



# **FISHTAIL WEST**

**Velocette Owners Club of North America  
Newsletter**

**December 2022 no.253**

## VOCNA CLUB OFFICERS

elected July 2022

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**Front Cover:** Good fuel lines in place, JP Defaut attempts the inevitable. photo by JP Defaut.

**Back Cover:** Santa Fred Mork wishes everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

**Club dues \$35 a year.** Membership runs from January thru December.

**Submissions for  
Fishtail West due  
last day of ODD Numbered  
Months.**

Next Deadline: January 31, 2023

**New Dates for 2023 Rally:  
July 9 - 15, 2023**

*The views, opinions and technical tips expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the editor or of any of the other VOCNA officers.*

**Renew Now!**

*This newsletter often features items from older motorcycle magazines, including photographs, drawings, cartoons etc. Where possible I acknowledge their source. Often these items are often from "MotorCycle" and "MotorCycling", and the current copyright holders are Mortons Motor Cycle Media. I thank them for their use.*

## Prez Sez: New Dates for 2023 Rally: July 9 - 15, 2023

### Stop The Presses!

The President Screwed Up. Big Time! The rally is in JULY!

Yes the rally is in July. We gather Sunday July 9th. The ride starts on Monday July 10th. The rally ends with the AGM on the 15th.

I don't know how I managed to get the dates wrong. All I can say is I was on a catamaran for 2 weeks at the time I pieced the last Fishtail entry together. It was in rolling seas when I wrote the entry and I was rushing to get it done as sea sickness was kicking in. That said I have no idea how I managed to pick the wrong dates. When I got home, thanks to JP I was queried about the dates. It was a Holy Crap moment.

Please cross out the June dates and replace with the new July dates.

Cheers, Cory

### Membership Secretary Sez: Renew NOW!

It's that time of year--property taxes are all paid up (you did pay your property taxes, right?)--now it's time to renew your Velo club membership! A whole year of the ever-useful and entertaining FTW publications + event participation for just \$35--pretty insulated from inflation, if you ask me!

With the holidays fast-approaching, I'm sure we all have that impossible-to-shop-for moto enthusiast in our circle--why not gift them a year of membership? A great way to pique their interest in all things Velo!

Visit <https://www.velocette.org/membership> to renew and/or gift a membership today! Sarah



*The Usual Suspects came out for the annual So Cal Christmas Party. Front Row: Dana Shatts, Ella Luce, & Remeny. Bruce Farren in the back, Larry Luce, Craig Rich and Mike Jongblood. photo by Gil Loe*

## Eastern News by Andrew Harris



Greetings from the East, where we had our first snowfall on 16th November. Now it's time to look for a warm (less cool?) day to get the oil warm and drain it out. Fortunately the weather has been kind for most of the year, even though the Velo only gets out now and again (mainly on a Sunday morning) I have still managed to put a respectable number of miles on the odometer. It is important to keep riding, keeps you cheerful and mentally agile. One day when I'm old (!) I don't want to regret not having taken every opportunity to get out riding. One of my buddies is 88 and still riding regularly. I am sure being on two wheels has contributed to his

youthful attitude.

Although I am writing in November it will be next year or close to before you get this, so a Happy New Year to everyone.

The Sunday morning group had a fall colours ride in October, the usual eclectic array of machinery was enhanced by one individual who had been knocked off his bike recently and was unable to ride. So he brought along a mid 1920's Alfa Romeo instead. I suppose you do what you have to...

Another contributor brought along the internals from a chronometric speedo which he had been repairing. I know the name makes it clear clockwork is involved but seeing the bits and pieces up close is a wakeup call for the complexity of the device. In addition to the gears and wheels the needle is pushed by a lever (hence the sometimes jerky movement) which engages as the driven speed changes. Not to be dismantled by the faint-hearted.

Another single cylinder visitor is a Manx Norton somewhat modified for road use – see the picture of it lurking by my Velo. The Manx has a Commando fork and disc brake, various extra engine breathers and 12V lighting courtesy of a Kubota lawnmower.

Emission regulations continue to limit choices, the latest European regulations mean Morgan no longer use the V-twin engine in the three wheeler. Instead they are using a 3 cylinder Ford engine. Something of a back to the future moment as a similar configuration was available in the 1930's.

ride safely and stay healthy,  
Andrew





The 22nd Annual San Francisco 49 Mile Ride for pre-1975 bikes organized by VOCNA's Pete Young was a fun romp through some of the scenic spots in the city. Above, a stop under the Golden Gate Bridge. Below, the editor pulls her bike into the Velo lineup at Twin Peaks. Note one rider doing the hand jive in the back. photos by Jeff Scott





**The 32nd Annual Northern California All-British Ride  
Don Danmeier**

The one question that recurs after each of these events, without fail, is “How many bikes?” Well, what with the uncertainty of the weather, this year’s ride saw a much-reduced number of forty. It certainly wasn’t going to reach our historical high-water mark of 200. You can’t blame people for not wanting to cross the Sierras with the travel advisories and chain requirements that were

being sent out. We did however get a hardy bunch of guys from Oregon. Kudos to them and the locals who defied the predictions. Except for four Velos, all the bikes were BSA, Norton or Triumph. Among the more or less exotic were four BSA Gold Star singles, two Rocket Gold Stars, a street-legal BSA Cyclone (500cc twin), a '66 Triumph TT and a '57 Norton ES2. Not everyone provided model information on registering, so I may have missed a few that nevertheless drew special attention.

Planning this year tried to balance territorial variety with the option of reduced travel time in the event of unpredictable rain. So, we took some roads that we hadn't used since 1999, but also had a back-door beeline for a rapid return to the point of departure if things got exceedingly damp. Things were looking up prior to launch, with sunlight gradually making its way through the overcast. I was feeling optimistically smug as we worked our way through the valleys of northern Marin and up into Sonoma County. The roads were dry, it certainly wasn't cold, and surprisingly, nobody went past me. Over the years, Don Clancy has made that his specialty, but this time nothing passed the front end of my BSA but pavement, all the way to our pit stop and turn-back point, Bodega Bay. But there was wiping of the face-shield by the time we'd reached Valley Ford, and a gentle drizzle in the air at the gas station. Quite a few had turned back earlier, as our contingent had shrunk considerably.

That's where the fun came to an end. Paul Zell prodded his bike into life and headed back ahead of the main body of riders, and just south of town, stuffed the Velo into the side of a van on Highway 1. We couldn't be sure of any of this until comparing notes later, back in Novato, but when I was told that the bike in question "had one of those funny-looking mufflers," I knew who





had been involved. At the time, the cops had shut down the highway, so most of us sat there in the rain to wait it out. Some guys doubled back to skirt the scene by going through side streets. When we were finally cleared to move, the bike and the rider were gone, but I saw that the van had been bashed in on the left side. I think that the driver pulled out into the highway from the RV park access road (which had been on Paul's right).

As I write this (November 7), we know that Paul survived but has multiple injuries and is expected to be hospitalized for about four weeks. He will be kept under sedation in the ICU until successive surgeries are done to set broken bones. Folks have rallied around his wife Julie to see that she is cared for (she is wheelchair bound herself). A GoFundMe page has been set up to help the Zells; here's the link: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/paul-julie-zell-care-and-recovery> (As this goes to print, Paul is still hospitalized)

Ironically - and tragically, in the 32 years of this event, only one other such event has occurred, when years ago a rider on a BSA B50 left the road out by Walker Creek Ranch, crashing and rupturing his spleen (and undergoing surgery to remove it). That was Paul Zell.

### **All Brit Frame by Jeff Scott**

Well our 30+ annual 50th birthday ride came out to test our metal, mettle and our water proofs with the annual All Brit Ride. The start line was fine with almost 40 entrants. Down from the 200 or so that the sun will bring. Signing up for lunch at the Mexican taqueria at the end of the ride, those brave souls having the benefit of dry pavement at the time, soon to be into the wind and rain on our way out to the gas station at the river. A reverse course to try to keep the wet miles to a minimum.

At one point I looked down to the Amp meter and noticed a deviation beyond the normal wandering needle that I came to realize was my head lights going dim due to a regulator failure. Four Velos and the rest Triumph/Norton/BSA to round out the limited road train of all brit iron. Lanora on the Mac with the Venom enduring with no lights and Paul Zell on his "MeSS." I was hoping to find at least one other bike with a larger puddle of oil at the stop but the only one that came close was Roland's Commando.

Anyway after standing around in the rain for 20 minutes or so just to get a better feel for clammy leathers and cold water running down our backs the band started to break out and head back with Paul leading by several minutes and the rest of the crew in a group with us a minute or so ahead of the main group. In the turn out of town, a slight back up of traffic led us to ride up on the shoulder to find Paul on the ground being attended by several people with his bike off to the side in a heap. We stopped and were immediately ushered out of the intersection with assurances the Paramedics were on the way and the situation was under control. Well Hell. Upon stopping at the bakery to get a warm drink we watched the rest of the crew that had been waiting behind the backed up traffic motor on by. Later we caught some of the group at the lunch stop and the news was that Paul was at the local trauma center and was receiving treatment. Well Hell. That saga continues.

To round off the day at some point on the way back to the barn the handling characteristics so well noted for rock solid tracking, in Velocettes in particular, began to feel very rubbery and flat tire-ish on my bike and I had to repeatedly assure myself that the tires were full up. Through the light drizzle and darkened skies we managed to get off the highway and into the driveway where close inspection proved the flexi-flyer feeling was due to the down tube having come apart at the steering head lug with a good 1 1/2" gap where the top tube had gradually turned up under the added stress.

Later it turned out that this is a fairly common action of the chromoly tubing, even double butted, as the material work hardens at flex points and will eventually part under stress. The works was aware of this is-



sue and advised owners to anneal that particular area of the frame to alleviate this problem. This in a letter to a customer that was using his Venom in the way the maker intended - or maybe a little more enthusiastically. Seems I missed a move there.

Butted tubing being seamless can be reinforced with a stiffening inner tubing, braze welded into place above and below the break and serves to spread out the forces of flex and provide a backing for a butt weld around the break. I can pull the tubing and have it annealed at the next service interval.

ON AIR MINISTRY APPROVED LIST

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12th September, 1962.

A. Duncan Esq.,  
[Redacted]  
AUSTRALIA.

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Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter, the contents of which have been duly noted.

It is difficult to state the cause of the fracture of the frame tube reported, but this could be due to as you state, fatigue, and it is advisable when machines are being employed for racing purposes, for frames to be heated at three to four yearly intervals, to anneal the tubes. Frames are repairable, and the down tube is manufactured from Chrome Molybdenum Steel, the top tube from .4% Carbon Steel.

The tubes are brazed into the lugs.

Yours faithfully,  
VELOCE LIMITED.

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
H.W. WOODGATE,  
SERVICE MANAGER.

## Chairman's Chat Paul d'Orleans

When the road went from single-lane to just plain dirt in the first five miles, I knew we were in for a fun weekend ride. Steve Eorio really knows the roads radiating like a spiderweb around his ranchito, most of which are superb for old bikes. Even a spontaneous redirection on Sunday's route brought yet more unexpectedly good back-roads, and the out-and-back peg-scraper of Hwy 229 was one for the books. I was glad I wasn't riding my Thruxton on the dirt, but missed it very much on the immaculate banked bends of Hwy 41, knowing they could be safely run at plus-plus velocity, so which bike is best? Interestingly, the revived Melo Velo

Rally was free of Thruxtons and even Clubman models, a counter-trend from ten years ago, when it seemed the majority of Velos on rides were sports models. The Melo Velo Rally included few Venom/Vipers, four rigid-frame Velos, Steve's hybrid VeloStar and Rickman-Triumph, a BSA ZB34, a BMW R60/2, and a pair of '60s Triumphs. Two bikes were hors de combat – Carl's 'Ghost' distributed chain rollers freely inside his primary, and Lance's Triumph scared horses while pop-popping down the highway with ignition blues.

More importantly, of the 15 folks signed up for the rally, five were new members, which was entirely the point of the exercise, and my reason for taking on the Chairmanship. A small success, but a win for sure. With the hospitality provided by Casa Eorio, and the roads laid out by JP and Steve, every one of these new members was thrilled to have joined the VOCNA: Lance Lindborg ('70 Triumph T120), Sean Duggan ('52 BSA ZB34), Simon Peters (Venom), Arnaud Goethals (JP's BMW R60/2) and Leyla Hujer (who couldn't attend last minute). Of the 3 new members on Brand X bikes, two are committed to buying a Velocette asap, and four are planning to attend the Summer Rally. Got a nice Velo to sell a new member at a reasonable price? Contact me or JP: folks are asking.

That 'reasonable price' question can be a stumbling point for new owners: Velocettes have kept their value better than other British bikes of their generation. I often joke that if you have one Velocette, you probably have three, or more. I happen to own seven (three swingarm and four cammy), which is



Sleazy Rider 2 auditions while lost in vineyards of Paso Robles. photo by Arnaud Goethals JP Defaut on left and chairman Paul d'Orléans in the middle.

ridiculous: I barely have time to maintain one. Perhaps you have several too. I've committed to build up my very first Velo, a '66 Endurance, in time for the 2023 Summer Rally, and will still have two in bits. That leaves a couple of spare Velos, and a declaration: for my commitment to building up the VOCNA with new blood, I will sell two of my Velocettes to new, non-Velo-owning club members, for less than the current retail price. Any club members care to join me in such a project – supplying interested potential members with a spare Velo? Again, contact me or JP, we already have new members who would love a Velo.

This year's Melo Velo Rally was the first time this venerable event was officially sponsored/organized by the VOCNA. Under previous management by rally founder Pat Peddicord, his son Terry, and more recently Tim Kenney, the ride has always been a fun gathering for NorCal and SoCal riders. I attended the rally many times, under all those organizers, and appreciated that many attendees were not Summer Rally riders (that's admittedly for a special, slightly mad few). We'd like to strengthen the Nor/SoCal bridge next year, or even in the nearer future, with more rides. JP and I were discussing an April ride further south, perhaps in Solvang, Ojai, Frazier Park, or? We'll put it to the club at next year's Summer Rally, but if you have an interest in organizing, scouting, or making suggestions for a SoCal weekend ride in April, we're all ears, because many hands do indeed make light work.

**A very mellow Velo indeed  
by JP Default**

*Below: The 39th Melo Velo Ride at Chateau Eorio, Paso Robles CA. photo by Carol Eorio*



As of this year, the Melo Velo Fellow Ride was “peened” to the cases of the VOCNA calendar, and is now an official club event. Over the recent years, Tim Kenny has fulfilled the legacy of this long-standing “unofficial” fixture with grace and style, taking over from Pat Petticord who carried on what Ellie Taylor had initially started back in the early 80s. Sadly, 2021 was Tim’s last as an organizer. Naively, I thought I should step up and tender the Melo Velo flame moving forwards. While digging deep into VOCNA history, I realized the provenance of these Velo fellows... What was I thinking? As a rookie following humbly in their shadows, I hope I did them justice. That said, I’ve learned from organizing other VOCNA rides: I needed a wingman. Steve Eorio kindly opened his gates of moto paradise and after setting a few things in motion, Paso Robles turned out to be an epic spot for the 39th Melo Velo Ride!

### **Friday 14th October:**

Surprise surprise, I had a late start! In my haste to please everyone, I agreed to a last-minute project and woke up Friday morning to find the client requesting further work... I ploughed through, sent in my homework, loaded bikes, and headed South to pick up Arnaud. A recent VOCNA member and a Velocette novice, I’d promised him a good time (!) What I meant was a unique experience, so the pressure was on. We eventually rolled in at 9 pm (after the kitchen had closed) to find the fellows elegantly sufficed and nursing drinks while hurling (well-deserved) abuse at my timekeeping.

### **Saturday 15th October**

Kick-off was at Chateau Eorio where we were greeted with a quick Grappa tasting to start the day! The rest of the posse was downtown Paso Robles at a notable coffee spot where we all connected and kicked tires while our steeds quietly oozed oil onto SLO county’s finest pavements. At 10 am, our fearless route master Steve signaled, and we all kicked our machines. The crowd of locals that had gathered to scrutinize the hardware was suddenly engulfed in a cacophony of noise and smoke as we pulled out of town. Not exactly Hollister 1947, but trying we weren’t!

The first leg of the ride was a gentle hill climb, followed by a dirt road that challenged some of us. Those that know Steve won’t be surprised. In no time the pack was scattered all over the dirt laden hill and my carefully printed maps came into



*Breakfast of kings with the Maestro.  
photo by JP Default*

play as most of us lost sight of our bearded leader. Eventually, we all reconnected at The Parkfield cafe where pink lemonade and an excellent burger were a welcomed delight. The local antique fair opposite also provided interesting distractions, as did a few vintage Harley riders who pitched up with some cool American iron from the 40s.

We carried on through the countryside and ended up back at Chateau Eorio for a culinary banquet: Steve and Carol had prepared amazing salads, and vegetables to grill with local bread; Velo fellows brought steak, sausages, and other goodies to throw on the grill. Carl surprised us all with 30 Dungeness



crabs from Oregon, and Arnaud put the icing on the cake with cheesecakes from his bakery in San Francisco. FEAST! Our palates were elegantly cleansed with Paso Robles finest pinot, grown on-site by a local winemaker with a beard. Robert Parker has yet to rate it and the Modavis will never find it.

### Sunday 16th October

“We need something different for Sunday morning,” I told Steve on the phone during our Melo planning conversations. “I know a cool diner at an airfield close by,” he said. “Done!” Joe’s One Niner Diner didn’t disappoint either. Friendliest service with everything to break the fast for the ride ahead as we gazed out on the runway at old aircraft on this small airfield.

We took off and headed toward the 229. While it looks short on the map, it’s fair to say: “It’s the greatest road in California!” Steve shouted at us as we approached the top. He wasn’t wrong. Technical in some parts with a few hairpin turns, it had all the aesthetics of a silk ribbon thrown onto a hill by the hands of motorcycle gods. We rode it down, and back up! A must if you’re ever in that neck of the woods. The rest of the ride didn’t quite go as planned: One of Carl’s bikes broke a primary chain, while Steve headed back to find him and Niel, a few of us carried on, only to get beaten by the clock as we all had to head back for a last drink, say our goodbyes and load up for the long drive home. Some of us had school the next day!

*mel-low: /'melō/adjective Especially of sound, taste, and color. Pleasantly smooth or soft; free from harshness. (of a person's character) softened or matured by age or experience.*

If one is to sum up the experience, the dictionary’s definition of mellow hits the mark. We were blessed with many things, great roads, an amazing selection of motorcycles, delicious food and good weather. The one thing one can’t put into words, is the human connection I felt from everyone: it was was off the chart. Special thanks to Steve and Carol Eorio, all who showed up to share love and create good memories, and the VOCNA community for making this an official fixture. Next year’s ride is already in the works with dates yet to be confirmed. If we ask nicely and we’re all on best behavior, who knows, perhaps Steve will have us back...!

JP Defaut is a photographer/creative director and editor for the VOCNA website [www.velocette.org](http://www.velocette.org) Email him your stories: [info@velocette.org](mailto:info@velocette.org)

**Right:** The ex-president John Sims on his show winning KSS, and the chairman on his... blue thingy! photo by P Defaut  
**2022**

**Melo Velo  
Ride Pictures**

**Below:** “Anyone ‘got any up to date tags I could borrow...?’” photo by Arnaud Goethals





*The Greenlund selection: MAC, rigid MSS and our host's "Velostar" built by Jim Romain. photo by JP Defaut*

*Right: 39th Melo Velo Ride T shirts... If you know, you know... So you missed it, but you still want a shirt:. Few left from the 39th Melo Velo ride in Paso Robles. email for sizes: [info@velocette.org](mailto:info@velocette.org)*





**2022**  
**Melo Velo views from**  
**Niel Macdonald**  
above: roadside meeting  
left: even the host has to eat  
below: a line up of bikes





*Like the rest of us, David Hill struggles to pick a favorite from the slickest barn find in California. photo by JP Default*

WANTED: Trade or Cash. Poster "Triumph Wins 36th Annual Big Bear Run". This old race win promotional advertisement from 1957 of Bud Ekins winning. Other similar posters wanted. Good copies OK. Anything on Big Bear, Catalina or Greenhorn races. Also "Motorcyclist" mags of 50's and 60s. R.E. Rogers Rogersr.e.65@gmail.com



From: RALPH Glorioso  
Sent: Thursday, 20 October 2022 2:20 AM  
**Subject: Hedley Cox has died**

Keith: I don't know if this sad news has reached "Down Under" but the iconic Hedley Cox died on October 13 at 7:30pm. His long-serving nephew Peter Cox and Petre's wife Valeria, who live nearby and Hedley's neighbor lady were at his bedside, holding Hedley's hands as he died. Hedley was very frail, but otherwise was in no pain and expressed no anxiety at what he knew was soon to come. I do not believe he had any specific illness. He had been losing

strength over the last few years and had become very frail. He just "slipped away".

I met Hedley in December 1957, when I was a customer at the New York City area Velocette dealership, Birchard Cycle Sales in Mt. Vernon, NY. Hedley was working at a motorcycle shop in Manhattan and on Saturdays would ride to Birchard's on his KTT, which was fitted with BSA teles and basic street-legal equipment (and a reverse cone megaphone which was not quite street legal!). Hedley was quite "interesting" in his attire, which was a cloth overcoat, shirt and tie and his "pudding bowl helmet with army surplus "tanker goggles".

One Saturday, at Birchards, Hedley announced that he had re-ground a set of M-17/8 cams for his bike for better performance and they needed to be hardened. Earlier, he'd been to a chemist and bought a package of cyanide crystals. He emptied this into a metal pan, then as the shop owner and 3 customers watched in horror, Hedley heated the cams cherry red with a welding torch and dropped the cams into the pan of cyanide crystals to harden them! The rest of us boiled out the shop's door, justifiably in fear for our lives, while Hedley ca-

sually walked after us, holding his breath. We survived but the shop was unusable for a while so we went down to the corner restaurant for lunch. I think Hedley enjoyed his escapade and how we reacted. He was not without a very impish sense of humor.

Hedley and I got on quite well and decided to get Canadian racing licenses and to race at the Spring Trophy Races at Canada's WWII military airfield at Harewood, Ontario, May 3, 1958. I was going to run my modified Velocette 350cc MAC and Hedley would race his KTT, devoid of street gear. He wanted a "dustbin" fairing for it but none was available commercially (and Hedley was notoriously "tight with a buck") so he went to a car salvage yard and bought a rusty hood from an old car which he felt would suit his needs. He cut the hood in half lengthwise and used the two halves to make a mold of sorts for his fairing. He laid on fiberglass cloth and resin and had a reasonably good fairing, which he used at Harewood. Throughout the race day the rain poured down and we struggled a bit but finished well down. Nonetheless, we enjoyed the outing.

A month later, I received my commission as a 2d lieutenant in the United States Marines and was off to Virginia and more distant bases for 3 years. Hedley and I promised to "keep in touch" and, remarkably, this commitment actually was pursued faithfully by each of us. In fact, for the next 64 years, scarcely a day went on that Hedley and I did not scribble a few lines about our activities and once a week mail the contents to one another. I became one of Hedley's closest friends and certainly the late Frank Panes (I have his book) was every bit as close a friend of Hedley's. Hedley was very shy and uncomfortable at gatherings of people he didn't know well, but to his little "inner circle" he was exceptionally loyal, and generous (he gave me his Yamaha 1000cc 4 cylinder sport bike in 2009, when it became too heavy for him to manage safely). At that time he was 81 and did not ride a motorcycle again.

Eventually, I moved to rural Burnet County, Texas, 113 miles from Hedley's San Antonio, Texas home. I would visit him several times a year. Two weeks ago, knowing Hedley's time was growing very short, I rode down to see him on my 2 year old Royal Enfield "Interceptor 650" and spent about an hour with him. As often happened, he regaled me with stories of traveling on the Continent with the Veloce Racing Team, working in the race shop with Frank Panes and Freddie Owen, of contretemps with the firm's managing director, of building Covell (and being given the sack for that!) and of coming to America in 1955, soon after working for Harley Davidson in Milwaukee and going to University of Wisconsin for a degree in mechanical engineering. Later he earned a masters degree in mechanical engineering at St. Mary's University in San Antonio. Hedley's thesis, on the manufacture of bricks, was not quite in keeping with his motorcycling interests, but it got him through the coursework and earned him his advanced degree.

He later went to work as an aeronautical engineer for the US Air Force at Kelly Field in San Antonio. He retired from that in 1990 at age 62, spending the next 20 years in his own shop designing and testing prototype sleeve valve engines for motorcycles. All the while, Hedley and I used reams of paper and a small fortune for stamps communicating our trials, tribulations and small suc-

cesses. It has become a sad reality for me that I no longer can write to my very close friend of 65 years. I have both of the books he wrote and in my own shop are three framed, large photos of Hedley, either with his Covell in 1951 or in other pursuits less exciting.

Hedley liked to be "published" in Fishtail DU and to correspond with Dennis Quinlan of your group.

Sincerely,

Ralph W. Glorioso

Burnet, Texas, USA

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Paul Adams sent the above photo and says, "Definitely not a Manx Norton tire.....would hate to race whatever it goes on."



### **How Good Does it Get** **Jack Sanders**

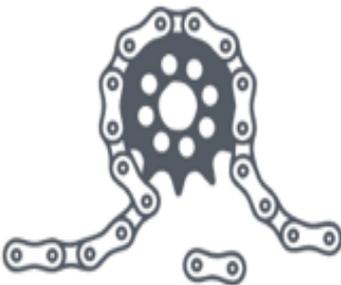
One day while living in Florida's Sunshine State I climbed aboard my motorcycle and lit out on another glorious day ride in "Paradise." I was living on the Gulf side of the state in the Sarasota area at the time and I had decided to ride north and traverse the state to the Atlantic coastal city of Jacksonville. The ride was roughly two-hundred miles or so which was the kind of day rides I frequently did so it was no biggie! In Jacksonville I would visit my long time Velocette riding friend Bill Weigle, a long time VOCNA member. Billy and I had grown up in the Panama Canal Zone together and we were high school best friends and dedicated motorcycle riders. Billy's father and both of our brothers rode British bikes before us and they had lit that torch that still burns today.

I can't remember the exact route I took that day but somewhere between Tampa and Gainesville "Paradise" I took a turn "south"! The clouds turned black and the rain began to fall! A little rain was something I had a lot of experience with from my rainy season Panama days and from fifteen years of living in Hawaii. Panama rain is the heaviest rain I have ever experienced except for a day in Hawaii where I got 33.3 inches of rain in one twenty-four hour period. Believe me that Hawaii 33.3 inches of rain is true! The Florida rain that day was pretty heavy and along with it there was horrendous thunder and lightning. The lightning was all over the sky, all around me, and striking the ground at a distance that seemed to be not far away. I felt like a rolling lightning rod but I stupidly pressed on knowing full well that Florida is notorious for lightning strikes that hit people. Years ago in Panama while water-skiing when lightning

crackled across the water, Larry Layman, another VOCNA member, had told my brother not to worry about the lightning because when your number was up, your number was up! True Larry Layman thinking! I guess I must have been suffering from brain fade and influenced somewhat by the Layman theory of life and death that day!

As I neared Jacksonville the rain turned into hail or should I say it turned into Hell! I was riding what in these days they call a naked bike with no weather breaking protection. My only protection was my leather riding gear. The hail was pretty serious stuff and I quickly slowed my speed. Car drivers were panicking, visibility was dropping and I felt like a lone shrimp in a sea of hungry fish! Cars were all around me. In the distance I saw an overpass but by the time I got to it some guy with a camper had taken refuge there and there wasn't an inch to spare for me. The hail was beating on me and the camper guy could care less! I cautiously went up the road a ways and finally I saw a rest stop that was crowded with car people. It was just a tin roof on poles with a picnic table under it. I drove up the curb and headed straight for the shelter with people scattering to get out of my way. Once under the roof I stripped to my underwear and rung all the water out of my clothing. The car people looked on in dismay. The leather riding gear was soaked through and weighed a ton. I put the wet clothing back on and waited for the deluge of rain and hail to subside. By then I was about twenty miles from Weigle's house. I was soaking wet, cold, shaking and chattering, and close to a hypothermic condition when I finally arrived at Weigle's front door. They took me inside, stripped my clothes from me and put me in a bath tub of warm water where someone seriously rubbed me down to get my blood circulating. After a while they put me to bed under electric blankets where I slowly recovered.

So much for Paradise and The Sunshine State! If the snakes, alligators, bugs, and "blue Hairs" don't get you, Boreas might!





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**Provenance**  
**by JP Defaut**

*prov-e-nance /'prävənəns/noun. the place of origin or earliest known history of something; the beginning of something's existence; something's origin. a record of ownership of a work of art or an antique, used as a guide to authenticity or quality.*

*Above: Mick Felder with his MAC at the Mellow Velo Rally 2004. Photo by Velobanjogent*

Tell someone you like something and beware, they might have been more than just listening.

A few years ago I had the privilege of riding Tim Kenney's well-known rigid MAC on the Mount Shasta rally, and... I fell in love. Since then, I've always had a soft spot for a MAC, but never actively looked for one. Every now

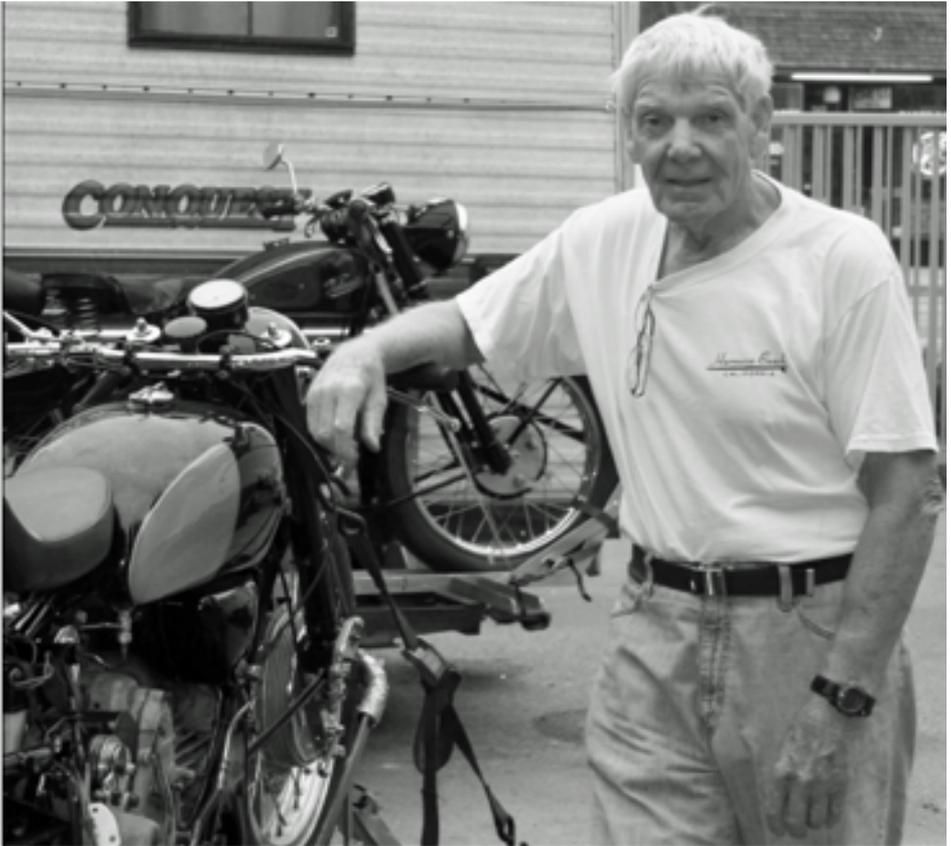
and then you share experiences, and in my limited time with Velocettes, Tim's MAC is one of those stories. Clearly, someone was listening at the Melo Velo ride.

### **A few weeks ago**

My phone rings. Steve Eorio. I pick up: "You still looking for a MAC?" He says quietly. "I know where there is one. Call this number. Tell him I sent you. If you're quick, Carl's going up there next week, he could pick it up for you..." He hangs up before I can get a word in.

So I don't need another bike, much less a Velo, but my curiosity gets the better of me and I call the number. Turns out the seller has two of Mick Felder's old bikes: a Moto Guzzi Falcone, and a MAC. Later, I mentioned both to Paul D'Orleans (PDO) in the hope that he would know interested parties for either bike: "I've always wanted a Falcone!" he chimes. The stars had aligned. Add to that, a trusted delivery service, this was too good to pass.

*Above: Mick Felder with Falcone and MAC in the background. Los Angeles*



*CA circa 2010. Photo by Velobanjogent*

### **Two weeks ago**

My phone rings. Carl Greenlund. I pick up: "So I've loaded up the bikes, shoot me your address and I'll see you in the morning." This is too easy.



*Above: Greenlund motorcycle shipping services, by appointment only. Sebastopol CA. photo by JP Defaut*

But rarely have I bought a bike “sight unseen.” Sure I had seen photos of both, but for all I knew, these could be junk. I get emails regularly from people trying to sell old motorcycles, hoping they’re worth “Brough Money.” More often than not, the parts are so crusty, it’s not worth the time or the effort. This thing might need a total rebuild. I’m still fettling the Viper with Jim Romain, so my bandwidth for another “project” is anorexic. But something one can’t measure, something intuitive made sense. Provenance. VOCNA. A motorcycle club in which members have known each other, and their bikes for years, sometimes decades. Sadly I never spoke with Mick, but I made a few calls to those that knew him. Everyone concurred: “If it’s Mick Felder’s bike, you’re golden.”

#### **Last week**

My phone rings. PDO. I pick up: “I’m coming for my Guzzi! Have you started the MAC yet?! I hang up. I had attempted to start it, but petcocks and fuel lines had been removed. She has compression, and I topped up the oil, checked the plug, and opened the carb to test the float. But I had homework to do before I went any further, so I pulled out the books and read up on MAC Velos. I also prayed for the magneto.

#### **Last weekend**

I gathered the parts I needed, added fuel, and proceeded with the Velocette kickstart procedure. After a few goes, no joy. I thought I’d jump-start it. Still nada. I checked the plug and replaced it with a fresh one. I kicked it, and

She roared back into life after a 5-year nap, what a moment! I took her out straight away and put 20, gentle miles on her. All good.

### **Yesterday...**

...All my troubles seemed so far away, now it looks as though they're here to stay... So she started. Great, I'll venture further afield, so off I went on a big loop. By the time I reached Santa Rosa, the revs were really high up. I pulled over to adjust the slider screw. No change. I try and move the slider, but it's stuck and won't close all the way. After consulting VOCNA technical support, both John Sims and Olav Hassel conclude with me that the throttle cable is threaded wrong and thus too tight. I get it home. I call the Cloverdale maestro Jim Romain to plan some fettling time and further my Velo-education.

### **Tomorrow**

Provenance creates legacy. The latter becomes responsibility. I hope I do this MAC justice as a custodian. It's a privilege to be in a position to acquire any Velocette. It's a tall order to look after one that was owned by such a prominent member of the community. By all accounts, he was immeasurably kind and generous. A true gent. Dennis Quinlan's online tribute is an indication of the giant Mick was in the global Velocette community, and the impact he had on others. "Velocette Club friends were his extended family, and he was welcome around the world as news of his generosity preceded him." PDO

Many of you spent time with Mick over the years. Some of you knew him well. I'd love to hear stories, anecdotes, memories, or photos you might still have of Mick. I've started a bigger article for the VOCNA website. Equally, other members have also left us recently, I'd like to do the same for them. I look forward to reading your memories.



*Mick's MAC today, up & running with minimal fettling. by Maïa Carpenter*



**Part 2 - Save up (raingear) for a rainy day.  
by Cory Padula**



In my previous recollection of the events of 1983 Rally, we hadn't left on our journey. We were in good spirits. Here are a few photos of the happy group kicking tires at my house in Mission, BC getting ready for the event.

As you can see by the photos life was good. We were soon going to be heading off on the first VOCNA five day ride and adventure. We would be riding in small groups traveling at a pace comfortable for that group. This small group format has continued on ever since. So groups of 2 to 5 were formed and ready for the next day's ride.

The Monday started off with decent weather, slightly cloudy and warm. The route details are fuzzy as I do not have a copy of the original route map. The likely route would have taken us 200 miles along a series of rivers and lakes. I do know that we had a final destination at Logan Lake.

Logan Lake was a very small village at that time. It had a small grocery store and a restaurant. The object was for us to camp at the lake and head to the restaurant for dinner. There was just one small snag. No one, namely me, had informed them that a scruffy group of motorcyclists would be arriving for dinner. They were completely ill prepared and as such said they could not accommodate us. Hmm, we had a large group of hungry people and there was no other restaurants even remotely close. Oops! Time to come up with a plan B. Off we went to the local grocery store. We proceed to buy all the hot dogs and pork and beans they had. Back at the lake we lit a fire and next thing you know we are doing a recreation of the Blazing Saddles fire scene.

Tuesday saw rag tag groups heading off under cloudy skies. Our next destination was Jasper, Alberta in the Rocky Mountains. Our motley group of 5 stopped in Kamloops for a hot breakfast. Upon entering the restaurant we were told that they do not serve bikers. We said we weren't Hells Angels, just regular motorcycle riders. Didn't matter. So off we went hunting for some decent





food after our less than appetizing feed last night.

With our stomachs full we suited up on the big trek to Jasper.

There was a light drizzle. Looking at the skies in the direction of our route was ominous, dark and threatening. Before long the rain started. This wasn't heavy drizzle, or

even a good soaking rain, this was a full on deluge. Our group being from BC was used to rain so we had our rain gear on. For others such as the Californians, raingear was not something that would be considered a necessity to bring along, hence they had none. Also you have to remember back in those days, riding gear was rather limited. Leather jackets and jeans were the norm. Exotic gear was a Belstaff waxed cotton suit. Riding through the downpour we came upon some hilarious sights. I recall Olav coming out of a store with a huge bright yellow rain suit, the kind that a fisherman would wear. We saw others sheathed in a variety of plastic bags. Unfortunately the plastic bags did not withstand the wind and rain well so most were in tatters.

The rain was relentless. It started flooding the roads. I recall my front tire was creating a wake as it cut through the water. To make matters worse we were climbing in altitude as we continued northeast towards Jasper, a town known for its surrounding glaciers and snow covered mountains. Temperatures started to drop to bone chilling levels. Just remember there was no such thing as heated vests, heated grips and only one of the Velos had a windshield. We were exposed to the cold and wet full on. None of the gear, no matter how good it was, could withstand the torrent of ice cold water. It was a freaking cold and wet ordeal for 300 miles!

At one point we come across Brian Williamson who was broken down standing under a tree to get out of the rain. His chain wheel had shed its teeth. He had been there for a couple of hours. There was nothing we could do to help him. He had to wait for the chase truck to come along.

It was a tough slog but we were nearing Jasper. As we got close to the campground that most of us planned on staying we see the sign that says

‘Campground Closed Due to Flooding’. Oh crap this was a bit of a problem. Our group, cold and wet had already decided to forego camping and head to someplace warm and dry. The rest of the group would have to find someplace to stay. Off to Jasper we headed to find a motel. Outside the Jasper Hotel were a few parked Velos. First thing we did was book a room before we headed to the bar. Just a slight problem, no rooms were available. Oh crap, Jasper was a very small town in those days so there weren’t a lot of alternatives. The only option at that moment was to head to the bar, order a beer, drip on the floor and get reinforced.

Once we were in the bar sitting with other Velo riders we found out that two of them had rooms. Before you know it we divided up into two groups that would each crash in one of the rooms. Yeehaa time to celebrate with more beer.

While we are all having a good time, Brian Williamson arrives with the chase truck. He had been sitting at the side of the road for over 6 hours. The chase truck left very late because a couple of the Velo owners held it back trying to get their machine(s) running. Poor Brian had a miserable wait. Upon hearing this, the chase truck rule of a 5 minute wait was implemented. A few beers later, Brian was feeling much better.

Before you know it the bar closes. Not sure if it was due to closing time or running out of beer We all headed to our assigned rooms. Our room was courtesy of John Ray. We were most grateful. It had two beds so we drew straws to see who got the spare bed. For the most part sleeping on the floor in a warm, dry room was luxury at this point so everyone was happy about the outcome. Tomorrow was a good sleep away from further adventures that were soon to come. To be continued...



**Right:** Neville Mickleson says, Start them young!. Neville is shown here with Archie. Neville was planning to squeeze all of the liquid out of the last Fishtail West in order to read it.

**Best Winter Holidays to all!!**

**editor’s note:** Thanks to all who submitted articles and photos. I have some left over! That’s the best holiday present ever! editor...

