

Brand New Old Bike

American Classic Motorcycle Services

Bringing classics back to life ...

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NEWSLETTER

September 2011

Volume 1

Issue 1

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our newsletter. Yup; volume one, issue one. Could be worth a fortune some day so hang onto it. But seriously, the aim here is to keep our readers informed about upcoming events, industry happenings, bikes of interest and all round motorcycle news, be it from the vintage community or otherwise. We will also be posting pictures and stories of our readers' rides.

I as I write this, summer is winding down and the Labour Day long weekend is upon us. For many of us, it's the last chance of the season for a bike trip before summer fades to distant memory. Not that we have had much of a summer to speak of here on the west coast...

It has been a cool, wet one; there is no doubt of that. While much of North America was sweltering through record heat waves, we here could only watch in envy. I need only look to my lawn for proof. Normally it turns a pleasing shade of brown around the end of June and does not need to be cut again until September. This year it just stayed green and grew like weeds. Come to think of it, it *is* mostly weeds now that they have stopped selling Weed 'n Feed. Anyway, my point is that mowing it seriously cuts into my riding time.

We will also have a tech section with tips on maintaining your pride and joy as well as some practical how-to advice on some of the more common repairs you will likely have to deal with at one time or another. We will not be giving step by step instructions on how to complete major repairs like rebuilding your engine or transmission as these are out side of the scope of this prestigious publication!

If any of you have some interesting pictures or stories that you would like to share, drop me an e-mail at jim@BrandNewOldBike.com and I will get back to you on submitting them. Just about anything goes, but please keep it *relatively* clean.

So without further adieu, here is volume one, issue one of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy it and find something interesting or useful here. If not, then I hope you are at least amused. We welcome your comments and suggestions. **The first 30 people to drop into the shop will receive their \$10 coupon good for their next purchase or service.**

Around the Shop

Last February 1, we celebrated our first anniversary in this location. Maybe “observed” would be a better choice of words as it was business as usual. No cake, no ice cream, nothing... Let’s face it, my boss is a jerk!

A lot has changed in that year and a half, most notably the build-up of store stock and acquiring several more suppliers and vendors. This gives us tremendous flexibility in the range of parts we can supply as well as helps in keeping our prices very competitive. We either have in stock or can order parts for Harley Davidson and Indian bikes from the very latest models, all the way back to the 1930s. All at prices that can't be beat!

While our original intention was to stick with vintage American machines, we get everything up to 2011 models in for service. We did manage to complete two frame-off restorations/rebuilds in that time and completed more than a few paint jobs and partial rebuilds amongst the usual service and repair duties.



Restoration project #1 was a 1946 Harley WL belonging to David M. of Seattle. A complete frame-off job included a brand new top end, gear case rebuild, new wiring, paint, and much more. Looks just like it did when it left Milwaukee in '46.

Project #2 was a '79 FXEF Fat Bob. Also a complete frame-off job, and top end rebuild, it also got new wiring, paint, controls, wiring, charging system, brakes, etc. This bike is currently looking for a new home.



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Readers' Rides

No doubt about it, there are some pretty interesting machines that roll in here from time to time. Although I try to get a picture of them all, a few manage to get away un-photographed. If you have some interesting shots of people or bikes, young or old, that you would like to see in here, drop us a line at service@BrandNewOldBike.com and we'll let you know how to send them in.



Left: A very nice example of a '7x FLH owned by Peter D. up in Kelowna.



Right: Another Okanagan machine owned and operated by Allison G. This '79 FXE was another Brand New Old Bike projects.



Left: A stunning 1948 Indian Chief. Would you believe the owner won it, as is, in a raffle? Believe it!

Industry News

When it comes to American V-Twin motorcycles, my taste definitely runs towards the traditional. Maybe that's why I gravitate toward the Indian Chief or HD's Softail Deluxe and shy away from over-the-top models such as the Crossbones or V-Rod.

With that in mind, the new Harley Switchback has piqued my attention this summer. A quick glance and one could be forgiven for mistaking it for a 1970 something FLH. The bike is a member of the Dyna family and as such is lighter, quicker and has sportier handling than touring or Softail offerings. Yet despite whatever aggressive images the name causes your imagination to conjure up, it is a traditionally styled, practical design that deserves a closer look. That is if you can find one at your local dealership.

Quick detachable windshield and fibreglass saddlebags make this a convertible type bike. One minute it's a boulevard cruise, the next it's a touring machine. I guess that's where the name comes from.

Features include a chromed out 1960 – 1984 FLH style headlight cowl & upper fork covers, floorboards, cast wheels and lockable fibreglass saddlebags. Even the tank badge is reminiscent of those found on FLs of the early 70s. I definitely want one!

Meanwhile, over at Indian ...

By now, I'm sure most everyone has heard about the Polaris take over of Indian. From my point of view, this appears to be a good thing and is not at all surprising. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the goings on with the famous marquee over the past dozen years or so, here is a brief run down.

In the '90s, there were a number of companies marketing various products under the Indian brand name. These included t-shirts, jackets, coffee mugs, etc., but no one was producing Indian motorcycles. In a nutshell, after much legal wrangling between the many parties claiming to have legal rights to the trademark, a US judge awarded the rights to an amalgamation of companies, lead by the California Motorcycle Company (CMC) of Gilroy, California.

As CMC was already in production and had a working prototype, as well as a factory, staff and suppliers. This being the case, the judge awarded the case as they had the best chance of getting a viable product to market in the shortest time, thus putting an end to the squabbling that had gone on since the original Indian's demise back in 1953. However, one stipulation was that the new Indian Motorcycle Company (IMOCO) must produce a proprietary motor within a given time frame.

The initial Chief models began rolling off the production line for the 1999 model year. These bikes were basically existing CMA models with a few modifications, such as the iconic fenders, and extensive badging/branding. These were powered by the venerable S&S 88 cu. in. engine in a stretched and raked softail frame. As much as I hate to admit it as I have owned my 2000 Chief since new, these bikes were essentially very fancy Harley softail clones with Indian style fenders and nameplates. The good news is that parts are easily available for these machines.

Production of these first models continued form 1999 through 2001 with only minor changes between these years. Then for the 2002 model year, the Indian PowerPlus 100 motor was introduced along with an all-new

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frame, front end, brakes and rear suspension. Although based on the Harley Evolution, the new engine differed in displacement, lubrication system and was cosmetically quite a beautiful engine.

Unfortunately, these new models, and the engine in particular, were rushed into production without sufficient R&D time to work out all the bugs. Coupled with that, the enormous expense of designing and manufacturing the new engine put a strain on the company's finances. As a result, contracted companies manufactured many of the components in an attempt to save money. Quality controlled suffered, warranty claims increased significantly and the financial backers pulled the plug the week of the 2004 model rollout set for September 2003 in Las Vegas.

It was as if history had repeated itself. This was similar sequence to the late '40s and early '50s with the new Indian lightweights. Both then and 50 years later, the product concepts were sound, but due to a number of factors, most notably inadequate financing, the new bikes were rushed into production which caused the company into a downward spiral that it would not and could not recover from.

For almost a year following the announcement of the demise of IMOCO, rumours circulated as to who, if anyone, would pick up the pieces and allow the company to carry on. There were accusations and media releases leaving Indian enthusiasts wondering who would carry on the tradition. Surely Indian, and all it stood for, would not be allowed to simply fade into history as it had 50 years earlier. There were rumours of the founder of IMOCO buying back the company after being unceremoniously ousted by the financiers and its henchman. [By the end, IMOCO boasted 11 vice-presidents in a company that was producing 2000 units per year, tops].

Scuttlebutt had Victory and even Harley Davidson battling it out for acquisition. Was any of this true? We'll probably never know. It would certainly have been a feather in the corporate hat at Harley Davidson to have purchased its one time bitter rival and finally put it to rest. Financially this was extremely unlikely as Harley had its own problems to tend to and such a move would have not been in its best interest. The truth is, that the IMOCO was in financial dire straits and few, if any, outside companies were willing to take on any company with far more liabilities than assets. It appeared that Indian was once more DOA.

Enter the Stellican Private Equity Group. With their announcement in July 2004 of the acquisition of the intellectual rights to Indian Motorcycles, they began rebuilding the marquee in a slow, meticulous reconstruction of what had once been. Here was a company with deep pockets and an excellent track record of resurrecting heritage brand names back to profitability. The most famous example of this is the iconic Chris-Craft boat company.

Although Stephen Julius, the driving force behind the takeover, stated that he was in the project for the long haul, the writing was on the wall. Stellican is after all, a venture capitalist group whose existence is dedicated to investing in companies that are having problems, nursing them back to financial health, and selling them at a profit.

This sounds very matter-of-fact and cold, but it resulted in Indian still being around today. Indeed Mr. Julius and company have done an excellent job of restructuring the company at Kings Mountain North Carolina and vastly improving the product. If you have ever had a look at the new Indians, they are spectacular while maintaining the traditional Indian aura.

I like to equate Mr. Julius' contribution as being similar to that of E. Paul du Pont in the 1930s. Both men managed to rescue the company from oblivion and lead it into some of the most productive periods since Mr. Hendee and Hedstrom founded the company in Springfield, Massachusetts back in 1901.

Had Stellican not improved the product and restored the company back to a viable operation, it is doubtful that Polaris, or any other company for that matter, would be willing to add Indian to its operations. Polaris produces recreation machinery and is not a venture capitalist company in the same sense that Stellican is. In other words, Polaris was likely only interested in adding Indian if it showed potential to be profitable over the long haul.

So is Polaris to Indian what AMF was to Harley Davidson back in the seventies? Maybe. The good news is that AMF's acquisition of HD allowed a much-needed influx of capital into the floundering company at a critical time in their history. This provided Willie G. and his cohorts with the resources to design many new models such as the SuperGlide, Lowrider, Wide Glide, and many more. Many of these models have evolved and are still in production. Had AMF not come along, Harley Davidson would likely not be around today.

The bad news is that as the '70s wore on, AMF's interest began to wane and quality suffered. This eventual lead to the executive buyout in the late '70s and rest, as they say, is history.

Polaris swears that they will keep Indian as a separate division and not amalgamate it with their Victory line. I personally feel that this is a smart move as Indian aficionados are a traditional bunch and would not appreciate sticking Chief fenders and Indian tank badges on an existing Victory model. There is room in the market for both an ultra-modern American built motorcycle (Victory) and the original. Certainly, the current 2012 models show little, if any change from last year's offering.

Polaris has been reaching out to and picking the brains of existing Indian owners, be they Springfield, Gilroy or Kings Mountain era machines. In my view, this is a very good thing, although I am concerned that they seem to be at least toying with the idea of redesigning the upcoming models.

With the solid track record Polaris has both in terms of the quality and innovation of its product as well as its solid financial management, I have no doubt that Indian is about to embark on an exiting future. Will the Indian motorcycle of 2020 still be recognisable as an Indian? Will Indian be restored to its once legendary status? Let's watch and see ...

Jech Tips

Every spring riders bring in their rides for an oil change and check up. While their intentions are good, their methods could use a bit of tweaking.

One of the worst things you can do to your engine is to let it sit all winter with last season's dirty motor oil. Oil not only gets dirty and loaded with fine particulate, but it also becomes acidic. Let it sit there over the winter and you get corrosion and sludge deposits. This is no way to treat your baby!

At a minimum, drain and change your oil as you are putting it away for the year. **DO NOT** be tempted to take it out for one last ride after you do this. Better still, do an oil flush:

- ⇒ drain the oil
- ⇒ pour in 2 or 3 quarts of fresh oil
- ⇒ start the engine and bring it up to operating temperature

- ⇒ drain the oil again
- ⇒ replace the oil filter and fill with fresh oil.

It is also recommended that the oil tank and lines be flushed out yearly, however this is a job best left for a professional.

Don't forget to do the recommended maintenance of the transmission & primary oil, gas tank, battery and tires. If you do all this, all you will have to do come spring is check the tire pressure and go!

\$10 gift certificate for the first 30 people who drop into the shop. No purchase necessary.

(Redeemable in parts or service. No cash Value.)

Specials

Winterising special until October 29. Starting at \$120*. Includes complete inspection and engine,

- ⇒ Brake pads , rotors & brake fluid checked
- ⇒ Tire condition & pressure checked
- ⇒ Belt drive tension checked
- ⇒ Primary chain tension checked
- ⇒ Shifter adjustment checked
- ⇒ Clutch adjustment checked
- ⇒ Steering head bearings checked
- ⇒ Stabilise gasoline
- ⇒ Check battery condition & battery terminals

**Your choice of conventional oil or Amsoil. Includes black oil filter. Other parts extra. Taxes not included.*

Now is the time to think about booking your bike in for that new paint job, engine mod, servicing or accessorizing. Don't wait for the spring rush, have your ride ready to go when spring arrives.

Ask about our special rates for long term or restoration projects.

For Sale

1979 Harley FXEF. Everything rebuilt, replaced, repainted or all of the above. Needs nothing. Asking \$8,900 OBO. Call Jim @ 604-218-0754

Upcoming Events

- Sept 17 Port Alberni Toy Run 250-723-7463, Port Alberni, Vancouver Island
- Sept. 17 -18 AHRMA Premier & Classic Vintage Trials & Motocross @ The farm in Chehalis, WA
- Sept. 18 Test our Metal @ Deeley Motorcycles
- Sept. 18 ABATE Fall Swap Meet @ Enumclaw, WA
- Sept. 25 Oyster Run, Anacortes, WA
- Oct. 2 32nd annual Vancouver Toy Run, Coquitlam Centre parking lot leaves @ 10AM
- Oct. 16 25th annual Fraser Valley Toy Run, Liquidation World parking lot, Mission BC leaves @ 9:45AM
or Sears parking Lot, Chilliwack leaves @ 9:30AM
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Summer Hours, until October 1: Tuesday – Friday 8:30AM – 5:30PM, Saturday 8:30AM – 4:30PM
Winter Hours, after October 4: Tuesday – Friday 9:00AM – 5:30PM, Saturday 9:00AM – 4:30PM
Closed on holidays



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