

FISHTAIL WEST

A group of four people are posed in a warm, painterly setting. In the center, a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a light-colored shirt, holds a small wooden structure with a key on top. To his left, a man with a beard and a light-colored shirt leans over his shoulder. To his right, an older man with white hair and a beard, wearing a dark shirt, also leans over. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a patterned dress, looks towards the camera with her hands outstretched. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with a framed painting of a group of people hanging on the wall.

#264

The elected officers of the Velocette Owners' Club of North America and Canada represent a registered non-profit organization.

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BSAOCNC All British Ride:

Sat 11th October 2025
Los Gatos, CA
www.bsacnc.org

25th Annual 49 Mile ride:

26th October 2025
San Francisco, CA
pyoung@614engineering.com

BSAOCNC All British Ride:

Sat Nov 1, 2025
Novato, CA
www.bsacnc.org

Melo Velo Ride:

8-9th November 2025
Paso Robles, CA
info@velocette.org

VOCNA End of Year Ride:

TBC December 2025
Napa, CA
veloist@sbcglobal.net

SoCal Velocette Xmas Party:

Sat 13th December 2025
Noon 'till you drop!
Bruce & Remery Farren
RSVP: farrenb@att.net

Submissions for the next issue: 15th November 2025

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

On occasion, this newsletter may feature content from diverse sources: from online, older motorcycle publications, archives, member submissions etc... These might include photographs, articles, technical drawings, cartoons, logos, memes etc. We try to acknowledge their source, wherever possible. We thank them for their use.

Cover image: Dana Shatts picks up the coveted Crock Award 2025

Chairman's Chat by Paul d'Orléans

*"Come gather 'round people
Wherever you roam
And admit that the waters
Around you have grown "
– Bob Dylan*

The times are always a'changin', and 'current events' have always impacted our enjoyment of old bikes: from bans on leaded fuel to tire companies going bust, etc. Today's eye-roll: For the foreseeable future, we (in the US) will not receive our Fishtail UK or Fishtail Down Under magazines, nor any other magazine from abroad, nor small parts or parcels, as mail service to the US has simply stopped due to tariff issues. My Moto Guzzi Falcone exhaust valve is stuck, not in the cylinder head but in the DHL office in Milan, as that company abruptly canceled all service to the USA until further notice. Luckily, I know a good machinist who can turn down a valve from a different make, but I don't know anyone who can make the Brough Superior hand grips I just ordered. Yeesh!

Luckily, we are still generally free to potter around the countryside on our old bikes, in loose packs at a speed of our choosing, as was the case in Oregon in July, during the magnificent rally hosted by Carl Greenlund. The northwest corner of that state is not dramatic like its central volcanic mountains, but was nevertheless consistently beautiful, with rolling small farmland of variegated fields, charming and little-traveled river roads, and fun mountain passes. Even the weather gods smiled on us, and the week only got more pleasant and comfortable as the days passed, always too quickly. Suzie and I had a lovely ride, and my Venom ran without a fault. What more can you ask? As good a rally as you could ask for.

Except, of course, for the loss of our beloved Dave Jorgensen, a longtime fixture of our rallies, and even a president one year, when he organized a rally in Stevenson, WA, only my third go-round with the club. Ironically, Dave never rode a Velocette on the



Paul d'Orléans by JP Default

rally, but nobody cared, because he brought great vibes and cool bikes, always had a good story and ready smile, and shared pertinent information on technical questions. He chose not to join our 'away' days to the coast this year, preferring short day-rides closer to Forest Grove; in deference to his age, he was 88. But that choice proved fatal, in a seeming moment of inattention, crossing a busy highway, it doesn't take a physicist to grasp the kinetic energy of a loaded logging truck doing 60 mph. It took a while for news of the accident to spread among our diverse group on the last day of the rally, which was sobering. I'm sure Suzie wasn't the only one flinching at the enormous logging trucks we passed on the narrow winding roads back from the coast. I was happy to share memories about Dave at our AGM, and we all wish him godspeed and send our condolences to his family.

I'm heading to New York to ride in the Catskills on our second East Coast Rally, and will give a full report in the next issue.

A letter from your Ex (Prez)

by Carl Greenlund



To all my friends and fun lovin' Velo Fans worldwide, we had a riot! Just wanted to add a few after thoughts about this year's rally. I found putting it together very rewarding. This club is about volunteering, and this was my turn to give back. I had so much fun, but I didn't do it alone, there are people to thank:

- Niel and Debbie for showing up a week early, running routes, making ride sheets and getting me organized...!
- Thank you also to Norleen and Terry Wolbert for the awesome lunch on Mary's peak.
- Dan Shutter, a new member and smart guy who put the routes on a digital app, a first for the club I believe. Well done Dan!
- My friends Greg and Celine for coffee and doughnuts at Cape Mears.
- Jamie Karrick for the heads up and the last minute route change to that back road to Astoria Column.
- Steve Eorio and Jim Romain for

Carl Greenlund by Blaise Descolonges

there fine Italian craftsmanship on the trophies.

- Madame president 2024 Kim Young for guidance and teaching me the ropes, thanks Kim!

I want to thank every one who's able to make it, and I missed those who couldn't. Planning the banquet was also fun, **this club rocks!!!**

See you at the Melo Velo...

Your ex, Carl

Speaking of Melo,

We are privileged to return to Steve and Carole Eorio's vineyard in Paso Robles. As always, Steve is at the mercy of nature, and his grapes come first! Once the harvest and crush has concluded, and the gods of Pinot get to work on fermentation, we can meet on the 8th of November 2025.
info@velocette.org

Too many mistresses, and not enough time by Someone who should know better

I missed the rally. Yes, another one. Instead of Portland's oily handshake of damp leather and dead flies, I was in London, escorting my mother through the NHS's chamber of medical games. You know she's recovering when she starts nagging: criticising my gear changes, doubting my ability to boil water without an incident report, and hustling me out the door four hours early for an appointment two miles away. Her marbles are firmly in place, and her spark plugs still fire harder than a BTH mag on the Isle of Man. I missed Oregon, but I rediscovered mum. A forgotten delight.

Meanwhile, the mileage log mocks me. A thousand unturned miles on one of the Velos, though which concubine deserves attention is debatable. The Viper's had a face-lift: 6v to 12, and halogen to LED no less. Like a pensioner blinking after cataract surgery. The KSS, by contrast, smokes like a Deadhead in '78, and is one wheeze away from a death certificate. The MSS plays mistress in Kent, where we courted between hospital visits, slipping down country lanes before collapsing in seaside pubs, watching seagulls knife each other over chips.

And then there's the R100RS. A younger German frau, all shoulder pads and latent froideur, roused from a decade-long coma by a sympathetic fettler in Faversham. We tangoed back to London, smug in each other's company. But the siren call is the '52 MAC, sulking in California since her melodramatic collapse on the Melo Velo ride. A suspected heart attack, code for magneto failure, left her shrieking and me guilty of manslaughter. Perhaps I killed her spark with too much tough love.

Henry VIII had six wives and couldn't keep any of them happy. I've got half a dozen motorcycles, and the record's not much better.

Perhaps the truth is this: a man can manage a harem of mistresses, but at home, one spouse is all he can... fettler.



When JP Defaut caught the MAC virus, on Tim Kenney's MAC. Circa 2018



The Faversham bike shed harem by JP Defaut

The President's palaver

by John RAY

Greetings Everyone! I am pleased to pen the first message of my current tenure as your club President. I appreciate the confidence expressed in me by the assembled club membership at our 2025 Annual General Meeting, and will do the best I can to organize an enjoyable safe and successful 2026 Rally.

At the outset, I want to extend my appreciation and congratulations to outgoing VOCNA President Carl Greenlund, who put on a fabulous 2025 Rally, based at the truly awesome McMenamins Grand Lodge in Forest Grove, OR. Great roads, wonderful venue, outstanding companionship. Thanks Carl! You've set a high bar.

Mark your calendars!

And speaking of rallies, the dates for the 43rd VOCNA Rally are 14th- 20th June 2026, so mark your calendars! The Location: Ft. Bragg, California, which is a town of approximately 7,000 residents at the mouth of the Noyo River on the Northern California Coast, 170 miles north of San Francisco.

Ft. Bragg has a number of hotels and restaurants and is a great jumping off spot for fabulous roads along the coast, through the coastal mountains and redwoods. And, being on the coast, it is usually cool there! As I write this, it is 94 degrees in Napa Ca, where we live, but a cool 64 degrees in Ft. Bragg! Great for those of us who do not like the heat, although some of the ride routes will take us into warm weather. Rally Venue: I am currently working with a Ft. Bragg hotel which is large enough to accommodate our group and has conference rooms for our Welcome Dinner on June 14th and AGM Banquet on June 20. Dates and rooms have been secured, but there are still a few details to be finalized. I will have full details in the next FTW.

The preliminary schedule for the week looks like this:

- Sunday June 14th: Welcome Dinner with Riders Meeting.
- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday,



El Presidente John Ray ©JP Default

- June 15- 17th: Day loop rides, returning to base hotel each day. Exact routes still to be finalized; I will be riding/driving the secondary roads in the coming months to make sure they are rideable. Daily mileage will vary between 170 – 220 miles.
- Thursday, June 18th: Ride north via Route 1, fabulous twisties with smooth pavement, followed by The Avenue of the Giants and the Lost Coast to Ferndale, California for an overnight stay with group buffet dinner. Lodging details below. 170 miles.
- Friday, June 19th: Return ride via Route 36 and backroads to Ft. Bragg. 180 miles.
- Saturday, June 20th: Concours d'Oeilgance, Annual General Meeting, and Awards Banquet at the Harbor Lite Lodge. Lodging in Ferndale CA, June 18: As with the venue in Ft. Bragg, I am working with several hotels in Ferndale to arrange lodging for us on our overnight stay on June 18. The date is being held for us, but there are still details to be finalized. Again, full details will be in the next FTW.



The road to Fort Bragg. CA

Breaking Digital News:

I am collaborating with Treasurer Blaise Descollonges to digitize the rally route maps so they can be downloaded to electronic devices for navigational purposes. Blaise did this for our recently completed Rally, but we hope to be able to push it out to more folks who might want to use electronic navigation. Blaise is doing most of the work on this. I am just supplying him with digital files of the maps which he then converts to a downloadable and useful format. We will provide participants with instructions on how to download and use these files, and may even post them in the Members Section of the VOCNA website. (Hey, you never know, this internet stuff may take off!) Reassurance for all my fellow analog types, not to worry, we will be furnishing the traditional paper route sheet packets to every participant!

The 2026 Rally is shaping up nicely. Watch this space for periodic updates.

In closing, I would be remiss not to mark the sad and untimely passing of longtime VOCNA member Dave Jorgensen, who was tragically killed while riding on a "personal day off" side trip to visit a local friend during this year's rally in Oregon. Dave was a true gentleman and keen motorcycle enthusiast. He was also a great companion, always smiling and with a good word for everyone. Although he never rode a Velocette on our rides, or even owned one in the US, he was a regular on our annual rallies, usually riding a small capacity machine, like a bevel 250 Ducati or a 160 Honda. To see his rather large frame draped over a small bike always drew a smile to my face. Dave was 88 years young. He lived a good and full life, and died doing what he was passionate about.

He will be sorely missed. Godspeed Dave. We'll raise a pint for you! — John Ray.

Godspeed, you speedy gentlemen...

by JP Default



Time, that most democratic of tyrannies, maintains a rather impressive perfect record when it comes to claiming us all. Yet it operates with the theatrical timing of a particularly capricious stage manager, never quite when the script suggests, often during the most banal intermissions. Death, it turns out, has no sense of occasion whatsoever. It doesn't wait for dramatic sunsets or meaningful last words. It doesn't check our diaries or consider whether we've finished our projects. The old boy simply turns up like an uninvited dinner guest, sometimes catching us mid-sentence, mid-stride, or, as those of us who gather around vintage motorcycles know all too well, mid-journey.

There's something peculiarly unsettling about mortality's complete disregard for narrative convenience. We'd rather like it to arrive with a fanfare, or at least a decent amount of warning; time enough to say the right things, to finish that restoration, to take that one last perfect ride through the countryside. Instead, it dares to interrupt perfectly ordinary Thursday afternoons with the sort of finality that makes retrospective philosophers of us all.

The mathematics of it are brutally simple: ten out of ten people die. The variables are merely when and where, rendered with a randomness that would make statisticians weep into their probability charts.

This year, the old boy has been particularly acquisitive with our ranks. Akin to waiting for a bus, nothing for ages and then, at the same time, you get three in a row. He's claimed not least our founding father Richard Renstrom: the sort of loss that leaves institutional memory scattered like spare parts across a workshop floor. Dave Jorgensen tragically followed: a veteran motorcyclist whose stories were as well-tuned as his engines. And from the younger vintage racing generation, Randy Hoffman departed mid-career, leaving behind the sort of unfulfilled promise that makes the heart ache in ways carburettors never will.

Godspeed, you speedy gentlemen. We miss you already, and shall continue to do so with the particular intensity reserved for friends who understood that life's sweetest moments happen at precisely the right RPM.

Goodnight Richard Renstrom

by JP Defaut



I met Richard quite by accident at the Baker Rally in Oregon, 2018. He wasn't announced, invited, or anticipated, yet he simply materialized, like a character who'd wandered in from another chapter, setting up camp on the last day at the spit-and-shine. Out came a table of books, followed by the boot of his car, disgorging Velocette relics that had clearly been loitering in his garage for decades. Within minutes, the rally's scavengers descended like piranhas at a picnic, snapping up carburetors, levers, and half-forgotten mysteries of metallurgy. One could almost hear the sigh of relief from Richard's garage rafters. Of course, we'll see those same parts again, lovingly hoarded until their oxidized glamour earns them another tour of duty on a rally swap table.

Richard himself was the antithesis of the clanking parts he peddled: discreet, unassuming, the kind of man who didn't need to announce his significance, because it leaked out in conversation like petrol from a bad gasket. I wasn't yet the proud, deluded custodian of a Hall Green factory unit, but his Velo wisdom, delivered with quiet precision was pure bullion. What I didn't realize then, was that he wasn't just another anorak in the field; he was a founder of the very club we were all guzzling beer under. Over the years, Richard was less a writer about motorcycles than a man possessed by the compulsion to document them. He scribbled and typed and hammered out words with the same urgency most of

us reserve for braking before a hedge. Books, magazines, endless articles: he became a major contributor to Cycle World, and if there was ink and a column inch to be filled, chances are he'd already beaten you to it. Even this very Fishtail West newsletter you're holding bears his fingerprints, as does the original Fishtail UK. Writing about motorcycles wasn't just his pastime; it was in his bone marrow, his genetic code, right there beside oil stains and the faint smell of Castrol R.

Later, when I was cobbling together the club's history for the website redesign, Richard became my reluctant oracle. He'd phone, dispensing stories, facts, names, and the sort of incidental trivia that fills the cracks between the grand events like the glue that makes history stick. He was a kind of living footnote, animated, stubborn, yet essential. He called me again late last year. Something in his voice told me this was the last entry in the ledger, though of course, you never believe it. You tell yourself you'll ring back, if only to check a photo, to argue about a date, or just to hear him lace a sentence with his encyclopedia of Velo minutiae. And then suddenly, you can't.

So here's to you Richard. Thank you for the conversations, the patient schooling, and most of all, for the club itself: even if you walked away when your vision diverged from the committee's death-by-minutes. May the road rise, the engine start on the first kick, and the rust finally stay put.

Dave Jurgensen

by Jerry Homola



Dave's journey began on April 1st, 1937 in a tight-knit Danish community of Des Moines, Iowa. His youth was spent exploring the physical and mechanical world through motorcycles with his best friends Ron Thomas of VOCNA fame and Virgil Elings, founder of the Solvang Vintage Motorcycle Museum. Dave went on to live a remarkable life of global adventure. When nearsightedness kept him from military service, he worked from 1962 to 64 as a Peace Corps diesel mechanic in Tunisia. There he met Patty, his future wife and lifelong companion.

His extensive career with Solar Turbines took him and his family across the world: from San Francisco in 1965, to San Diego, Brussels, Beirut, Tehran, Singapore, Seattle, Anacortes, Tokyo, London, Kuala Lumpur, and finally to Whidbey Island where he retired in 1999. His years spent living and working abroad nurtured a profound appreciation for global cultures. From his early days on a James, he flat tracked a Triumph 3T and Indian Scout; campaigned a Manx at Daytona; traversed Europe several times, once on a Velocette; crossed Africa on a factory-purchased Ducati 250 and rode IoM classic trials and countless vintage trials and rallies. His garage is a curiosity shop of parts, tools and

machines. Step inside and one is immersed in the scent of machine oil, sounds of a 70 year old a.m. radio playing classical music from a French Canadian station in Victoria B.C. and visual delights of old motorcycles. In his shed, he left behind 29 bikes from across the classic spectrum. Many bikes incorporate parts collected from around the world. For example, a barn-find 3T Triumph bought in Cyprus was assembled in Singapore with a pumped T100 engine from Jakarta and an unobtainium brass in-tank instrument panel unearthed in a Kandahar carpet bazaar. He was also a genuine jokester, and lightened the mood with a witty anecdote or an old-timer joke. A keen world historian, his range of knowledge seemed limitless: over lunch with friends the conversation varied from ocean biospheres near super-heated floor vents, to bore and stroke of a 55 Manx.

Dave is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Pat; his children, Kelly, Dan, and Anne; his devoted dog Beatrice; and, amazingly, by his Eel River Rally sweatshirt, which he wore almost exclusively since he got it in 2008. Though his boundless curiosity, profound kindness, and unwavering support will be deeply missed by all who knew him, their impact will endure.

Condolences

Dave Jorgensen; an active member of the Velocette Owners Club of North America for over twenty years that I know of, maybe closer to thirty? He was president of the club in 2002 and staged the Stevenson rally in Washington that year. I don't think he ever owned a Velocette but he was a consummate motorcycle enthusiast. In his younger years he qualified to race in the expert class at Daytona one year so he was no slouch as a rider. At the age of 88 Dave was the oldest rider on the summer rally this year, unfortunately, he died when he was hit by a lumber truck.

I was on the rally this year but left early Thursday morning, Dave died that afternoon. I heard of his death, third hand, a few weeks later. I saw many accounts posted on the computer of good times had on the rally but no one acknowledged Dave's death. I have to admit, that bothered me. I'm also a member of the Velo club in Australia. A similar death occurred on the Australian annual rally this year when Gary Gibson was hit by a truck. I, and the Velocette community worldwide, was made aware of that event within a day. Maybe Gary was a more important person in Australia, as far as club history, than Dave was here but is that how acknowledgement and respect is allocated? Dave was one of us and this club, as an association of motorcycle enthusiast as much as a group of people interested in an obscure make of motorcycles, should value the people involved. More to the point, both Dave and Gary were my friends and I want to know what is happening with my friends and fellow club members whether it is good or bad news. I know there is an active campaign to attract new and younger people as members of this club. I can imagine that speaking of the death of a rider can be seen as casting a bad light on motorcycle riding but get real. There is an element of risk involved in this activity. I hope we have not reached the point where the perception of no rain falling on our happy little parade is more important than friendship and that a death which occurs on a club event can get treated like a dirty little secret which needs to be swept under the rug to keep up appearances.
- Larry Luce

"I first met Dave Jorgensen at the Colorado Rally & believe he was there with his friends Mick Felder & Paul Adams. He had lived & worked in UK for some years and as fellow Scandinavians, we had much in common. He was an accomplished engineer with a love for single cylinder European & British machines. Do believe he finally got a Velo - a GTP, a few years back.

Dave was a serious rider, right up to the end in his late '80's! He never seemed to age, was quiet, modest and full of helpful know-how. He regularly attended rallies with Paul Adams, with whom he shares many virtues. I will never forget him riding round trip from WA state to LA on a modern sports bike for Mick Felder's memorial. We have lost a real rider and true gentleman." - Olav Hassel

"I remember Dave from the Cascadia Rally out of Stevenson, WA in 2002. It was my first rally with my daughter Jennifer who was 15 years old and was the youngest to complete an entire Velo rally. We came up with Gil Loe and brought the '69 Thruxton in a borrowed pickup truck. Dave and George Hayes were experienced grandfathers and calmed Jennifer when she was exhausted on Day 4 at Mount St. Helen. Dave distinguished himself as a motorcyclist by completing the rally on a Ducati 250. He was a fine gentleman, always helpful and will be missed." - Dana Shatts

"Dave was a cool guy. He was always around and he left us doing what he loves. RIP Dave, we will miss you."
- Carl Greenlund

"I've ridden many miles with Dave, over many many years. We've shared a room on numerous rallies and rides. One thing is for sure, I will miss his friendship, but most of his sense of humour and ability to always look on the positive side of life. He never stopped making us laugh!"
- Paul Adams

Dave Jorgensen was a VOCNA old school member. He was stand up guy, with motorcycle oil in his veins. The club is deeply saddened by his sudden passing, and we will miss his vitality, camaraderie and sense of humour immensely. - VOCNA

So long Randy Hoffman

by Dave Roper



I first met Randy in the early /mid '80s when he was racing an A10 BSA. He was a cabinetmaker with a shop in Manhattan. Sometime later, he moved out to the east end of Long Island to the "Fabulous Hamptons" and started collecting earlier British singles. I know he had an M20 BSA that I think he rode in the USCRA's 'Pewter Run', a road ride for pre-1950 bikes. At various times, he has had a Goldstar, a Manx, a Vincent Comet/Greyflash, a Velo KTT in a Featherbed Chassis, a Comet in a Featherbed chassis, and a proper Mk VIII KTT, which he raced with the USCRA and AHRMA. Randy was an EMT and volunteered in the Hamptons, assisting at many gruesome accidents and medical emergencies.

About ten years ago, he went into the hospital for minor back surgery and came out paralyzed from the waist down. He regained some use of his legs and eventually could walk a bit unaided, but it was a real struggle, and he routinely used a wheelchair and crutches to get around. He wanted to get back to racing and did ride a bike around a parking lot a bit, but needed help getting on and off the bike. He entered a bike and came to a few races, but was never actually able to get on the track, the problem being unable to get his foot down off the

footrest in time, coming to a stop. Rob Iannucci of Team Obsolete bought a racing sidecar built by the late Maurice Candy, largely to get Randy back on the race track. This outfit was powered by a motor that Maurice built out of thin air, a 500 cc, DOHC, 8 valve parallel twin that Maurice had raced at the IOM TT in addition to the US and Canada. Maurice had started restoring it, but died before he finished it. So when Rob bought it from Maurice's son Chris, the motor was loosely assembled with many new parts, but very few notes on settings, etc. T/O mechanics Cliff Godard and Seth Rosko got it running, and Randy drove it on the track, with passenger Michelle Le Clear-Fischer, an incredibly emotional and heart-warming experience of getting Randy AND this fantastic outfit back on the track. The machine had all sorts of teething problems, and Seth and Michelle have only now finally been able to finish a race after Randy died after bone marrow transplant surgery that failed to save him.

More recently, Randy had gotten into casting aluminum parts and cast the shift lever for the outfit. His last project was casting an Amal GP carb. A determined and giving enthusiast who is missed.

Velocette President and a well-run Administration by Mark Stevenson

I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President. Not the words of Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968, but of Carl Greenlund, President of the 2025 Velocette Owners Club North America, delivered with mock solemnity at the close of our July 20th, 2025 awards banquet. Throughout the week, the 1,000-mile-plus ride, culminating at the Saturday "Show 'n shine", I teased Carl about leading his re-election campaign. I pitched myself as campaign manager, strategist, and even floated the idea of founding a Political Action Committee (PAC) to support his next term. He laughed, of course, and commented that "the people can vote me out of office at any time, no problem! Especially if they didn't like my planned rides." Club members know well that the President's role, while democratically elected at the AGM banquet, is not about wielding power; it's about logistics, diplomacy, and vision.

The President selects the ride location, the accommodation, and most critically, the routes that will deliver 1,000 miles of joy to Velocette and vintage motorcycle riders. The office demands strategic thinking: pick a destination that's attractive for a summer holiday; find a venue that's interesting, cost-effective, and bike/oilyrag friendly and design ride routes that favor serpentine side roads over freeway slogs. It's a blend of urban planning, national park management, and spiritual guidance.

So by the end of the week, Carl and I both knew he couldn't run again. Not because of scandal or fatigue, but his presidency was too successful. His first term will be a tough act to follow. Carl Ran the Perfect Administration. Location: Northern Oregon is a motorcycling paradise, when it's not raining. Towering fir trees, lush green hills, crisp coastal air, and roads that actually receive maintenance funding. Sure, a few "logging roads" could do with a grader or two, but they'd still outperform half the state highways in California. Add to that Oregon's world class IPA and underrated wine country, and you have a constituency with full



Mark Stevenson with a motorcycle beginning with V...

mugs and full hearts. Carl didn't need pollsters or Yale economists. As a long-time club member, he simply knew what the people wanted, and delivered.

Venue: McMenamins Grand Lodge in Forest Grove; the 1922 former Masonic rest home and orphanage, was Carl's Mar-a-Lago, if Mar-a-Lago had been designed by Jerry Garcia and outfitted by Janice Joplin. It had a bar on every floor, music in the air, and redwoods in the garden. The parking lot served as our nightly garage and music venue. The Lodge became a de facto campaign HQ, while Carl, man of his people, walked the grounds shaking hands, turning wrenches and shared beer recommendations.

The Grand Lodge embraced our crew offering ample space for late-night wrenching and daytime shining. The Saturday *Show 'n Shine* was held under redwoods that gave the event a cathedral-like reverence. Some members explored town, but many happily stayed onsite, enjoying food, drink, and stories.

Carl also orchestrated a Wednesday ride to Florence, Oregon. It was a presidential junket along the coastal highway, where the pines and redwoods tumble into the Pacific. A well-timed diplomatic outing and

elevation gain. roads are everything. As an Oregonian, he drew from local knowledge to deliver routes that combined elevation, canopy, and curvature.

The ride offered a balanced legislative agenda: technical twisties, scenic sweepers, tree-lined tunnels, and backwoods lumber routes that hadn't seen a tourist in a decade. With the Florence excursion, Carl proved his bipartisan appeal country roads and coastal highways alike.

Shine and Show under the redwoods Carl Greenlund served his constituents with wisdom, humility, and joy. But while routes and venues matter, they aren't everything. There's a bit of alchemy in a good presidency. The best presidents build culture, forge alliances, and grow the ranks. Carl reached across the aisle, welcoming Velocette purists and vintage riders of every denomination. Everyone felt included. Contrast this with some single-marque events, insular echo chambers of groupthink and carburetor nerdery. Carl's inclusive spirit made our 2025 gathering one of the best-attended in recent memory. His ticket? Roads, people, pints and heart.

So here's to Carl. A great President. A great ride. And here's to John Ray, our incoming President for 2026. The campaign trail runs through Southern Oregon and Northern California. Onward!



Steven Andrews, Jim Romain, Steve Eorio and Mark Weinrobe take a moment to soak up the view.



Top: Melissa Guerrero finds true love.

Middle: Jesse Pierce gets down 'n dirty with his Venom.

Bottom: The one and only, the man of the moment, Mr Dana Shatts.



The 50w Forever Motley crew



Above: Jim Romain helps Kim Lohstroh Young on her KSS, while Niel reminds Carl who's in charge.

Left: Evan and Mirek Sharpe



Melissa Guerrero continues on her quest for Velo slaves...

Below: Kim Young takes a moment.

Bottom right: Velo angels Allyson Smalley, Melissa Guerrero, Debbie Macdonald and Kim Lohstroh Young



Velocette Owners Club of North America 50w Forever 2025 Rally Awards

Best Non-Velocette:

1. Mark Stevenson: 1950 Vincent Rapide series B
2. Lance Lindborg: 1967 Triumph TR6C
3. Tie: 1965 Melissa Guerrero: Matchless G80, John Ray: 1957 Moto Guzzi Falcone

Best Standard Velocette:

1. Jim Romain: 1965 MSS
2. Joe Wright: 1954 MSS
3. Paul D'Orleans: 1960 Venom Clubman Mk I

Best Cammy Velocette:

1. John Sims: 1946 Mk II KSS
2. Kim Young: 1930 Mk I KSS
3. Jim Romain: 1937 Mk II KTS

Best Special Velocette:

1. Blaise Descollonges: 1965 VMT 600cc
2. Steve Andrews: 1961 mock KTT VIII bitsa
3. Terry Wolbert: 1947 MAC w/1974 Honda XL350 head Conversion

Best Rigid Velocette:

1. Steve Andrews: 1952 MAC
2. Carl Greenlund: 1948 MSS
3. Pete Young: 1938 MSS

Best Sporting Velocette:

1. Eric Smalley: 1964 Venom Clubman
2. Jessie Pierce: 1966 VMT
3. Frank Recoder: 1971 VMT

Hard Luck/CoS Award:

1. Dana Shatts: Failed Electric Starter
2. Kim Young: Two Flat Tires
3. Steve Andrews: Various Machines

Squiddie, Most Bodacious Performance

1. Kim Young
2. Tie: Atticus Young, Blaise Descollonges, Adam Cecchini

3. Niel Macdonald was awarded the "Little Squiddie" for breaking a rib while push-starting a Velo, and for driving the chase truck the final three days.

Phistail Phil Award for Member of the Year:

1. Carl Greenlund
2. Dave Jorgensen (RIP)
3. Tie: JP Default, Blaise Descollonges

Eddie Arnold Trophy for Most Outstanding Velocette:

1. Jessie Pierce: 1966 VMT
2. Kim Young: 1930 Mk I KSS
3. Tie: Carl Greenlund: 1948 MSS, 1969 John Ray: Mk II Venom Clubman

Board Awards:

Golden Quill Award for Outstanding Contributions to FTW: Debbie Macdonald Outstanding Contributions to Velocettes: Blaise Descollonges Derek the Deerslayer Award, for Scary Animal Encounters: Steven Andrews

Other Awards:

Melissa Guerrero: Plummie Award, for the rider of a Matchless (trophy donated by Susan McLaughlin)
Mark Weinrobe: Nice Try Award, for bringing an unsorted Velo
Adam Cecchini: Thrilling the Million Award, for his riding prowess
Pete Young: Excelsior Award, for the owner of an early Excelsior
Niel Macdonald: Finish It Award, for his MAC
Joe Wright: Warm Welcome Award, for a first-time rider
Allyson Smalley: Naught Lady Award, for a first-time female rider

VOCNA 2025 AGM

Chairman Paul d'Orleans called the meeting to order at 5:10pm and welcomed all the Rally participants with a special acknowledgement for first-time participants. He also thanked and congratulated Club President, Carl Greenlund for organizing a successful Rally.

Acceptance of Minutes of the 2024

AGM: Motion passed unanimously.

Officer Reports: President: President Greenlund thanked everyone for attending, and those who assisted in organizing the Rally.

Treasurer: Blaise Descollonges reported that club is solvent with bank balance of around \$8,000 to meet the working capital requirements of the club. He also confirmed that the Annual Rally is budgeted and funded separately from the annual membership dues, and he recommended no increase in dues for 2026.

Editor: JP Defaut, (via phone from London) told the membership that the FTW Newsletter requires the participation and submissions of the club members, and asked the members to send him stories, articles and photos to inform other members

Webmaster: JP Defaut informed the members that he is designing an online archive to upload past FTW's in a searchable format. Updates will be published in FTW.

Rally Purser: Kim Young reported that 44 people registered for the Rally. She also suggested creating an opt-in function on the Annual rally registration form to allow rally participants to receive updates and other rally-related messages via text messaging on their phones.

Membership Secretary: Debbie Macdonald reported that the club has added about 20 new members since January 1, 2025, and currently has about 250 dues-paying members.

Old Business: There was no Old Business.

New Business: 2026 Dues: Motion made and seconded to keep the 2026 dues at current levels. Motion passed unanimously.

2025 Rally Location: Mr d'Orleans reminded the members that at the 2024 AGM, Tony McNeill had volunteered to organize a rally in British Columbia, but since Mr. McNeill was not in attendance at the 2025 AGM, it would not be possible to vote on that proposal. After discussion, John Ray volunteered to organize the 2026 Annual rally in Northern California and/or Southern Oregon. Motion made and seconded to hold the 2026 Rally as recommended by Mr. Ray. Motion passed unanimously.

2027 Rally Location: Mr. d'Orleans stated that he would contact Mr. McNeill about organizing the 2027 Annual Rally as originally planned for 2026.

Membership List: Motion made to develop and distribute a membership list, including Name, Phone Number, Email Address, City, State/Province, but no exact address. Motion seconded and passed unanimously.

Waiver of Rally Fee for Officers:

Blaise Descollonges made a motion to waive the rally fee for club officers as a gesture of appreciation by club members for the effort put in by the officers to run the club. He stated that it would have minimal effect of the budget for the Annual Rally. Motion seconded. After discussion, motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers:

Chairman: Paul d'Orleans

President: John Ray

Editor: JP Defaut

Treasurer: Blaise Descollonges

Secretary: Debbie Macdonald

Rally Purser: Kim Young

Web Master: JP Defaut

Adjournment: Having no other business for the meeting, Mr. d'Orleans adjourned the 2025 AGM at 6:10PM.

Cory's rant, or Cory's ride?



It all started when Vivian and I were sitting around wondering what to do as our plan to attend the Oregon Rally was killed by the political antics that emerged after the US election. Although we were looking forward to seeing all our friends and acquaintances south of the border, crossing the border was not the same. We thought, well let's see what the other BC Velo owners were doing. I thought maybe we can get 6 to 8 people and get together, have a beer and kick some tires. Emails were sent. It was a resounding, "No one was going to head south" for exactly the same reasons. Before I knew it we had over 16 interested in attending. With this amount of interest I grew the event from a one day get together to a 2 day rally. In the end we had over 25 people attending. 19 bikes, 10 of which were Velos.

The first day was a Meet and Greet hosted at our house, with all bikes on display. This was followed by a brief meeting of what to do in the future. It looks like there is support for

continuing the event, at least for the next 3 years. We will likely move it to another date that doesn't conflict with the main VOCNA rally should the political situation change.

After the meeting we all relaxed with a BBQ and a beer to finish off the day. The next day we again all met at our place. Velo mounted we headed off for a breakfast stop. After breakfast we proceeded to do a 170 kilometer ride in surrounding back roads.

Although we had a chase truck, it was never used. All the bikes performed well. Eventually we ended back at the house where we had another beer and BBQ to finish off the rally. It was good fun and a successful event. We all say Hi to our Velo buddies south of the border and hope we can tee up soon.

Cory Padula



Top: Vivian scrutineering bikes pre-ride

Above left / right:
Canada Dry Club
prospects, BC 2025

Right: The tarriff-ick spit 'n' shine



Am I on route? A review of the Beeline Moto II GPS by Adam Cecchini

We've all been there. "Is this the turn?" "I thought you knew the route so I was following you." Enter the Beeline Moto II, a motorcycle-friendly GPS device that quickly attaches to your handlebars or nearly anything else in your particular cockpit.

I already had the Beeline app on my iPhone for years, (also available on Android), but I don't like my phone overheating in the sun; not to mention the battery life nosedives if you're not charging while navigating. You do have to keep the app running in the background on your phone if you want to use this device, but your phone's battery will say "Thank you!" The Beeline is the only screen you need. With this small 2" device attached to the handlebars of my Clubman (clone), I could easily see the distance to the next turn, or dropped "pin", in both miles or kilometers, with a simple "drawing" of the turn to stay on route. In the 5 days of scootin' around Oregon during the 2025 Velo Rally, I only missed two turns, which I knew I had missed within 100 feet of the mistake. Nothing a quick U-turn couldn't fix. The directions given aren't perfect; you're often at your turn with the device showing 0.1-0.2 miles remaining. I just took this into consideration and it quickly became a non-issue. I also experienced a broken mounting o-ring



Adam finding nature by Blaise Descollonges

during the rally. Not an emergency considering it's mounted using two o-rings and I've since been using the larger (included) o-rings without a hiccup.

Club Treasurer Blaise Descollonges was also testing his Beeline during the latest Rally and, even with his built-in compass, was glad he had it with him. Simply put it, it allows the rider to enjoy the ride versus worrying about the route.

Club leadership has been sharing GPX files (routes) for group rides, so the more we use them the more we'll enjoy the convenience. You simply import the files in the Beeline app, tap on the route, and you're good to go.

Admittedly, \$220 is a chunk of money for another doodad to keep charged (USB C) and, frankly, I wasn't going to keep it after the rally if I didn't see using it again. But it saved my butt more than once, and essentially eliminate the stressful aspect of staying on route. I'm holding onto to my Beeline, now get yourself one!



View from the bridge by Adam Cecchini

Packing up and heading West

by Joe Wright



Joe Wright at the spit 'n polish

The universe aligned this year in such a way that I was not only able to join the 50W Forever Rally in Oregon, but I also plan to join the September East Coast Rally in New York...what a year! I had been hoping to attend a 1,000 mile rally for a decade or more, but there were always other demands for my PTO (precious time off) or my MSS was not ready for whatever reason. The 2024 Idaho rally was close to happening, but a work trip pulled me away. In a cruel irony, that trip had me driving across Idaho within miles of the route. My friend Melissa Guerrero has been prodding me for several years to join the rally, so I loaded up the van and drove 1,900 miles west from Iowa to Oregon. It was great having Melissa as a riding buddy for the week. She was right: this ride, *and* the people are special.

Frankly, the Oregon rally was just what, and when I needed it. 2025 has been a year of massive personal and professional change for me, and it was nice having time for reflection while riding my favorite machine on amazing roads. My '54 Venomised MSS performed well all week, not skipping a beat aside from a flickering headlight on the last day. I came away inspired and wanting to do it again. Not sure if the 2026 rally is in the cards, but I'll try!

What impressed me the most was the welcoming, and the encouraging nature of rally veterans; motorcyclists and enthusiasts of the Velocette marque in their truest form. It was great fun meeting people I had previously connected with on social media, or characters from the Fishtail West zine now in person. Other club meets have meticulously restored machines on static display or a maybe a short dinner ride. Nobody else does it like the VOCNA: real riders on well-tuned machines, marking their trail through remote areas with drops of 50w on the way. The Upper Midwest has a strong vintage bike scene and I know of a few other Velo owners who I encourage to make a rally happen. Walt, are you reading this?! Since the rally, another Velo has followed me home; a '61 Venom sourced from a friend.

Currently on the lift getting some love, complementing my '54 MSS and '61 Scrambler. Life is good!

I spoke with several of you about my ex-Ernie Pico Velocette speedway bike. The bike has all its vitals and should run with fluids. I've borrowed a roll starter (thanks Eric!) and plan to breathe life into her soon. Watch future issues of Fishtail for a writeup. If (when) it runs well, laps will be made!

See you on a future ride!

Reflections on the Crock

by Mirek Sharpe

I have been wanting to write a piece about the Brian Williamson Crock of Shit Award, since it was awarded to me after my breakdown in Idaho last year. It is an enigmatic, some may say dubious distinction, and the "in your face" name seems to bring out a variety of emotions. Such a beast is worthy of a note, so here are my thoughts. I was not even a little bit surprised when Paul d'Orleans called my name at the 2024 banquet. I think I was already walking up to the front when he reached for it, such was my certainty that it was going to me. Had I been receiving almost any other award, such an attitude would rightly be called vanity, but with the CoS, it was simple resignation. I knew my bike had broken better than anyone else's and dammit, it was mine! When I sat back at my table amid the diminishing applause and a few jeers, I looked it over. It was the first time I had really examined it. What I felt was a bit surprising, it was Pride.

Because I am a reflective guy, that somewhat unexpected emotion caused me to think about the Crock, what it represented and why it is given. It began to mean a lot more to me. The thing that struck me first is the diversity of names on it. Many, if not most, of the legendary names in the club are on it. Members of the "old guard" whom I sadly never met are on there. Many members who have stepped up to organize the club as I have known it grace its face: John Ray, Paul d'Orleans, Debbie Macdonald, Olav Hassel. Several whom I count among my Velo friends are present: John Sims, Jack Sanders, Frank Forster. Those legendary road burners Paul Zell and George Shoblo have received it, even our current road burners, Blaise Descollonges! The names of the technical wizards amongst us such as Dennis Quinlan add scads of class to the award.

The list even includes members who we all acknowledge as having impeccable and beautiful machines, like Frank Recoder. Loved members no longer with us: Derek Belvoir, Dee Cameron and Mick Felder are remembered on the trophy. It is quite incredible, and



The pink ribbon... if you know, you know.

now my name has been added. I did not feel slighted by the award, rather I felt as if I had joined an elite group of members, and I did not even have to slave over the bike preparing and polishing it: it just broke down without any effort from me. In an odd way I felt as if I did not deserve the award, but not because my bike did not break down spectacularly enough, but because I was in awe at the company in which I was now included. It was cool to get the award.

As I absorbed that thought, I realized that this trophy probably represents the most complete cross section of club members of all the awards. It is not an award restricted to those who spend days carefully preparing their bikes mechanically, or members who restore them to a height of cosmetic excellence unknown from the factory, or those that have the skill to bodaciously tear up the pavement, cornering with their knees to ground. No, the Crock can, and has, been awarded to a complete representation of club members. A polished beauty is arguably just as susceptible as an oily old rag. It is an egalitarian award that holds all members and their bikes equal. Why is this? There may be multiple reasons but I think it is mainly because:

1) we have chosen to ride bikes that are at minimum 53 years old most probably in the 60 or 70 year category, and for the cammy owners, bikes that are pushing 80+ years. Kim's bike will be 100 in 5 short years!

2) because we are proud of and highly value our collective mechanical knowledge and willingness to help and share information to keep our Velos on the road; thus breakdowns deserve recognition. With such old machinery, limited by the engineering of the day and the integrity of many aging parts that have miraculously lasted since the bikes left Hall Green, the chances of a breakdown are always there, spread amongst us all, perhaps not quite equally, but we all have a good opportunity to be awarded the Crock.

Theoretically a newly rebuilt bike should be less susceptible, but they are still limited by the quality of the replacement parts available and the fundamental engineering. I think we all recognize that keeping a Velocette on the road is a time consuming and often frustrating business. There is much about their design and quality that is exceptional for their time, but they are old and quirky. We ride our bikes knowing that at any moment, that distinctive thump-thump-thump of a single on song can change to silence, as we coast to a standstill at the roadside. It is point of pride to be able to repair them on the spot and carry on, but sometimes it is simply not possible. This susceptibility to breakdown, and our defiance of it, is one of the things that bonds us. It has created an esprit de corp that we are proud to be part of. We revel in snubbing our noses at the risk of failure and audaciously sally forth with our bikes each year to accept the 1000 mile challenge. It reminds me of Homer Simpson's self-evident truth, "trying is the first step toward failure". The context in which he used it was to avoid trying, but not us; NO, we try regardless of the risk of failure. For me, the Crock award is necessary to recognize and honour the susceptibility to breakdown and it is a tribute to all of us for the bravery to ride an old bike for a 1000 miles on challenging roads, despite the chance of breakdown. The Crock salutes those who tried and suffered a let down that could not be overcome on the rally. In my opinion, is an essential part of the VOCNA experience and to be awarded it is simply recognition of having embraced the risk in full knowledge of the potential



embarrassment. It is worth remembering that all riders on a rally vote for the various categories of awards, the Crock included. Thus the Crock represents a collective salute from the riders who shared the ups and downs of each years event; it is a gift from everyone. And then the name. First, it is obviously named in good-spirited humour; there is nothing serious about the name, it is a poke. I have never, in my approximately 20 years of membership, ever heard anyone seriously describe a Velo, much less another member's Velo, as a Crock of Shit. We all know that there are poor, run down, tired, badly repaired Velos out there, but when they are bought into the Club by a member, destined for resurrection. They are jewels in the rough ready to be re-cut and polished (maybe). A Veloists looks past the years of neglect and see the treasure that lies beneath. Witness the reaction to the white Venom that Mark Weinrob brought to Idaho; a neglected, broken, incomplete and non-running bike. But it was swarmed by members, happy to share advice and excitement with a new member willing to bring it back to life.

I can, in my mind's eye, imagine the original members who started this amazing organization, crowding around a friend's broken ride and splitting a gut laughing as they teased them about their bike, before dropping to their knees to help fix it. That is the true spirit of the Club. The Velocette Owners Club of N.A. is a unique and special group of people. The Brian Williamson Crock of Shit trophy is part of that uniqueness that I love and respect. I hope we continue to value the history and its tradition.

My full circle Journey to VOCNA

by Mark Weinrobe

This is the story of how I became involved with VOCNA.

I can trace the start of this journey to a beautiful September day in 2014...



The eBay barn find by Mark Weinrobe

...That morning, my wife and I decided to take advantage of the fine weather and go on a dual sport ride north from our home in New Meadows, Idaho. As we turned onto Highway 95, we noticed traffic moving slowly. As we passed, we quickly understood why—we came upon a pack of very special motorcycles, some moving at just 30-40mph. These bikes appeared to be old and in fact VERY OLD. This is the moment when my obsession with vintage motorcycles started.

Realizing this had to be some special ride, we decided to follow along. About halfway down the canyon to Riggins, many riders pulled over at a rest stop. We pulled in and immediately started ogling the many beautiful and ancient bikes. We soon learned that many dated from before 1930 and they were on a cross country rally called the Motorcycle Cannonball. I was amazed that bikes that old could actually be ridden through such arduous terrain as the mountains and valleys of Idaho, let alone across the entire US. The riders were more than happy to chat about their wonderful motorcycles and their passion for restoring, maintaining and riding them. I was truly in awe of the whole scene.

This was a life changing event for me. I have been enthralled with motorcycles since very early in my life. One of my earliest childhood memories

is riding on the back of my uncle's Honda 750 Supersport. As soon as I was old enough and had saved money from my paper route, I bought a 3rd hand, clapped out Kawasaki KX 80. I really didn't know what I was doing and could barely use the clutch, but I didn't care. I was riding my own motorcycle! Into a tree my first day and eventually learned enough to rip around the woods behind my house in Massachusetts. I then had a never-ending succession of motorcycles, including a first year Kawasaki Ninja 600 that I bought at age 17 with money earned bagging groceries. My poor mother! She was a single mom with four out-of-control kids and her hands were too full to contain my motorcycle obsession. When I moved to Idaho in my early 30's, my interests returned to the dirt with trail riding and enduro, then dual sport/adventure riding and ultimately several major adventures to the Alaskan Arctic and other crazy rides in India, Europe and Asia.

After returning from that wonderful September ride in 2014, I told my mom and old family friend, Marcia, about this experience and how cool I thought the vintage scene was. Out of the blue, Marcia said she owned a bike similar to what I was describing, sitting in an aircraft hanger in Montana. She had inherited it from her beloved brother, who had passed away five years prior

when he crashed a home-built experimental aircraft. She was trying to figure out what to do with the bike and amazingly said she wanted me to have it because I seemed so enthralled with owning a vintage motorcycle.

A few weeks later, I traveled to Missoula, Montana where she showed me the vintage BMW that had been sitting under a tarp in her late brother's aircraft hanger. It was a gorgeous 1962 BMW R60/2 with a sidecar. I was blown away with the bike and her generosity!

After a delightful visit filled with stories about her late brother and his adventures touring Montana and Idaho roads, I loaded up the bike and brought it back to Idaho. I hadn't even attempted to start it, as I couldn't figure out where the key went. Luckily, a friend who also owned a R60/2 showed me how to start it. After some fiddling, we got it running but it obviously needed work. I then dove head first into learning about the bike and how to tune it up. I quickly learned how passionate folks are about these bikes and vintage bikes in general, shown in how helpful people were on BMW forums and the great care they put into documenting needed work. While working on this first vintage bike, I learned that this labor was like an elixir for my soul. Taking apart an old machine, cleaning it, fiddling with it and ultimately getting it running perfectly was just about the most enjoyable thing I could imagine doing with my spare time.

After getting the R60/2 running, I was addicted. I quickly acquired a 1967 Triumph Bonneville that also required fiddling, then bought a barn find 1963 Triumph Thunderbird that required complete restoration over two years. While wrapping up the T-Bird restoration, I found a non-running, barn find Velocette Venom Special on eBay and couldn't resist winning the auction.

Realizing this restoration would be significant and I'd need advice from other Velocette owners, I joined VOCNA a few years ago. Unfortunately, I'd been unable to attend the annual rally until this past July when it was based in McCall, Idaho, close to where I live. I had an amazing time getting to know

fellow members and got lots of advice on my Venom restoration. I was concerned the project might not be worth the effort given its sorry state, but many VOCNA members encouraged me to forge ahead. I was thrilled with the camaraderie and felt sincere kinship with everyone in attendance. Immediately after the rally's conclusion, I dove head first into the project, and I'm hopeful the bike will be ready for the 2025 rally in Oregon.

So how was this a "full circle" journey? During the Idaho VOCNA rally, I learned that several participants and longtime VOCNA members were also riders I observed chugging along Highway 95 back in 2014, including Paul D'Orleans, his wife Susan and Debbie MacDonald. I also learned that several other members had participated in various Cannonballs including Sean Duggan and Peter Young. I thought this was an amazing coincidence and further evidence that I had fallen in with a crew I was destined to join.

The other "full circle" feature of the Idaho Rally was being able to ride my R60/2 on many of the roads that its prior owner had ridden in Montana and Idaho prior to his untimely death. Like many other riders, I really believe that motorcycles have a soul and I'm convinced that the old R60/2 was happy to be back on the road traveling through its former haunts.

So that's my Velocette "Origin Story". I hope it entertained a few readers and I'm eager to continue meeting other Velo owners and share our passion for this lovely brand, and vintage motorcycling in general.



The Velocity of life

by JP Default



Mike Tomany and his Viper on the streets of the Ozarks by Dave Roper

Mike's son, bless the boy's opportunistic heart, announced with the casual bombshell delivery "Hey dad, there's a Velocette on eBay." It was rather like being told there's a unicorn in the garden shed. Thrilling, improbable, and requiring immediate investigation. The truth is that he'd been pining for a Comet. He is, you see, a late bloomer when it comes to Velocette. The bike in question was a '67 Venom Veeline, stripped of its fairings like a supermodel caught in a gale, having emerged from the garage of George Pena, Sonny Angel's father-in-law. This genealogy suggested it had been hot-rodded, which in motorcycle parlance means "expensively broken in creative ways." He passed, having already spent enough time in workshops to qualify for an honorary degree in Disappointment Studies. Soon after, fortune smiled, or perhaps smirked when a Viper showed up, having been privately imported from the UK like some sort of two-wheeled contraband and forgotten about. The DMVehicles

encounter that followed could have been scripted by Kafka's more sadistic brother. The VIN number on the UK documents was as blank as a politician's promise. He prepared for bureaucratic Armageddon, but the DMV lady, clearly an angel in polyester simply declared: "I'll just fill this in!" Sometimes the universe conspires to be surprisingly reasonable. As with any new motorcycle acquisition, and most marriages, one must conduct a thorough inspection. The bike came with a 30mm carburetor, which sounds impressive until you realize it was about as responsive as a teenager asked to clean their room. He swapped it for a 28mm, the bottom end needed encouragement, not strangulation. A seized valve and various mechanical hiccups required attention, but Groves in England shipped parts with the efficiency of a Swiss watch factory on amphetamines. Three days! The thing now purrs like a particularly content kitten. The racing tank and seat were replaced with standard kit because,

frankly, cosplaying as Barry Sheene while pottering to the corner shop is a bit much, even for him. This bike possesses that rare quality of anticipating intentions: when he's approaching a corner, it's already committed, like a good somelier. It starts easy with the Velo kick ritual and handles with the grace of a ballet dancer on two wheels. It's become quite the celebrity the Small Bike Big Adventure in Arkansas, where it draws admirers like honey draws bears. He'll be at the East Coast rally again, last year's crowd were magnificent, the sort of people who understand that motorcycles are not merely transportation but religion made manifest in steel and chrome.

He used to race with Bob Coys on a Norton Commando back in 2007, living the track racing dream until his wife, displaying the sort of practical wisdom that keeps marriages intact, declared "no more track racing." So he pivoted to land speed racing, because apparently substituting one form of potential widow-making for another is what

passes for compromise in their household. Since he was fourteen, he'd harbored the ambition to achieve 200mph. Last year, astride a Kawasaki ZX14R, he managed 201mph! Just enough to tick the box without being greedy. Yes, it's dangerous, but here's the thing: all the racers he's known who've shuffled off this mortal coil did so on street tracks, not salt flats. There's a certain irony in the controlled chaos of purpose-built circuits proving more lethal than the wide-open spaces where speed is the only religion and the only congregation is yourself and the horizon.

As his Viper returns to the garage, a testament to the beautiful madness of motorcycling, it waits for the next adventure. Because, at the end of the day, it's not really about the destination; it's about having something that understands the poetry of motion and doesn't judge you for wanting to write verses at 80mph. - With thanks to Mike Tomany for taking the time on the SBSB ride.

The VOCNA special offer!

Pete Young, that infernal mechanical Mephistopheles has struck again. The same chap who, in a fit of engineering evangelism years back, birthed the VOCNA clutch tool, now about as common as a vegetarian at a Texas barbecue. He's also the guilty party behind those Velo flags that flutter like arthritic butterflies at our rallies. More recently, our Pete has conjured up a rather fetching chenille patch; 11x3.5 inches of embroidered glory, exclusively for club members. I confess, the damn thing looks rather splendid; the sort of badge that would sit handsomely on a Barbour jacket, or tool bag. But... we need fifty souls to make this venture commercially viable. More than fifty orders? We'll graciously honor them.

But dawdle at your peril, these patches will only ship with the next issue of FTW, arriving just in time to horrify relatives at holiday gatherings. Twenty-five dollars, shipping included, which seems almost reasonable for such sartorial motorcycle tribalism. The digitally inclined can email info@velocette.org for a payment link. For those who regard technology as the devil's work, ring 415 944 9050 and speak to a human being. **Go on, DO it!**



Full Circle by Josh Branch



Josh Branch loads the Clubman as Gil Loe says goodbye to an old friend...

There's something special about the moment you know you're exactly where you're meant to be. For me, that moment happened with a set of worn handlebars, a tank smelling faintly of old petrol, and the satisfying scrape of boots on a truck bed.

The photo says it all: Gil and I, hands steady, hearts racing, easing a Velocette onto my truck. This isn't just a motorcycle, it's a piece of rolling history. Velocette motorcycles are in my blood, along with more than a little oil and grease from countless hours in the garage.

I've always believed in timing: the idea that life puts you in the right place at the right time if you're willing to see it. And this time, it was my turn. This machine, in all its classic British elegance, was meant to find its way back to a Branch.

I can't thank Gil and his wife enough for trusting me with this legacy. Every nut, bolt, and cable tells a story, and I plan to honor every single one. Some people collect trophies. I collect moments, and this one, well, it rides on two wheels.

Now, she sits in my garage, waiting. Soon enough, she'll be back on the road where she belongs, her exhaust note echoing through the years. Because history, when cared for, doesn't fade, it rides...

Gil Loe advertised his beloved Clubman in our last issue, FTW#263. It caught the attention of many, but Gil felt that Josh was the right custodian, since it was originally sold by Lou Branch, Josh's grandfather. Full circle!

Classifieds

**Treat yourself to a one off special:**

Built by Bill Bothelo, this '47 MSS Bobber will upset the purists, but who cares. With styling this cool, it will definitely not get you the Crock of Sh!t award at the next rally... No tire kickers or test pilots. info@velocette.org

**If you're on a budget:**

And looking for a good place to start, this is it. Mostly complete, owned by VOCNA members over the years, and now being offered by one careful lady owner at a reasonable price.

By appointment in San Francisco.
info@velocette.org



The Original: For the discerning enthusiast, this '68 MSS, belonged to the late Alan Jefferys, from his collection of over 80 motorcycles. One of The "Panama Velocettes" article coming soon. If you want provenance, this is it! info@velocette.org

The Final Tap by JP Default



What's Wrong with Bein' Sexy? Only Everything, Darling. Nigel Tufnel, that luxuriantly coiffed apostle of sonic excess, once asked the immortal question: "What's wrong with bein' sexy?" It was 1984. The Cold War was still a thing, shoulder pads were a religion, and Rob Reiner's *This Is Spinal Tap* was piping hot satire straight from the gods of mockumentary Olympus.

We laughed. We wept. Some of us did both simultaneously, like emotionally confused walruses. Fast forward 40 years: a time-lapse montage of bad decisions, internet memes, and humanity willingly uploading its entire attention span into a 6-inch glowing rectangle: The boys are back in town! (Thin Lizzy ref, 'couldn't resist!') Yes, *Spinal Tap 2* is coming, a title so inspired you can practically hear the screenwriter's hangover in it. Now, whether this sequel will turn things up to eleven or just stall awkwardly around a buffering seven remains to be seen.

But let us take a moment to applaud what is already an Oscar-worthy performance from the wardrobe department. Nigel, played by Christopher Guest, who still resembles a man genetically engineered to sell artisanal cheese at Glastonbury, looking like a demigod of midlife crisis, is wearing a motorcycle tee shirt. But not just any motorcycle tee shirt. A Velo Tee shirt! And the look? Sublime. An accessory that could double as medieval weaponry. But credit where it's due: the Tap lads always understood the game.

In an age where 'rock star' now refers to a Silicon Valley CEO in Allbirds trainers giving TED Talks about blockchain and gut health, the question still stands: What's wrong with bein' sexy? Absolutely nothing if you can still fit into your leather trousers and remember your Apple ID.

At a time when vintage motorcycle appeal is on the decline, it's a refreshing palate cleanser to see men (of a certain age) embracing their inner peacock. Nigel's still here, still strutting, and crucially, still not asking Siri for permission to fly the Velo flag. Rock on Nige, we're ready: volume set to 11...

Spinal Tap 2 goes on general release in mid September 2025.



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