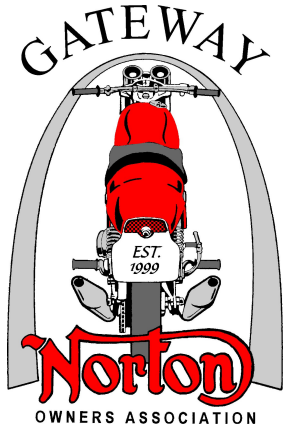


# Gateway Norton Owners News #38



**"To Promote the  
Use and Pride of  
Norton Motorcycle Ownership"  
Compiled by Marty and Peggy Dupree  
November 2008**



## KING'S KOLUMN

I was thinking, what can I possibly write about for this newsletter? What exactly should the Kings duties be? Steve and Marty don't trust me with the membership dues and I am too stupid to do much else in the way of organizational duties. So I thought again, (twice in the same week) perhaps I could help keep some enthusiasm alive within the Norton club. Not a bad idea during this time of year. I know that I must have something to do during the off season of motorcycling. I hate fishing in the snow and riding the Norton when its' freezing cold. Last year it was the Suzuki Road-racer project, this year it is the BSA Bobber. (Perhaps I have sent some of you pictures of this mess) This is good therapy for me. I just can't get the same results from Classic Bike magazines, Jockey-Journal websites and looking at other peoples stuff. I have this "hands on" affliction and that's how I keep the "High". I hope all of us have a nice warm place to carry out maintenance and to be with our Loved Ones, even if it is just to clean and polish or socialize . I hope by March you don't forget what your Norton sounds like. Sound familiar?

Mike

## SONG CONTEST

I told Mike I envied these British guys you see, arm in arm, a mug of beer in their hands, singing a song that they all knew. I told Mike, "We can drink. . .some of us can sing. . .we need a Club song." As a kid, I always enjoyed Mad Magazine when they would put new lyrics to a familiar song. So this is my idea:

Put Club-specific lyrics to a well-known, easy to sing song (no "Star Spangled Banner"). I will post the submissions by e-mail for the Club to vote on. Winner will get a two year membership to the Club. Since 2009 is the 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the Club, this could be a fun project to mark this milestone. Maybe club member Brent's band, Red Ass Jones and the Goldbondsmen could record it for us?

*Back By Popular No Demand: I'm the guy that wrote the article about the porous cylinder head awhile back. In the article, I mentioned that in the 32 years I owned my Commando it suffered through two periods of inactivity. The first time I let this happen resulted in a rusted fuel tank, which I fixed with an application of Kreem fuel tank liner. The second time I allowed this to happen is what this article is about.*

## **The Dark Time**

**Bob Yancey**

I can honestly say that if I had known how frustrating this was going to be, I might have thought twice about it. I dusted her off, changed the oil, and installed a new battery and fresh gas. On the second kick I got a loud pop. On the third a "brrrrp." I thought to myself, "Sweet, she's going to fire up on the next kick." Well, it never did. I kicked till I was blue in the face and it wouldn't start. I pulled the plugs out and they were wet with gas. I dried them off and let them hang from the wires and rotated the kicker by hand. Lots of pretty blue fire shot from both plugs. I reinstalled the plugs and tried again. No good. I pulled the plugs again and all was the same. Next I ethered the air filter. No chowie. Then I removed the air filter, raised the slide on my single Mikuni and squirted gas right through the carb directly into the intake manifold with a syringe. No start. Then I tried squirting gas into the spark pug holes. Nadda. I reasoned that it was getting gas, has spark and good compression so it had to be timing. I knew precious little about the original ignition and nothing at all about this Boyer I had put on 10 or more years earlier.

Donelson's was the only place I could think of for help. I took it there on 12/13/05 and went to retrieve it when they called 22 days later on 01/04/06. When I arrived I noticed that the fuel tank wasn't on it. I enquired about it, and they told me that there was no sense in putting it back on, as it was no good and part of my problem. They said the reason my Norton wouldn't start was a faulty ignition switch and debris in the carb from my fuel

tank. And they added that they have never seen anything like it and had no idea how to get the debris out. Their recommendation was a new tank. I looked in and said, "I don't see anything." They said to take it home and drop in a mirror and a light and I would see.

Well I did and my heart truly sank. The Kreem that I had put in years ago had cracked into hundreds of pieces and had risen up around the edges. It looked as if some one had glued orange peels to the whole inside of the tank. The only place it didn't crack was the only place I could easily get to, below the fill cap. The first thing I tried was to call the Kreem Co. and tell them what happened and ask if there was some kind of a magic bullet antidote. Like fill it with Coca Cola and two aspirin, wait till morning, dump it out and back to bare metal. They said, "No our product is designed to resist gasoline which means it will resist almost everything and furthermore our product doesn't do what you said it did." (CLICK) Well so much for the friendly folks at Kreem.

Next I called a guy who cleans the rust out of tanks and coats them with a sealer. He said he had already tried to clean a Kreemed tank for a guy and his chemical didn't work. He said it took the guy a long time to get it out, and that he used acetone. (Nail polish remover.) Finally, I called my nephew, an environmental engineer and who knows a lot about chemicals. He'd never heard of Kreem, but looked it up and said that it would be hard to do. He named a few chemicals that would work, but

quickly added, "You have to have a license to buy them." Then he said that "acetone was almost as good, and anyone could buy it at any hardware store." So acetone it was. I started off with two gallons. I acquired a coffee can full of iron ore pellets to shake around in the tank. I made a scraper tool and started what would be a 5- or 6-month project. I quickly learned that I was going to have to give the acetone time to work. I also learned to point the tank away from my face while vigorously shaking. Pressure blew the fill hole stopper into the air missing my face by inches. I first regained sight of it when it was in re-entry mode about 25 feet in the air.

Well, now to some of that frustration I mentioned. I should say that when I took my bike to Donelson's, I thought a timing adjustment was all that was needed to get it running. It also had a leaking fuel line and master cylinder. I asked them to repair those two and install two new turn lamps. I thought I would be good to go and could ride off into the sunset. My bike sat for a couple days while I got organized on the tank job. I thought it would be fun to put gas in the carb and listen to it run. That's when I noticed two little puddles. One was under the master cylinder and the other was under one of my fork drain plugs. Donaldson decided that changing my fork oil would help it to run. They decided my fresh motor oil needed changing too. Later when I rebuilt the master cylinder and saw the gunk that was in the piston bore, it became obvious that they just topped it off and bled it. They charged me \$65 for a rebuild. When I looked at the leaking fork I found that drain plug was loose and that the head on the plug had been nearly obliterated. Not good. Well anyway, as long as it runs, I could live with it. But it didn't run! Same thing. No start, and every time I check I have fire and fuel. I paid them \$604 for things I didn't ask for and for things they obviously didn't

do, and it still didn't start! I was wilder than Donald Duck.

So I'm out in the garage wondering what to do when a friend interested in the Norton effort stops by. He had a Triumph years ago that was constantly having electrical problems. He insisted that something was shorted out and if we disconnected the wires going to what was shorted, it might start, and we might find out what's shorted at the same time. I didn't think much of the idea, but at that time I did not know, or know of, any person that had a Norton who I could talk to. And most importantly, drowning victims have been known to grasp at a straw floating by. Here at least was something to try. We took turns at kicking and disconnecting/reconnecting wires with no success, and after a bit he left. When he left I discovered that the ignition light no longer lit. I was checking to see if there was a loose connection on the Warning Light Assimilator when I discovered that it was very hot. I remember thinking that my buddy must know what he was talking about. It must be shorted because it's hot. Maybe that's why it won't start. So I ordered a new \$84 Solid State Assimilator from Fair Spares. As soon as it arrived I installed it, and the light still didn't come on. I had spent \$688 so far, and it still wouldn't start, and now I lost the ignition light.

I was losing the war. This was the low point. I couldn't fix it. Donelson's couldn't fix it. I had planned to rejoin the INOA, so I called them that day and ask if they would send me a copy of their last issue that I might scan it for a repair shop. I was willing to drive a long way if I had to. They said sure and then they said that there was a ST. LOUIS chapter and that they were nice guys and might be able to help. They gave me Joe Jump's number.

Joe was trying to be very helpful. He talked to me for a long time. He told me about a

number of tests to do. Unfortunately I didn't understand much of it. After a bit he probably realized that I was a mechanical moron. I realized he has probably forgotten more than I will ever know about Norton's. He did help me though. He said there's a guy in the club who's a motorcycle mechanic by trade and that he works on a lot of bikes in the club. He gave me the guy's phone number and I called him immediately, and that was the first time I talked to Mike French.

I told Mike the whole sad tale and then he told me a couple of sad things. First he never heard of Kreem doing that and had no idea about it. Secondly, he said his basement was full of club member bikes and he couldn't take on any more work for some time. He told me to take my bike somewhere else if I wanted to. He said to keep working on my tank and he would call me when he had the time for it. Mike did get my ignition light to work again over the phone. He said one of the wires coming from the rectifier went to the warning light assimilator and asked if I had messed with them. I said yes, I had. I made note of how it was wired and Mike said I had two wires crossed. I uncrossed the wires turned the ignition on and nothing. Then I hooked up my original Assimilator and tried it. To my amazement the light came right on. I guess I fried the new Solid State Assimilator when I switched on the ignition while the two wires were crossed. Regrettably, it still wouldn't run. He also said that he thought that my problem might be a loose connection somewhere and that as soon as the engine fires the vibration shakes it loose. He said that there was nothing to be discovered until the spark fails completely. Only then could I find why there's no spark. So every day I would try to start my bike, always ending with the same result.

Finally I got a break. One day it just wouldn't do anything. No pops, no spark. I waited till

my trusty wife came home and we got right to it. I'm color blind, so when I look at wires it's like, "Which gray wire?" I piled up on the workbench my complete arsenal of testing equipment, a 12-volt test light, and we proceeded. I was shocked at how fast it went. We traced the ignition circuit from the key to the kill switch. Current went into the kill switch, but never came back out. That was mighty interesting. When I unscrewed the switch base plate from the control housing, one of the wires fell away from the brass contactor it had been soldered to. Mike was spot on in his diagnosis. As soon as the engine fired the vibration shook it apart, killing it. As soon as the vibration ceased, it made contact again causing me to think it had spark. I thought that I was doing the right thing by buying a new Sparks replacement, but that proved to be unwise. By now it was March but at least I could start it and run it till the carburetor ran out of gas. It didn't want to idle but I wasn't worried about that. The tank job was not coming along at all. Mike ask me if I wanted to bring it to the '06 spring meeting at his house and said he had a gas tank we could put on it temporarily. I was glad I did. Joe Jump and Gary Creech dismounted, cleaned and reinstalled my carburetor in probably 20 minutes, resulting in a very smooth idle. Donelson's charged \$68 for this service. I guessed they somehow missed some of the crud. I went home a grateful happy camper.

July comes along and I'm not doing well on the tank. I was getting out depressingly little. I took my tank to the local radiator shop and asked if they would put it in the caustic acid bath. The guy said, Say so long to the paint job." So I said so long and my gas tank went into the acid for the weekend. I was there when he pulled it out and watched intently as he emptied it. Nothing came out! I took it home, refilled it with acetone and let it sit for a week, while I got into some serious

searching for another gas tank. I never did find an Interstate tank, but when I resumed cleaning a week later I was welcomed to a very nice surprise. That old Kreem finally started breaking up. I filled one of those plastic grocery bags with Kreem chips. Now it's August and I have the tank cleaned and re-coated with Por-15. I go to the auto body shop to get it and the side covers painted. The guy said if I wanted to strip it myself and wait just a little bit till he was painting something else black he could do it for half price, and he was always painting something black. I said sure, and what a mistake that was. After a month I reached my limit. On the day I decided to retrieve it and go elsewhere he called me and said it was done. It's September and I can finally ride my Norton. Ten months from the first kick to the first ride. Just in time for a rainy Rocky Top, and a good time. I didn't arrive till Saturday morning and that taught me a valuable lesson. To always get there on Friday night so you don't miss the fire jumpers.

As soon as I got back from Rocky Top, she quit. No spark. The first thing I checked was my new control assembly, discovering that the plastic base plate had broken. A friend came by with his soldering gun and re-soldered my old one, which I re-installed, and is still working today. My Norton started well for the short remainder of the season. I hadn't ridden it much in the beginning of the '07 seasons before it quit again. No spark. The kill switch was fine this time. I talked to Mike and he said that if I was willing to let it sit I could

bring it to the spring meeting at his house in a few weeks and he would look at it for me. That was the nicest way anyone has ever said, "Don't touch that Norton, stupid." He looked at it and the diagnosis was a bad Boyer. He told me that Bill Langer might have a used one for sale. I called Bill and I received it from him in the mail two days later. I was sorry to see him leave the area. I hadn't ridden long with Bill's old Boyer when it broke down on the road four miles from home. It felt like it was running on one cylinder for a few seconds and then died abruptly.

Quickly becoming Mike-dependent, I called him before I started fooling with wires again. He suggested that perhaps the magnets for the electronic ignition had shifted, and to check the retaining bolt that is screwed in where the centrifugal advance used to be. As soon as I removed the point's cover a wire fell out. It had detached itself from the Stator pick up plate and was shorting out against the timing cover. Mike re-soldered it for me, and modified the wires so it won't happen again. Well that's been 2,500 miles ago, and knock on wood, I haven't had an electrical problem since. I hope this doesn't sound like a bitch session, but there was very little time from one electrical problem to the next. I was actually telling my wife what roads I would be on and to come looking for me if I don't show up by a certain time. I have since learned that if you have a Boyer and wish to murder it, short of a sledgehammer a good way is to let it fire ungrounded plugs, which is what I did repeatedly.

#### Contact Information:

Mike French, King/President:  
Steve Hurst, Membership:  
Marty Dupree, Newsletter:

636-940-9365  
636-928-3391  
636-398-4049

mfrench9365@charter.net  
shurst01@att.net  
[madx2@att.net](mailto:madx2@att.net)

Dues are \$5 per year running July thru June. They are non-prorated to keep bookkeeping simple. Make check payable to "Steve Hurst" or send cash to Steve at: 966 Weybridge Ct. W. St. Charles, MO 63304.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

His name is Gary Doherty. I hope the electronic "welcome to the club" he received hasn't soured him to us. Gary was pressed for time when I approached him about a little bio for this newsletter but he said he would do one. Gary, we look forward to hearing your story!

## ED PERRY INTRODUCTION

I bought my 1974 750 Commando Roadster back in 1981 from one of my second cousin for \$950.00, which was a huge amount of moola for me at that time. Besides my mom and dad were on a vacation and they weren't around to ask about the purchase besides the banker was fine with it.

I actually did not know anything about English motorcycles but knew that I was buying a very cool bike. Most of the people in the area didn't know a damn thing about Norton's either. I used a trusty Clymer manual make the minor adjustments and to generally keep the bike running and sometimes not so smooth.

After 27 years it is hard to recall most of the events that happened to me and my bike. Here is a quick history of some of what I remember.

The fastest I ever tested myself and the bike was at 115 mph then the front wheel became too light to stay on the pavement. I thought, MAN what a smooth ride! , until I felt the front tire set back down on the pavement.

I took my 750 to college at SIU-C. We met up with more English bikes and riders. We had ourselves a grand time zooming around southern Illinois.

We ran into some trouble with a cracked connecting rod. Darn thing split right down the center. Looking from the riders perspective, after the head was removed, the right piston while still connected the crankshaft was  $\frac{1}{2}$ " inch lower in the cylinder than the left piston. Graduating college took a toll on the bike, it almost died. Well, it took me two attempts at overhauling to get the 750 running right. We've been involved in three spills but both of us are running fine.

And I have to hand it to my better half. Once I married my wife I thought she might prod me to sell the Roadster, but she told me to take care of it, have it repainted, keep it running smooth. I knew right then I made a good choice. See, I didn't know anything about women but I knew when I saw Peggy she was a cool one.

When my father was married he was told to sell his Indian Chief. He said selling it probably saved his life but he wishes he had kept it.

I have put a lot of work into the bike. I recently bought a set of Dunlop K 81's which made the ride like new. I have done some of the wrench turning on the bike but the majority of work on the bike is done by Ron of R & K Cycle of Kirkwood IL. their phone is 309-768-2489. Ron can fix practically anything. Lucky I found him.

Nort on... Ed Perry

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- December 20: Donelson's Customer Appreciation Day Open House. Rock Road location.
- July 20-24: 2009 INOA Rally near Manchos, Colorado [www.nortoncolorado.org/rally.html](http://www.nortoncolorado.org/rally.html)

### **Louisiana, MO Colorfest Ride, Oct 19, 2008.**

By Dale Knaus

In 2003 the Louisiana Colorfest committee asked me to organize a bike show for Sunday of the local fall festival, Colorfest Weekend, which is celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in October. Since then until this year I have helped put on the bike show. This year a new committee asked Chariots of Fire to sponsor the show and put it on, freeing me up to ride!

I spent some time the last couple of weeks putting a new spoke in the back wheel of the Mark III, this required pulling out the cush drive rubbers and the wheel bearings to get the spoke in, a real pain, but the bike was roadworthy again.

Charlie Mills, a local friend who I ride with quite often and who has helped me with judging the bike show in the past, rode with me to Troy for breakfast, where we met up with John & Ruth Wuebbeling. We rode the back roads West of Hwy 61 to Louisiana, highways H, E, Z, HH, & NN. Nice roads for cruising, with enough curves to be interesting.

Arriving at the show about noon, we met Steve Hurst, Jeff Hurst and his girlfriend, and King Mike French. The bike show was mostly V-twins, with one notable exception, a late 70's or so Triumph 750, stock.

We left the show and meandered through the various booths and food vendor stands of the Colorfest, set up for 4 blocks along our "main drag", Georgia Street. The local motorcycle & boat shop, Tread & Prop, had gone out of business and was auctioning off their miscellaneous stuff that day. We went down there for a while to see what was for sale, but didn't want to wait for the items to be auctioned.

The group wandered back to the show, kicked tires, and mid-afternoon we called it a day and fired up the bikes to head back South. I rode down highway W with the Wuebbelings, splitting up when I got to Lincoln County road F and came back to town on D. A nice curvy run.

When leaving Louisiana, we met a Norton heading into town, so when I got back to town I went back to the bike show to see if I could catch up with it. It turned out Bill Henkel had ridden up on his 750 Commando, along with Dave Swope, a friend of his, riding Bill's very nicely restored Yamaha 650 Seca.

We talked Nortons and bikes in general for maybe an hour, then split for home.

It was a nice day and a great ride with good friends. The trees waited another week to give us the color that would have made the roads more scenic.



A Norton rider from Bristol, England who is visiting St. Louis, walks into a bar and orders three mugs of Guinness Stout. He sits in the back of the room, drinking a sip out of each one in turn. When he finishes them, he comes back to the bar and orders three more.

The bartender approaches and tells the Norton owner, "You know, a mug goes flat after I draw it. It would taste better if you bought one at a time."

The biker replies, "Well, you see, I have two brothers. One is in India, the other is in London. When we left our home in Bristol, we promised that we'd drink this way to remember the days when we drank together. So I'm drinking one ale for each of my brothers and one for myself."

The bartender admits that this is a nice custom, and leaves it there. The English bloke becomes a regular in the bar and always drinks the same way. He orders three mugs and drinks them in turn.

One day, he comes in and only orders two mugs. All the regulars take notice and fall silent. When he comes back to the bar for the second round, the bartender says, "I don't want to intrude on your grief, but I wanted to offer my condolences on your loss."

The bloke looks quite puzzled for a moment, then a light dawns in his eyes and he laughs. "Oh, no! Everybody is just fine." he explains. "It's just that my wife and I joined the Baptist church and I had to quit drinking. Hasn't affected my brothers, though!"



1963 Norton Electra spotted at Barber's this year. Bob Yancey photo.



## WHY I LOVE TO RIDE

Doc Coogan

It was the summer of love (1967) and it was hot in Tampa! I had just turned 14. As with most 14 year old boys, my hormones ruled!! I think I fell in love every other day. There were 5 children in my family, I was the second oldest. We had migrated to Tampa from upstate New York when my father's Air Guard unit was activated. In New York my father had been operating 2 small airports and flying since his early twenties. By 1967 he had already done 2 tours in Vietnam flying F-4's and was now working as a civilian pilot for Continental Airlines a subsidiary of Air America.

Often when my dad was home from Vietnam, he would take me to McDill AFB where he would let me do cool stuff, like sit in the cockpit of an F-4 Phantom or shoot his M16 at the dump behind the base. My father was and still is my hero! Today at 77, he still flies and is an expert aviation accident investigator.

In the late summer of 1967 I had not seen my dad for about a year. So when he showed up and asked if we wanted to go overseas with him, there was no way I would have said no. I missed him terribly! We flew in a small Cessna he had rented to Montreal, where we spent a few days at Expo 67. From Montreal we flew commercial to England, Switzerland, India, then finally to Saigon, Vietnam. Our home was in between Saigon and Ben Hoa in a town called Tu Duc. The first day at my new home I had my first solo motorcycle experience.

There they were, two Honda 90's. A red one and a black one. I claimed the black one. It was so cool! My dad gave me a quick lesson and off I went. I was 14 with a fake

Vietnamese driver's license, riding through the streets of Saigon.

My younger sister Marlene and I attended and English school in the Chinese section of Saigon (Chi-Lon). The rest of my siblings spent most of their time in Singapore with my dad's new wife. I was allowed to ride the black Honda to and from school daily. I was also allowed to drive an old WWII military jeep, but given a choice, I rode the Honda. Charles Bronson had nothing on me.

It was the second week in my new school and I rode the Honda to school with my sister on the back. When we arrived I realized I had forgotten the lock and chain needed to secure my bike to a pole in front of school. Needless to say, at the end of the day my black Honda was gone. My dad got really pissed off and I was heart broken. I was forced to drive the jeep and for two weeks (it seemed like months). God, I loved that little black Honda 90!

There were about 14 American kids at my school that were around my age. The guys all had motorcycles, Honda Yamaha, etc. All of them small bikes, but to us they might as well have been big ass Harley's. After school we would hang out at the Ton Son Hut U.S.O. where we made friends with the G.I.'s. The G.I.'s helped me with many of my firsts. My first trip to Mamma Son's house, my first drink, etc. The G.I.'s were my friends. Some of them never made it home and I sometimes dream about them. I still dream about riding the Honda through the streets of Saigon. We loved harassing the white mice (Vietnamese police) and the cowboys (Vietnamese punks/thieves on motorcycles). We would ride our bikes through the streets of Saigon with no fear.

In 1968 things started to change. It was the end of January and the beginning of Tet (the Chinese New Year). I was attending a New Year's party in Chi-Lon given by the parents of a very pretty 16 year old Chinese girl. Her English name was Snow White (no, there were no dwarfs). My father was at another party given by a fellow Continental pilot. As the night wore on, the constant noise from the fireworks outside started to change. They were loud, very loud. All hell had broken loose in Chi-Lon. The Vietcong and North Vietnamese were attacking! My father stormed in to the house and we made for Tu Duc. I barely remember the ride home, but I do remember I was scared shitless!

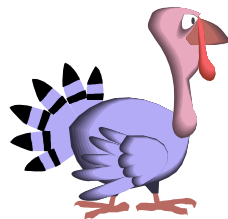
For the next two weeks I was not allowed to leave Tu Duc. Finally after things calmed down I was allowed to ride to Saigon. The U.S. Military has declared marshal law and the G.I.'s were not allowed in certain parts of Saigon. I was making my way to the U.S.O. when I was stopped at an M.P.

road block. I was a big and tall 14 year old and was often mistaken for a G.I. They did not believe I was a civilian and they took me and my red Honda 90 to their headquarters at Ton Son Hut. They chained and locked my bike to a fence. They took me to an office for questioning. They were confused and did not know what to do with me. They made the mistake of leaving me alone in an unlocked

office. While they were trying to figure out the situation, I snuck out of the office. The Continental office was across the runway. When I reached the Continental office I patiently waited for my dad to return from his mission. He was dropping supplies in Cambodia and Laos. When he landed I explained the situation, so off we went in the jeep with a welding torch he borrowed from one of the Continental hangars. My dad was pissed! We drove right up to the fence where my red Honda 90 was being held captive. My dad had his .38 with him, which he always took when he flew a mission. As we started to cut the chain with the welding torch an M.P. came up to us and made the mistake of asking us what the hell we were doing. The .38 came out and the M.P. walked away. My dad drove the jeep home and I rode the Honda. Don't mess with my bike!

So you see, to this day when I ride my black Norton I still think about those days so long ago, in a strange land so far away. The heat, the smell, the crowded roads, the G.I.'s who were my friends, the white mice, the cowboys and the friends who I lost such a long time ago. I seldom talk about my experiences living in Vietnam, so here's to my new friends, my Norton friends.

This is why I love to ride.



**Happy Thanksgiving everyone!** Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue. It was an embarrassment of riches because so much was submitted. In the next issue, expect an article by Chad Stretz, Rocky Top 2008 pictures and story, results of the Club Song Contest, and another Caption Contest. As always, send your submissions early so we don't have to "cram for the finals." My e-mail address is in the Contact Information box on page 5.

Marty & Peggy