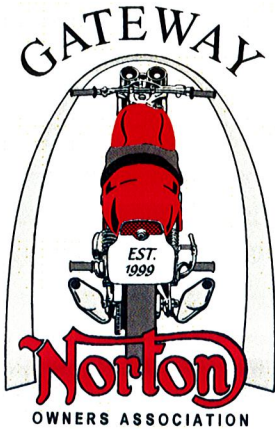


# Gateway Norton Owners News #47



**"To Promote the  
Use and Pride of  
Norton Motorcycle Ownership"**  
Compiled by Marty and Peggy Dupree  
March 2011



## THE T SHIRTS ARE IN!!! THE T SHIRTS ARE IN!!!!

They will be available at the Kick-Start meeting. Pay and pick them up then. If you can't attend, make arrangements with Mike. He won't hold them long so don't make him mad. You know how he gets. 636-288-5088

### KING'S KOLUMN

Get that Bastard out! (Not your Norton, but rather a large file.) This highly technical article will reflect on the high tech mechanical aspects of the Norton Commando circa 1968 thru 1977 along with many other makes/models from years past. I can only relate to you what I have found in the past, having torn apart a dozen or so Nortons, a dozen Triumphs, 8½ BSAs and a couple assorted AJS and Matchless engines. We won't go into the numerous Honda, Toyota, Briggs and Stratton, and Chevy and Ford engines (perhaps a later article.)

What I have found out is that old motorbikes have been thru hell by previous owners "fixing them" along with mid-evil designs, manufactured with worn out machines, by worn out people with worse attitudes than myself. These old British engines I have found to be heavy, inefficient, inaccurate, awkward, and downright beautiful works of art. However, I have always found sealing surfaces in dire need of help, not much mind you, just a little big flat bastard skillfully applied to certain surfaces to help avoid the oil/fuel leaks associated with Brit bikes. The areas are as follows:

1. Amal carburetor bowls: flat file them carefully with a large bastard and use quality, thick red Amal gaskets (if you can find them). Due to overtightening, they warp and suck air around the idle passage and the mixture becomes weak and they may leak fuel.
2. Valve covers: same bastard on them, mark them "left" and "right" scratched inside so to put back in the same orientation after every valve adjustment (helps stop oil leaks).
3. Crankcase/barrel surface: I have personally chased down a chronic oil leaker until I removed all the studs and ran a bastard across the surface. I was appalled at first, realizing that over time the cylinder flange studs pulled small volcano-looking areas up around each crankcase stud holding the cylinder to the crankcase. Take this warning. . . small high spots will make rather large low spots all over the area that you do not want to leak. That's where

the bastard comes in. These engines are not rocket science, run the file across the surface just to see what gives. It will show up all high spots on any flat surfaces. You won't hurt anything, just use discretion and a nice new large flat bastard file. Do not drag it backwards (this will dull it) and keep your bastard clean! You can get a small wire brush to clean it often, especially after filing aluminum. A good sharp file is just as handy as a heavy hammer.

4. Check your oil tank: stick a small telescopic magnet down to the bottom of your oil tank, swish it around and see what comes up. Realize that this swarf is traveling to the heart of your engine, the rod bearings. I have had to regrind two crankshafts in the last two months, worn down due to contamination in the oil system. Nortons only filter the oil "going back to the tank" so the swarf in the tank goes right to the heart of the matter.

Thanks to all for listening. See you at Kurt's with some spankin' t-shirts. [Great advice, you old bastard file user!]

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 09: AMA Supercross (FIM World Championship) at the Edward Jones Dome.
- April 10: Trash pick-up day at 10:00 a.m. See minutes on page 3 for details.
- April 16: Swap Meet at St. Charles Harley Davidson (Cave Springs exit) 314-620-0399
- April 29: Royal wedding! Book your airline tickets or plan your party now! (You KNOW you're interested!) This would be a great date for a Club ride . . . . .
- April 30: Spring Kick Start meeting at Kurt Baue's, 528 N. Benton in St. Charles. 636-947-3895. Bring your ideas for the Club along with a snack if you are arriving on four wheels. There will be a donation jar for the food and drinks that will be provided. Be generous!
- May 14: Club ride hosted by Scott Dowler, from his house in St. Charles County to Hermann. See minutes on page 3 for details.
- June 13: Road America (held in Wisconsin). Tom Mitchell wants to know if anyone is going. Call him at 636-947-0717.
- July 18-23 INOA Rally. Find info on this web link: [www.inoanorton.com](http://www.inoanorton.com)

### FOR SALE:

Tires for Commando. Dunlop and Avon. 4.10/19 Like new (less than 500 rolling miles) Also... First come First served. I have a Boyer Electronic Ignition complete unit for sale. \$100 Fits Norton Commando and Triumph/BSA, too. Call King Mike 636-288-5088.

2004 H.D. Ultra Classic Custom with custom paint, new tires, brakes, and engine overhaul. 40,000 miles. Selling due to serious medical set-backs. \$12,000. 636-441-0338 ask for Hank.



## MINUTES and OBSERVATIONS from FEBRUARY MEETING

Winter meeting at The Corner Bar in St. Charles started at 8pm with 17 members present.

Unfinished Business: T-shirts - still waiting for head count. Shirts have been white short sleeve with pocket and the Club logo on the back. Steve Hurst motioned that the Club pay the up-front money on the T-shirts, seconded and approved. Mark Bosworth asked if a moisture-wicking fabric could be used, which would be nice but we will stick with cotton. Scott Dowler asked for green T-shirts, which led to several people asking "How 'bout this color?" So we will keep our white. (Scott, just tell yourself, "white is the new green!")

New Business:

Spring Kick-Start Meeting will be held at member Kurt Baue's house April 30. We will hold elections for President, Vice President, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. If you have a desire to do any of these jobs, please step forward and let your desire be known - don't be shy! We will also talk about Club rides and other Club functions, so be thinking about hosting one of these.

Trash Pickup: Steve reported that MoDot is having a "No More Trash Bash" campaign. They would like all road sponsors to clean up their stretch this Spring. Steve set our date as Sunday, April 3 with a rain date of Sunday, April 10, at 10:00 a.m. Our one-mile stretch of road is in St. Charles County, Highway 79 about two miles north of I-70. We would like to have at least 8 participants to knock this out quickly. High vis vests and plastic bags will be supplied - bring gloves, or better yet, one of those "claw" grabbers that you can get at Dollar General. My experience shows a stick with a nail on the end doesn't work all that well, and besides, most of us shouldn't have sharp/pointy objects.

Club Ride: Scott Dowler has offered to host a ride from his house (in St. Charles County near the Daniel Boone Home) on Saturday, May 14, leaving at 10:00 a.m. You will take a scenic route towards Hermann. Mapquest for directions - his address is 2386 Highway F, Defiance, MO, or call 314-378-6600.

Campout: Club member Robbie Pesek has offered to host a campout at his country estate near Piedmont, MO in late summer. More information will be given at the Spring Kick-Start meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

INOA Rally: Mark Bosworth offered to take the Club banner to the rally and will pick it up at the Spring Kick-Start meeting (did I mention it is on April 30<sup>th</sup>?). Other attendees will be Bob Yancey and Gary Creech. Anyone else going?

Free Advice: Mike French offered to give free over-the-phone Norton motorcycle advice to Club members until he gets a paying job. Call him at 636-940-9365. Don't make him mad, though. You know how he gets.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40.

## MY REBUILD/RESTORATION

John Murray

Hello fellow Norton enthusiasts! Here's a few notes on the restoration of my 750 Commando. It's a 1973 750cc model, built July 1972, bought late in 2006 in a complete but non-running condition. The engine is a Combat version and these 72/73 models were built with the engine breather located low on the left crankcase rear.

I dismantled the bike completely, first step was to bead blast the battery box, brake drum and back plate, Isolastic mounts and air filter back plate. I then sent the frame and swing arm out for commercial sand blasting. Also, I boiled out and stripped the oil tank in strong caustic detergent. All these parts were then primed with epoxy chromate and top coated with black aerothane. All Isolastic rubber parts replaced, replated steel collars, etc., assembled to chassis with stainless hardware. Swing arm installed with new bushing and O-rings, new bearings pressed into frame neck for fork stem. Chassis re-assembly started, all new hardware, either stainless or grade 8, all bolts not screwed into nylok nuts drilled for safety wire, Norvil racing headsteady.

Front forks rebuilt next with new upper tubes, bushings, seals, etc., and long gaiters. Triple clamps bead blasted and painted black, low "Euro" handlebars installed. Along the way I bought a nickel plating kit from Caswells and plated lots of small parts.

Wheels next. Both hubs rebuilt, new bearings, seals, etc., installed. Axles and related parts stripped and parkerized (no plating on axles, no clearance), wheels built with stainless spokes from Buchanans and Morad alloy rims. After I built the wheels I had Donelson's balance and mount new Dunlop K-81 tires.

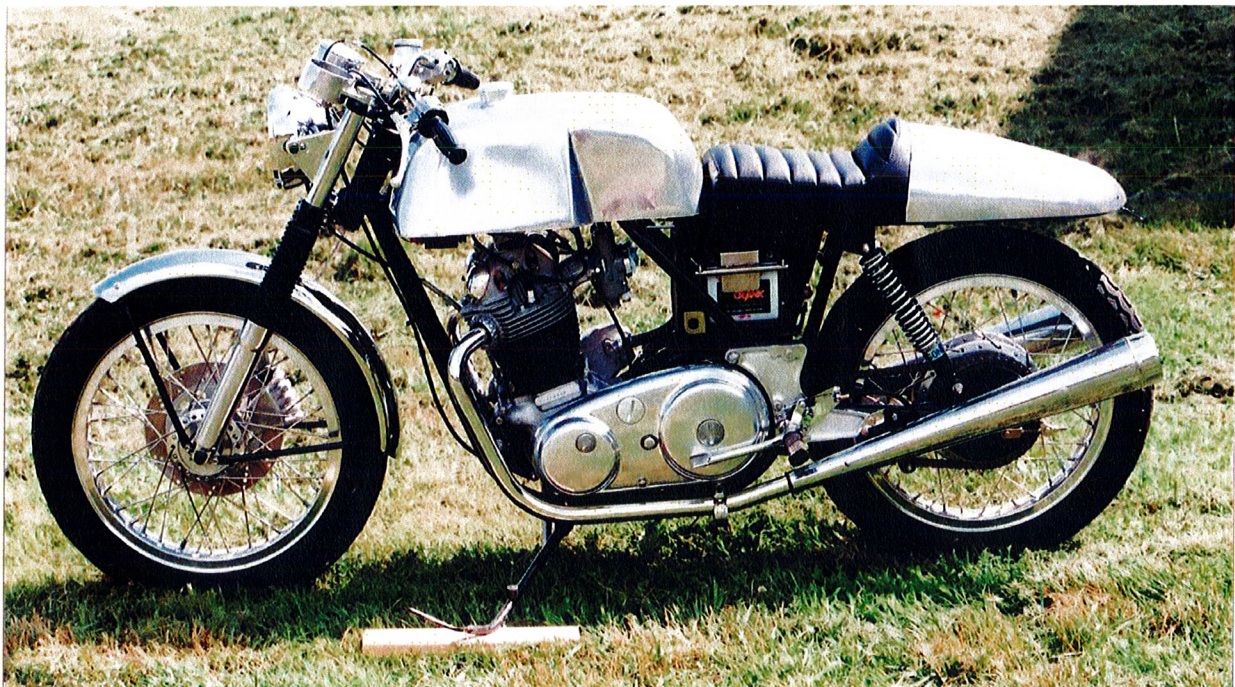
Engine next. This bike only had 8,550 miles on it since new, but had been in storage since 1983. Disassembly revealed why, it was in the beginning stage of a classic combat engine bearing failure. The R-H. bearing was very fretted and one cylinder bore showed noticeable scratches. I disassembled everything completely down to taking the crankshaft apart. I should mention that my dad, rebuilding a 750 Commando of his own, had bought a lot of Norton factory tools already. All the special pullers, etc. for engine work and so forth, and I had made some tools from pictures in the shop manuals. After solvent tanking all parts inspected, crank journal showed no wear at all, rods good, cam good, etc. I blasted the cases and heads with walnut shells and started reassembly. Engine rebuilt to original Combat specs, new rod bearings, Super blends, etc. While I had the cases apart, I did the "Hemmings modification," machined the LH case, re-routed oil passage, three holes into timing case, etc. and made the breather elbow from LH rear of crank case to right behind timing cover on the RH side (like an 850). Replaced the cylinders casting with a brand new (old stock) set, a stock bore 750cc cylinder set made like an 850cc part, with long through bolts, no base nuts on the sides, etc. New (old stock) Hepolite pistons, all variable clearances set tight, intending careful break-in. Mike French ground the valves and seats, I shortened the push rods .040" per tech digest suggestion. Carbs (32mm) disassembled, tanked, rebuilt, carb mounting hardware, rocker shaft end cap hardware, etc. drilled for safety wire. Exhaust ports rebuilt by "Fair Spares" in California . . . a great job.



Transmission disassembled, case walnut shell blasted, no appreciable wear detectable, reassembled with new bearing, seals, O-rings and gaskets. Primary parts and clutch solvent tanked, inspected, no wear or damage detectable. The engine, transmission and primary drive was assembled to chassis with new stainless hardware, lock washers, etc.

Along the way I buffed out and polished the alloy parts (inner and outer primaries, transmission end cover, timing cover, rocker covers, fork sliders, front and rear hubs, speedo and tach holders, etc.) and sent a box of stuff to Triangle Plating for chrome plating. Gary Hollowich drilled and ground the front disc, I rebuilt the caliper and installed Ferodo Gold pads and stainless hydraulic line. I bought an RGM master cylinder sleeve kit, bought metric drill and tap and sleeved the master cylinder to 13mm.

With the bike up on two wheels and basically complete, now I could do the more creative (fun) parts. I made a new café racer style fuel tank, tail cowl and seat pan out of 3003-H14 aluminum, .063" thick. The tank is mounted to the stock frame brackets with stock lord mounts in front and a padded clamp in back. It holds slightly (one quart) less than 5 gallons. Fuel cap is vented, a Fitzall old airplane cap common to Stearman, Piper, Aeronca, Travelaire, Waco, etc. Thus a replacement always handy. An upholstery guy finished the seat out in black vinyl or naugahyde or something. The small rear fender is aluminum, courtesy of Mike French, possibly a BSA product. I trimmed and modified it somewhat and mounted it with thick rubber pads, I made a new stainless battery box and hold-down set up which fits inside the original battery box (2 bolts), also it has a bracket to hold the ignition switch. The switch is a 35 amp Allis Chalmers item, and can be removed without undoing anything else.



I made rear set controls from pictures I saw in "Classic Bike". They are 4130 chrome-moly tubing and chrome plated. Rear brake set uses stock brake light switch. I made a shorter cable to replace



the original. I made a tail light and license mount from 4130 sheet, the tail light is from a Chinese mini-bike (from Mike), the rubbers on the foot pegs are Triumph parts, I think.

The mufflers are original Dunstall parts but the baffles etc. must have fallen out somewhere. I cut off the original mounts and added new ones to allow two lord mounts for each muffler. I made a new kick start arm out of two old ones, it is 3" longer than stock. I wired the bike using the scheme in the tech digest, used 16 gauge wire and shrink-fit tubing.

A trip to Mike's house (bike on a trailer) got it started, timed and carbs nicely adjusted. On returning home I wrestled the stock air filter assembly into place. That convinced me to severely modify the air filter setup. In a day or two, I hope to have a nice mod worked out that will work well, and be way easier to install.

In closing, I'd like to say that this has been a very enjoyable project, no bad surprises, not too hard or crazy to work on. I look forward to building up another one sometime, maybe a full-tilt Norvil racer. Thanks to Mike for his help and Marty Dupree for introducing me to the Norton club.

A man is stopped by the police at midnight and asked where he's going.

"I'm on the way to listen to a lecture about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse on the human body."

The policeman asks, "Really! And who's going to give a lecture at this time of night?"

"My wife," comes the reply.

## ASK A BIKER MOM

Dear Biker Momma Jane,

My wife said she would like to ride two-up with me now. Years ago she said, "You're nuts, no f'n way I will ever ride with you again!" My question is...what the hell is going on???

Confused in Defiance

Dear Confused,

Why re you confused? Think back on the last ride se went on with you. Maybe you scared her so much in the past with your crazy riding maneuvers that she went into shock. Now that some time has passed and she feels you have become more experienced, she is willing to try it again. If you really want her to go with you, I would pick a nice sunny mild day and have a destination in mind before you go. Tell her you are planning it just for her. Have a 30-40 minute ride and go to a winery or restaurant, and no crazy maneuvers. Possibly she feels neglected and thinks you are out having too much fun without her. Bet it pays off, too.

## MY NEW GAS TANK

Mark Bosworth

This story began 25 years ago on the front range of the Rocky Mountains. One of my riding buddies Sherman the German had this cool 1970 Norton S model. One day we traded bikes and with that one ride I was hooked. I told him if he ever wanted to sell the bike let me know.

Fast forward to 2007 and I get a phone call from Sherm telling me that he was now 73 and not riding as much as he used to and was I still interested in that green Norton. I said yes and the deal was done. Later that summer I stopped off in Pueblo, Colorado on my way back from running at Bonneville and loaded the bike on the trailer and brought it back to St. Louis.

The bike had not been run in quite awhile and that was before some people decided that we should use our food supply as our energy supply. Filled up the fiberglass tank with some high-test pump gas and got the bike running. From the get go the left cylinder would pop at idle. Dinked around with the Amals with no luck and considered sending them out to be sleeved. Changed my mind and bought a single Mikuni with a one into two manifold. Bike now started and idled but the more I rode it the slide would stick. It was suggested to me that the original Mikuni spring was not very robust and I should beef it up by stuffing one of the Amal springs in there too. That helped but it still got stuck open now and then. Not very safe and unnerving having to pull in the clutch to slow down while the motor is screaming away at  $\frac{3}{4}$  throttle.

After the GNOA campout in the fall of 2009 I pulled the carburetor off and found it was coated on the inside with a brown varnish. So was the intake manifold. An e-mail to Mike

French and he confirms that it is the dreaded brown goo from the unintended consequence of putting ethanol into gas. Off comes the head. Why just clean it when you can get it blasted, repainted and rebuilt. While the head is off check the pistons and yes they are loose in the bore. Off comes the barrels, order new pistons and rings, get the barrels bored out and repaint them.

The whole time I am doing this work in the back of my mind I am thinking "If I am spending all this time and money what am I going to do about the gas tank?" Should I line it with epoxy? Ok do that. Then I start reading that Ducati is having problems with the roto-molded tanks on the Multistrada. Gas in the United States is causing them to swell and split. They don't have ethanol in Europe yet. Then some are saying that none of the tank liners are really that good. Some are better than others but in time they all will all fail. What to do, what to do?

I made the decision to get a steel tank and be done with all this foolishness. Started looking around and found out the used ones available on E-Bay and such were mostly junk. Rusted, dented would need lots of time and body work to get them usable. New ones are expensive and some of them on the market are made in some third world countries and are worthless. Searching around the internet I found Burton Bike Bits in England. They sell all kinds of gas tanks for vintage British bikes. I contacted them and was assured by Danny Page that their tanks are not made in Pakistan or India. I also asked around on the Norton Commando forum on Jerry Doe's web site and Burton and their products came highly recommended. Christmas 2010 came and I got a little extra in the year-end bonus. Contacted Danny and he gave me a price quote including shipping



and delivery in British Pounds. Had him put it on my credit card and send it out.

Now I do all of the purchasing for the factory working with big international companies who can't get a shipment out of Europe through customs and delivered in less than a month. The package from Burton arrived in 8 days! I was impressed. The quality looks good. It is

heavy and made of steel that appears thick enough to hold up over time. The changeover from the original tank on the S Model will require a rear bracket because this tank is a Roadster reproduction. No problem The King had one and he sold it to me.

#### **NEXT INSTALLMENT MOCK UP AND PAINT**



*To borrow a line from a famous Paul Simon song....*

#### **THERE MUST BE 50 WAYS (OR MORE) TO DROP YOUR BIKE**

I saw a long list of ways on a website (which I don't remember) and have whittled it down to 50 of what I think are the best. I personally saw #18 happen to Gary Creech at the Club campout, and #41 happens to King Mike more than he's willing to admit.

1. Putting your foot into a hole when stopping.
2. Putting your foot down on something slippery when stopping (gravel, dog dookey, etc).
3. Locking the front wheel during over enthusiastic braking.
4. Missing the driveway and sliding on the grass.
5. Not putting the kickstand down when getting off.
6. Make a turn from stop in gravel or sand at high throttle.
7. Not putting a board under the kickstand on asphalt on a hot day.
8. Forgetting the bike's in gear when you jump on the kickstarter.
9. Revving the engine, releasing clutch, and putting feet on pegs when the light turns green, but the bike's in neutral.
10. Losing balance when putting it on the centerstand.



11. Ignoring the sand that builds up in the spring at the side of the road in places that sand and salt roads in winter.
12. Kicking your kickstand in a cool fashion and having it bounce back up instead of staying down.
13. Having your fat brother lean way over to the side to look at something on the ground while at a stop sign.
14. Wife gets foot caught in saddlebag while getting on before you.
15. Look at the sand at the edge of the exit ramp rather than through the turn.
16. Trying to hold the bike upright before deploying the center stand only to find your knees are too weak from riding.
17. After getting fuel at gas station and holding the bike level with your legs in order to fill it completely, jumping off forgetting that your legs were holding it upright not the kickstand.
18. Getting your boot/shoelace caught on the gearshift.
19. Getting pissed off for dropping it in the first place, yanking it vigorously off the ground, only to have it dropped on the other side.
20. \*Thinking\* the kick stand was down when it wasn't.
21. Kick stand slowly burying itself in hot asphalt.
22. Kick stand slowly burying itself in soft ground.
23. Backing your bike down a plank, by yourself, from the bed of a pickup truck. Works great as long as you remember that once you start moving stopping for any correction is out of the question. Get two people to stand on each side of you and the bike.
24. Losing your balance when coming to a stop because of fatigue from a long trip. The wind and the buzz of the bike induces an unexpected case of vertigo. Stop often and rest.
25. Riding beyond your limits while trying to keep up with someone who is probably riding beyond their own. Always a temptation. The best riders/racers understand and use discipline when riding.
26. Assuming that all wet roads are created equal. They are much more slippery when it first starts to rain - until the oil and dirt are washed away.
27. Assuming that the condition of a blind corner is the same as it was the last time you rode it. Instead you find sticks, road kill, oil, rain wash, stones, pot holes, garbage etc.
28. Being to short for the bike you are riding, and coming to a stop sign.
29. Your rider hops on before you are ready.
30. Pushing your bike into the garage and letting it get leaned just a little away from you, pulling you on top of it to the ground.
31. Pulling off both fork caps while the bike is on its centerstand.
32. Allow friend to ride bike that has either no riding experience, or only tiny dirtbike riding experience (they will wheelie out of control, fly straight at the nearest object, or drop it attempting to stop suddenly.)
33. Pulling into Dairy Queen and slipping on a spilt chocolate malt.
34. Running into a bus after a 120mph+ high speed chase where there is helicopter pursuit and you are being taped by 5 local news stations.
35. Spending 3 hours washing and waxing your bike and then stepping back to admire it with some buddies and then watch it fall right off its side stand while it was warming up.
36. Covering it with a windsail (aka canvas cover) and letting the wind push it over.
37. Unbolting too many components from the back so that the bike falls off the jack.
38. Discovering when you stop and try to put your foot down that the footpeg is up your pantleg.
39. While pushing your bike in an attempt to start it by compression, jumping on side-saddle with excessive vigor.

40. Successfully compression starting your bike while running alongside, only to find out that you'd held a BIT too much throttle!
41. Riding in stilettos and getting stuck on the footrest.
42. Swinging your legs too enthusiastically over the bike with tight trousers on and kicking it over.
43. Dismounting while trying not to wet yourself (cold weather).
44. Pulling off with a blood alcohol level exceeding the stated limit.
45. Reaching down to pick up your gloves/keys/glasses.
46. Dropping your dirtbike on the side of a steep hill covered in pine humus, then while getting it righted go over the down side because it's too far of an angle to get a foot down.
47. Trying to ride away on the side of a steep hill covered in pine humus which is slipperier than sand.
48. Trying to get a wasp out of your jacket while sitting on the bike.
49. Throw a party and get together with a random girl on your bike in the garage while extremely drunk.
50. Stop for gas, carefully shut off ignition and take key out (to unlock tank), carefully remove helmet and set it over mirror, carefully remove gloves and place on instruments, open jacket, step off bike...forgetting to put sidestand down.

#### **Contact Information:**

Mike French, King/President:	636-940-9365	mfrench9365@charter.net
Steve Hurst, Membership:	636-928-3391	shurst01@att.net
Marty Dupree, Newsletter:	636-398-4049	madx2@centurytel.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.

#### **Don't let this happen to you!!!!!!**

A tough-looking biker was out riding when he sees a girl about to jump off a bridge, so he stops.

"What are you doing?" he asks. "I'm going to commit suicide," she says.

While he did not want to appear insensitive, he didn't want to miss an opportunity, so he asked,

"Well, before you jump, why don't you give me a kiss." So she does.

After she's finished, the biker says, "Wow, that was the best kiss I have ever had. That's a real talent you are wasting. You could be famous! Why are you committing suicide?"

"My parents don't like me dressing up like a girl."

#### **Editor's Comments**

Thank you to everyone who took the time to submit something for this newsletter. Member input is what makes it interesting and bonds us together as a Club.

If you have changed your email address or phone number in the last year, please pass the new information to me at the Spring Kick-Start meeting, or phone/email it to me.