been a bit stretched across the tank to reach the distant clip-ons. Now that I have a CapoNord, I'm selling this v-twin to get me a KTM dirtbike.

Clean, RED, 46K-miles, many extras; setup for sport-touring; Carbotech 5.9-gal carbon/kevlar-fiber fuel tank (& oem tank) Penske rear shock (& oem) & Lindemann re-valved/re-sprung forks. Braided-SS hydraulic lines Modified (2" taller, 1.5" back) VTR Helibars. Custom-machined 2" mirror stalk extensions; Zero Gravity +2" sport-touring windscreen (& oem).

- ✓ K&N air filter
- ✓ Modified stock exhaust (3-chamber --> 2-chamber). Nice, louder-than-stock sound, but passes Laguna Seca sound meter
- ✓ Ventura sport rack and grab rail
- ✓ Many new parts (front/rear brake pads, sprockets, air filter, etc..)
- ✓ Honda service manual, Honda air-screw adj. tool
- ✓ Lives on Mobil-One (15-50w) and has yet to require ANY valve adjustments
- ✓ Its a HONDA!
- ✓ SFNorthstars and WetLeather *firm* price, \$5400. Goes into the papers at \$6000 in two weeks



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M C

THE RIDE OF THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN (PLUS OR MINUS ONE)

This Spring a group of seven intrepid riders converged on a predetermined meeting point in Hollister, California for the sole purpose of riding to Baja where we would search for the best fish tacos and the coldest beer. This group of seven consisted of Kari (SV650), Lisa (Daytona 955i), Bill (GS), Henrik (GS), Scott (GS), Paul (DR650) and myself on the venerable old Tiger. Our plan was to enjoy each day as a ride unto itself and set a pace that was agreeable to all. If we got tired, we stopped. If we were hungry, we ate. If we needed more, we rode on. Whichever way the wind blew is the direction we took. No firm route, no required destinations. Hell, we're on vacation!

Day One

Our day was one of cool weather and empty roads. Highway 25 was sublime. 198 over to Coalinga a bit wet and foggy. 33 South had a major crosswind.

CerroNoroeste began with great zeal but soon slowed progress thanks to water, sand and dare I say it—snow? After gassing up in Frazier Park we hit 139 to N3 to Palmdale. Some of the group chose an added bonus ride toward Lancaster before turning around and joining the lead riders back in Palmdale.

We continued across the high desert on 138 and then dropped down into the valley on 215 where



Kari calls out coordinates while Lisa takes notes.



Cielito Lindo hotel near the beach in San Quintin

we chose to spend the night in San Bernardino. Paul proved his worthiness as a plumber that evening by clearing out a vomit-clogged line in his \$45 room. The rest of us resigned ourselves to sleep off that evening's first on-the-road margaritas.

Day Two

Day 2 saw us race around the Southland on 30, 79 and 94 along with a slew of funny little backroads. The highlight was leaving the cold high ground in Julian and making our way into the warmer climate outside of Tecate by way of some wonderful little goat-paths! Thanks to Bill for the highly detailed map of the area. The border crossing was pretty uneventful. I was waiting for Lisa to create some ruckus with the guys in uniform but she chickened out.

Once into Baja the weather magically transformed into a warm, dry, comfortable state. Our first Federale inspection went smoothly despite my attempts at getting Kari to pop the clutch and wheelie for the boys in uniform. I did a token one for the three girls in school uniforms. Hey, they're easy to impress. Lunch at the fish taco stand in Ensenada was awesome! There's nothing better than fish tacos and beer! By nightfall we were firmly ensconced at the Cielito Lindo hotel down on the beach in San Quintin. I really don't remember much about that place because I had one margarita. No, I'm not a lightweight! These things were deadly! Oh yeah, I do remem-

ber the crab plate at dinner. That and the crab stuffed shrimp. Wow!!!!

Day Three

Day 3 we rode South on highway 1 heading for Bahia de Los Angeles. We stopped a couple of times to wet our whistles (because riding motorcycles is serious business) and we also paid a visit to the memorial for Randy Bradesku. We rolled into the Bay of LA by late afternoon where we checked into a couple of suites at the Casa Diaz resort. Well, they were pretty minimal rooms and at \$8 per person per night really were quite cheap. Then again, they were clean and located right on the beach. Watching the moonrise that night in a tequila induced haze was quite romantic. I'll never forget that night Paul...



Randy Bradesku's memorial

Day Four

Day 4 saw the load of us do nothing. Well, almost nothing. Seems that when you put Paul in the company of Bill you end up with something akin to a perpetual motion machine. These guys will go on for hours. I believe they managed to solve the crisis in Palestine, the global warming issue, nuclear power for motorcycles, poverty, gentrification of Blackhawk as well as numerous other world issues. It was great!

Unfortunately Henrik had to bail on us due to an important project with work. But he was replaced by Torsten who showed up a couple days late thanks to prior engagements with work. Adding Torsten to the mix of Bill and Paul was like tossing gasoline onto a tire fire. Whew! I really wish I could have recorded the conversations! Still, there were some quiet times and those of us with books managed to get a little reading done.

Day Five

Day 5 saw the intrepid men of AYU go on a fishing excursion. Torsten, Paul and Bill hit the water at 7am for a morning of fishing. Apparently we missed one good photo opportunity with Torsten peeing into a coke can on the boat. Why no one got a shot of this one is a mystery to me. They did however return with a 5-gallon bucket full of fresh fish, which the local ladies of the loncheria turned into fresh fish burritos. Man that was good! The rest of us chickens ended up laying around reading. Especially Scott since he'd managed to burn up most of his tire on the way down. Yikes!



Feet Up The view from our cabanas in Bahia de Los Angeles.

Day Six

Day 6 was our day of mourning. Unfortunately all good things must come to an end and our time at Bahia de Los Angeles was up. We motored out to Highway 1 and turned north. Roughly 35 miles up we turned off toward Coco's corner.

Despite riding an SV 650 and Daytona 900 the girls kicked butt on the dirt.

Lisa was hanging it out sideways in the corners roosting the boys on their wimpy Beemers. I think she's the first person in recorded history to have ridden a Daytona to Coco's. Pretty amazing! After hanging out for a while we all shook hands and parted ways. The guys took off for Alfonsina's at the Bay of Gonzaga while us girls went back to the pavement and split for El Rosario.

I was a little concerned about Scott and his tire. I heard rumors that there were flats to be had but I don't believe it was Scott that suffered the loss of air. That night we suffered through the lack of the Bill and Paul show and forced ourselves

to eat lobster and drink beers and margaritas. Man that was rough.

Day Seven

Day 7 was a nice ride north to Ensenada. The three of us set a nice pace stopping briefly at La Pinta for lunch before hitting the big town in the afternoon. We stayed at the El Rey in town and really suffered big time after that. My one-hour massage was just terrible. I was so beat-up that I nearly passed out on the table from exhaustion. I could barely walk the three blocks to Hussong's.

Day Eight

Day 8 saw the girls getting pedicures and manicures while I wandered the waterfront. I was nearly thrown in jail for trying to make off with a rather well developed yellow-tail. Did I mention that I like sushi? There were four rather nice looking fish stacked on the pallet and I really didn't think they would miss one. Ah well, I tried. Later we wandered up to Tecate where we attempted to spend the last of our pesos. The girls got a shoeshine from a local in the Town Square. I had to put my sunglasses on to ease the glare! Wow! Nice shine for only \$3.

We soon crossed the border and made for San Diego. I manage to finagle us a room at the Beach Cottages. It wasn't on the beach but half a block back. Oh well. We did end up at Hooters though and I had to do my best to keep Kari and Lisa in line. And I thought guys were bad...



The famous Coco's corner

Day Nine

Day 9 was another day of breakups. Lisa had the hots for Erik and so hit the highway bright and early. Kari had wanted to go to the San Diego Zoo forever so off she went. I in turn made tracks for LA. I spent the next couple days hanging with friends and had an amazing visit to the Getty museum. I highly recommend it to anyone going down that way. \$5 to park. Free to get in. Huge galleries with a vast array of art. I saw everything from Monet to Picasso.

There was an exhibition on drawing in perspective and a photo exhibit on railroads. After 4 hours I had covered only one of the four complexes. Wow!

Day Eleven

Day 11 I rode home. I-5 through LA. Off at Frazier Park. CerroNoroeste, Soda Springs Road across the Carrizo Plain, 58 to 229 to Paso for lunch. River Road to Indian Valley to Peachtree to 25 to 101 to 880. A 400 mile day that ended in the early afternoon.

All in all a great time with great people. I'm hooked! Same time next year? Maybe two weeks instead of one? More fish tacos and more beer! Yee ha!
—Craig

See more on Craig's website at:
<http://home.attbi.com/~craigums1/index.HTM>



Langosta Fresca! Enjoying lobster dinner at the famous Mama Espinozas!



Craig, Kari, Lisa, Bill and Paul We frequented this breakfast place in Bahia de Los Angeles because they served the best jugo de naranja we'd ever had!



Craig holds up a Mexican cactus.

Where are they now?

A number of Northstar members have come and gone, including some who have moved away from the Bay Area. Brooks Harris is one such character, so when word got out that he had become a father, I got a little more scoop on the life and times of Brooks.

For those who know me and those who don't, here goes.

Life in Louisiana is fine. I am hanging my shingle as a financial planner, so that creates plenty of stress to go along with the new kiddo. Jackson Taylor is a great kid, as kids go, crying only when he is hungry or pissed off. Much like his father. I am relegated to the domestic bliss of family, food, and good deeds as this is how life is lived in the bayou where it is too hot and flat for a sensible (ie. padded) rider like myself. No more big red beemer, but I do a bit of fourwheeling in the muddy

fields and flats of my inlaws' wide and varied woods on occasion. I miss the weather, roads, vistas, and mostly the friends of the road in California. I was moments from attending the Songdog (on four wheels, of course), but was unfortunately captivated here by family commitments beyond my control. Look to see my big round head bouncing around some Northstar fireside in the not too distant future. Perhaps when Volpe has returned from the great north and swings through on a ride in the usual places with the usual suspects. IF anyone makes it down this way (Central



Louisiana, New Orleans, Texas), let me know and I will roll out the red carpet, such as it is. We always have an extra room for any brave soul that ventures through and carries the Northstar tradition with them.

Hope all is bliss and blurs to all the road warriors...ciao.—Brooks

Death Valley...Guggenheim

Matt Brockway (GS1100), Patrick Moriarty (V-Strom), Gary Thomas (GS1100) and Joe Volpe (GS1100) met in Hollister on Friday morning to begin the ride. We compared notes with the Baja Ride crew and got under way. Rt 25 was clean and a pleasure until somewhere around Priest Valley road the rain began. It wasn't all that bad and cleared up before Rt 33 where the wind was gusting quite a bit. Somewhere south of Kettleman City, also known as the middle of nowhere, Matt Brockway's GS shit-the-bed while tickling the rev limiter in 5th.

Accompanied by Professor Moriarty's running commentary, the disassembly and troubleshooting began. After several teasing start-ups indicated an intermittent electrical problem not solvable on the side of a windy back road, the tow strap was thrown to the dejected Northstar. Twenty miles later, we were 20 miles deeper into the middle of nowhere and Gary Thomas used his valve cover to compress some mud while on a scouting run; ask him about his

'back saving' technique to lift a loaded motorcycle. Joe Volpe ended up towing the rare DNF BMW 40 miles to Wasco where a U-Haul, lunch, and 6 gallons in a 5.6 gallon tank were available.

Short one Northstar, the trio continued toward the California City rendezvous with the dirty bunch. The fog over Tehachapi Pass was 'chain reaction' thick and quite chilling. We arrived at the dirt bike camp in extreme wind. Extra special thanks to Steve Hirsh and Earl Minkler who opened their trailers to house and feed us. Patrick Moriarty's V-Strom and gravity reached equilibrium in deep sand ruts to start the morning's ride... could Steve Hirsh's massive 5-star breakfast upset Patrick's otherwise perfectly positioned center of gravity??

Day two was through Death Valley via Trona and Wildrose Canyon. If you can handle a mile of washboard gravel, take the short detour to see the Charcoal Kilns. We hustled right through to Vegas to see The Art of the Motorcycle exhibit at the Guggenheim.

Parking was free and the \$15 to see the bikes was well worth it. We ate some great Japanese food and marveled the Venetian before the \$439 per night charge pushed us toward cheaper pastures.

Day three started in Beatty and might be called the Ten Pass Tour. Parting ways with Patrick Moriarty, Gary Thomas warned Joe Volpe not to piss off the 'Laughlin agitated' H-D riders... did that include not flipping the bird when they don't wave back? We busted 10 passes (7420', 6373', 7271', 7000', 8041', 8138', 7519', 8314', 7740', 7382) with all but Rt 50 to ourselves. The scenery was spectacular but the view and solitude was paid for with frigid temperatures; 35-60 degrees with the majority of the day around 45-50 degrees. We were above the snow line a bit and snowed upon on Luther Summit/Rt 89. Joe Volpe could only laugh about riding at high altitude in late April... but it's been summer in Sacramento for a month now!?!? Gary Thomas and Joe Volpe parted ways in Placerville as another Northstar ride dissipated with chilled riders embracing the valley sun for their solo rides home.—Joe

Man Gets 6 Years for Binding Wife, Setting House Afire

May, 2002

by Jim Carlile, *The Olympian*

OLYMPIA—Patrick McCrystle was sentenced to more than six years in prison Thursday for setting his wife's house on fire with her bound up inside.

McCrystle, 53, pleaded guilty in Thurston County Superior Court to two counts of first-degree kidnapping and one count of first-degree arson. McCrystle originally had pleaded not guilty.

After McCrystle changed his plea, Judge Richard Strophy sentenced him to 82 months in prison.

"It's a blessing that it's over," said Trisha Swanson, McCrystle's ex-wife and victim.

During an argument in June 2001, after Swanson had filed for divorce, McCrystle held an ether-soaked rag to Swanson's mouth, dragged her around the house and hit her.

McCrystle then taped his wife's face and hands with duct tape, spread diesel fuel around the home and set it on fire.

Swanson managed to escape before the house—her childhood home—was destroyed by the fire.

Swanson has a background in anthropology and a master's degree in museum studies. She lost a collection of unusual objects she picked up on her travels, American Indian sacred objects, baskets, textiles, masks and photographs and antiques her parents had collected.

Steve Straume, a Thurston County deputy prosecuting attorney, suggested the maximum sentence, while McCrystle's attorney, Bryan Hershman, asked the court for mercy.

McCrystle was seeing a psychologist at the time and had no prior run-ins with the law, Hershman said.

"Whatever good you did before this episode was erased," Strophy said to McCrystle. "I'm not persuaded that any further leniency is warranted."

Before the sentencing, McCrystle addressed the court and apologized for his actions. He said that, at the time of the incident, he was suffering from depression and anxiety.

"I destroyed the history of two people," he said. "What was destroyed can never be replaced fully."

Strophy sentenced McCrystle to 82 months for kidnapping and 41 months for arson—the times to be served concurrently.

Strophy said he would have sentenced McCrystle to the prison terms consecutively—one after the other. But the prosecution asked that McCrystle serve the terms at the same time, Strophy said.

Jim Carlile covers crime and public health for *The Olympian*. He can be reached at 360-754-5465 or jcarlile@olympia.gannett.com.

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"6+ years doesn't seem like enough for trying to kill someone and burning their life away. What emotional scars exist after being ether-drugged and taped to a chair inside a burning house that had ammunition stacked near the doors to dissuade the fire fighters from entering the structure?!"—Northstar

Domestic Abuse Law Invoked in Arson Case

Woman's payment for burned house based on 1998 law

by *Liona Tannesen, The Olympian*

OLYMPIA—A woman whose former husband faces charges of burning down their home while attempting to murder her has collected insurance money on the house.

A 1998 state law requires insurance companies to pay victims for arson or other damage that occurs during a domestic abuse incident.

The law was the first of its kind in the nation, said Sandy Mealing, spokeswoman for the state Office of the Insurance Commissioner.

Meanwhile, attorneys in the criminal case against Patrick McCrystle are negotiating and expect to meet in court for a pretrial hearing Friday, said Steve Straume, a Thurston County deputy prosecuting attorney.

Defense attorney Bryan Hershman could not be reached Wednesday.

Trisha Swanson had filed for divorce by June 25, which is when McCrystle is accused of setting the house on fire.

Investigators from the Thurston County Sheriff's Office have said McCrystle and Swanson were arguing when he bound her hands with duct tape, held a rag with ether on it to her mouth and then dragged her around the house and hit her.

McCrystle then forced Swanson to sit in a chair, spread diesel fuel around the house and set it on fire, investigators said.

Prosecutors charged McCrystle with attempted first-degree murder, first-degree arson and second-degree assault.

McCrystle pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The house—Swanson's childhood home—was destroyed.

"I have been, of course, through a very understandably difficult situation,"

Swanson said. "And I think I am responding as well as possible under the circumstances."

Fires set during a domestic violence incident used to be excluded from insurance coverage, said Parks Weaver, Swanson's attorney.

Legislators passed the domestic abuse exemption after Safeco initially denied coverage to Kittis Bolduc, whose estranged husband set her house on fire to prevent her from having it.

Safeco later agreed to pay Bolduc.

The question in Swanson's case was how much should be paid, Weaver said.

The law says payment may be limited to "the person's insurable interest in the property."

Grange Insurance Group started out at 50 percent, and Weaver started out at 100 percent of the loss.

Neither side would say the exact settlement, but Weaver said it was closer to 100 percent than to 50 percent.

"The basis of our 50 percent position is Washington is a community property

continued

state, and the insurable interest in that property would be 50 percent,” said Larry Kegele, Grange’s western region claims manager.

Kegele said the claim is not common, but they probably receive a couple of claims each year that touch on the domestic abuse exemption.

“They were a very nice company to deal with,” Weaver said.

Swanson said she is satisfied with the insurance settlement.

LOST HEIRLOOMS

Swanson has a background in anthropology and a master’s degree in museum studies and had collected unusual objects from countries she visited during her travels around the world.

She also had a collection of American Indian sacred objects, baskets, textiles and masks.

When Swanson was about 17, she started to do needlepoint, and she had about 350 that were completed or almost completed.

Swanson also lost photographs and antiques her parents had collected.

If Swanson could have one object that was lost, she said she would choose a Huichol Indian jaguar from Mexico. The carved, beaded jaguar was colorful and a powerful symbol.

“It was not the most precious, but it was certainly one of the most unique,” said Swanson, who plans to travel again.

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Photos from Past Rides

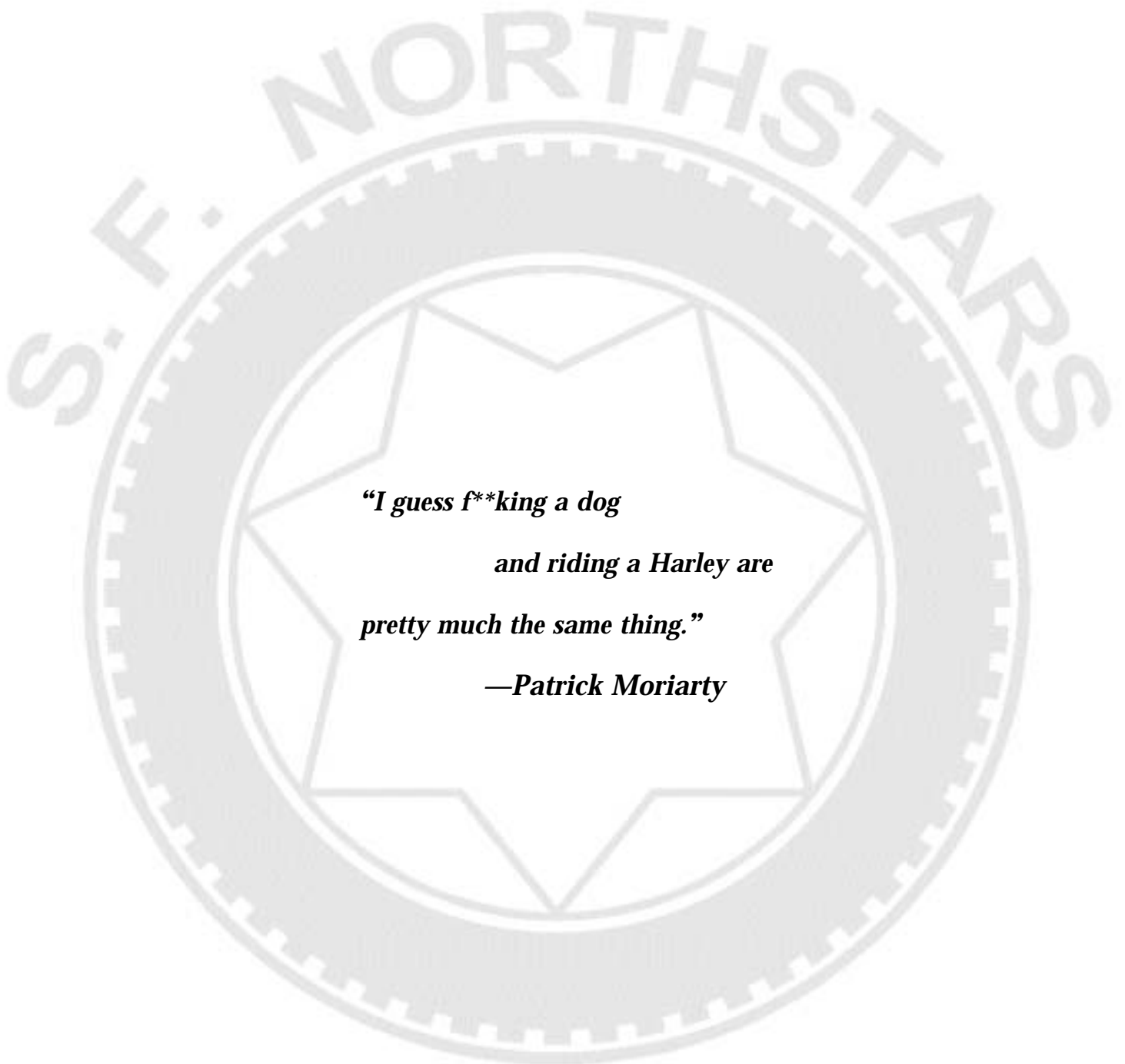


Uhhh gentlemen, may I please see your license? This Mount Diablo ranger felt like chattin’ us up on this year’s two mountain ride. Remember this guy, Catfish?



Last year’s delta ride





***“I guess f**king a dog
and riding a Harley are
pretty much the same thing.”
—Patrick Moriarty***

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

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