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# MODESTO ENGINEERS CLUB FIELD NOTES

Volume 2009, Issue 8

[www.modestoengineersclub.com](http://www.modestoengineersclub.com)

August 4, 2009

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## August Activity:

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### **AUGUST'S MEETING WILL BE HELD AT Modesto Primary Wastewater Treatment Plant See information below:**

City of Modesto Primary Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Cost: \$7 for lunch  
Address: 1221 Sutter Avenue, Modesto  
Date and Time: Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am  
Parking: Lot located at front or in the area to the right side after driving past the security booth  
Check-in: Please check in at the front desk and let the receptionist know you are there for the tour.  
If you have not signed up and would like to attend please call Jennifer Pratt by July 31<sup>st</sup> at 341-2915.

Next Event:

### **Presidents Steak Fry August 28<sup>th</sup>**

**5:30pm setup, 6:15pm begin dinner, 9:30pm clean up.  
Downey Park, Red Section (Coffee Rd. and Brighton Ave.)**

## Save the Date:

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**Formal Lunch Meetings:** First Tuesday of each month.  
Upcoming meetings: September 1, October 6, November 3.  
11:30am – 1pm at SOS Club, Mellis Room, 819 Sunset Avenue

Lunch features a buffet style meal. The main courses will vary each week. Please sign in and pay **\$10.50** to the treasurer, (half off for students). The beverage, tax and tip are included.

### **Informal Meetings:**

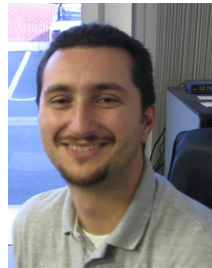
Members regularly meet on Tuesdays, 11:30 am to 1pm at the Old Mill Café corner of 9<sup>th</sup> & F St. in Modesto for camaraderie. No formal program is presented.

**Attendance at Last Month's Meeting:** 19 members, 9 guests  
**Freeloader for July:** Ross Campbell was pulled by Aja after running through the entire deck.

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## Presidents Message:

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No SOS Meeting in August. We will be having a field trip at the **Modesto Primary Facility** thanks to our Vice President Jennifer Pratt who set it up for us, thank you Jen. You can get to the Plant by heading west on Tuolumne and then you will turn left at Sutter and continue south until you reach the treatment plant. We will have lunch served before the tour. How do you know if you are an Engineer, you voluntarily eat lunch at the local Waste Water Treatment Plant. I think I might write my own book called "How do you know you're an Engineer", maybe I will ask Jeff Foxworthy to help me out. Remember we are having our Presidents Steak Fry in August, with food catered by Branding Iron Catering. Dinner will include tri tip, chicken, green salad, baked beans, macaroni salad, rolls, ice tea, lemonade and goods times for all. If anyone has questions about our August events please feel free to contact myself or the other officers.

## Secretary's Editorial: Coming Home

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A few weeks ago I was driving up the hill out of Knights Ferry when I spotted a car and some motorcycles pulled off the road. A couple of guys were spreading a blanket in the grass in the center median. I wasn't sure what was going on until I was down the road a bit. It was confirmed first when I came upon a CHP and then an ambulance heading in the opposite direction with lights flashing. Let me come back to this in a minute.  
It may come as a surprise but I'll confess that I am a biker. I've been coast to coast through most of the lower 48 states and some of Canada over nearly 40 years. The motorcycle culture is complex. There are motorcycles and then there are Hog's. I think you know what brand I am talking about. I don't ride a Hog. For many years now it seems that

everyone else rides a Hawg. Grandmothers ride Hog's, weekend fair weather, latte sipping lawyers and tons of wanna-be's ride Hogs. There are even some real live throw-backs of honest to goodness American bred, do-or-die faithful, bug splattered, tooth-missing, oil drenched, beard flapping Hog riders still around. These guys are great. I heard that one guy actually *married* his Hog.

There are distinct lines of social norms drawn in the biking world. Most all bikers wave at each other in some manner. Except that genuine Hog owners only wave to the other genuine Hog brethren and do not acknowledge things like Ninja's and bikes with cryptic names like F4i. And then how you wave tells a lot about you too. I'm old school so a smartly raised clenched fist (elbow held at 90°, wrist slightly bent forward) with black glove suffices. You just practiced that didn't you?

It is easy to start a Hog, which is why grandmothers, lawyers and flight attendants ride them. Starting sequence: PUSH START BUTTON. While easy it is not as fun as starting my bike which is a 70's vintage Norton 850 Commando. Norton's have always been known in the biker universe as Hogslayer's. For good reason. If Norton's were airplanes they would be a P51 Mustang. They are not modern or the fastest anymore (Japan has that sewn up pretty tight now with the two wheel Osterizer's they produce). And the BMW motorcycles (aka Beemer's) silently glide past with their efficiently clicking machines. But the Norton has incredibly classic looks and a sound that even gives the Hog brethren pause. It's a familiar big bore thumping sound, with British dignity. My wife was waiting for me at an outdoor café when I pulled up on the Norton. She said every guy there stood up and craned their neck to see what had pulled up. The male DNA knew that this was different and not just another Hog.

Back to the starting sequence. This drill is an anti-theft device in itself: There is no electric starter and even the key location is a mystery. You can't see it. It's somewhere down by your inner left thigh. While groping and fiddling around to find and turn the key it appears as if you have a really bad itch. People look away out of politeness. After the ignition light glows red you are ready to fire this baby up. First, throw the choke, next 'tickle' the float carburetors to fill them until they spill a little petrol on the ground, straddle the bike and move the pistons via the kick starter to top-dead-center (allowing the Norton to breath deeply) and give it a kick like you really mean it. The uninitiated will usually get their knee slammed back into the handle bars. It's kind of like trying to get on that surly horse that puts a horse shoe into your shins. The better experienced people

will be rewarded with a very throaty roar that lets you know the Hogslayer has once again come to life.

In the unlikely event that a Hog owner could start a Norton she would not be able to go anywhere, simply because the controls are not labeled and are mostly reversed. This baffles everyone. What should be on the left is on the right, and what is supposed to be shifted up goes down and what should click left goes up....or was that down? You get the idea. But once on the road the a twist of the throttle puts the eyeballs deep into your sockets.

So why does this merit some time in our Field Notes? I'm not sure, but I guess sometimes I feel that life is just too 'convenient'. Why do we like to go camping or 'rough it' somewhere except to get back to simpler more elemental senses. Riding the Norton does not afford much protection from the cold/heat, wind and bugs, but pulling big positive/negative G's and leaning hard into corners of Highway 1 near Big Sur gets the juices going for an exhilarating time. Some of you do that with snow boarding or other means, but it is all good stuff with some risk.



**The Hogslayer and author, ca 1979**

When I came upon that bad scene near Knights Ferry it gave me pause. There is always some inherent danger to biking. So I don't play foolish anymore to minimize the risk and I watch the oncoming traffic the best I can. And life keeps on going: the Japanese Ninja Nunchuck Osterizer's scream past (on one or two wheels), the Hog brethren don't wave, and the Beemer's with their purring motors always wave. But every journey makes me determined above all else to be careful and make sure to come home.

## Photo of the Month



From the 'THAT'S NOT MY DEPARTMENT' Archives

### Purpose of the Modesto Engineers Club

The preamble of the club by-laws is quoted: "The object of this club, primarily, is to provide an organization in which Engineers of all branches of the profession may come together, and through which they may cooperate and foster fellowship and the development of the engineering profession in public affairs and

community welfare". The club, having been founded in 1932, currently has 66 members and enjoys a wealth of former members.

**Who May Join:** The by-laws are further quoted: "The membership shall consist of those who are or have been engaged in the direction or prosecution of engineering or architecture, or teachers of students of engineering or other allied sciences". To join simply obtain an application from any Officer, complete and present to the Secretary at the next regular meeting.

A \$25.00 initiation fee and first years dues of \$25.00 (\$50.00 total) is payable with the submission of application. Thereafter the dues are \$25.00 per year to renew. New members will receive a certificate of membership and a nametag. Members pay for their own lunches, and for meals at other events.

**Club Activities:** The Club meets once a month on the first Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the SOS club. The program usually consists of a speaker on technical subjects and local affairs of interest to engineers. There are several social affairs during the year, which include the annual President's Steak Fry, A Valentines Day luncheon, the annual Officers Installation Dinner. Spouses and guests are welcome at all functions.

To maintain club discipline the President has the authority to levy fines completely at his/her whim. Do not 'tick off' the President with offenses such as failure to wear a name tag during meetings, not showing evidence of voting, conducting business during meetings, talking during presentations, failure to mention the Modesto Engineers Club to the media, etc. As a warning to members an appropriate receptacle for fines is maintained and prominently displayed at every regular meeting.

**Best Attendance for 2008-09:** We have four members that are not going down without a fight. I probably need to list the ones in second place. Odds are on these four to finish out the next three meetings and score 100% attendance. Please sign in with the secretary to be counted as present. Congratulations again to the following:

- **John Amstutz**
- **Sergio Fuentes**
- **Earl Kleinfelder**
- **Evangelina Paoluccio**