

Sept-Oct '02

Volume

19

Number

5

A Newsletter for the Members of the San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club

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San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club Annual T-Shirt Ride

© Kevin Sisterson

The day before the T-shirt ride I heard that Engineer Rd. was closed and I thought about whether or not we'd even be able to have the ride. I ditched the 40 maps that I had printed and pulled out the Thomas Bros. to look at alternate routes.

Frank Vaughn had mentioned that he recently went down Kitchen creek Rd. and although there were a few potholes it was paved. I have planned some routes in the past that look real good on the map, but have turned out to be 20-degree downhill dirt twisties. The quaking bones of some of our elderly riders can't take that kind of punishment without a requisite degree of complaint. I didn't want this to be one of those rides,

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**SDAMC ADDRESS:
SDAMC
San Diego Automotive
Museum
2080 Pan American Plaza
San Diego, CA 92101**

Monthly Meetings

Are held at:

**The San Diego Automotive Museum
In Balboa Park
On
The Second Monday of Each Month
At 7:30 P.M.**

**Enter at Door to North
of Main Museum Entrance**

Herald Policies & Editorial Statement

The Herald promises to provide an interesting forum for all antique, vintage, and classic motorcycle related information and will attempt to do so in a timely manner. Since we publish bi-monthly, please present any items for publication early enough for inclusion. We accept no responsibility for items furnished after a reasonable deadline. As a volunteer staff, we expect other members to help by providing items from time to time. We have a large club membership base with a varied interest in all aspects of motorcycling and, as such, we believe all members have stories of interest.

Let us hear from the garages, sheds and shops of the membership. This publication will remain a viable option only with the help and consideration of all. Our Editorial phones and e-mail addresses are available. We look forward to publishing your stories.

SDAMC CHARTER

The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation organized and dedicated to the preservation of antique motorcycles, and in furtherance of such purposes, the sponsorship of antique motorcycle rides, exhibitions and related activities, and the encouragement of social, fraternal and educational activities among its members and the public, with membership open to all persons having an interest in antique motorcycles.

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

IDEAS AND THOUGHTS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER REFLECT ONLY THE VIEWS OF ITS EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE, CONTENTS OR ANY OTHER PART OF THE HERALD, PLEASE LET US KNOW.
ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF OUR CLUB IS THE SHARING OF EACH OF YOUR IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES; THEN WE ALL LEARN MORE.

Triumph 100th Anniversary “Ride Across America” Party

©Will Speer

The Triumph 100th Anniversary “Ride Across America” Party took place in Pasadena about a block from the original location of Johnson Motors. For those of you wearing chaps, Johnson Motors was the West coast Distributor for Triumph throughout the 50’s and 60’s, a time period many would consider the golden era of Triumph. To mark Triumph’s 100th year a group of riders, led by some big-wig from Triumph North America, rode new “Hinckley” Triumphs across the country from New Hampshire to Southern Cal. That’s some ride, but it would have been more impressive if they had ridden old Triumphs. Oh well, I guess that’s why it wasn’t called “Oil Slick across America” or “Parts Vibrating Off across America”.

At first I wasn’t sure that it would be worth the drive to Pasadena; I was afraid this would be a “new bike” event. I like the Hinckley Triumphs, but I can drive 15 minutes to the local dealer and see them any time I want. I called the SoCal BSA Owners Club contact and he assured me that there would be enough old stuff to hold my interest, plus a lot of the famous old racers were going to be there.

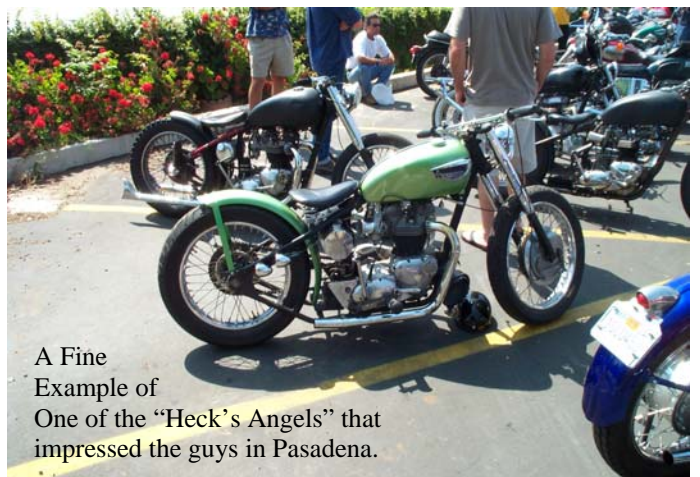
So Joe Michaud, Jon Saltz, and I hit the road in Jon’s stylish new Jetta. Traffic wasn’t too bad and time went quickly as we discussed British bikes, barbeque, and more British bikes. My directions actually got us there without getting lost once, to everyone’s amazement.

It was hot in Pasadena! Walking through the motorcycle parking area we were pleased to see many cool old bikes. Some of the ones that stood out were a beautiful Norton Atlas that Jon recognized from Cachuma, and a cool little BMW (!) bobber with polished cases. As we wandered throughout the parking area and into the concourse I noticed that while there were some really clean, original bikes, a large number of the bikes in the concourse were customized. Not what I expected from a concourse, but it was kind of cool to see some different bikes.

Nothing is more predictable than a band playing southern rock at a biker event, and we were not let down. As the singer asked for someone to “Give him two steps”, we walked around, checking out bikes and people, and bumping into a few SDAMC club members, including John and Donna Mulrean. There were some memorable people there, and the dude from Symond’s Cycles was at the top of the list. By the way, he still has the ’71 Bonnie he had for sale at Cachuma, a steal at \$5000. Act now before someone snatches it up!

There were not many vendors there, just a couple of the Los Angeles Hinckley Triumph dealers, some food, and the Triumph USA tent. They had lots of T-shirts, belt buckles, etc. for sale, and Jon and I each bought T-shirts that commemorated the event.

Jon was quite pleased when a group of about six old Triumph bobbers / choppers pulled into the parking lot. He’s been contemplating a Triumph bobber lately and this added fuel to the fire. Joe was unimpressed and called them “Heck’s Angels” because they weren’t really



A Fine Example of One of the “Heck’s Angels” that impressed the guys in Pasadena.

menacing enough to be the real deal.

At some point the band stopped and the guy that wrote the book “Triumph Motorcycles in America” spoke for a while about Triumph’s history. One memorable thing he had to say was that Triumph’s post war rise was due to people not wanting a slow, unreliable, foot-clutch, hand-shift, poor handling Harley. The crowd went crazy with applause! He then began introducing the racers that were in the crowd. I was amazed at

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Commando Leanings

© Joe Michaud

“Hello. My name is Joe and I am a bike-aholic.”

I’m sure that there are more severe addictions rampant throughout society and I mean to cast no aspersions on those that truly suffer the consequences from any of their own personal demons. However, I am confident that I also need a twelve-step program. Seriously.

Three weeks ago, I had no thoughts of owning a Commando except in some vague “winning the lottery” context and I was quite content with my Triumph project that never makes progress, and the new-to-me BMW. I have no lack of garage fodder. I also figured that I had maxed out the Kitchen Remodel Good Will account, as well. Then, I got that damned email from Tim Stahl saying he knew someone willing to sell a Commando “cheap.”

I phoned the owner and got directions. I



took my digital camera. Perhaps, I could buy this bike, then resell it and raise some cash for the stalled project bike. This is purely a peek for business purposes not for personal use, I tell my-

self...cool and logical.

I never pass up a peek at a private bike sale and this was also a divorce sale. Against my better judgment, I tossed my checkbook into the camera bag and set off.

I got lost a bit in new housing and I wandered down cul-de-sacs, built-up with high-end tract homes until I saw the driveway.

This has to be the house. The garage door is open and I can see the bike from the rear...the pea shooters are aimed skyward, the narrow bars have that insouciant droop to them like the wings of a WWII Corsair. This is the 850 Interstate model.

As I walk up the drive, I instantly regret having brought the checkbook since this bike projects an appeal similar to that of cocaine in the ‘70’s...somewhere, somehow, something as good as sex is just gonna have to be involved.

It’s done up in bright-assed Corvette Yellow, an obvious repaint but a fine job, the decals are clear-coated. The chrome is decent, as is the seat and engine patina.

I introduce myself to the owner without

taking my eyes off the machine. I try to keep my face noncommittal but I fear that I’m failing badly. I sense a gaze of loopy consumerism is on my face. I’m goofy-eyed like a high-school boy seeing his first unbuttoned blouse.

This is neither good for my here-to-fore firm resolve or any pre-perceived bargaining power that I thought I might have had. And I brought the damned checkbook

I sit on the bike, lean forward into the bars, and lay my chest near that Exxon Valdez-sized Corvette Yellow Interstate

tank. Big capacity, hence the Interstate name. This was the Continental ground-gobbler of its day...”24 liters of premium, please. Then get the hell outta the roadway.”

From the cockpit, the bars are low/narrow wind-cheaters. The clocks look fresh and the headlight brightwork is nice. The tires on the two 19 inch rims are period rubber.

No individual part stands out as a new replacement. The bike is detailed well and shows an even patination. I pull the timing plate off and see a Boyer electronic ignition.

The owner starts it and I rev it while it's on the center stand. I squat beside the motor listening for oddnesses. We waltz together, the bike and I, the center stand leaving 4-inch scrapes on the concrete whenever I blip the throttle. Above 3000 rpm, the vibration ceases and the bike is steady. This, I've been told, is a good Commando sign.

It's unregistered and uninsured so I'm not gonna get a test ride. But its beauty can not be denied.

The owner retrieves a three ring binder with his shop records/expenses over the life of his 6 year ownership. We trace the lineage of the bike. It's an original San Diego bike first owned in Lemon Grove. This man is the fourth owner and the clock reads 17K miles. Paul Lima, of GP Motorcycles, was the second owner.

He hands me a glossy postcard showing a very similar machine with a 3 year old child sitting on it.

"Wow, just like your bike," I say.

"It is my bike. That's the change-of-address card I made when we moved to this house three years ago."

I pocket the card to show Ellen.

It is a divorce sale. He elects to keep his Fat Boy and sacrifice the Norton. It's to be the next owners gain.

I stand behind the flashy Yellow Harlot and feel the pop-pop-pop of the upswept pipes as the bike idles. I ask the price. He says, "What

where you told?"

I tell him what Tim said he might take, and he slowly and silently agrees.

While the muffler pulses ruffle my check-book, I write a deposit to be redeemed the following weekend, with the total to be rendered in cash.

I snap a few pics and write the serial numbers down for research.

I search the 'net the next day questioning the Commando folks on Brit-Iron about foibles or blessing for the 1973 850 line. All reports come back positive. I call Paul and pick his brain.

"Wow, I

remember that one...that was my first *modern* bike," says Paul. "Erin used to fall asleep on the back of that bike."

Paul says the bike has had a top end rebuild at their shop.

There's an awful lot that I don't know about Commandos. All I know about this one is that it has Major Cleavage.

And now, it's mine.

"My name is Joe and I have an addiction."

"I sit on the bike, lean forward into the bars, and lay my chest near that Exxon Valdez-sized Corvette Yellow Interstate tank. Big capacity, hence the Interstate name. This was the Continental ground-gobbler of its day...24 liters of premium, please. Then get the hell outta the roadway."



Rocky Mountain Ride

© Alan Greer

The old John Denver song kept going through my mind on the flight from San Diego to Denver. Maybe it helped keep me from being nervous about buying a motorcycle sight unseen. But when I finally got to Ft. Collins and saw the bike for the first time it erased all my apprehensions. It looked just like what a seven year old motorcycle with 1942 miles on it should look like.

The seller suggested a route to avoid Denver for the ride back from Ft. Collins, so the first night was spent in Estes Park. The ride there was filled with the type of scenery that Colorado is famous for, twisties following the routes of meandering streams with mountains on both sides covered in green trees, very nice!

Day two started out a bit cooler, with the temperature at 42 degrees as I left the hotel. The original plan was to ride through Rocky Mountain National Park, but a snow overnight caused a change in route.

Colorado is a beautiful state, but the weather there must make for a short riding season, snow in May? The alternate route had a few sections at over 9000 feet and brought me out on I-70 near the Eisenhower Tunnel. It's over 9000 feet in elevation. It was very cold and windy, with blowing snow mixed in to keep it interesting. The heated grips on the bike were a greatly appreciated option. After the tunnel I stopped in Dillon to thaw out and drink a gallon of coffee.

I crossed into Utah on 70 and headed toward the Moab cutoff. The road along state route 128 toward Moab follows the Red River Canyon, and its like riding at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. It's not to be missed if the opportunity ever



The new Beemer in Red River Canyon, Utah

presents itself.

Day three started with plans of visiting several National Parks. The first stop was Arches National Park and what I thought would be a short visit ended up lasting several hours, with unreal vistas presenting themselves at every mile in the park.

I wanted to get to Nevada that night so the late afternoon and early evening was spent on a bun numbing run to Mesquite Nevada and a night at the Virgin River Casino.

Day four was going to be a short day, with the goal for that night being Beatty, Nevada. A quick ride to Las Vegas, then north on Hwy 95 and I was in Beatty by early afternoon. Plenty of time for a quick ride to the ghost town of Ryolite, a mandatory stop whenever I'm in the neighborhood. Then back to Beatty to my room at the Exchange Club.

There are several interesting small bars in the area. One is the hangout for the drivers who desert test cars before they're put into production. The walls are covered with items donated by the different test teams and it's fun to check the stuff out while enjoying a beer at the end of the day.

Day five started early with a short ride into California and zigzagging down the hill into Death Valley. The ride is fun with little traffic and views at every bend.

On the Valley flood the first stop is Furnace Creek, with a quick visit to the museum to see what's new, check the weather, and pay the park entrance fee. My next stop was Dante's View, a twisty road that winds to the top of a mountain range that offers a spectacular view of Death Valley. Directly below is Badwater, which at 287 feet below sea level is the lowest spot in the United States.

While up at Dante's View two other BMW riders rode in. Their bikes were only a few years old and they both had over 40000 miles on them. They

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wondered why there were only 3000 miles on my seven year old bike. I asked for a break since I only had the bike four days!

Back down into the Valley and a ride to Badwater, followed by a ride across Artists Palette, my favorite road in Death Valley. It's a one way road, only about seven miles long, but the swoops up and down and the narrow passes make this a real fun slow speed road. Afternoon was passing, so it was time to leave the Valley and head for Ridgecrest for the night.

Day five started with mixed emotions, glad to be heading home, but sorry to have the ride ending. The 220 miles back to San Diego passed quickly, and I introduced the new bike to the R90 sitting in the garage. The trip home covered over 1400 miles in five days, which wasn't much shy of what the original owner put on the bike in seven years.



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how many of the big names from Triumph's golden era were in attendance. We saw Eddie Mulder, Pat Owens, Bud Ekins, Gene Romero, Skip Van Leeuwen... the list goes on and on, a real treat for anyone interested in racing history.

After all the racers were introduced they brought up the people that participated in the "Ride Across America". This didn't sound very interesting, but Jon and I both had raffle tickets for a drawing that was suppose to happen after the ceremony, and we wanted to stick around. About one minute into the first of probably seven people's account of their epic journey we gave up, handed our raffle tickets away (if the guy that let us sit at his table won anything, it was on my ticket and I want half!) and headed out. On the way back to Jon's car there was a beautiful old classic car on a trailer. It was maybe from the 1920's, some kind of high-end horseless carriage. There was no one around and Jon and I tried to convince Joe to jump up in the seat and have his picture taken in it. Perhaps if we had liquored him up he would of done it, but he wasn't, so we headed home. Joe was kind enough to invite us for dinner, and his wife Ellen treated us to some incredible barbeque pork sandwiches. We topped it off by standing around in Joe's garage, looking at his cool bikes and projects.



(Continued from page 1)

but then again aren't these the ones everyone remembers? After all, this was our Annual T-Shirt ride. Unusual events are the norm on this one. I scribbled out the revised map on a few sheets of paper and decided to go for it. We've been on just about every other road in that area and what were we missing out on? Anyway, "We Ride" is our slogan.

I knew it was going to be hot, and I decided to remove the big cow-catcher windshield on the Victory.

"The heat came in waves. Unlike riding in a car you feel the environment changing around you. Valleys had pockets of warmth and downright heat can feel like a blast furnace. .'"

The next morning, Flinn Springs was a beehive of activity, but only a few got anything to eat. We waited for our food for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, many of us simply hit the road without breakfast. It was obvious they weren't prepared even though I called them the previous Tuesday and warned them that 50 or so hungry motorcycle enthusiasts would be swarming their establishment.

On the road, it was hot and I started unzipping every pocket I had in my jacket to get some airflow going. I was glad I'd removed the "cow-catcher" windshield on the Victory the day before. The long line of bikes parading up the hill on Dehesa road was a sight to see. Riding as I was at the end of the line, I could observe the group shifting around to adapt to the different riding styles. Ken Schuttenhelm had taken the lead from the Dehesa road intersection on his Ice chest Gold wing and was expecting me to take over. He was setting a fairly sedate pace, but soon opened it up a bit to stretch out the group when he realized that I couldn't get back up to the front.

The heat came in waves. Unlike riding in a car you feel the environment changing around

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you. The valleys had pockets of warmth and downright heat and felt like a blast furnace. Cresting hills brought welcome, cool breezes. The tree-lined roads had the dry scent of leaves and were slightly cooler. The vistas of Dehesa and Japatul valley along the way were breathtaking.

As we approached Interstate 8 the group was spread out over a mile or so with everyone at comfortable distances from the rider ahead. We overwhelmed the gas stop in Pine Valley. A few riders split off to take an alternate route, but the rest of us were in for... Kitchen Creek road. Old Highway 80 has some really nice concrete between Sunrise Highway and La Posta: a few curves at first with some oddly cracked concrete, but it soon gives way to long straights in the valley and sweepers over the hill to Kitchen Creek road. If Old 80 has some interesting cracks, Kitchen Creek has interesting *crevasses*. The first part was marked with mounds of tar snakes. Then, the patched concrete turned into asphalt at

the "paved road ends 400 ft" sign. It was supposed to be paved all the way up, but I'm not sure what they meant by paved. There were big potholes and ribbons of asphalt in places for a road, certainly not a road you'd be dragging your knee on.

As we gained in elevation the meadows turned to Alpine forest. At the back of the pack Bob Felter's Triumph stalled with battery problems, and required a lift from the chase truck. Somewhere along the way Pete Picksly's Norton also gave up the ghost and he was picked up later.

Heading north on Sunrise Highway, we crested the hill and the temperature dropped about 15 degrees. However, the forest looked a bit dry. The deciduous trees were already beginning to yellow, and the pines seemed a bit brown. Since we only had only about six inches of rain in 18 months it was no wonder why.

The shade-lined highway gave occasional desert and meadow views until it looked like a

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A Few of the Classic Bikes Ready for the T-Shirt Ride



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bulldozer carved away half of the forest and left behind ash from the fires. The left side of the highway was green and the right side gray. The fire had been extinguished through what must have been a tremendous battle. The devastation on the right side of the highway lasted at least 14 miles. Occasionally, we could see firefighters digging through the clumps of ash looking for hot spots. I had to close my visor because I was getting particles of ash in my eyes. There were a few expansive views over the mountain and desert where the decimation could be appreciated, almost as far as you could see even the desert was burned; and the ash haze made it look like that for farther than it really had burned.

Kentwood-in-the-Pines was a welcome haven. Cabins and small homes are tucked into the forest along the road. The residents had all been asked to evacuate just a week earlier as the fire line came to within a few miles of Julian. The heroics of the fire fighters had really saved this area.

Soon the street in front of the Bishops re-

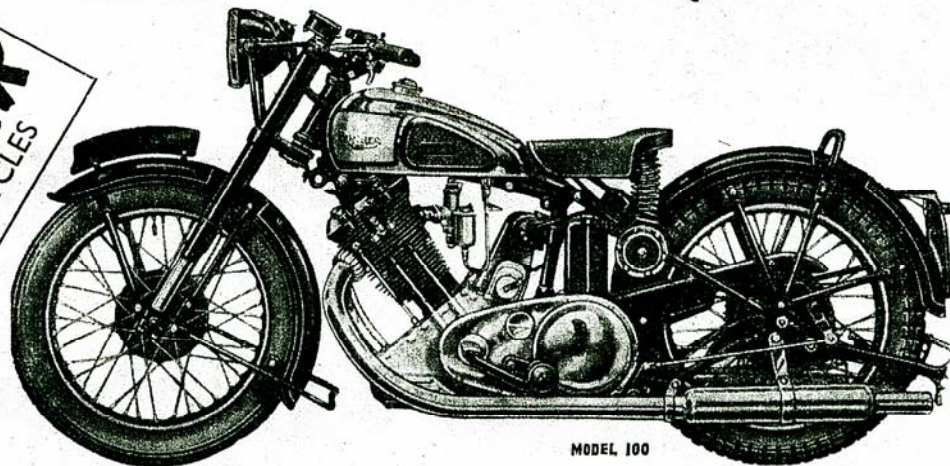
treat was filled with bikes and the sounds of motorcycle enthusiasts bantering about and sharing their cycling and experiences. I called for poker hands and the last few cards were drawn. In between swilling copious amounts of water, buying T shirts, and eating, everyone finally managed to get their cards. The Italian feast that John and Donna Mulrean prepared was, as usual, outstanding. Finally after about 45 minutes I was able to tally the hands and call for prizes. The high hand prize of \$90 went to Robert Welsh, and the low prize of \$45 went to one of the San Diego Motorcyclist riders. The Aerostich neck warmer went to one of our own.

As it goes with Poker runs, as soon as the prizes are given out the bikes begin to stream away in groups. Although warm, even hot at times, there wasn't a better way to spend a day.



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SDAMC Rides, Reminders & Upcoming Events

- ◆ **September 22 (Sunday):**
SDAMC Mystery Ride starts at Mount Helix at 8am. Contact Kevin Sisterson at 619-442-9545.
- ◆ **September 29 (Sunday):**
El Camino swap meet. Contact John Mulrean at 619-443-9169.
- ◆ **October, 2002:**
Bonneville Salt Flats Speed Events. Contact Joe Michaud at 858-278-0476.
- ◆ **October 5 & 6 (Saturday & Sunday):**
Del Mar Motorcycle Show and Concours Event. Concours Event, Swap Meet, and Show: Saturday. Del Mar Mile: Sunday. The SDAMC plans on "manning" a booth at this fun event. Volunteers are needed for setup, tear down, and corner work. Contact John Mulrean at 619-443-9169.
- ◆ **October 12 & 13 (Saturday & Sunday):**
Coronado Vintage Car Races. The SDAMC will be "manning" the Club Corral. This is a premier event that has been described as Southern California's version of the Monterey Vintage Car Races. This is a premier event as pedestrians are encouraged to walk into the pits and view these expensive races cars up close. Contact: John Mulrean at 619-443-9169.
- ◆ **November 2 & 3 (Saturday & Sunday):**
This is the anticipated date for the Golden State 400, a breathtaking 400 mile ride on antique, classic, & vintage machines. We've been participating in this ride for several years and those who have been on it have had a blast. The route typically goes through Temecula and Warner Springs before dropping down into the Anza Borrego Desert. We stay in the Barbara Worth Hotel in Holtville, just outside El Centro, then ride back through Calexico and SR94. Contact Joe Michaud at 858-278-0476.
- ◆ **December 14 (Saturday):**
The annual SDAMC Christmas Dinner Potluck Dinner and auction will take place on this Saturday evening at the Auto Museum. Contact John Mulrean at 619-443-9169.
- ◆ **January & February, 2003:**
Our annual, month long event with the San Diego Auto Museum. This year, we plan on starting the event a week earlier than last year and finish up just prior to the Big 3 Swap meet held at the stadium. Planning will begin at the October club meeting held at the Auto Museum, 7:30 pm.

For Sale

1956 Ariel Square 4: The Auto Museum is now accepting bids on this fine machine. The museum has it on the books at \$5,000. The Motorcycle Price Guide lists the following values: Fair Condition: \$4,750; Good: \$6,750; Very Good: \$10,250; Excellent: \$14,750.

Art Bishop says, "This machine hasn't been operated since we picked it up at GP Motorcycles. At that time it would start on the first kick. The only modification we noted was that the front fender has been shortened about 4 inches. SDAM is now accepting bids, which can be sent to the museum at:

2080 Pan American Plaza #12
San Diego, CA 92101

Arrangements to view the Ariel can be made by calling the Auto Museum @ 619-231-2886."



San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club

Membership Application

Purpose of Club

The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club, Inc. is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation organized and dedicated to the preservation, restoration, and enjoyment of antique, vintage, and classic motorcycles, and in furtherance of such purposes, the sponsorship of antique motorcycle rides, exhibitions, and related activities, and the encouragement of social, fraternal, and educational activities among its members and the public.

NAME: _____

SIGNIFICANT OTHER _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE: (H) _____ (W) _____ (Cell) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ (FAX) _____

May we include your name, phone numbers, and e-mail address in our Club Roster,
sent only to members? YES NO Note: Home address excluded

NOTE: THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY. DO NOT SIGN UNLESS YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS RELEASE. The San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club, Inc. Hereinafter referred to as SDAMC, Inc. its board of directors and members shall not be liable or responsible for damage to property or any injury to persons, including myself, during any SDAMC, Inc. meeting, activity, or event even where the damage or injury is caused by negligence (except willful neglect). I understand and agree that all SDAMC, Inc. members and their guests participate voluntarily and at their own risks in all SDAMC, Inc. meetings, activities, and events. *I RELEASE* and hold SDAMC, Inc., its board of directors and members harmless for any injury or loss to my person or property which may result therefrom. I understand this means I agree not to sue SDAMC, Inc., its board of directors or members for any injury resulting to myself or my property in connection with any SDAMC, Inc. meeting, activity or event.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: Annual Dues are \$25.00 Mail To: SDAMC c/o SDAM
2080 Pan American Plaza
San Diego, CA 92101

