



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



# Norton Colorado

## Newsletter

[www.nortoncolorado.org](http://www.nortoncolorado.org)

January 2026



Fiona and I (Gino Rondelli) are on our travels again, at the moment in Asia, found a 650ss first day here in Chiang Mai Thailand, small world.

## Upcoming Events

*2025 Calendar See Page 8*

January 1, 2026 (Thursday), Clancy's Irish Pub.

February 7, 2026 (Sat ) Winter Banquet. Mickey's Top Sirloin, 6950 N. Broadway

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





**Herb Verona**, a long time Norton Colorado member, passed away this month.

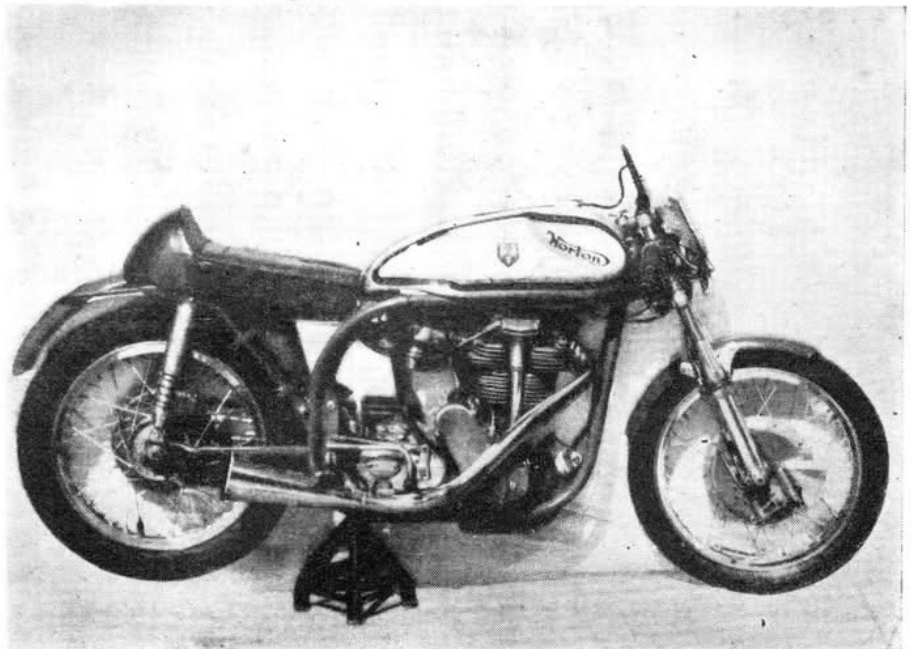
Herb was the epitome of the crusty old motorcyclist who has given this club it's unique flavor for many decades. Those of us who remain will need to crank up our crankiness a notch to compensate.

— Eric B

AS is to be expected, the workshop where Francis Beart is preparing the Nortons to be ridden by I. K. Arber is a model of scrupulous cleanliness and well-organized efficiency. The two machines look very attractive in their familiar green finish, and quite distinctive by virtue of their many non-standard features. At once apparent is the low overall height, achieved not only by the use of 18in rear wheels but also by specially tailored, extra-light gauge, aluminium-alloy fuel tanks. That on the five-hundred has recesses for the rider's forearms, while the three-fifty tank has a concave top to enable the chest to be kept well down. Both tanks have large, downward-projecting sumps at the rear, from which the feed is taken to the carburettor. Capacities are  $5\frac{1}{2}$  gallons and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  gallons respectively. The standard steel retaining straps are placed by doubled aero-elastics. Beart's own rear suspension struts are fitted to both models; they incorporate coil springing and hydraulic rebound damping.

A LENGTH of control cable replaces the rod for rear brake operation, and a further novelty is the use of a floating rear brake plate anchored to the main frame by a long torque arm. This arrangement is stated to give smoother braking and to tend to improve rear-wheel adhesion under severe conditions. Very comprehensive light-alloy guards protect the primary chain and also result in much less oil finding its way on to the rear tyre. Rubber-mounted between the rear engine plates, a small tank feeds mineral oil to the front chain through a restrictor jet. Rear chain lubricant is, of course, contained in the left-side tube of the pivoted fork.

BORE and stroke of the 496 c.c. engine are  $82 \times 94$ mm. The extra large Amal G.P. carburettor is mounted on a light-alloy extension and a Tufnol heat-insulating block. Bottom feed float chambers are employed on both engines, with twin leads to the mixing chambers to eliminate carburation bias on fast bends. Normal measurements of Beart's smaller engine are 72mm bore and 85mm stroke, though at present its capacity is unavoidably reduced to 336 c.c. by the use of a standard 71mm barrel and piston.



*As usual the Beart-prepared Nortons present a distinctive appearance. Both 350 and 500 c.c. models will be ridden by I. K. Arber*

## **First Thursday and Hogslayer** by Eric Bergman

For many years there's been a "First Thursday" monthly gathering of motorcyclists, mostly vintage enthusiasts, in Denver but the fellow most involved in promoting it died a few years back and it's been very quiet. Now some new fellows have revived it, and last Thursday it was "sponsored" (stretching the meaning of that term considerably) by Norton Colorado. The weather was crummy so no one was riding, but we showed the movie "The Hogslayer" about the famous double-engine Norton drag racer out of Sunset Motors in Kenosha, Wisconsin. T.C. Christenson was the rider, John Gregory the builder. That bike ruled motorcycle drag racing from the late '60s to mid-'70s. None of the Harley dragsters could beat them, but a fellow named Russ Collins riding a triple engine Honda (three one-liter fours) was close. I'd never seen the movie before and was pleasantly surprised at how good it was. Definitely recommended if you ever get the chance to see it.

Anyway, They were running a pair of 750 Norton engines on nitro with Hilborn fuel injectors and claimed to be making about 150 HP in each engine. Considering they were consistently running the quarter mile just above 8.0 seconds (they made many runs in the 7.9s) at 180 miles per hour, I'm not arguing with that claim. But what amazed me was their claim that the engines were extremely reliable. They'd run a dozen race meets with 160+ individual passes and never have the engine apart. Not even valve clearance adjustments. That boggles my mind.

(Editor's note : Ed at Morries Place now owns two of Hogslayer's motors. Might be for sale if anyone's interested.)

## **A Norton SS Story** by Bob Martin

Here's a little aside from my experience as a Norton Dealer relating to the Norton SS.

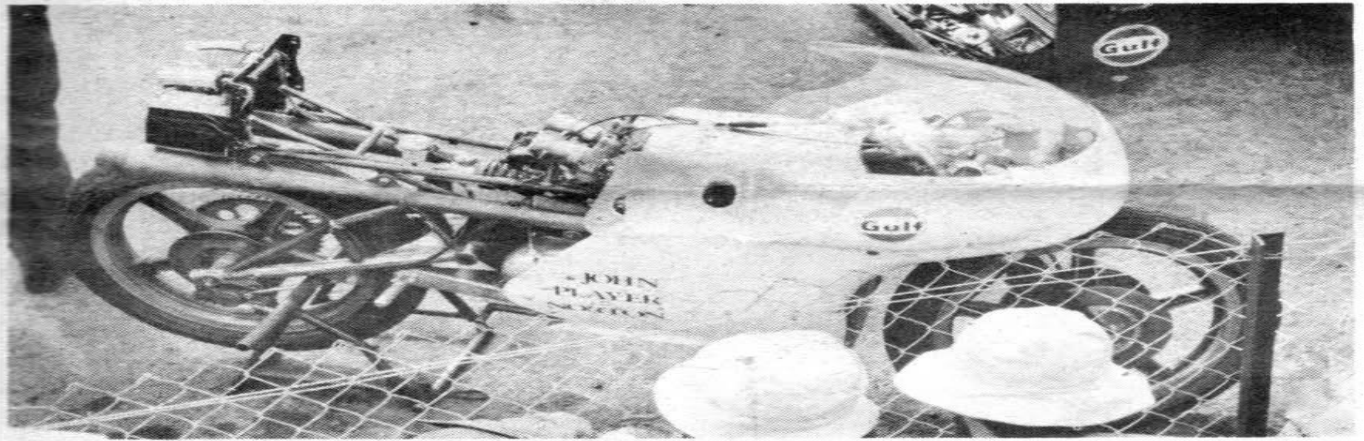
Norton SS was a resounding flop sales wise. The Commando was well received and a good seller for our shop in Longmont. Norton offered the SS to dealers at about a \$400 discount below the Commando roadster wholesale price to get rid of them. Quite a bit in 1971 or 1972 Dollars. Basically the same bike with a few minor changes in styling. My partner Joe and I bought a few and went to work. We installed four inch overlength front fork tubes. Did some custom paint jobs on the tanks & side covers. Replaced the high pipes with low pipes and good looking and sounding Bates mufflers, installed custom seats from Corbin Gentry (Precursor to Corbin seats.) We did something with the front fender which I forget now, and replaced the bars with HI Rider style bars. This was at the high point of the chopping & customizing fad. Sounds like we did a lot but not really the case. We put them on the floor at a several hundred \$ premium over stock Commando Roadsters & they sold out right away. Not a really big deal but a few thousand of tidy profit. This was when a guy with a trade was earning a little less than \$4.00 an hour. One cringes today at what over length fork tubes did to handling but that was a different world. As always a little elbow grease and imagination can do wonders.

PS Club members may get a laugh out of this. Also Matt Rambo made a handsome living for years in a similar way though his creations were really superior.





# Two new racers at Silverstone



*PETER WILLIAMS' new cantilever suspension John Player Norton.*

**JOHN PLAYER NORTON'S** No 1 rider, Peter Williams, tested a new frame during practising for Silverstone — and after “blowing up” his normal mount in the Formula 750 race he started in the John Player Grand Prix on the new machine.

This has cantilever rear springing — similar to that developed by Yamaha and used on its 500 cm<sup>3</sup> works racers. But in the Norton system the single suspension unit is shorter. Instead of extending right up to the steering head, it ends under the carburettors.

The unit is a Koni — a racing car unit modified by the Dutch company for Norton. It is the normal type of unit with a large coil spring aided by oil with gas to prevent the oil frothing.

The Norton also had high level exhaust system and adjustable steering head angle (by means of eccentric adjusters in the steering head).

Team Manager Frank Perris confirmed that this new Norton chassis is the first step developing a new frame for the completely new 750 cm<sup>3</sup> twin-cylinder four-stroke engine being built for Norton by the Cosworth company — maker of the world famous Ford Formula 1 racing car engines.

The machine used at Silverstone was fitted with a normal Norton push-rod

· racing engine.

At Silverstone Paul Smart raced a 500 cm<sup>3</sup> works Suzuki fitted with a new British-built frame. This has been developed for Smart by Ron Williams, a 33-year-old Manchester frame builder who designed and builds the Maxton frames for Yamahas used by Chas Mortimer and Charlie Williams.

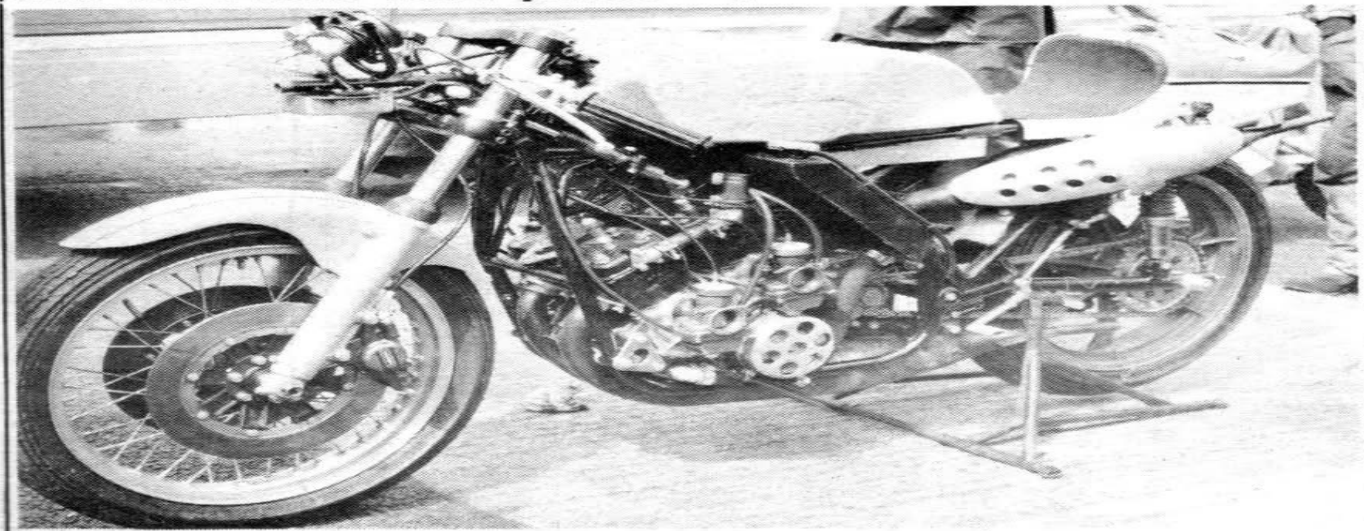
Smart asked Williams to build him a complete frame for his four-cylinder Suzuki after experiencing handling problems with the new machine in the early Grands Prix.

Williams, who worked for several years as chief draughtsman and development engineer with the Chevron car racing team, designed and built the frame in four weeks — completing it just in time to rush it to Silverstone.

Despite lack of testing (Smart had never ridden it before), Smart finished third in the 500 cm<sup>3</sup> race.

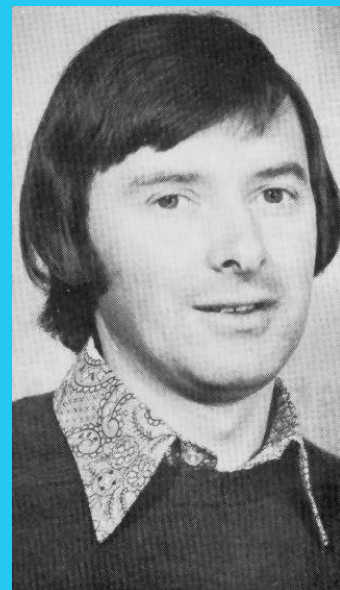
The engine is mounted lower and further forward and is also tilted forward. To get it further forward, the normal radiator has been replaced by two smaller radiators and these are positioned on each side — just in front of the rider's knees.

Suzuki forks and brakes are retained. The complete machine weighs under 135 kg.



*PAUL SMART'S new Ron Williams-framed Works Suzuki.*

**Paul Dunstall** was a Ex motorcycle racer turned Motorcycle tuner and parts manufacturer who was from Erith and operated from the local area.



## ***History of Dunstall Motorcycles***

### ***Chapter One - The Early Years (1950s)***

The first year after he left school, Paul Dunstall helped his father Arnold to build a dream bungalow on the slopes of a wooden hill in Erith, overlooking the Thames estuary. As a reward, Paul was taken into the family business selling scooters and mopeds. While his father sold 30 to 40 scooters a week, Paul managed a smaller shop up the road specialising in mopeds and light scooters.

Paul first got involved with motorcycles in 1955 when, at the age of 16, he obtained his first machine. It was an old MAC Velocette 350, which was fun to ride, but needed lots of care and attention to keep it going. Within a year, the old 350 has been replaced with a new 600cc Norton Dominator 99 which he immediately began modifying to achieve better performance.

In 1957, at the age of 18, Paul started his racing career. Needless to say, all the parts necessary to convert a road going Dominator into a competitive racer were not available as everybody preferred the Manx Norton single cylinder engine to the Dominator twin cylinder engine. Therefore all the parts had to be made and fitted by Paul. He took the silencers off and fitted a Manx gearbox and wheels. He also carefully prepared the engine incorporating his own ideas for improving the performance and reliability up to racing standards. He balanced the crankshaft and carefully re-assembled the engine. Other improvements over time included fitting the engine into a genuine Manx Norton Chassis.

Paul racing career was centred on Brands Hatch. Even though he was up against the more popular Manx Norton, he came 3rd in his first clubman's race at Thruxton, followed by two outright wins at Brands Hatch. After this he graduated to the expert class where he gained 3rd and 4th places in events at Brands Hatch, Cadwell Park, Silverstone, and Crystal Palace. It was obvious that the work he had done to convert his stock Dominator into a racer had been very successful, the machine ended up faster than many of the more conventional racing machines around at that time.

By the end of 1959, Paul had retired from racing simply because he found that he received greater satisfac-

tion from preparing and modifying machines than he did from racing them. He had also got married to his wife Lynn. It was during this time Paul got to know a fellow racer Fred Neville well, and when Fred asked if Paul would build a Dominator for him to race, Paul was only too pleased to say yes. The bike was built in the scooter shop between working on customer's scooters. His Dominator kept on winning and in time it brought a few Norton owners into the shop.

**(next month Chapter 2)**





**Before** she was the most famous Bond Girl of them all, “Pussy Galore!” Before she was the first Avenger Girl, Dr. Catherine “Cathey” Gale, sharp-witted anthropologist, Black belt in Judo, and a keen motorbike rider. She was just 15 year old **Honor Blackman**, with a new motorbike license! She then put it to good use, joining the UK Home Office as a dispatch rider! Under black out conditions, with tape over her headlight, and the roar of the engine, she raced through the nights in London, often not hearing the German Doodle Bugs until they exploded! Even then, the camera loved her! — Dennis Oberwetter



This is the card of Bryan Flanigan, used to work at Vintage Twins. Started his own shop about 6 months ago. I've used him for vapor blasting, good guy. Also works on older Jap bikes. Harder and harder these days to find someone to work on classic stuff, spread the word to the club and bring him your business!

<https://trophyclassiccycles.com/>

King Browne

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## Motorcycle Stuff on the web:

Check out the club websites new photo galleries:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/galleries/>

Here's the link to the discussions page on the website:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/discussions/>

**Norton club t-shirts and sweatshirts available to purchase**

<https://classictees.us/classictees/norton-colorado-club/>

Interesting, especially for old guys! (So if you know any old guys, send this to them.)

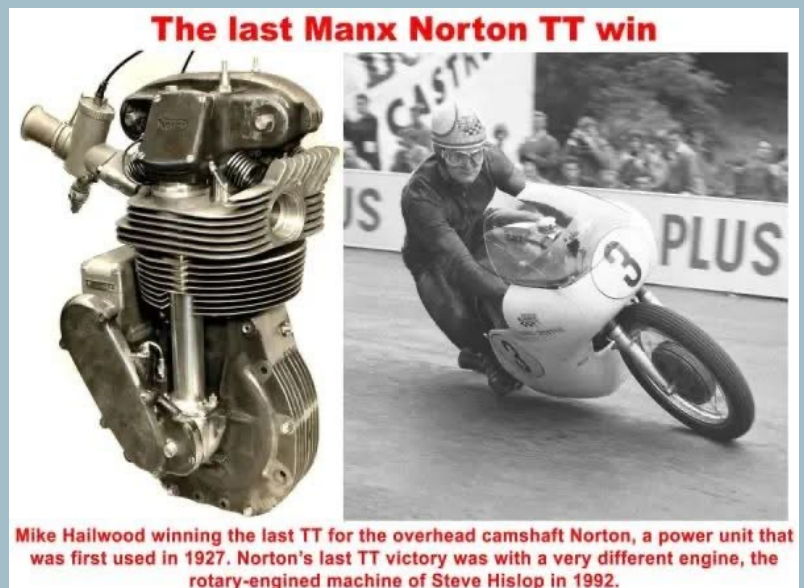
[What Is The 12-Second Rule For Motorcycles And Why Is It So Important?](#)

Old motorcycle video

[The Bikies 1968](#)

Join Jerry Doe for a nice blast on his Commando!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXXeIGTR1Cg>



Jesse Carraway mentioned that he recently acquired most of the used parts, and possibly a number of new ones, from Matt Rambow at Colorado Norton Works. Matt is no longer building complete bikes so he doesn't need that inventory. Jesse had previously purchased the inventory of the club's Parts Depot when we lost our storage site and he already had a large inventory of his own parts, so at this point I think it is safe to say Jesse has the largest inventory of Norton parts in Colorado. He is glad to help out fellow club members who are in need:

Jesse Carraway

(303) 980-6641

[jesse@fastmail.fm](mailto:jesse@fastmail.fm)



## Norton Colorado 2025 Event Schedule

Here is the first draft of the club's 2025 event schedule. I've taken the liberty (based on past performance) of listing you as a host for an event. Please have a look and let me know if you are still willing to host an event, or if the date needs to be changed. Also, if you would like to host an event of some sort, please contact Eric.

February 8, 2025 (Saturday), 6:30pm, Winter Banquet,  
Mickey's Top Sirloin, 6950 N. Broadway

March 23, 2025 (Sunday) Museum.

April 19, 2025 (Saturday), Group Ride.

May 18, 2025 (Sunday), Open Garage / Tech Day  
hosted by Al and Barb Slarks.

June 1, 2025 (Sunday), Big Tent BBQ hosted by Eric  
Bergman & Susan Saarinen.

June 7, 2025 (Saturday), 8am to 2pm, Colorado Vintage  
Motorcycle Show

June 12-15, 2025 (Thursday-Sunday), Four Corners Ren  
dezvous hosted by Steve Harris and Charley  
Gremmels.

June 16-21, 2025 (Monday-Saturday), INOA Rally,  
Quincy

July 13, 2025 (Sunday), Mt. Evans Ride and Brunch  
hosted by David Sheesley.

July 20, 2025 (Sunday), BMAC Picnic hosted by Frank &  
Joanne Puckett.

August 3, 2025 (Sunday), BBQ and open garage hosted  
Jamie & Michelle Jones.

September 7, 2025, Sunday, Old Bike Ride.

September 14, 2025 (Sunday), English Motoring  
Conclave.

October 12, 2025 (Sunday), Plains Ride, hosted by Scott  
and Julie Robinson.

October 26, 2025 (Sunday), Open Garage, hosted by  
Jonathan Chaikin and Tamara.

November 6, 2025 (Thursday) 1st Thurs day, Brooklyn's  
Finest Pizza

November 8, 2025 (Saturday) Tech Day

December 4 2025 (Thursday) 1st Thursday, Brooklyn's  
Finest Pizza

December 7, 2025 (Sunday), Pub meeting.

January 1, 2026 (Thursday), Clancy's Irish Pub.

January 18, 2026 (Sunday), Pub meeting.

February 7, 2026 (Sat ) Winter Banquet. Mickey's Top Sirloin



Santa was very nice to Robin Webster this year. She must have been a very good girl!!!



## Membership

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

Dues are \$25 per 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.

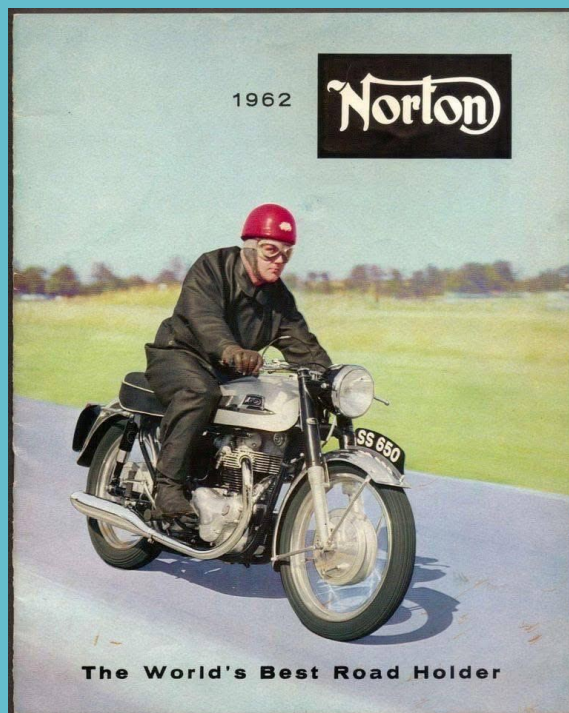
The membership year begins with the Winter Banquet in February. New members who join after August 1 are credited with membership for the following year.



## Club Events

Many events have been scheduled for the 2024 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:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/events/>



## Current Occupants

### Officers

#### **President**

Arnie Beckman (303) 733-4239  
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#### **Secretary**

Eric Bergman (720)400-7835 **NEW #**  
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**Credits:** Thanks to Eric Bergman, Jim Colt, Jerry Doe, Bob Herman, Julian Kowalewski, Bob Martin, Dennis Oberwetter and Gino Rondelli for their contributions to this newsletter. I also want to say thanks to others who sent me things I will use in future editions.

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