

---

# Comstock Chapter -Antique Motorcycle Club of America

## News for the Northern Nevada Membership

---

Mar 3, 2015



### **From the President**

I hope you were able to join us on February 7 at Paughco's for our meeting and tour. Eighteen people were present for the event.

Ron McBroom, the production manager, gave the tour of the Paughco collection of antique and rare Harley Davidson motorcycles, engines and prototypes. The tour also included their huge manufacturing plant. The quality they put into their custom, stock and restoration parts is amazing. Look for pictures on the new web site we are about to release to the members.

Question - Can AMCA member James Sadilek control the weather? The rain stopped as he was riding to the meeting and started right up again as soon as he reached home. Probably a good guy to invite on tours!

Dick Toth  
President, Comstock Chapter

---

## **Stop the Presses - This Just In!**

We just received word from Fred Davis, Director of Chapters AMCA Inc. National Board, that our charter will be officially signed on March 5 in Daytona Beach, Florida by the Directors marking the final step in the beginning of the Comstock Chapter. Special thanks goes out to all of you who made this possible.

But Wait, There's More...

Mark Lobsinger has been working on initiating a web site for the chapter. In the not too distant future you will be able to read up on chapter news, see photos of the chapter in action and learn about future activities of the AMCA and your chapter. Neat huh? As soon as we are ready to go live there will be an email with the announcement. Keep an eye out for it.

## **Friendship Day in Minden, Nevada**

Bill and Dorine Ramsden will open up their private collection on May 17th for a pot luck picnic for over 100 members of the Inliners, Horseless Carriage Club, Antique Automobile Club, Studebaker Drivers Club and Packard owners. Bill extended an invitation to the newly formed Comstock Chapter AMCA members. I quite haven't figured out how you are going to get that 3 bean salad or the Angel Food Cake there without panniers but you still have time to work on that.

Please consider attending so we can flesh out the assemblage of vintage cars with your beautiful motorcycles. You think the potato salad should go in the side car rig as ballast?

We will put up the event flyer on the web site and there will be a reminder email too.

## **As They Say, "Dues is Due"**

Membership in this Northern Nevada chapter of the AMCA is open to current AMCA national members and dues paying Chapter members. Dues are \$20 year beginning at the first of the year. If you like what you see, please become current with both organizations. \$20.00 for the Comstock Chapter is payable to George Canavan, 2881 Wicker Court, Sparks NV 89436-6422. Thank you!

## **A Member's Submission to the Comstock News by Wally Thomason**

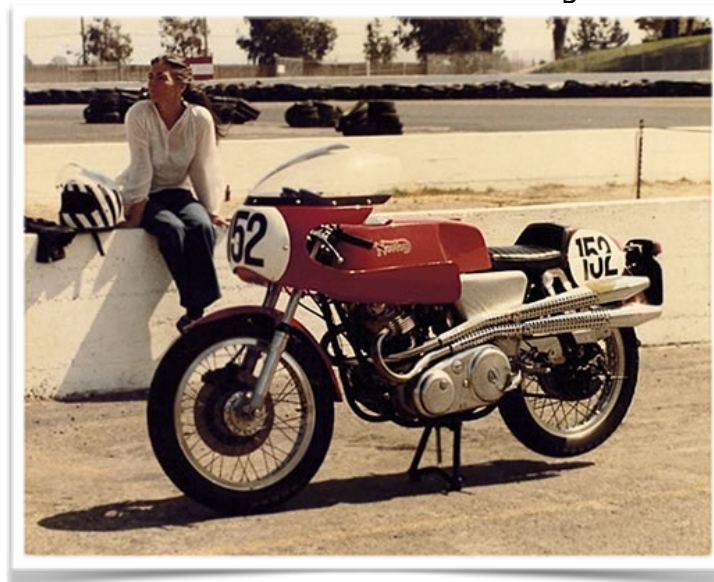
### **THE 1969 NORTON COMMANDO PRODUCTION RACER**

In December 1969 Cycle World published a road test of the as yet unannounced Norton Production Racer, with photos on the cover. Interestingly, the bike was colored red and had other characteristics that set it apart from the later series-production racers. Alex Maclean of Motorcycles Unlimited in Corte Madera, California purchased the bike, and for two years Alex sponsored Davy Scott and later Bill Donnelly, who both raced the bike with memorable style.

---

Sometime in those two years, perhaps after being scuffed-up a bit, it was painted a Ford pickup truck yellow, a very close match for both the factory and Dunstall-copy fiberglass color.

I noticed the bike sitting neglected in the back of Alex' shop in 1971 and bought it on the spot and rode it home. I had been racing the still awkward Japanese bikes for some years and was unprepared for the surprise of how stable and communicative the Norton was - in my first race I wore through the sides of a new pair of boots without even noticing - the sock was sticking out of the left one - a second place finish, later followed by a first. And Davy and Bill had fiddled the motor to what at the time was amazing power with beautifully polished internals. I was in love, and Norton and I put in steady appearances at west coast AFM / AMA meets. Orange County Raceway (remember?) clocked us at 136+ mph, and the aerodynamic brick wall told me that was about all we would get.



Around 1975 I was talking with Brian Slark, begging for parts probably, and mentioned the red fiberglass underneath the paint. Brian kind of lit up and said "there was only one red one, laddy – that's the prototype", and asked if it was kind of "prototype-ish", which indeed it was, including an Atlas wiring loom with several dead-ends. Some of the assembly was downright cobby, and Brian said that it had been put together "from bits from the shop floor". The distinctive number plates, the odd configuration of center stand with its inner-tube retainer were both there (see the photos) as well as less obvious distinctive bits – the fairing on the rider's side was much heavier than the flimsy production item. (The S-Type pipes were added early on, as the original lower pipes dragged - I don't see how anyone could race with them.) Because I was intent on racing at the time, none of Brian's story meant as much to me as it might have and I'm sorry now I didn't get more of the history. I returned it to its original red in 1978 or so and unhappily sold it in 2001 (30 years) to a bright and appreciative young guy in Oakland. It's been awhile since I spoke with him, but I hope he still owns it. If too many incidents hadn't caused me a hip problem (can't kick-start anymore) I'd track him down and try to buy it back.

---

There's a lot of myself tied up in the bike and it's hard to not rattle on - this is probably more than you wanted to know. Over the years I rode many road racers from Unlimited GP and Production to 50cc GP bikes, but the Norton was always a favorite - quirky and demanding about maintenance, but always delivering that wonderfully predictable glued-to-the-road feel and pretty astonishing power thanks in later days to Jimmy Dewer's and Dan Bacheller's generous work. A beauty.

(Thanks Wally for your interesting recollections of your Brit warrior. Editor)

Got an interesting motorcycling story or photos to share? Please submit them for the Comstock Chapter News.

Thank you,  
George Canavan  
Secretary Treasurer

P.S. Check out the photos below? They were in the last news. Each has a story. Clockwise from top left. The '36 Knuck is part of the Paughco collection. Next to it is a rare Victoria, a forerunner to BMW motorcycles shown at the Goodwood Festival of Speed in 2013. The brown bike is Rotten Richard's Reading Standard at the Borrego Road Run in 2012. The last bike never existed. That is an Indian chassis but with a Vincent twin. Dennis Magri did the build. Who remembers why it is significant today?

