

THE HERALD

The Newsletter of the San Diego Antique Motorcycle Club

JAN-FEB 2007

Vol. 24 No. 1



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The Herald needs your help.

A few facts / opinions, photos with captions, even a convincing lie or two and you could be a respected contributor. Don't hesitate to participate. Share your experience of our common interest. This mill needs your grist. Thanks for reading.

-ed



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Monthly Meetings

Are held at:

**The San Diego Automotive Museum
In Balboa Park**

On

**The Second Monday of Each Month
At 7:30 P.M.**

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

Herald Policies & Editorial Statement

The Herald promises to provide an interesting forum for all antique, vintage, and classic motorcycle related information and will attempt to do so in a timely manner. Since we publish bi-monthly, please present any items for publication early enough for inclusion. We accept no responsibility for items furnished after the deadline.

As a volunteer staff, we expect other members to help by providing items from time to time. We have a large club membership base with a varied interest in all aspects of motorcycling and, as such, we believe all members have stories of interest.

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

SDAMC CHARTER

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

EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER

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

Please send your contributions to any of the Editors as listed above.

Prince of Darkness Ride – a True Halloween Story

Let this story be a warning to you – do not mock Lucas. Lucas electricals aren't poorly designed, they are just plain haunted. They don't break down because they're old, they break down on purpose – so that you'll remember them and pay attention to them. An integral part of that British charm, no doubt. I also have a BMW that never breaks down - but I don't miss it when I drive something else (unless it's a rental car).

We didn't do the POD ride last month, so I decided to do one on my own. I've had the Chief for 11 years and have never had an electrical issue of any kind – what could go wrong, (queue dramatic music). Evidently this attitude offended Lucas – who was informed of my offense by his positive-ground agents lurking silently in the back of the garage (the Austin Healey and the MG). Immediately, the Indian developed a host of familiar, electricity-related anomalies.

Before leaving on my POD ride, my wife took a picture of me, and I have included that picture (developed later) as evidence. You'll notice whom I believe to be Lucas himself standing right behind me, ready to remind me just who controls the electrons around here.



Before I could even get out of the driveway, my headlight stopped working even though a quick meter reading showed power at the wires. Then I discovered that the headlight would come on if you were holding the handlebars while touching the headlight. Freaky. It must not be grounded properly - even though the whole thing is bolted together. I added an extra ground wire and it worked fine, so I headed out into the gathering darkness of the mean streets of Del Mar.

I rode over to "Chief's" (coincidence?) which is a good burger and beer joint in Solana Beach. Pulling into a parking space, and reaching for the ignition switch, the engine died, suddenly – just as the sun went down. Again, freaky. I tried to re-start it. Nothing. Maybe I just flooded it. Nope, no spark. Then when I checked my battery charge meter (horn button), there was nothing, not even that pathetic, I-need-to-be-charged, "eeeeep". I even tried to short the battery terminal and circuit breaker to the frame with my keys, but there was just absolutely nothing! All the electricity just vanished.

The bike had had plenty of charge the day before, so I couldn't figure how it could go dead on a two-mile ride. I decided to go in and have dinner and think about it. With this much sudden electrical trouble there had to be something strange going on. Maybe solar flares, or the magnetic field switching poles, or ...wait! I then realized that I had probably offended Lucas by going on this "Prince of Darkness Ride" on a non-British bike. So I immediately ordered a black and tan as a peace offering and went out to re-inspect (stare at) the bike.

Suddenly, I realized that the only possibility for the lack of juice would be a broken wire inside the battery shell. I have one of those fiberglass "battery" shells that hides a modern battery. Ironically, the shell is made in India, so I figure it counts as an authentic Indian part. Well, taking off the shell, that is exactly what the problem was. I just wrapped the broken copper wire around the lead on the battery and put it back together. It started right up.

I headed North onto the Coast Highway to continue my night ride. As I smugly cruised along, I chuckled to myself about how this would make a good story for the Herald. Well, I must have chuckled out loud, because I was given a quick reminder of the purpose of this ride. Inexplicably, my horn started this long wavering "beeeeeeeeeeeep" that went on for about 30 seconds. I was just about to yank the lead off the horn, when it stopped. But every few miles, it would let out another creepy "eeeeeeep".

The next night, (while drinking a Bass Ale, just in case) I tracked down the latest electrical gremlin. Seems the horn wire inside the handle bars was being pulled by the flexing metal throttle cable, creating an intermittent short circuit. Yeah, I tell myself, that's all it was. But I still moved the Indian into the other garage with the BMW just to be safe.

-Brian Church

Xi'an Rides

I had the good fortune to explore Xi'an, China early this year. While the tours of several historic and scenic sites were certainly fascinating, the traffic and roadside views enroute were equally absorbing and sobering. During a previous visit to the mainland in '81, bicycles clearly dominated the streets. Those hordes of bicyclists have clearly given way to battalions of motorcyclists.

These days the predominate Peoples' ride appears to be small displacement singles and twins, if one can afford 'em. Pedal power is still going strong as personal and commercial transportation on two and three wheels, but motorbikes and the attendant small repair shops are common in the industrial heartland. I regret not taking more photos of the ubiquitous scoots, but it's not like they were involved in an oldies ride, and I was reluctant to get up close and personal with my camera. However, I can report that red Yamazukis with leopard-skin seat covers are very popular.



Near Xi'an, 2007

Traffic was generally more chaotic than in Tijuana for example, but speeds were also lower. Vehicle demographics are far more cosmopolitan than before, as can well be imagined. Where previously one Russian-looking variety of gray sedan was to be seen, now virtually all European, American and Asian marques can be viewed in a short span of time. The Xi'an airport parking lot sported virtually one of each parked near the coach bus which received our tour group, quite a curious sight.



Zundapp in '07

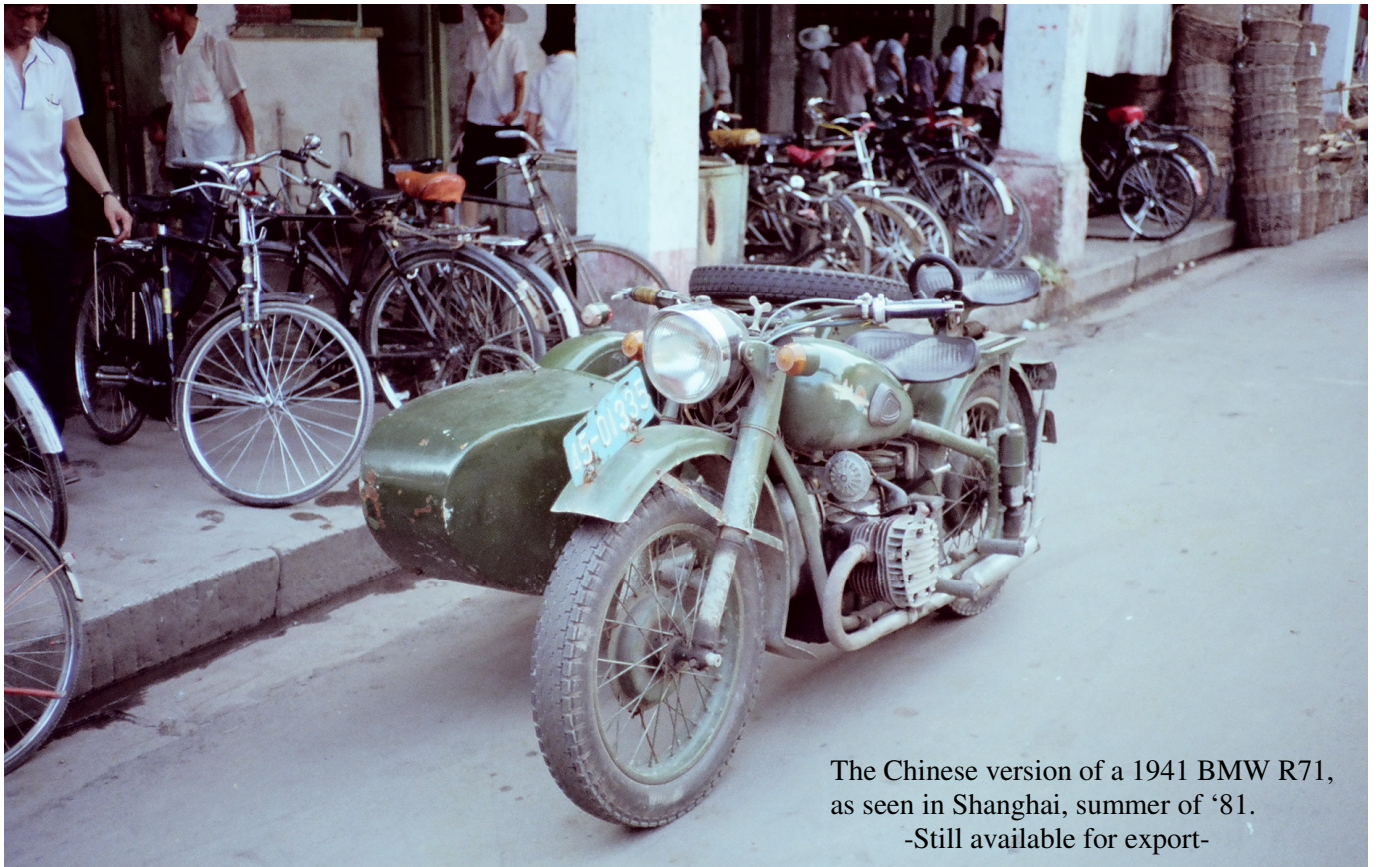
Modern toll freeways are in use and under construction locally though adherence to flow formalities is less than uniform. Cars using on-ramps to drive off the freeway may not be uncommon and, while potential cause for consternation even in SoCal, it seemed to be taken in stride by our inscrutable coach driver. At any rate, the closing speed was low enough to accommodate the modest confusion. While parked near a busy intersection I observed several vehicles enter the clearly marked exit of a one-way street. It may be that education and enforcement is not keeping pace with the burgeoning transportation population.

City traffic is slow enough that pedestrians casually stand between lanes waiting for an opportunity to advance while jaywalking, and entrepreneurs with loaded trikes may stop broadside to oncoming traffic while getting their bearings at an intersection. These individuals usually attract the attention of the traffic police stationed at the busier hubs.

The AMA reports that within Guangzhou (the city formerly known as Canton) congestion caused by the multitudes of motorcyclists has become so problematic that as of Jan. 1, the roughly 260,000 registered motos will be banned from city streets. Guangzhou is not the first city to dictate this course, Beijing and Shanghai have also severely limited use of two-wheeled vehicles in their municipalities.

What I saw of the repair shops was less than appealing. It was cool in Xi'an, temperatures hovered around freezing during the week and most shops had a brazier burning coal at the front door with several mechanics(?) huddled around, waiting for work to roll up. Of course they would not be inside as the carbon monoxide from an indoor brazier would be fatal.

Even so, there wasn't much room in those shops even for a huddle, a two-car garage would be luxurious. Tearing down an engine on the ground before the shop entrance seemed the practical solution and good advertising as well: pick the shop that uses a sheet.



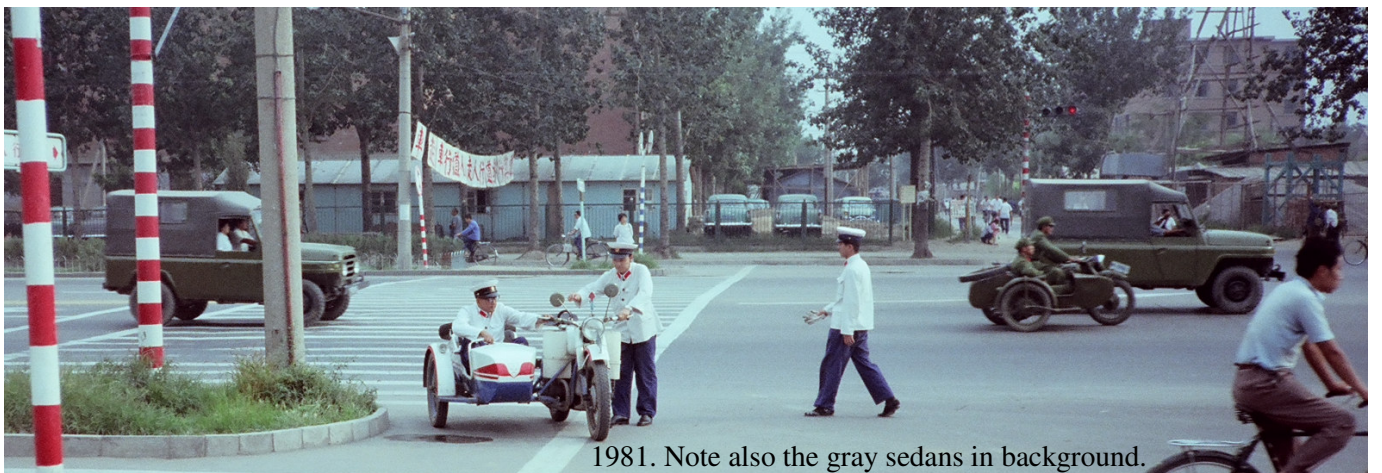
The Chinese version of a 1941 BMW R71,
as seen in Shanghai, summer of '81.
-Still available for export-

Though I saw an exceedingly small slice of life during the one-week visit to the mainland, I believe most of the People handle crude tools at best, that the average comrade is fortunate if he progresses beyond the shovel and sledgehammer brigades occasionally seen about town. The tools offered at Harbor Freight must be hard to come by where they're manufactured. Communism and the Cultural revolution have not done these folks any favors.

Air pollution obscured the sun, simplifying photography. However the ICU is not entirely to blame. I honestly don't know how much of the winter haze was caused by the coal-fired industry in Xi'an, but the mountains on three sides kept a lot of that soot right where it was discharged. Coal is the current emperor of China and coal-fired powerplants are poorly regulated. Though they may be equipped with exhaust scrubbing systems, those are often not engaged as it hampers efficiency and therefore costs money, never mind about the collateral expense down the road or just around the corner.

I'm glad I went, but the best part was flying in to Lindbergh Field on a beautifully clear, sunny Sunday afternoon. I even got to see a few bikes parked at Tio Leo's, still warm from Mods vs. Rockers. It was just bad planning that I missed that ride.

-Scott A.



1981. Note also the gray sedans in background.

**Raven's Solo
Four-Day San Francisco Trip
1500 Miles on my new Ducati Monster 620
October 16-20, 2006**



This was taken at the IHOP near Buttonwillow, four hours into my trip and halfway in miles. I thought to myself, "This is easy!"

The rest of the trip took another seven hours (eleven total hours of saddle time) and was utterly grueling. So much for the scenic route (although it was pretty).



I finally went over the Golden Gate Bridge! When I lived there, I couldn't afford the \$5 toll back, so I never visited Marin County. The bridge is beautiful.



I made some new friends, too.



The guy is Wes, who works at Munroe Motorcycles, the local Ducati dealership. I went there to get a taillight fixed and to ask about local ride routes. The guys did a great job of fixing the light, but knew nothing about rides in the area; they all are race-only types. Wes was nice enough to take me on a night ride around the city on my last night.



Maria followed me home from a local store where she works; we spent the afternoon shopping together. She's very nice. And no, even though she's in my hotel room, we didn't make out.



I mostly just drove around the city looking for nice views. I did the 49 Mile Drive, visited a friend in Oakland (getting to go over the Bay Bridge, which was beautiful and amazing), and looked for landmarks to visit.

I packed everything into a tiny, tiny little tail bag; just a couple of shirts, a few changes of underwear, and a toothbrush. Boy, my jeans were ~disgusting~ by the time I got back. I didn't entirely connect that my entire body would look like a grotty old windshield after going through farm country. There are some big-ass bugs out there.

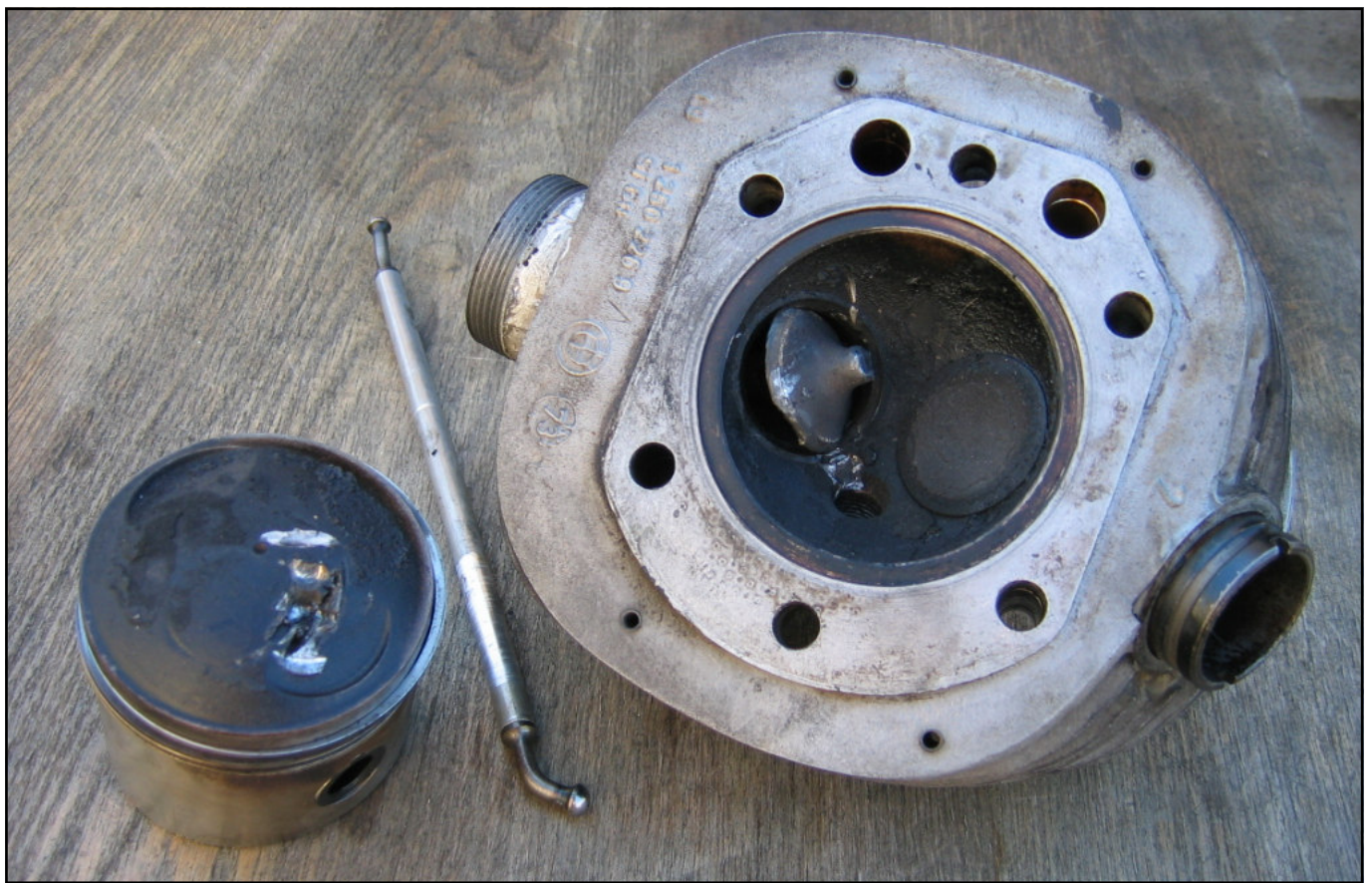
Oh, and my license plate was stolen or lost somehow along the way, so I kept getting pulled over on the trip home. I took a different, shorter scenic route home, and did it Iron-Man style, stopping only for gas and restrooms.

This is me after the ten hour, virtually non-stop ride home. Jeff was happy to see me; I was utterly beat. I hadn't taken my helmet off since I left San Francisco, which is why my hair was so curly.

So, four days, 1500 miles on the new Ducati. Woo! I'm totally ready to do it again. This time I'm bringing more than one pair of jeans, though.

-Raven





When up from the jug there arose such a clatter

Though beemers enjoy a well-deserved reputation for reliability, BMW exhaust valves have been known to separate and tribal wisdom dictates replacing them with new valves somewhere in the 80,000 mile range, as preventative maintenance.

Personal understanding of this rule of thumb was gained subsequent to my own experience of valve failure while on the road.

There I was: flying up Siskiyou Pass southbound on Interstate 5 when in less time than it takes to say millinano-second, my trusty twin became a sorry single. Never before have I witnessed such a sudden exchange of power for loud banging. Short story is: I managed to get the bike off the freeway and then safely home via flat-bed tow, courtesy of a professional, experienced driver and AAA.

The nice thing about failures of this nature is the lack of mystery and the joyful anticipation of a bike much improved after necessary repairs have been accomplished. The down side is that the bike will be down for the time it takes to accomplish those repairs.

Partly due to my reluctance to part with parts, I happened to have a spare engine which had been rolling around the garage underfoot for a couple years. Previously employed in a sidecar tug, it had seen heavier loads than were usual but probably less time in service as well.

Swapping engines went smoothly. The replacement engine ran no less well than it did when I brought it home and compression was surprisingly excellent. However the occasional tin-ratchet sounds emanating from the timing chest, particularly at low rpm, fueled a gnawing apprehension so off came the front cover and there before me lay evidence: the duplex timing chain had been abusively broaching the front crank bearing carrier. Apparently this is common of good chains gone bad, and the repair was both inexpensive and straightforward.

There was also the issue of oil from a pushrod tube seal. That repair cost less than lunch and was simpler than expected, with satisfying results.

The current installation has worked well for weeks, managing the Desert Tower ride with ease and enthusiasm. It's great to be running with the pack again.

-Scott A.



Enthusiasts: Count your blessings



SDAMC Rides, Reminders & Upcoming Events

- ◆ February 17th: TBA
We're still working on this one, stay tuned.
- ◆ February 24th & 25th: Big 3 Swap Meet
- ◆ March 18th: TBA:
- ◆ April 14th & 15th: Desert Ride, yet to be determined.
- ◆ June 23rd: Antique Gas & Steam Harvest Fair
<http://www.agsem.com/show.html>



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Membership Application

Purpose of Club

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

NAME: _____

SIGNIFICANT OTHER _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____ (FAX) _____

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

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

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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

We...



...ride!