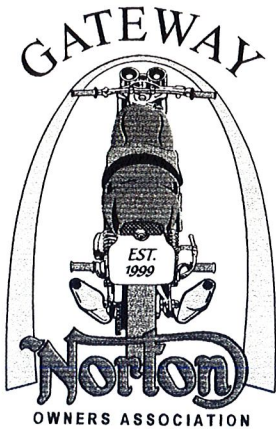


Gateway Norton Owners News #14



**"To Promote the
Use and Pride of
Norton Motorcycle Ownership"**
Compiled by Marty and Peggy Dupree
January 2003



FROM THE PRES

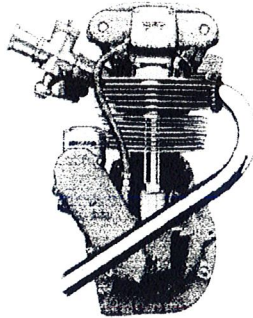
Happy New Year to all & welcome to 2003. As of this writing (01-03-03) I haven't gotten in a New Year's ride in yet, but I had a nice one on December 29th. I met up with a fellow Norton owner & took a nice ride. We ended up taking the old Lollygag Ride route that Tom Mitchell put together a few years back; through Wildewood, Labadie, Washington, Dutzow, Augusta, Defiance, & back home. Roger was riding his '73 850 Roadster that has gotten the Colorado Norton Works treatment-a real pretty bike & a good runner too. Come to find out that he also has a Kenny Dreer Commando, and a gaggle of Triumphs & BSAs. I have invited him to join us on other previous rides, but our schedules haven't worked out. Hopefully I'll be able to get him out to one of our upcoming get-togethers & sign up a new member.

My apologies to all those who were waiting for the Rocky Top Camp-out to materialize; obviously it didn't happen. Blame it on me - my extensive time away from home on business last fall prevented me from taking any more leave from my family responsibilities. My only consolation is that those whom I let down have been very polite & have not mentioned to me their disappointment in my performance-you guys are just too nice! My responsibilities also prevented me from participating in John Wuebbling's ride. From what I've heard, it was a great ride topped off by a generous spread at John's new homestead. Thanks John, from the club, for putting out the effort to host a ride.

Which brings me around to club business, of which we have none! It seems that where I should concentrate my efforts this year will be in trying to organize a regular get-together, like a monthly meeting at a local watering hole, followed or preceded by a ride. If we could meet on a more regular basis, I think that the club will start to pull back together a bit, and perhaps will give us a shot in the arm. At our meeting we can catch up on what everyone is up to, how are machines are running, where to get help, places & events that members are going to attend, etc. Perhaps we can even put together another Rocky Top this year!

Of course, there will be a bit more work to do with a more active club. I've solicited for the spirit of volunteerism in the past, and to those who have stepped up goes my sincere thanks. But now I will try a different approach. Don't be surprised if some day I walk up & ask you to do something specific for the club. Certainly you can decline, but if you agree to lead a ride after a meeting or open your garage to a tune-up day please follow through. This will not be a one way deal - if you have an idea for a club event but need some help, please bring it to my attention & I'll do my best to follow through.

I will establish a meeting for the Spring, probably a Sunday morning in April, where we can kick off the new riding season. I'll either contact you through separate correspondence or personally by phone. In the mean time, put together a plan so you can ride your bike to the meeting. Order the parts you've been needing, check your tires, change your fluids & charge your batteries. Let's try to kick this club off dead center!



*** NOTICE ***

Mike French has stated he will host another Norton Day at his house in February. The date is undecided at this time but all members will be contacted when it's finalized. Call Mike if you have any projects that may be suitable for a tech session: 636-940-9365.

JOHN WUEBBLING'S GLORIOUS RIDE

By Tom Mitchell

Meeting at the I-70/Lake St. Louis exit Hardee's at about 10am, Gateway Norton and EMU folks trickled in till we had a very decent gathering. Showing were: Ted Hoyer, Mike French, Steve Hurst, Bill Bluemel, John Wuebbling and Tom Mitchell, all Norton mounted. On Beemer's were Jack Hutson, Dennis Spencer and long lost friend Jack Schnelker. And wonder of wonders was Tom Moors with his fiancée on his souped-up '79 Bonney. Marty Dupree swept with his pickup.

Without going through all the right and left turns and sweepers we took, may I say John did a great job of finding and putting together some good and some spectacular roads, all in St. Charles and Lincoln counties. This was John's goal and he succeeded admirably! Although it was a cold day it was sunny (Mike does not like cold weather). The fall colors were just about peaked.

As the ride continued and it warmed up some. . . well, this is why I called it "John's Glorious Ride". Well-sorted preferably British bikes meandering together on a fall day going up and down, sweeping left and turning right with the temperature just about perfect for a British machine; it was so fun! We had some views of the countryside that were so picturesque. Thank you John! After about 100 miles on the nose, John pulled us into his new residence on the same road as Mid-America raceway with his better half, Ruth, and daughter greeting us and then listening to our babbling about the exceptional ride we just had.

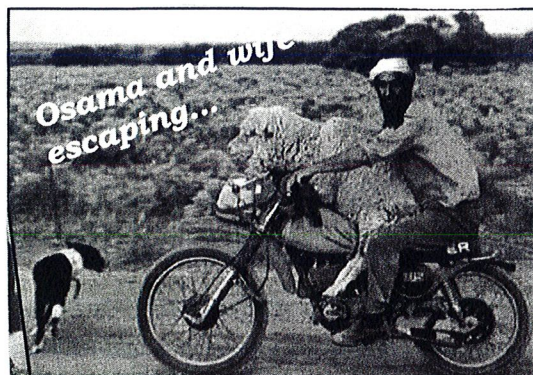
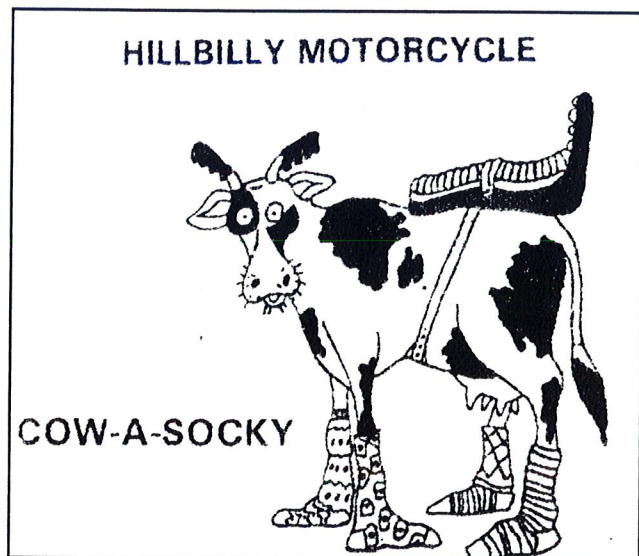
After taking a brief around his acreage and buildings, Ruth, John and daughter broke out the very substantial food setup with chili, noodles, brats, chips, dip, beer, pop, desserts, etc. As the sun beat down, we sat around talking, looking, adjusting and comparing. As the afternoon wore on, one by one various riders started their bikes, mounted and left. Although we had few outings this year for the GNOA, this final one made up for it. It was a glorious finale! Thanks John and Ruth.

CREECH'S CORNER

I'm calling it this because these three items were submitted by Gary. His instructions were: "Found this in an old bike mag, thought you could stick it in the newsletter sometime."

I like the Norton because it offers more pure motorcycling than any other bike that I have ever ridden, sure the owner will have to hassle keeping it in tune, cleaning off oil, watching three different lube levels and funning with the electric. But unlike Jap bikes, this is designed by the folks who ride spooky roads every day and dig it! It's a machine for the guy who gets involved deeply with his motorcycle. It is not hermetically sealed, sanitized for his protection. It is not a motorcycle forever, nor does it pretend to be.

Dave Swift, 1972



In case this picture isn't clear when printed,
let me say his ewe "wife" is a real barnyard
"hottie" Editor

WEBSITES I KNOW AND LOVE

By Marty Dupree

I'm sure all of you have favorite websites, the ones you go to every week and sometimes every day. As Norton lovers, we check out the INOA site, the NOC site and probably DynoDave's site at www.norton.com (after you wade through the computer programs he tries to sell). The best personal (as opposed to an organization) site for me is George Cohen's at www.norton.uk.com. George is the editor of Roadholder and only deals in single cylinder Norton's. It's amazing how much stuff he has on his site. While searching for petrol tank repair options I ran across Ross Thompson Restoration at www.execulink.com/~rosst/. It shows some before and after tanks that they have repaired. Quite impressive. I might have sent mine to them if they had been located in the U.S. Have you ever wondered what an oil pressure gauge for a Model 7 looked like? You know, the one that is in the top of the fuel tank? For a peek, try going to http://home.iprimus.com.au/rohanb/norton/tomey_160psi.jpg. Need a Smiths gauge? Take a gander at www.gaugeguys.com/smithscat/htm.

If you're very lonely and want several e-mails a day from people you don't know from around the world, log on to the NOC site, go to the "General" section, then to the NOC-list Mailing List section. Fill in the required information and you will not be lonely any more. The most e-mails I've received in a day is 19. I went to their site to search the archives for ES2 entries but had to join the e-list to do so. Naturally, most of the posts are Commando related, but sometimes a real gem pops up. For instance, on August 31 after finishing the motorcycle text of his message, Steve Shiver from Arkansas posted the following:

I went to the store the other day, I was only in there for about 5 minutes and when I came out there was a damn motorcycle cop writing a parking ticket. So I went up to him and said, "Come on buddy, how about giving a guy a break?" He ignored me and continued writing the ticket. So I called him a pencil-necked Nazi. He glared at me and starting writing another ticket for having bald tires!! So I called him a horse poop. He finished the second ticket and put it on the car with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket!! This went on for about 20 minutes, the more I abused him, the more tickets he wrote. Finally, I got bored and went around to where I'd parked my own bike...

The Fatback Report

By J.J.

By now you all are probably getting sick of hearing about my dealings with the Brown Goo, aka how the new-fangled oxiginated fuels are attacking my fiberglass tank, but I think I might have found the solution.

As you may recall, I tried the Casswell repair kit-it didn't work. Mike French tried it too with similar failures. He went on to try POR-15, and that didn't work either. I was hoping that if I ignored it, the problem would go away-no such luck! It became glaringly apparent at the ride to Marty's last spring. While our bikes were lined up for pics in full sunlight, I noticed a shadow along the bottom edge of my tank. Further examination revealed that the fuel was attacking the seam where the bottom of the tank meets the side, and the seam was starting to swell & get soft-it was going South in a hurry! Now I was desperatel! Not only was I having to deal with the inconvenience of having to clean my carbs occasionally, but my tank was about to melt before my eyes! I was faced with 3 choices; convert my bike into a Roadster using a steel Roadster tank, buy an alloy Fastback tank, or find a sealer that worked!

It finally dawned on me that maybe I should ask an expert- I called Doug at Colorado Norton Works. He recommended a product sold by Bill Hirsch Automotive, a company specializing in auto restoration products, known as Alcohol-Proof tank sealer, about \$20 a pint. I called them up & ordered one for myself.

The product is white, one part, and dries relatively fast when exposed to air. Some folks say my description sounds like Kreem-I don't know 'cause I've never seen a tank done with Kreem. I've heard some real horror stories about Kreem, coming loose from the inside of the tank & found floating around like a loose bladder. I was under the impression that Kreem dried sort of rubbery-this stuff seems hard.

All the standard preparation instructions apply. This time I used a heavy-duty detergent sold by POR-15 called Marine Clean, but I think it was nothing more than a glorified Simple Green. I sloshed it with a bunch of nuts & bolts, leaving the cleaning solution in the tank for a few days, and whenever I passed by the tank I gave it a few sloshes, rolling it over a time or two while agitating. The idea is to get it as clean as possible, and that is not such an easy task. I just did my best and tried not to rush it. After about a week of this, I dumped out the soap & rinsed the tank a few times with hot water, then left it out in the sun to dry for a few days.

Ensuring that all moisture was gone, I spent a few minutes preparing the tank prior to pouring in the sealer. I installed an old set of petcocks to prevent loosing the sealer out the holes & ruining my good ones. I also found a roll of wide packaging tape to apply over the mouth of the filler. I still latched down the filler cap on top of the tape, but the tape prevented any leakage through the cap vent. The instructions say to pour in the sealer,

slosh, and then drain off the excess & let dry. On my tank there is a lip around the inside edge of the filler preventing adequate drainage through there, so I decided I would drain the excess through the threaded bosses that the petcocks screw into. I chose to drain the excess directly back into the can it came in & chased down an extra can to catch the excess from the second boss. I had a sawhorse standing by to rest the tank on for drainage & drying, and stools to hold the drain cans close to the bosses. So then I was ready- I opened up the can of sealer, poured it in (using a funnel), sealed the filler, then proceeded to roll the tank around, allowing gravity to do it's thing to distribute the sealer. After a few minutes of this, I wanted to take a peak & see how it was doing-looked ok, so I pulled the junk petcocks & started to drain the excess sealer. I recovered about a third of the original pint of sealer by looking inside the filler & blocking up the tank so the excess ran out the petcock boss. I guess if the excess would pool up in an area, it may form a skin over itself & not cure thoroughly. After draining I wiped out the threads of the petcock bosses with a rag to prevent build-up.

I let it dry for a few days in the sun, then repeated the process using the left over sealer.

After the second coat had dried, I was looking around inside the tank checking for coverage. I was doing this in full sunlight, and I happened to notice a couple spots that were still a bit translucent, indicating thin coverage. I decided to order another pint & do it again. If I had it to do over, I would have bought a quart to start with & pour it all in at once the first time. This sealer is somewhat thick & viscous, kinda like pancake syrup. But with exposure to air it starts to thicken up quickly. Given the convoluted bottom on my Fatback tank, a pint simply wasn't enough volume of sealer to cover the whole inside surface of my tank fast enough, hence some areas weren't coated as well as others.

So the results? Well, after about 5-6 months, all seems fine. No more sticky slides, no more Brown Goo, and the sealer is not coming loose.

So if any of you guys (I know of at least one) are having trouble with the Brown Goo, I think I've got it wupped-gimme a call!

ES2 Update

Last edition found my tank at the "wizard with metals" workshop. "Stop by next weekend and I'll be done," he said. Since I wanted to give him plenty of time to do a good job I waited a month before I went back. He hadn't gotten around to it yet. Two more attempts yielded the same result. On the fourth visit, with my mind made up to take it done or not, he had worked on it. The dents were raised but were not quite high enough. He suggested that maybe the plater could buff the contour right since the tank was made of thick steel. Not being too keen with that idea, he offered to work on it some more.

Always curious, I inquired how he got to the dents located on the left side of the frame tube tunnel. His technique was simple. Put a bolt in one fuel tap, insert a male air hose fitting in the other. Make a device to close the gas cap hole. Pump a little air in the tank. Use a torch to heat up the dent. Carefully tap adjacent to the dent and let the air pressure do the work of raising the damage.

Neat, but it still needs some additional attention. I'm afraid the bottom will have to be cut out to really get the job done right. I'll see what he did when he gets it done "next weekend".

MOVIE REVIEW

By Marty Dupree

Make a list of the three worst movies ever made. Professional critics always mention Ishtar and Yentl, and I am including I Bought A Vampire Motorcycle to the list. I saw this listed on e-Bay in a Norton Motorcycle search, and for \$6.99 I thought I couldn't go wrong. How wrong I was. It turns out this was a very poorly pirated copy (barely viewable at times due to a worn out master tape) with Chinese character subtitles. The story goes something like this....

Our unsuspecting hero, "Noddy", purchases an 850 non-electric start Commando that had previously been used in a satanic ritual gone awry. Blood dripped into the gas tank. I'm sure this is not good for any motorcycle, especially a Norton. Even though Noddy got what he thought was a good deal on the bike, he couldn't tell his wife the actual purchase price. Okay, so that is the most believable part so far.

After cleaning and prepping the bike all day and into the night with a friend, it starts first kick. Rev, rev, vroom, vroom. It's late, so he goes to bed and can't wait to ride it the next morning. When the sun rises, he pushes the bike out of his shed and is sure it will start right up, but after many kicks and cusses ("bloody 'ell" is the recurring expletive), it just won't fire. They stop working on it to go to the funeral of a motorcycle mate. The funeral consisted of a motorcycle procession with the coffin slid down into a sidecar.

Without giving too much away, the vampire motorcycle is able to start itself (after the sun goes down) and goes on its "bloody search". How, you may ask, does a motorcycle suck blood? Quite obvious - it rears up on its back wheel and "fangs" drop out from the bottom of the sliders. After many victims and mishaps (and a stop at the "Fu King" Chinese restaurant) the mayhem is brought to an end when sunlamps are turned on while Noddy, his wife, the detective and the priest hold crosses over the shriveling, moaning remains of this evil machine. In what are undoubtedly the best lines of the whole movie, the detective says, "What make of motorcycle was that?" Noddy replies, "A Norton Commando." The priest, in all sincerity, says, "Funny, I thought they were more reliable than that."

If any club members still feel as if they would want to see this, it's free for the using. Remember: be kind, please rewind.

And now a few words from our Far East correspondent...

MOTORCYCLING IN CHINA

By Robin Swaysland

Marty asked me to write about our trip to China in September and give an impression of the motorcycling side of Chinese life. This is rather difficult to do as I didn't ride a motorcycle at all during our 3 week vacation, so at best I can describe my observations from coaches, trains, boats, and walks in some of China's major cities.

The reason for visiting China at this time was because next year the upper Yangtze river will be flooded after the Three Gorges Dam is completed. This will raise the water level 570 feet, and destroy over 100 cultural and historically important sites. A secondary reason for the trip was so that Sylvia could see how much the country

had changed since she was there as a member of a ballet company on a cultural exchange in 1957.

Our trip took us via Japan (no stop-over) to Beijing (Peking), the present capital, Shanghai, Wuhan, Chongqing (the capital during the war years from 1937 to 1945), Xian, Guilin, and finally Hong Kong, from where we flew home.

Beijing is a huge city with a population of 11 million, with two important historical sites - Tianamen Square, and the Forbidden City, where the Imperial Palaces of the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties resided. On the outskirts of the city are the Summer Palace, the Ming Tombs and

the Great Wall - which stretches for 3000 miles, and was built 2000 years ago! Naturally we visited all of these sites during our 4 day stay. The streets in Beijing appear to be in utter chaos, with bicycles, scooters, motorcycles, pedicabs (the front end of a motorcycle attached to a two wheeled, two passenger conveyance with or without a canopy), cars, buses, coaches and trucks all vying for the same piece of pavement. The strangest truck I saw had a single front wheel, belt driven by what appeared to be a single cylinder "hit and miss" stationary engine. It certainly sounded like one. It wasn't long before the two front seats of our coach were the last to be occupied, and those who did could be heard gasping every few seconds for fear that we had run over a cyclist, for they would turn in front of our coach without looking and dare the driver to hit them. Bicycles are very cheap in China, the basic single speed costing about \$20, which probable accounts for the numbers on the streets. One morning our guide told us that we were very lucky to have the second best driver in Beijing driving us. After a long pause he added, "The best driver is in hospital recovering from an accident!" A little local humor here. A few days later I did comment to him about the complete lack of discipline on the streets and he asked me if I had seen an accident yet, and I have to admit that I hadn't and I never did the whole time we were in China.

Apparently only 250cc and smaller motorcycles are permitted in China, and most appear to be of Chinese manufacture, although I did see a few made in Japan. I was amazed at the size and weight of merchandise being transported to market on these small motorcycles, not to mention cyclists with trailers heaped with similar loads. I also saw a few Chang Jiang flat head boxer outfits, which I believe are Chinese copies of Russian copies of German BMW R71's. When I mentioned to our guide that they were obviously larger than 250cc's he said that it was probably owned by a government 'official', as they had certain privileges. I was told that helmets were mandatory in China but I only saw about 10% of riders wearing them! The helmets would certainly not pass any DOT tests, they reminded me of

Chinese army issues. Women passengers ride side-saddle on both cycles and motorcycles, some of the women even held sun shades on the cycles.

Next we flew to Shanghai, which has a population of 16 million if you count the suburbs. Shanghai is the center of China's economic resurgence with a 7% growth rate. It has many new, attractive high-rise buildings, and some innovative architectural designs. China used a number of foreign architects for this work. We were told that 20% of the world's cranes were in the city, and there was a lot of foreign investment, especially from France and Germany. The Communist Party was born in Shanghai, with victory over the Nationalists in 1949, after which the foreigners left the country, leaving behind many commercial buildings which remain, and are in use today. The buildings still hint of their nationality with architecture similar to English, French and Russian buildings. These are mainly situated along one bank of the Yangtze River, the region being called the "Bund". The city has an excellent subway system, but traffic is still chaotic. There were Buick Regals everywhere, but on closer inspection of a parked Buick, the trunk lid had a chrome strip which read "Shanghai Buick". Our guide said that they are produced locally and are used mostly by 'officials'. In order to reduce automobile congestion in the major cities the Government has raised the price of licence tags to be equal to the price of the car! However, it doesn't seem to be working.

We spent three days in Shanghai, where we visited the museum with collections of Chinese relics and artifacts, including china pottery, a rug factory, and the Yuyuan Garden, with cloistered courtyards, winding walkways, stone bridges over carp filled ponds, bamboo woods and rock gardens. We made a side trip by train to Suzhou, which is like a scruffy Venice, without the Italian architecture, but with all the smells and floating debris, which we experienced from small, 12 passenger boats. The city is famous for silk production so we naturally were taken to a silk factory, and where naturally Sylvia bought some clothes.

The sidewalks in the major cities are wide, to accommodate the vast numbers of pedestrians, and at some of the intersections groups of young men would park their motorcycles in a row and sit on them, smoking cigarettes. I suppose they were trying to emulate the Hell's Angels, for it's hard to look tough and menacing when you weigh 100 pounds, can't grow a beard, and only have 250cc bikes without extended forks.

From Shanghai we flew to Wuhan, where we began a 5 day cruise of the Yangtze River, which terminated at Chongqing. Our cruise ship (The Princess Jeannie) held about 150 passengers, and was one of three ships originally built in Germany for a Russian cruise line for use on the Volga River, but were purchased by the Chinese cruise line when Russia defaulted. Our cabin had German plumbing and electrical fixtures and a Russian refrigerator. The Yangtze river is 3,400 miles long, which is 310 miles shorter than the Mississippi river, and flows about the same speed, and is of a similar muddy appearance. It splits China into the north and south.

I didn't see many motorcycles on the cruise, except for one amusing incident I viewed from the boat. A young man rode his motorcycle down the river bank straight into the river as we passed, where it quit as the water reached the electrical system. He looked down at the engine in surprise, got off in waist deep water and pushed it to shore. The last I saw of him was sitting on the river bank presumably waiting for it to dry out.

The banks of the river as we left Wuhan were rather flat, but as we approached the three gorges the banks grew into spectacular giant limestone ridges. The dam is in the process of construction at the first of the three gorges, at Xiling gorge. When complete the dam will be 600ft high and 11/4 miles wide. It will be 4 times the size of Hoover Dam, and will contain a ship elevator, large enough to raise a 3000 ton floating ship the height of the dam. 20,000 people have been working round the clock for the last 18 years on the project which is scheduled for completion in 2-3 years, at which time the river level upstream (the direction we were traveling) will rise 570 feet, and many historical sites will be flooded. In

fact 1.3 million people will be displaced- some to new improved villages built on higher ground above their old villages, the less fortunate will be relocated to other parts of China, where the local language will be different. To the western world this all seems unthinkable, but not to the Chinese Government, who on the positive side maintain that the dam will provide 15% of China's electricity, reduce flooding and improve navigation on the river. One concern was that the dam could be a military target, and when I asked our guide who they feared as an aggressor, he said it would be Japan.

After visiting the dam sight we continued though Wu gorge, which has lush green mountains, limestone and shale cliffs. We could see markers high up on the cliff faces which indicated where the water level would rise to. We disembarked at a city called Wushan, to board sampans for an excursion on the Daning River to the Lesser Three Gorges. Leaving the ship to get to the coaches was a perilous experience. We walked across a long floating pontoon walkway in drizzling rain, then in single file up a steep, slippery, muddy bank with "steps" cut in the mud. The crew had left earlier and formed a human chain to pass us from one to another up the slimy incline. What was bizarre was that they were dressed in full uniforms including patent leather shoes, the girls in high heels! Along the way we passed numerous disfigured beggars and peddlers. The lower part of the city was in complete chaos, in the process of complete disassembly, manually, of course. The coolies were carrying huge piles of bricks suspended on each end of large bamboo poles. I saw one small thin man carrying an oxygen welding tank on his shoulder. Everything in the site was being carried up to the new city, which was under construction above the future flood line. The coach ride to our sampans was also as treacherous. With horns blaring, the coaches wound though narrow untidy streets narrowly missing oncoming traffic, pedestrians, bicycles, trucks and carts. The streets were lined with "shops" which consisted of openings in the buildings at ground level, a bit like roll-front garages. All manner of business was being conducted- barbers, electrical appliances,

cooking, bicycle and motorcycle repair, automobile spare parts, etc.

In complete contrast the sampan ride was a tranquil relaxing experience, well worth the trouble getting there. The Daning River, and the Lesser Three Gorges covers a distance of 30 miles, and has unique natural scenery with towering peaks, sheer cliffs, canyons and waterfalls. We saw wild monkeys, goats, sheep, and caves cut high up in cliffs containing coffins placed by the local Ba people in ancient times (to be closer to heaven). The water of the Daning River, which flows into the Yantze River, by contrast, is a clear green color, with frequent shallow rapids. The sampans held about 30 people, including a crew of 4. One of the crew controlled the boat's engine and rudder at the stern, while the others took turns steering (pushing) the bow with long bamboo poles with metal spikes on the end when we grounded on the loose shale. As the rain was intermittent, we took turns from the covered seating area to sit with the pole men. One of them kept staring at my arms, fascinated it seems with the hair on them, as his arms were bald when he held them out and rubbed them. He spoke no English, but I think that is what he was telling me.

The trip back to Wushan was much faster as we were traveling downstream. The river bank was easier to traverse as the rain had stopped and some of the mud had dried, so it wasn't too long before we were back on board "Princess Jeannie" and making our way through Qutang Gorge, the last of the major gorges

Our next stop was the city of Wanxian, with a population of 1.6 million, the largest city to be flooded when the dam is completed. This time we had we climbed stone steps to a more prosperous city than Wushan. We visited a "free" market (not government controlled) and then were driven up to the new city and stopped at an area with modern shops and apartment buildings for resettled Wanxians. We were apparently a real novelty to the locals, as few western travelers are taken to this place. A large crowd of friendly people gathered, not begging, selling or asking for anything. They were very happy to have their

pictures taken, especially with their children. It was an enjoyable experience for all.

The cruise ended at the city of Chongqing, the largest city in China with 32 million inhabitants. We left the ship to the accompaniment of the ships band, now recognizable as our stewards, waiters, cleaners, bar tenders etc., playing patriotic American music. We could now excuse the quality of the music when we were first played aboard at Wuhan, as this was not the band members' major skill.

Chongqing was the capital of China during the Sino-Japanese war from 1937 to 1945, and is where General Stillwell had his headquarters, and was the home of the "Flying Tigers". 300,000 Chinese died there from Japanese bombs during WW11, and it was obvious from our guide that Japan was not a favored nation! The city streets are filled with yellow cabs, and bicycles are not allowed on the busy streets. There is no subway system, because the city is built on rock, so to ease traffic congestion a monorail system is under construction. We were taken to the city zoo, to see giant pandas, which was unique for us, but overall the zoo is very poor in comparison to St. Louis. Unfortunately the museum to General Stillwell and the Flying Tigers was under renovation so we didn't get to see that.

From Chongqing we flew to Xian, which has a population of only 6.5 million! This is where the tomb of Qin Shi Huang (259-210BC) was discovered by well diggers in 1974. The tomb includes 6000 life size terra cotta warriors, archers, infantrymen, horsemen with their horses, chariots, all in battle formation. Only a portion of the site has so far been excavated- there will be many more years of work to complete it. In the evening we were taken to the Tang Dynasty Restaurant and Theater for dinner and a spectacular show. The Chinese meal was excellent, served with warm rice wine, by attractive girls in traditional costumes. The elegant production had a large cast of athletic men and beautiful female dancers, all in colorful costumes copied from the Tang Dynasty period (618-907AD), and the musicians played instruments from the same times,

many no longer in use. The Tang Dynasty was the most prosperous and cultural period in Chinese history, and the performance reflected some of the arts from that period.

Our next stop was the city of Guilin, about a 11/2 hour flight from Xian. Guilin is a small city by Chinese standards, with a population of half a million. This was our favorite city in China, situated on the river Li in some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. The city was heavily damaged by bombing during the Sino-Japanese war, but has been completely rebuilt. Our hotel overlooked the river, and was within walking distance of the city center, on the opposite bank of the river. After dinner at the hotel, which was an excellent Western -style meal served at the table, Sylvia and some of the women on the tour went to a local hospital annex where foot and body massages were given by trainee masseurs. She said they did a good job and the cost was minimal. I should mention that the food we had on the tour varied from the above to Chinese meals served on Lazy-Susans, with a great variety of dishes, or buffet style with a choice of Western or Chinese food. We never went hungry, and enjoyed most meals, except for pork which was mostly fat. While the ladies were at the spa, my friend and I walked along the promenade, across the bridge and into the city center. Along the way a group of students approached us and asked if they could take our pictures, then further along another group asked if they could walk with us and practice their English. We ended the evening relaxing at a table outside a bar watching and being watched by the crowds of local people.

Our next day began with a 45 minute ride to board a local river boat for a cruise on the Li River, passing rice paddies with water buffalo grazing at the waters edge. The cruise lasted 4 hours, terminating at the small market town of Yangshuo, and took us through landscapes of "hump-peaked" mountains, sheer cliffs with varying colors that made designs that looked like animals and birds. We passed small settlements, where locals were transporting goods on narrow flat rafts, and fishermen were using tame cormorants to catch fish. The birds were tethered and had their necks

constricted to stop them swallowing the fish they caught. Our boat had 3 decks with tables and seating on the first two, and an open deck topside for picture-taking. A buffet lunch of Chinese dishes was served during the cruise. It was a very nice boat trip with spectacular scenery on a sunny day with a refreshing cool breeze. At Yangshou we bartered with a local stall owner and bought a very nice crocheted lace tablecloth. The bartering is the same all over China- no words are spoken, the seller writes his price in Yuan (1 yuan = 12 cents) on a piece of paper, or enters it into a hand calculator, and hands it to the buyer who changes it to a lower number. They continue to and fro until both parties are happy. We soon learned not to show interest in an item for sale unless we were prepared to go through this.

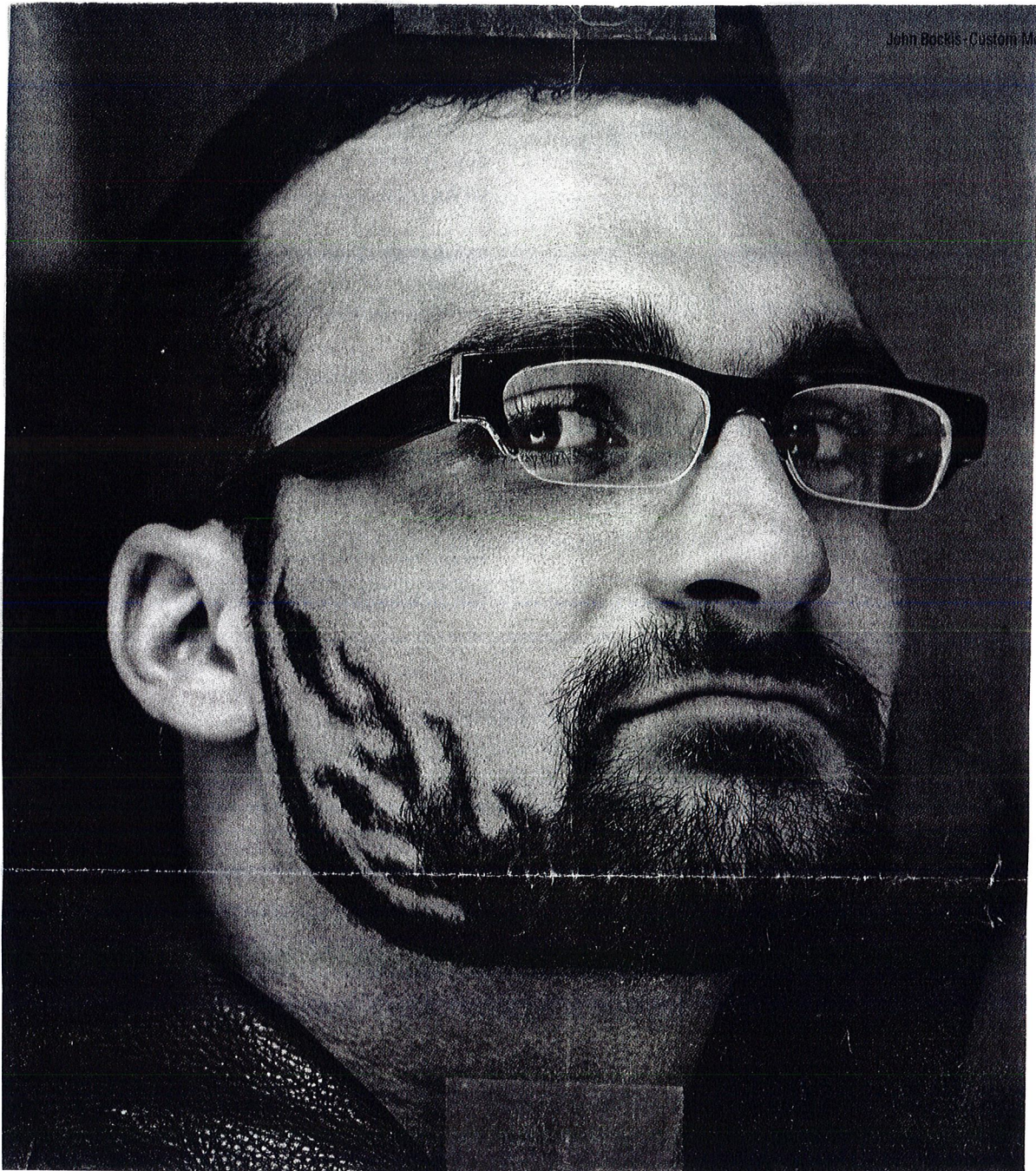
The following day we toured the Guilin Teacher's University for a lecture and demonstration of traditional Chinese painting. I was the only volunteer to try to copy his technique. My humble effort presently resides on our refrigerator door! In the evening we flew from Guilin to Hong Kong, the last city on our trip.

As you probably know, Hong Kong was returned to China by Britain when the 99 year lease expired in 1997. This is not very apparent to the observer, for Hong Kong is very different to other Chinese cities. The currency is in dollars (1 HK dollar = 13 US cents), the people are more prosperous, and the prices of goods are much higher. Hong Kong is one of the four most expensive cities in the world, along with New York, London and Tokyo. I was amazed to see so many Rolls Royce, Bentley, Mercedes, BMW and Ferrari cars, and Harley Davidson motorcycles. We started the day with a ride on the Star Ferry from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island, a 15 minute ride, and we took the Peak Tram, the worlds steepest funicular railway, to the top of Victoria Peak, overlooking Hong Kong Harbor to Kowloon Peninsular, and the New Territories in the distance. Our local guide said that Hong Kong hadn't changed much since 1997. The laws were the same as in Britain, the educational system was the same, same taxation, no one child per family restriction as in China, and the traffic drove on the left side of the road. He

said it would take 50 years to complete the transformation. We visited the floating village of Aberdeen, where we boarded 12 passenger sampans for a tour of the harbor, where thousands of boat people used to spend their lives and make

their livings. It is less crowded now as many of the boats have been moved to other harbors.

We didn't enjoy Hong Kong as much as the rest of our trip, due in part to the rain which continued from our arrival until our departure.



What do you think, should I do this to my beard if I put flames on my fuel tank?

VELOCITY
By Billy Collins
Poet Laureate of the United States

In the club car that morning I had my notebook
opened on my lap and my pen uncapped,
looking every inch the writer
right down to the little writer's frown on my face.

But there was nothing to write about
except life and death
and the low warning sound of the train whistle.

I did not want to write about the scenery
that was flashing past, cows spread over a pasture,
hay rolled up meticulously-
things you see once and will never see again.

But I kept my pen moving by drawing
over and over again
the face of a motorcyclist in profile-

for no reason I can think of-
A biker with sunglasses and a weak chin,
leaning forward, helmetless,
his long thin hair trailing behind him in the wind.

I also drew lines to indicate speed,
to show the air becoming visible
as it broke over the biker's face

the way it was breaking over the face
of the locomotive that was pulling me
toward Omaha and whatever lay beyond Omaha
for me and all the other stops to make

before the time to arrive at a stop for good.
We must always look at things
from the point of view of eternity,

the college theologians used to insist
from which, I imagine, we would all
appear to have speed lines trailing behind us
as we rush along the road of the world,

as we rush down the long tunnel of time-
the biker, of course, drunk on the wind,
but also the man reading by a fire,

speed lines coming off his shoulders and his book,
and the woman standing on a beach
studying the curve of horizon,
even the child asleep on a summer night,

speed lines flying from the posters of her bed,
from the white tips of the pillowcases
and from the edges of her perfectly motionless body.

Editor's Editorial

I'm sorry I didn't get this out in December but the holidays just seemed to run into each other. (Peggy types this, and she told me that the newsletter would just have to wait until AFTER the holidays!) This issue won't count as one of the four due in 2003. So you know what this means - I NEED SUBMISSIONS! Ideas might include "What I did to my bike over the winter vacation", "This is how I got my Norton", "Here's how racing season went last year" (hint, hint, Ernie), "The ride I took last month", "Interesting comments people have said to me and my Norton", "Rallies I've gone to", etc. etc. Any articles you might submit don't have to be very long (or true!), but this newsletter will be more interesting if we all contribute. A big thanks this issue to Robin for his China article. What an experience that must have been.

I'm trying to compile an archive of all the issues of the GNOA newsletter for posterity. I am missing issues 5 and 8. Does anybody have them? If so, please send them to me and I'll return them after I make copies.

I hope you've found this issue interesting. We had a technical article, cartoons, jokes, travel stories, movie review, and poetry. Two more issues like this and we'll have The New Yorker on it's knees.

(PS) Would someone be interested in doing some movie or book reviews? It would give you a good reason to watch some trashy cycle videos. "Dear, I really don't enjoy this sort of thing but I'm doing it for the club!"