



WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT ALL THERE



Norton Colorado

Newsletter

www.nortoncolorado.org

February 2022



Another beautiful bike from the St. Francis (Kansas) Motorcycle museum.

1922 Ace

William and Thomas Henderson founded the Henderson Motorcycle Company in 1912. In 1927, Henderson was sold to Ignatz Schwinn. William and Thomas Henderson worked for Schwinn for a short time as part of the transaction, but both left the company. Bill Henderson intended on building his own 4-cylinder motorcycle, and in 1919 the Ace Motor Corporation was founded.

The first Ace was modernized significantly compared to the original Henderson. At 75 cubic inches (1200cc), the Ace produced 20 horsepower, had a three-speed transmission, and was built stronger throughout than the Henderson. Its design had no interchangeable parts with the Henderson - its primary competitor.

In 1922, William Henderson was killed at age 39, when he was struck by a car while testing a new Ace model. Ace production bikes were little changed from 1919 to 1924. In 1923, a modified Ace called the XP4 reached a speed of 129.61 mph. The Ace brand was purchased by Indian in 1927 and motorcycles were produced with the name Indian Ace. Once Indian began modifying the design, the Ace was discontinued.

Interesting fact: This beautifully restored Ace was judged as a 99.25 point restoration.

Owner: Mike Bahnmaier

Upcoming Events

February 5 (Saturday) Open Garage @ Dennis Horgan's

March 20 (Sunday) Clancey's

Look for club emails or check the website for more details about these gatherings.



2021 BMAC Restoration Award by Frank Puckett

This restoration story is about a 1967 Norton P11 that I brought back to stock form. The P11 was a motorcycle designed in the US and built by Norton in England. In the early 1960's, with California desert racing a major attraction, distributors in the US wanted a lighter and more powerful motorcycle. Californian Norton Distributor Bob Blair built a prototype racer by shoehorning a Norton Atlas 750cc motor in a Matchless G85CS frame. The G85 frame was light and performed well, but its 500cc single cylinder motor was not up to the task. The prototype motorcycle was taken to England, and Norton-Villiers was convinced to manufacture "Project 11" for export to the US. It was expected to compete against the Triumph and BSA desert sleds of the time. About 700 of the first year P11's were made, so they are quite rare. The 1967 models are very desirable, since later P11's in 1968 and 1969 were made to be more streetable to widen the possibility of sales. The 1967 model is easily identified with its high exhaust pipes and "billboard" tail light.

Desert racer Mike Patrick won two championships on a P11, and his bike is on display at the Barber Museum. At the end of the 1960's, the light Husky and CZ two-strokes started coming to the US, and the Norton, Triumph, and BSA four-stroke desert sled era was over.

Since these early P11's were designed for racing, they have had a rough life. The P11 that I have came out of Billings, Montana. Hillclimbing is big in Billings, and I believe this bike was used for that. The swingarm had extensions welded on to lengthen the wheelbase and it had a monster overlay rear sprocket. All lights and instruments had been removed and the rear frame loop was cut off. The front of the frame had numerous dents. So initial restoration included lots of frame work. I learned to braze with a TIG welder, since the P11/G85 Reynolds 531 tubing was all brazed.

The frame was powder coated after all the repairs were made. The original Dunlop rims were sent off to be re-chromed and they were laced up with new stainless steel spokes. The fenders are aluminum, and I was able to source them along with other parts from Walridge Motors in Canada. I was very lucky to get a replica air box and tail light from a gentleman in Canada that was making motorcycle sheet metal parts. He has since stopped making parts. Proper gauges were also obtained and reconditioned at Vintage Cables in Canada. The motor was rebuilt with new bearings as needed. The bore was good, so only new rings were needed after a light honing. The gearbox was also disassembled and renewed. I was able to use the old brake shoes and I installed new linings. The seat is a replica made in England.

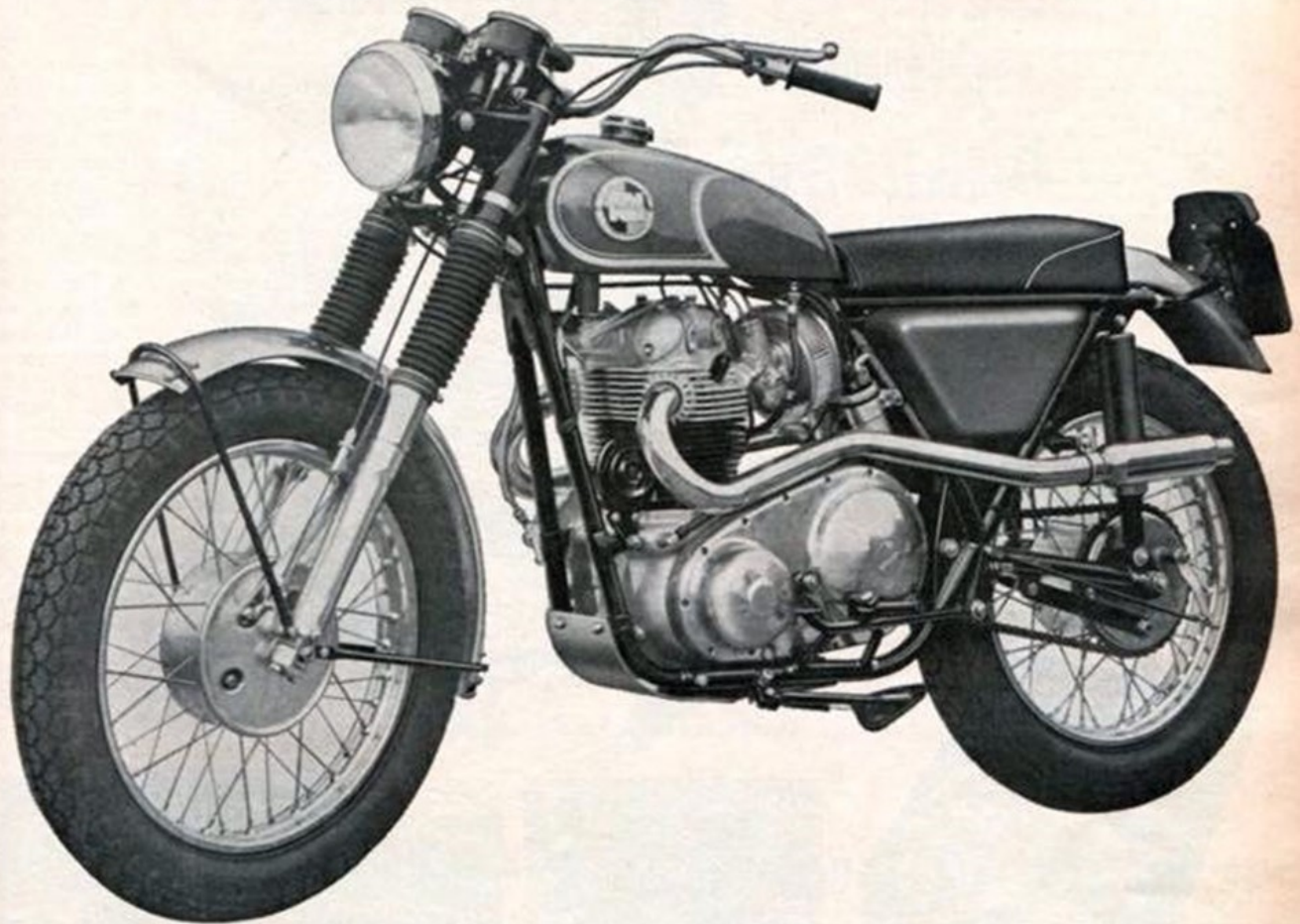
Fitting the front fender and the supporting fender stays was a much harder job than expected, especially with an alloy fender that scratches just by looking at it too hard. Lots of rehab work was also needed on the alloy oil tank. I converted the points to electronic ignition and put in new coils. Once the P11 was up and running, I was able to use air-fuel sensors and the dyno to dial in the engine. This P11 had been converted to a single Mikuni carb rather than the original double Amal Concentrics, so I converted it back to the original dual carb system.

The P11 is a serious motorcycle to ride, with a 750cc twin engine and a claimed dry weight of 345 pounds. Early advertisements said: ***"Only a seasoned cyclist with a lot of ability, experience, and know-how will really enjoy the thrill of this high performance motorcycle"***. I am very happy to have been able to obtain and restore a P11.

To read the full story of Frank's restoration project use this link:

[BMAC 2021 Restoration Award.docx](#)

DYNAMITE ON WHEELS!



New 750cc OHV Norton **P-11** Scrambler....

The choice of the seasoned sports rider! Famous "Atlas" twin-cylinder engine has latest dual carbs, with centrally located float bowls. New lightweight **CHROME-MOLY** frame! Special forks and wheels, full-hub brakes...The Norton P-11 is **lighter** in weight, **lower** in appearance and **faster** in performance-Dynamite on wheels!

Norton

The World's Best Road-Holder,

JUNE 1967

For the road rider there is the 750cc OHV Norton "Atlas" high-speed sports/touring twin with famous "featherbed" frame and "roadholder" fork.

Berliner Motor Corporation

Plant Road • Hasbrouck Heights • New Jersey

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“Before” picture. No lights or instruments, and a number plate. Definitely used for racing.



After Frank worked his magic , wow!





New Membership Category

We have implemented a new membership category called “corresponding member”. This is available to anyone who lives outside Colorado, including other parts of the U.S. There are no dues requirements because such members are unable to take advantage of most of the benefits that the dues subsidize, such as the Winter Banquet.

The advantage of this membership category is that we attract the interest of fellow Norton enthusiasts with different perspectives and experiences that can enhance our own enjoyment of the club. These remote folks can also be good contacts if you happen to be traveling to their part of the world.

I’ve always taken pride in the fact that people in other parts of the world find our activities of sufficient interest to want to be part of our community, and I have greatly enjoyed getting to know them to one degree or another. I attended the Manx GP races on Isle of Man a few years back at the invitation of Julian Kowaleski. I’m sure Trevor, Julian and Bill and others would enjoy getting to know some other members of Norton Colorado more closely.

If you qualify for corresponding membership and would like to switch your membership category to that, just let me know. --- Eric

As a foreign correspondent I had chance to contribute a couple of snaps I took today while on a mission to find some spares for a project I’m working on. These were taken of a very tasty Commando Racer and as the sign says one of only a handful that were built and one of only 3 imported to New Zealand. This machine is in a collection of bikes on display at E Hayes and Sons in Invercargill at the Deep South of NZ. You might need Google Maps to give you a hand on where this is. This hardware store literally stocks everything from a crown to the proverbial anchor. I was looking for some Welsh plugs for an 1947 Burman CP gearbox and yes they had what I needed. Alex the store man added not much call for these today. The other attractions include the Original Burt Munro Velo and Indian along with his collection of contributions to the Gods of Speed as seen in the movie Worlds fastest Indian. Signing out till next time, your Kiwi cobber, Trev.





Bob Herman doing his version of the Black Power salute made famous by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics. He is celebrating “Best European Motorcycle” for his Moto Guzzi SP1000 at the Colorado Vintage and Custom Mo-



Sometimes I have to share sad news from our Norton Club Community. Peter Guise lost his house and his Norton in the Marshall Fire. So sorry to hear about your loss, Peter.

I’ve had to clean out my things at dad’s place, and among the trinkets, nick-knacks, flotsam and detritus I came upon the famous Windjammer fairing and mounting rack for a Norton Commando that I got from Eric so many years ago. While it served its purpose (and is highlighted in my membership photo), it’s time for it to go to a new home. Still in good shape!

Tim Johnson
timson4@gmail.com



My Norton Story by Gino Rondelli

I thought I'd run over where my Norton Commando obsession came from and developed;

I first caught the Norton bug when I was in my mid teens, I remember the motorcycle police riding around on their Norton Commandos in Perthshire (Scotland) and loved the sound and look of these what seemed to be at the time massive bikes. My first big bike was a BSA Road rocket which fell to bits every time I took it out, my twice weekly run to the college in Dundee almost always involved some pushing and returning home with less bits on the bike than when I set off. A friend at the time was selling a Commando to buy a new fangled GS1000 and offered it to me for £650, after scrambling around another friend lent me enough for the deposit and finance was obtained to buy this 4 year old Commando complete with Dunstall rearsets, 2 -1 -2 Exhausts and a half fairing. That bike (BNC64M) got thrashed regularly, ridden through all weathers and was from memory never maintained, I probably owned it two years and coming back from the Iron & Steel Rally in Scunthorpe one wet and windy day in October it consumed almost a gallon of Castrol GTX on the 350 mile trip home. A rally was looming in the peak district at the start of December and there was no way I could fix it before then (I had neither the ability, facilities or finances) so I did the sensible thing and traded it in to Sandy Bloy (Local bike dealer and still a Norton riding friend) for his own Mk1 Guzzi Le Mans which was at the time the price of a small house. The salesman was a genial and incredibly dodgy character who filled out the Hire Purchase forms and asked me to sign, I never was sure if I actually got anything for my Commando.

The Guzzi I have to admit didn't endear itself to me immediately and I was wishing I'd bought one of Sandy's brand new Mk3 Nortons which he was selling at £999 at the time if I remember rightly, anyhow, we eventually bonded. A while later the racing bug bit and I started racing which improved my mechanical skills a bit but I always wanted another Norton. In the April of 1981 I found myself with some spare cash which was very unusual as racing kept me completely skint (poor) and usually in debt up to my eyeballs. I remembered George Peddie (still a good friend) had a Commando and went to visit him, long story short I came away with MVD944L and some money as George refused my first offer saying it was too much, what a gentleman.

If I remember correctly it was a Tuesday and I had a course in Stafford the following Monday (350 miles away), George had started to overhaul it but had lost the wiring loom and the sidepanels, (that's the bits I remember anyway) I obtained a wiring loom, rewired it gave it a check over and topped up the oil tank as it was pretty empty, I got it running and took it for a celebratory lap of Perth, sitting idling outside the Police station I could smell oil, I looked down and the bike was doing a passable imitation of the Torrey Canyon (An oil tanker that sunk in the 80's) This was my first experience of wet sumping, my first Commando was probably never more than 12 hours between start ups so I wasn't aware of the issue, I got home, emptied out the excess oil, cleaned the mess up as well as I could and felt quite happy with myself and so started a very long relationship with this wonderful bike.

On the way to Stafford the following week I stopped off at Jacksons of Chorley, a wonderful emporium of all things British and bought a couple of second hand sidepanels, the bike was complete. Over the years it's taken me to over 20 Countries and always got me home, that's not to say there hasn't been some serious roadside maintenance from time to time. Broken Chain on the motorway just outside Glasgow where a good Samaritan saved me by going home to find me an old

bit of chain and joining links (now I always carry joining links) Burnt a valve on the way to the Isle of Man TT trying to keep in front of all my pals on jap multi's on a very hot day, still got me home. I even raced it at Beveridge park once (a tricky woodland park circuit where two prams would struggle to pass each other) I'd had a big blow up on my race bike and couldn't get it fixed on time so one night after a beer or two my mechanic and I thought it would be a great idea to prepare and race the Commando, I crashed at the Snake in the final practice session, I deserved to, I was being a total lunatic on a bike with half worn TT100's that was my work hack and apart from wiring the drain plugs no other preparation (The scrutinisers did make me take the rack off the back)

The last complete engine rebuild was after an epic trip to Transylvania, Romania, a 5000 mile trip that proved its too long to go that far without an oil change! As I write this its now finished after a major overhaul (Its been finished over year now) , funnily enough I also rewired it, the old loom was pretty knackered after almost 40 years and I reckon 160 thousand miles, I'm looking forward to wearing it out again as soon as Spring comes .

In 1987 we were on strike, the best 3 weeks I ever had working for British Telecom, I had recently built a Trident T160 which I'd bought with a bottom end failure, I needed some cash because although being on strike is good fun, manning the picket line and antagonising the police, it doesn't pay well, it doesn't pay at all and my mortgage was due and there was racing to do, Motorcycle News had an ad for a JPN, despite being skint I had to call, the seller was in Kilmarnock and after a few minutes I realised It was Geoff Proven, fellow racer and Norton fan, The bike was in big lumps but all there, I rented a van and shot through with the Trident in the back, I got £600 and the JPN in exchange for my Trident, Geoff was happy, I was happy, the world was good. Because we were on strike it only took me a couple of days to build the JPN and surprisingly it ran. A few weeks later I seized it on a high speed blast through Glenfarg trying to beat my pals on a z900 and a GSX1100, will I never learn? The same night my race mechanic blew his 750 Commando up spectacularly trying the same trick, I found him sitting at the side of the road looking at the smoking hole in the back of the crankcases (It had just been rebuilt and hadn't had its final torque down of the barrels resulting in the barrels lifting and catastrophic failure) The following year I needed a new bike for the Manx GP so the JPN was reluctantly sold to finance a new Yamaha.

After I'd stopped the racing nonsense (a spectacular crash in the 1990 Senior Manx Grand Prix ended that chapter) I had an opportunity to buy a JPN replica based on a Mk3 Commando from fellow Norton man Gary MacKnight (actually we were at the local Christmas Norton do and I bought it after many beers) That has been a good bike and has only let me down once by blowing a head gasket on the way to a winter rally, the cam went eventually so it got a full engine rebuild and its been good since, a surprisingly useable bike despite the clip ons and rear sets.

A friend had crashed his 72 750 Interstate, a genuine low mileage bike (7k miles from new) The frame had snapped through the main tube (I've re framed a couple of Commando's before with this problem after accidents) I had a frame but was reluctant to part with it until John had looked to see if he could get one elsewhere, he didn't bother doing anything about it and left it strapped to his trailer outside for two years while he thought about it, I eventually managed to buy that one at midnight at a Guzzi rally after you guessed, a few beers, that is now Fiona's bike (my wife) and is now a yellow 750 Roadster.

A few years later I bought a Mk3 Commando from a Colleague and used that extensively as well, I had the foot come off a cam follower and took the opportunity to do a full engine rebuild as the cam had suffered some damage also, I also had the primary chain snap on me on a German Autobahn which resulted in almost total wipeout on the primary side and necessitated a roadside rebuild (Parts were couriered over by RGM the following day) It then took me to the Belgian Begonia rally and heading home from the ferry at Hull just at Newcastle it spluttered to a halt, I had the shame of being recovered home and stripped the top end just after I returned to see why it stopped, compression seemed low but in the end all the problem was down to a fouled plug! Anyway it was a good reason to clean up the top end and its been fine since! I since managed to pick up a fastback (with a hot engine, built for the previous owner by an old racing friend of mine who raced a Commando at Daytona) and a 750 drum brake roadster bought unexpectedly during a trip to Applecross in the North of Scotland from a Doctor from the North of England who was on holiday and who offered it up for sale when he saw our Nortons, too good an opportunity to miss! Both of these bikes give me much entertainment.

Finally I bought another Mk3 through a friend, the same owner for 40 years and "restored" Stupidly I never looked that closely despite the price tag being double the previous highest price I've paid for a Commando, this turned out to be a mistake. I spent well over £1000 to get it rideable, It ended up a good bike but I sold it to a friend of a friend who was desperate for a Commando, 7 Commando's is too much for any sane person anyway!

In summary, if you buy a Commando, anything can happen, cam's go, parts wear out, buying new shiny parts is no longer cheap plus the quality of some parts is sometimes dubious but when they are going well they are a most rewarding motorcycle to ride, sure they have their foibles but considering they started rolling off the production line 50 years ago I think they're pretty damn good. If you have a modicum of mechanical ability they are relatively easy to maintain and a great bike to learn on (and learn you will) a handful of special tools and a bag full of AF and whitworth spanners and sockets will also be required.

In my experience useful mods include electronic ignition, single Mikuni carb (or maybe the new Amal Premier twin carb set up is worth a go) They run well on Avon Roadrider tyres, don't run a different diameter rear wheel, it seems to upset the steering and they wobble more than normal so keep it 19" front and back or 18" Front and back (ground clearance suffers a little on the 18" if you get carried away) I've dabbled with belt drives and generally they are good if set up properly but chains are also ok. Re sleeving the front master cylinder to 13mm is a good idea and makes the brake significantly better, a cheap regulator rectifier to replace the zener / rectifier is also worthwhile but wait until your old zener packs in (+ve earth zeners are almost impossible to get now) The best mod though is ride the thing, its addictive, I have had Norton free years for various reasons in the past (I also have some Guzzi's and a long distance travel fetish) but I'm always glad to get back on one.

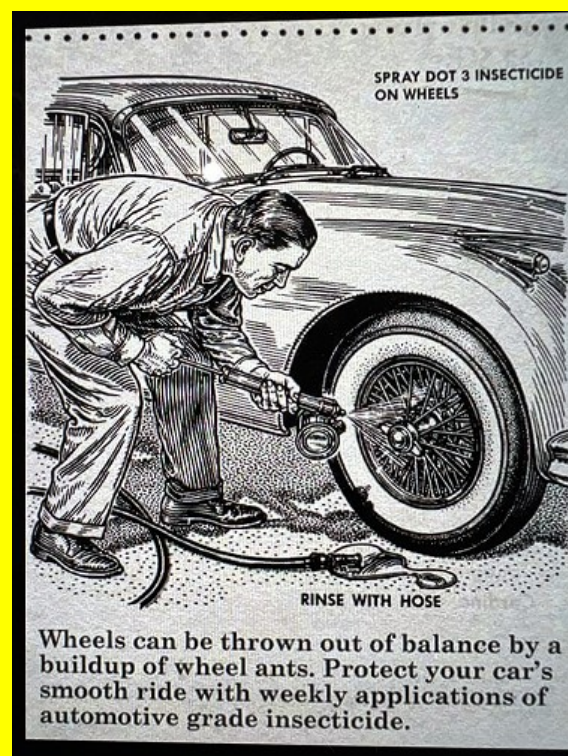
Interestingly my £650 in 1977 is worth just under £4000, I think Commando prices have gotten a bit out of hand, are they worth it? I don't know, I'd be very reluctant to pay the prices I see asked in some of the websites, its been my experience that no matter which Commando you buy it will need money spent on it, how much depends on your luck but a more satisfying bike to ride is hard to find.

The main thing though is that Norton ownership has opened up a worldwide circle of friends, good people, and that's what sets owning and riding a Norton apart from most other Marqueses.



Lunch at
Lincoln's
Road House

**Beware of a new
E-Bay scam.
I ordered my
wife some
expensive
jewelry and they
sent me
motorcycle
parts.**



We should check our bike wheels.

Norton Colorado 2022 Event Schedule

These are the events planned so far. As you can see there is still plenty of open time for you to host an event. Group rides will be announced throughout the season on short notice, based on weather conditions. In the interest of variety, volunteers are solicited to lead group rides on their favorite roads. Likewise, we're looking for volunteers to host an open garage. Tech days are usually scheduled on short notice as they become necessary. Contact Eric <eric@nortoncolorado.org> for more information or to volunteer.

February 5 (Saturday) Open Garage @ Dennis Horgan's

March 20 (Sunday) Clancey's

April 24 (Sunday) Tech Day/Open Garage at Bob Martin's

May 22 (Sunday) Distinguished Gentleman's Ride

May 29 (Sunday) BBQ at Eric Bergman & Susie Saarinen's

June 5 (Sunday) Group Ride

June 16 - 19 (Thurs - Sun) Four Corners Rendezvous

July 4 (Sunday) Mt. Evans Ride & Brunch @ David Sheesley's

July 23 (Saturday) BMAC Picnic

August 6 -7 (Saturday - Sunday) Wimpy Campout @ Jamie & Michell Jones'

August 13 (Saturday) Colorado Vintage Motorcycle Show

September 11 (Sunday) Old Bike Ride 19

September 18 (Sunday) English Conclave

October 2 (Sunday) Plains Ride

October 16 (Sunday) Open Garage @ Jonathan Chaikin's

December 4 (Sunday) Pints Pub

January 1, 2023 (Sunday) New Year's Day Ride

January 15 (Sunday) Lincoln's Roadhouse



Membership

Membership in Norton Colorado is open to anyone, regardless of whether they own a Norton, or any motorcycle whatsoever.

Dues are \$20/ year individual, \$22 for a couple or family unit, payable to "Norton Colorado" and sent to the Treasurer, whose contact information is listed on the last page of this newsletter.

The official club membership list is posted on the club website. Please let Eric know if there is an error.

The membership year begins with the Winter Banquet in February. New members who join after August 1 are credited with membership for the following year.

Club Events

Many events have been scheduled for the 2022 season, usually about 2 per month. Participation in these events will be counted for the President's Award. Events may be added, dropped, or re-scheduled through the year. The schedule can be found in this newsletter or check the schedule on the club website:

<http://www.nortoncolorado.org/meetings.html>



Michelin Men are Scary

Long before Evel Kneivel



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I also want to say thanks to others who sent me things I will use in future editions.

Norton Colorado

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