

# Trail Gazette

Aug-Sep 2020

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## Vintage Motorcycle Destruction by Fires

*By Bill Quaccia*

Here is an accounting of three unfortunate owner's of vintage motorcycles and their losses to the September forest fires in Oregon.

**Skip Ortner**, Grand Poobah (really) of Southern Chapter of the OVM, for many, many years hosted informal Wednesday night BBQ meetings at his rented home on East Bolz Road in Phoenix, Oregon. Skip's place was an extremely high-visible location at the confluence of Hwy 99 and I-5 adjacent to the Union 76, a main source of ethanol free high octane. Many, many strangers would see the bikes parked, the BBQ smoking mightily and pull in to join the Wednesday night Tech Session. Now the unofficial OVM Clubhouse is just a pile of ash never to be rebuilt.

With fire and wind barreling toward him, Skip made a decision: he moved five motorcycles from his garage across the busy two-lane to the gas station! Would that location be safer than a wooden structure on Bear Creek Greenway? Yes, a BSA 441, Triumphs T140 & Daytona, Norton Commando and a modern BMW G/S survived with only a slight dusting of ash! Skip escaped in his beloved 1960 Chevrolet half ton, "Stella." Left behind with tools, parts and dozens of major trophies were a BSA B50, Honda Trail90, CZ MX and last but not least the Three Stooges Racing Team and reigning Pacific Coast AHRMA champion Triumph Daytona road race bike, Skip Ortner, pilot.



Remains of Skip Ortner's home in Phoenix, Oregon

Lost with Skip's Phoenix abode, aka The Clubhouse, were dozens of photos, trophies and much racing memorabilia collected from his early pro MX career and later AHRMA road race revival. Truly the end of an era. The Rogue Valley has lost a treasured meeting place.



Remains of one of Skip Ortner's motorcycles after the fire in Phoenix, Oregon



**Don and Sherry Turner** evacuated their home and motorcycle shop in Phoenix, Oregon, leaving Don's lovely Velocette, hard-working Triumph, and a recently resurrected BMW airhead. Don, a regular Wednesday-night tech visitor is a fabulous mechanic of all things motorcycle, but he is specially versed in the art of the Britt. As an important aside, Don was a mechanic to Jim Pomeroy back in the day and an amateur racer himself. Whereas several Skip Ortner bikes were reduced to frame, crankshaft, and puddled aluminum, Don's bikes were merely damaged severely. Indeed, plans for a resurrection are being discussed with the magician Terry Wolbert!

Semi driver **Bill Beebe** was overnighing at his usual room at the Best Western, Eureka, California while all hell was breaking loose on the Bear Creek Greenway. Bill is an auto and motorcycle enthusiast, graphic designer of many of the Oregon Vintage Motorcycle club T-shirts and co-organizer of the SOTT, Southern Oregon TT. Adorning his Talent, Oregon living room was his prized pre-unit Triton now reduced to junk in the rubble of his home. Luckily, his motorcycle collection was stored at another location, miraculously spared by the leap-frogging inferno. His autos, workshop, tools, and memorabilia is in that junkpile that once was a two-story house.



Above and below, remains of some of Don and Sherry Turner's motorcycles.



Before and after of Bill Beebe's Norton and Karmann Ghia







## The Pres Letter

Hello! Hello! Hello!

I hope this newsletter finds you safe. The phrase, "Be Safe," or the question, "Are you safe?" are very common and frequent parts of my vocabulary these days. To those of you who were in some serious situations over the last month, know we are thinking of you. And, to those of you who have had family and friends affected by the craziness of this past month, know we are thinking of you too.

As you read this month's newsletter, please check out the new format. Drop the Newsletter Editor, Tom Nielsen, a line to let him know what you think. Guidelines for placing ads in the newsletter and on the website have been included in this edition as well. I encourage you to check them out.

Today is a beautiful day! Tom and I are looking forward to taking out our bikes and enjoying a fine fall ride! Our sidecar is up and running, so we get to take the dogs along as well. I wish all of you safety and health.

Peace out,  
Jen  
[tomandjen@shadyapple.com](mailto:tomandjen@shadyapple.com)  
503.522.3163

*"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together."*

— Anonymous

## Officer Election Results

We had very good voter turn-out, with 28 ballots cast. Unanimous for the incumbent officers. Congratulations to all.

### October 10<sup>th</sup> ACTIVITY

#### Newberg Coffee

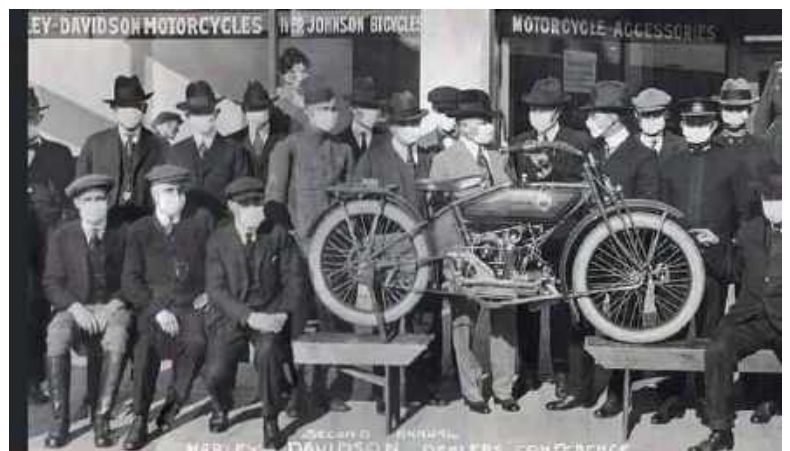
Meet at 11:00 AM at See See Motor Coffee  
**Rain or shine.**

This will be just a gathering, no club ride planned. However, there are lots of scenic ways to get to Newberg.

See See has two outside seating areas and a spacious inside coffee bar.

101 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Newberg, OR

Follow Oregon's social distancing and mask rules



Introduction of the Harley-Davidson Twin Sport at the second ever HD Dealers Conference in 1919. Note the face masks, as this was during the 1918-1920 Flu Pandemic.



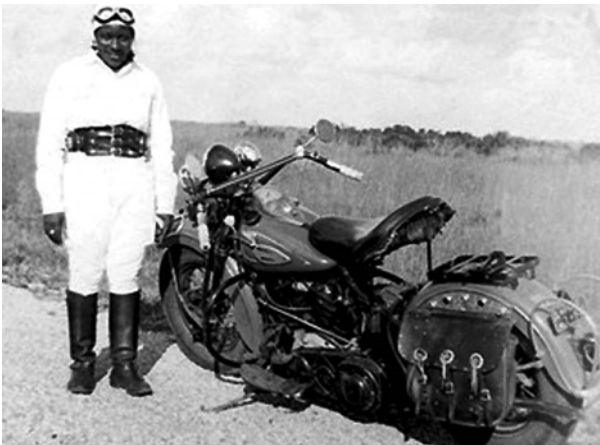
## Bikers You Should Know: Bessie Stringfield

By Bryan Wood

Meet Bessie Stringfield, a true trailblazer and hero for two-wheeled women everywhere. If you were to read the list of places Bessie Stringfield rode to, and the number of miles she racked up, you would be impressed if it had been done in the 1980s. Bessie, though, pulled it off long before then and in a time when some felt a woman like her shouldn't even be on the road. A 5-foot-2 black woman, and only 19 when she started, Bessie began riding in the pre-WWII, pre-civil rights, pre-interstate highway era—facts that amplify her accomplishments even more.

Born on the island of Jamaica in 1911, her father was Jamaican and her mother a white Dutch woman. The family moved to Boston early on, but both of her parents died of smallpox when she was just 5 years old and she was adopted. Her early life is a little murky, and she has said that though her adopted family loved her and cared for her, she was not allowed to use their name. It seems they were fairly well-to-do though because when Bessie asked for a motorcycle for her 16th birthday, the family gave her a new 1928 Indian Scout 101.

After graduating high school, Bessie started crisscrossing the country on her bike, working to earn money at carnivals and county fairs doing motorcycle stunts. Besides stunts, she would also compete in flat track events and hill climbs (I'm assuming she did this on whatever motorcycle she was touring on at the time). [she is known for tossing a coin onto a map and riding to wherever it landed, eventually covering the lower 48 states.]



Her many tours of the continental US carried her through the Great Depression, and she also managed trips to Brazil, Haiti, and Europe. When America entered World War II, Bessie volunteered



herself and her bike (a Harley 61 knucklehead) as couriers. Going back and forth between home-front military installations, she eventually crossed the country another eight times for the Army. Don't forget: much of the country at the time still lacked major through-streets, many of which would have been barely paved, let alone lit or well marked.

After the war and approaching middle age, Bessie didn't slow down at all. She settled in Florida, eventually becoming known as the "Motorcycle Queen of Miami". Some of the 1950s stories told about Bessie have her winning flat track races while disguised as a man then being denied the trophy when she revealed herself. And demanding a one-on-one test of motorcycle skills from a local police chief so his officers would stop harassing her for riding through his town.

Professionally, she trained and got a job as a nurse, but continued to ride exhibitions. Eventually, she founded the Iron Horse motorcycle club, with whom she continued to ride with until she was in her 80s.

Bessie Stringfield has been honored by the AMA Hall of Fame, and the Harley-Davidson Museum (she owned 27 of their bikes in her lifetime), and is honored every year with the AMA Bessie Stringfield Award to honor women who are leaders in motorcycling.

Original article from:

<https://www.rideapart.com/articles/246019/bessie-stringfield-bikers-you-should-know/>

See also on AMA site:

<http://www.motorcyclemuseum.org/halloffame/detail.aspx?RacerID=277>





### Celebrities on Motorcycles -

Who are these familiar faces on two wheels?  
Answers on page 6.





## 2020 Meeting Calendar Oregon Trail Chapter, AMCA

Month	Activity
Every Month 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	<b>OTC Business Conference Call</b> All members welcome Call 971-256-0996, then enter code 412341
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Newberg Coffee Gathering</b> <i>Rain or shine</i> 101 E. 1st Street, Newberg, OR Meet at 11:00 AM at See See Motor Coffee. This will be just a gathering, no club ride planned. However, there are lots of scenic ways to get to Newberg. If it rains, and you want to stay dry, come in an enclosed vehicle 😊. See See has two outside seating areas and a spacious inside coffee bar.  <i>Follow Oregon's social distancing and mask rules</i>
November And December	<b>Pending</b>

### Club Gathering in Eugene

We had a nice showing on August 15<sup>th</sup> for our ride. Attending were John Davey, Tim Burns, Jim and Rosie Singhose, Chet Turner, James McQuiston, Terry Wolbert, Tom Ruttan, and Tom Nielsen. Two guests also attended, Stu Wiley from Bend and Chase from Eugene.



### Celebrities on Motorcycles

From page 5

Upper Right: John Belushi

Center Left: Gail Gadot (Wonder Woman)

Lower: Bob Hope

### Vintage Motorcycle Enthusiast

Portland Chapter on the second Tuesday of Every Month at 6:00 PM at Yurs Bar and Grill, 717 NW 16<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR

<http://www.vmemc.org>

### Oregon Vintage Motorcyclists

OVM monthly meetings are cancelled until further notice. There are officer meetings and pending "Meetups" – see website.

<http://www.oregonvintage.org>

### SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER:

Please submit article contributions, classified advertisements, photos, trip reports, and suggestions by the second Thursday of each month. Prefer Word or Adobe PDF for text and .jpg or PDF for graphics to [tomandjen@shadyapple.com](mailto:tomandjen@shadyapple.com)

*Thanks, Tom*





## Looking for information

Does anyone in the group know the name George Bodenhamer? If the information I have is correct, he was a motorcycle dealer in the 1960's (+/-), possibly in Polk County.

I purchased several Dealer plates several years ago and I got a note with them giving me his name as the dealer they came from. The plates are for the years 1964, 1965, and 1966.

Bruce Lamont  
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Harley-Davidson overhead valve engines awaiting assembly in 1930s.



BMW Assembly Line.



## Steve McQueen Indian Seat

I am trying verify the history of a Steve McQueen Indian seat that I purchased some years ago from a gentleman from Oregon. (See the attachment at end of this newsletter explaining the seat's history-ed.)

Any information that you or your members could give me would be much appreciated.

Any ideas or suggestions that you have for me would be much appreciated.

I live in northern California. When I get the bike completed, I would love to take a trip up to you guys. Your club looks like fun.

Best regards,  
Doug Gjerde  
[dgjerde@comcast.net](mailto:dgjerde@comcast.net)  
Cell: (408) 464-4727





## CLASSIFIEDS

### From Tim Burns:

Looking to buy any pre-1970 Oregon or California motorcycle license plates.

Looking to buy any pre-1985 Harley motorcycles, basket cases, or parts piles.

**Tim in Cottage Grove (408) 687-0635**



### From James McQuiston:

Numbers in descriptions match numbers in following photos.

01. 7ft of 7 mm cloth covered spark plug wire. Sourced from Greer or Starklite \$5
02. Pair of adjustable shocks from '78 Triumph Bonneville fair cond. \$25
03. One H-D panhead era star hub. Good condition. Bearings are free so would just need a little work to clean up and use. \$50
04. Mirror, 9.5" long stem, 0.395" dia. Decent chrome good glass. \$5
05. Two Indian chief gen belts, #4L210. \$5 ea
06. Outer primary cover off '47 Chief. Very good cond. Needs clutch worm nut. \$100
07. One set oil lines (feed and return) fits Indian Chief. New-never installed. Sourced from Jerry Greer. plated perfect cond. \$50
08. Engine sprocket off '47 Indian Chief. Approx. 1,500 miles on it. Excellent cond. \$35



Not shown- contact James for more info or photos.

Seat for 78 triumph Bonnie. Good cond. \$50

Seat for '72 Electra Glide black /white with chrome hand rail. Very good cond. \$100

### Tools

Van Norman cylinder Boring bar - call

Motorcycle cylinder bar mount - call

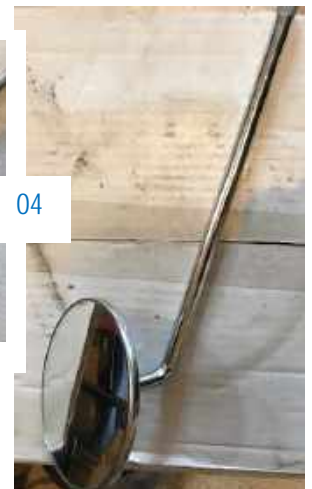
Kwik Way valve grinder - call

Kalamazoo band saw roll around model - call

**James in Bend (425) 736-2015**

## Classifieds

OTC members get one free quarter-page ad with a photo for motorcycle related items each newsletter issue. Additional quarter-page ads and non-OTC members are \$10 each. Ads run for two issues.







05



06

07



08



Harley-Davidson Founders Arthur Davidson, William Davidson, William Harley, and Walter Davidson look at their new overhead valve powered motorcycle as it comes off assembly line in 1936.



OTC members James McQuiston and Kris Thompson (dark blue) were joined by Scott Parker (helmet) for a ride on the back roads around Bend. Left shows Kris's Indian-4 and Scott's Indian Scout. Below is a view of James' 1947 Indian Chief.





## Minutes of the Oregon Trail Chapter of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America August 11 2020

President Jen Nielsen called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM by conference call.

**Officers in Attendance:** Jen Nielsen Pres., Tom Nielsen Secretary, John Davey Treasurer, Bill Quaccia Activities Coordinator.

**Other Attendees:** Tom Ruttan.

**Minutes:** Reading of minutes were waived. See newsletter.

**Correspondence:** Tom R received a call from potential member and forwarded a copy of newsletter. No new nominations for officers were received.

**Treasurer's Report:** Club remains in the black. Tax form 899N was submitted to IRS

### Old Business:

- ✓ 2020 Election. To send notice that no new nominations received. Discussed options. Motion by Tom N seconded by Martin to send out ballots by mail to members, due September 1, and ballots to be collected by Tom Ruttan.
- ✓ John Day Ride. Discussed that dates of arrival are up to individuals. To have maps available and Tom N will send out maps by email also.

### New Business:

- ✓ Upcoming Meetings and Activities. All events tentative based on COVID pandemic.
  - October 10 meet at See See Coffee in Newberg.
  - November No-Turkey Tech day at Tom Krise's is cancelled. Martin volunteered to do a garage crawl.
  - Tim Burns volunteered his place for December garage crawl.
- ✓ AMCA National sent out a Q&A to clubs. Focus was on making club websites using national service. It would involve completely rebuilding our website to do so, and they charge 3% of our renewals. Discussed and decided not to change our website.

○ Next business meeting/conference call – September 8<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. Meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Minutes by Tom Nielsen.

## Minutes of the Oregon Trail Chapter of the Antique Motorcycle Club of America September 9, 2020

President Jen Nielsen called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM by conference call.

**Officers in Attendance:** Jen Nielsen Pres., Tom Nielsen Secretary, Martin Doerfler, Vice-President, John Davey Treasurer, Bill Quaccia Activities Coordinator.

**Other Attendees:** Tom Ruttan.

**Minutes:** Reading of minutes were waived. See newsletter.

**Correspondence:** Jen received an email from Keith Kizer at National regarding OTC having a National in 2022. Consensus was that we would only hold another National if we had significant increase in members helping to plan and execute the event.

**Treasurer's Report:** Club remains in the black.

### Old Business:

- ✓ 2020 Rally: A notice cancelling the ride in John Day was emailed to all members.
- ✓ Election ballots were returned and all officers were re-elected.

### New Business:

- ✓ Upcoming events.
  - For October discussed a John Day ride. This was nixed as weather can be "iffy." Meeting at See See Coffee in Newberg on 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - November to have garage crawl at Martin's, for 10<sup>th</sup> for up to ten people (tentative).
  - December is holiday party. All concurred to hold at Tim Burn's on December 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> (tentative).
- ✓ Discussed rally location for 2021. Powerland campus was proposed as alternative, but decided to stay with John Day as ride routes and other details are worked out.
- ✓ Jen provided update on non-discrimination clause for our charter. Because National is updating their charter to be more comprehensive, our members will need to conform to those national requirements.

Next business meeting/conference call – August 11<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. Meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Minutes by Tom Nielsen.



## 1947 Steve McQueen Indian Chief Motorcycle Seat

We are two brothers who grew up in rural Minnesota in the 60's riding motorcycles. We have a love for old motorcycles and keeping history. We are in the process of restoring 1948 and 1947 Indian Chiefs. We have a 47 seat that we are attempting to document former ownership to Steve McQueen.



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### 1947 Indian Chum-Me-Seat

1947 Indian single seat purchased the seat off of eBay in 2003 or 2004.



### Original Owner of the 1947 seat

The person who sold us the seat was from Oregon. After we won the bid, the owner wrote me asking for the shipping address. In the email, the owner said that the seat was from Steve McQueen. He specifically said the seat was from a 47 Indian.

In his email he said he was always going to use the seat in a restoration. The reason he had held on to the seat was that it was owned by Steve McQueen. He was getting old and was down to only riding his Harley Knuckle. It sounded like he had other motorcycles. Once I found out that the seat was once owned by Steve McQueen, we tried to correspond with him, but he wouldn't return emails. The Oregon guy may not be living yet. But he may still have family or friends there.

Shortly after that, the pressures of business took over and we not able to devote any time on Indian projects. It is only within the last several months that the business was sold and the pressure of day to day business and payroll was reduced. We can now return to the project.

Our intent is not to restore the seat but rather we would like to make it useable and install it on a 47 Indian Chief motorcycle with as many original parts as possible. It seems fitting that we should gather parts together to assemble the bike rather than just replace the seat on an existing bike. This would be more appropriate for an "orphan" seat with this history. We have the majority of the parts already purchased.

### Riding partners of McQueen's

Riding partners of McQueen's were Bud and Dave Ekins. Perhaps there is connection here with the Oregon guy; we don't know.

We would like to find out who in Oregon once owned a 47 Indian seat that was owned by Steve McQueen and then document the history of ownership.

### Trip to National Motorcycle Museum in Anamosa, IA <https://nationalmcmuseum.org>

The Executive Director is Bill Barber [bbarber@nationalmcmuseum.org](mailto:bbarber@nationalmcmuseum.org). Bill showed me the Steve McQueen 1947 Indian Motorcycle on display. It was a daily rider and favorite of Steve McQueen. The museum has owned the motorcycle for since about 2000. The 1947 Indian chopper was built by Douglas "JD" Cameron in Santa Ana, CA. for McQueen in the late 60's JD wouldn't sell his bike to Steve, so he made Steve a replica of his own bike. There may have some Starklite Indian Motorcycles (Perris, CA). It was modeled after another Indian that McQueen saw that he liked. Mr. Barber thought it was between built between 1967 and 1969.

