



San Francisco Motorcycle Club

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Newsletter - Issue #3

Ride Report: SFMC Memorial Ride SFMC President Brian Holm

“When a nation goes down, or a society perishes, one condition may always be found; they forgot where they came from. They lost sight of what had brought them along.” - Carl Sandburg

On Sunday October 16th the SFMC visited four cemeteries in Colma to pay respects to and remember eight members of distinction.

At each site, a small SFMC flag was left behind as a token of our remembrance. After our ride we visited famous Molloy’s and shared a toast, and then enjoyed the hospitality of the Young family. Following are some of the notes that were shared during the ride:



Richard James Pharr – “Uncle Dickie” - Uncle Dickie was a member of our club for 55 years, and is one of our strongest and longest ties between our club’s past and present. He’s one of only a handful of people who have been an officer in four different decades, more amazingly he was the Road Captain six times over four different decades and 33 years apart. He was President three times, including 1983 when you could have assembled a quorum of officers all with the last name “Pharr.”

Bob Young Sr. and “Boots” Young - In our 107th year it’s notable that, between the two of them, Bob and Boots Young represent a combined total of 107 years of membership in the San Francisco Motorcycle Club.

In the 45 years of his active membership Bob was an officer of the club 35 times. He was President three times, a Director throughout the 1940s (except in 1945 when he was President again), and our Treasurer from 1961 until 1972 (except 1967 when he was Vice President.) Bob is the only person in our history to be an officer of the club in 5 different decades, and Boots is the only woman to hold office over a 40-year span. They married in the club, and their kids were Mascots; Bob Jr. was our President last year, his brother Jack is an Honorary Member, their grandson Matt is our current Vice President, and their great-grandchildren are now Mascots.



William Francis Townley - William Townley was born in San Francisco in 1879, and was elected as our first Road Captain on October 25th, 1904. At 25 years old he was also an accomplished bicyclist and the President of the “New Century Wheelmen” cycling club.



Townley worked as a salesman for Leavitt & Bill, who sold bicycles and motorcycles from their shop in the 1st floor of the Supreme Court Building at Larkin & McAllister. He led the club on our first official ride, down to Woodside on November 6th 1904, and then the second one across the bay on November 20th, and then on a ride to Centerville (now Fremont) on December 4th.

A couple of months later, still just 25 years old, Townley was also the first member that we lost; he died suddenly of an unknown illness on February 3, 1905. His only child, his son Walter, had been born just the week before. His distinctive tombstone is a result of his membership in the “Woodmen of the World” an organization that today still provides burial insurance and survivor’s benefits.

P.H. McCarthy - Club history proudly notes that at the time of its most explosive growth the Mayor of San Francisco, was a Member. Patrick Henry McCarthy was born in Ireland on St. Patrick’s Day in 1863. Generally known as P.H. McCarthy and sometimes as "Pinhead" McCarthy, he was a labor leader in San Francisco and Mayor of the City from 1910 to 1912. He apprenticed as a carpenter before coming to the United States in 1880. He moved to San Francisco in 1886, where he rose through the ranks to become president of Carpenters Local 22, and then President of the Building Trades Council in 1896. Labor unions associated with the SFLC organized the Union-Labor Party to challenge James Phelan. The ULP's candidate, Eugene E. Schmitz, won election in 1901. Schmitz' administration, however, was largely controlled by Abraham "Abe" Ruef, a political boss who made few efforts to conceal the depth of his corruption. Reform elements succeeded in bringing about Ruef's conviction and Schmitz' removal from office in 1907. McCarthy was eager to fill this vacancy but lost. McCarthy ran again, this time successfully, in 1909. As Mayor he installed BTC officials throughout his administration, required City employees to become union members, and raised the minimum wage for city employees from \$2 to \$3 per day. While Mayor and a member of the Club he endorsed an unsuccessful plan for the club to build a racing “motordrome” in Golden Gate Park; subsequently it was built in Emeryville.

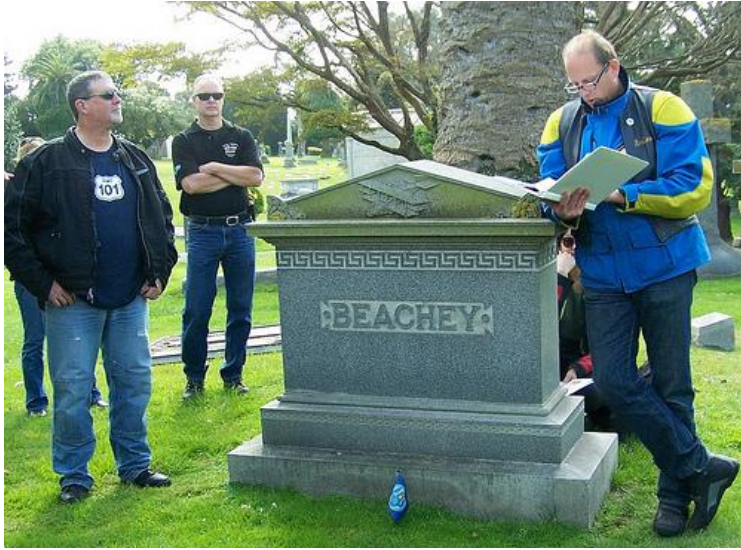


Lincoln Beachey - Lincoln Beachey was a pioneer American aviator and barnstormer. He became famous and wealthy from flying exhibitions, staging aerial stunts, helping invent aerobatics, and setting aviation records. He was known as “The Man Who Owns the Sky”, and sometimes the “Master Birdman”. Beachey was acknowledged even by his competitors as "The World's Greatest Aviator". He was "known by sight to hundreds of thousands and by name to the whole world."

Beachey was born in San Francisco in 1887. At the age of thirteen, he ran his own bicycle shop, and by fifteen he was repairing motorcycles and small engines (for a man named C.C. Hopkins.). Everyone who knew Beachey said that he was fearless. With the help of fellow member and SFMC founder George Payton, he attached a one-cylinder engine to a bicycle and rode it down Golden Gate Avenue at 40 mph, he intended to stop at Gough, but realized too late that he didn’t have brakes, so he yanked the battery wires and skidded to an ungraceful stop.

In 1905 at the age of 17, Beachey started his career as a dirigible pilot in Thomas Scott Baldwin's balloon troupe. Beachey helped build the dirigible "California Arrow" – powered by a V-Twin Curtiss motorcycle engine. In the fall of 1910 Beachey began flying lessons at the Curtiss Flying School. On his first attempt to solo, he struck his plane’s nose straight into the air, stalled, and came down tail first. He walked away from the wreckage unscratched as Glenn Curtiss turned his back in disbelief. The team manager thought Beachey had potential and convinced Curtiss to give him another chance.

To the chagrin of Curtiss, by the end of 1911, Beachey had become his greatest moneymaker.



After several short-lived retirements Beachey returned when his manager had an idea that he depicted in a poster: the "Demon of the Sky" against the "Daredevil of the Ground." Beachey was to race his plane against a racing car driven by the popular driver, Barney Oldfield. The manager made sure there was a high fence around the exhibition grounds, forcing people to pay if they wanted to see the race. Beachey's plane was faster than Oldfield's car, but they took turns "winning," and crowds flocked to see their daily competitions. The pair turned out to be one of the greatest outdoor attractions ever known staging shows in cities across the country throughout 1914.

It was at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition that Beachey made his last flight, demonstrating a maneuver Beachey had not yet presented to the public: inverted flight. He took the plane up in front of a crowd of 50,000 (inside the Fairgrounds, with another 200,000 on the hills), made a loop, and turned the plane onto its back. He pulled on the controls to pull the plane out of its inverted position, where it was slowly sinking. The strain caused both wings to shear off, and the fuselage plunged into the water. His funeral in San Francisco was said to be the largest in the city's history up until then. It is said the calls for news knocked out the city's telephone system for two days.

The following is an excerpt from the *San Francisco Call*, from December 29, 1912, describing one of Beachey's race exhibitions locally at Tanforan Park, it includes another of our famous members:

"In his race with Dudley Perkins, who rode a motorcycle, Beachey clearly demonstrated that he had perfect control of his headless biplane. The atmosphere was choppy near the earth, but the little Curtiss took the turns as easily and evenly as did the terrestrial machine with which it raced. Perkins got the very best out of the cycle he drove, but at no stage of the race did he gain much of an advantage over the aircraft. Almost every time that the racers passed the grandstand Beachey swooped down upon his adversary, forcing Perkins to sink lower over the handle bars. A less daring driver would have been unnerved by the proximity of the flying propeller of the biplane, but Perkins seemed to enjoy the sensation."



Charles Clay Hopkins and Laura Hopkins - An unmarked grave is the resting place of Charles Clay Hopkins. He preferred to be called "C.C. Hopkins", but was known to his peers in the club, and the other old timers who came after him, as "Daddy" because, in their words, "He was the father of us all." He is the truest founder of our club, a fact attested to after his death by at least two of his surviving peers and club members A.W. Green and Gus Chelini.

Hopkins was born June 14th 1859 in Iowa. At age 17 he saw his first bicycle, and two years later traveling in England saw his first race, in London (1878). He owned the first pneumatic-tire bicycle west of Chicago (a 54-inch “Columbia Light Roadster”). It cost him \$150 in 1885, the equivalent of about \$3,500 today. He rode that from Ohio to Cheyenne, Wyoming and then won the state championship race there; then he rode it to Denver where he won again a week later. He rode it 150 miles in a single day, on a round trip between Denver and Colorado Springs. Then he rode home; to Ohio.



He was, in his words, “starved out of the printing business” after “The Great Panic of 1893”; then he came to California and went into the bicycle business. He set up shop first in Stockton and then in San Jose. During this time he traveled all over the western states and to Hawaii. His only ever race on a modern “safety” (or diamond frame) bicycle was a 15-mile race from Stockton to Lodi. He won, and then capitalized on his victory and sold the bicycle to a spectator. By 1897 he went to work in San Francisco for Thomas H.B. Varney, selling Rambler Bicycles. In late 1903 Varney got out of the Rambler business, pursuing billboard advertising and an electric & steam automobile business (of which Hopkins was a shareholder and board member); so Hopkins opened his own Rambler shop at Larkin & McAllister. His shop also featured Indian motorcycles.



At age 45, “Daddy” Hopkins was elected as our first Treasurer on October 25th, 1904. He acted as organizer, participant, and judge of the earliest racing events in San Francisco (including the races at Ingleside.) It was from his shop that James Tormey (one of his employees) rescued our original gavel during the quake and fire in April 1906. Hopkins rode his “Tri-Car” to San Jose to deliver supplies within a week of the earthquake. He organized our first post-Quake ride just 4 weeks later, and rebuilt his Indian shop in San Francisco less than two months later (constructing the building in just 10 days.)

He used his printing skills, and publicity experience, to promote motorcycling and the Indian, producing beautiful, one-of-a-kind local brochures (of which he left us copies.). He actually had a movie camera document the record-setting hill climb (on Fillmore Street) in 1908 (with his employee, and our President, Walter Collins on board.)

He used his printing skills, and publicity experience, to promote motorcycling and the Indian, producing

He was an employer, mentor, or friend to legends like Hap Alzina, Cannonball Baker, Lincoln Beachey, Dudley Perkins, and many others – all of whom are in one or more “Halls of Fame”.

Hopkins was divorced from his first wife in 1897, and a few years later met Laura Emma Small whom he married. Miss Small was an avid (and competitive) bicyclist in San Francisco during the late 19th century, and they are buried together in the Small family plot. A smiling Laura Hopkins appears with and without C.C. in nearly every early photo of the club’s rides.

“Nepotism? I Say Nay, Nay” *A Presidents Brother Gets Voted In*

Yes, I am Brian’s oldest brother. Following him into the SFMC is probably the only time in my life where I followed him anywhere. I couldn’t be happier! Brian was the baby in our family, and we moved a lot as kids. My two brothers were also my best friends while growing up. They still are. When we were little, I felt responsible to look after Brian. Now, it feels like he’s doing that for me. I couldn’t love anyone more than I love my brother.



I visited the SFMC clubhouse with Brian many times over the last 10-12 years as a guest. I always thought it would be wonderful to join the club, become part of the family and contribute to its history. However, it never seemed possible, because the right opportunity to live and work nearby didn’t materialize. It was a real shame, because the Bay Area is my favorite place to live in the whole world.

When I graduated from college I had this notion that I would remain employed with one company, and live in the same city, until I retired. We moved a lot as kids, and staying put sounded like a good idea. I was way off on that notion. I’ve travelled often during the course of my life.

I graduated from UCLA with a degree in Chemical Engineering, and my first job was at a Chevron refinery in southern California. I loved that job, but left after almost 8 years and moved to Mukilteo, WA (and then later to Whidbey Island, WA). I worked for Scott Paper for a little over 5 years, got laid off, and then was hired by Jacobs Engineering to work at the same place for another six years.

My daughter, Sabina, was born while we lived in Washington. She’s twenty years old now, and a student at the University of Durham in northern England. I love her dearly, and miss her very much. I hear from her frequently, but only get to spend time with her once or twice a year, if I’m lucky. She’s spending her summer this year in Sri Lanka on a school project, which is a terrific experience for her, but it also means I won’t get to see her. She graduates with her bachelor’s degree next year, and I’m hoping to be with her for that.

About 11 years ago, my wife and I decided to sell everything, get a leave of absence from my job and embark on a 6 month trip around the world. The three of us lived out of backpacks and cheap hotels travelling through Thailand, Australia, India, Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam. We spent a whole month living at an ashram in Kerala, India. I’ve got lots of stories about those places. The trip was a life-changing experience in many ways...we got divorced in the year following that trip.



Afterwards, I returned to the Jacobs office near Portland, OR and worked as a Project Manager for five years. I travelled a lot for business during this stint; I once figured out that I only spent a total of 8 months at home during the entire five years. I spent the better part of two of those years working on a Solar Cell factory built in the Philippines. My best friend, Monica, came with me on that job. The first year was difficult and required long hours on the job site and a really miserable commute from Manila, but during the second year we were able to take some time off and visit Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, Thailand and New Zealand. It was a pretty incredible experience.

Afterwards, I changed employers and took a job with a specialty process equipment manufacturer in Los Angeles.

It felt like coming home for a while, since I was born in Santa Monica, and lived in the beach communities near LAX during my first job. I spent the last five years living in Hollywood, but hoping my employer would open a new office in the Bay Area, where many of their customers were located. Eventually, I became their Chief Operating Officer, and it was apparent that I would never leave LA as long as I remained employed there.

Fortunately, a really great opportunity brought me back to the Bay Area to stay when I was hired by Linear Technology, as their Facilities Manager in Milpitas, CA at the end of March. Now that I'm a local, I just had to join the SFMC, and I have to thank Casey and Ian for sponsoring me. Now I feel like everything I've wanted is coming together.

My brothers and I didn't learn to ride dirt bikes or motorcycles when we were kids. We went camping a lot, but didn't get to ride. I spent one summer during college with my grandparents, and got to go dirt bike riding with my uncle and cousins a lot. I was hooked. My grandfather gave me street riding lessons on his 175 cc Suzuki dual sport. For the last 15 years, I've been an everyday street bike rider. I don't even own a car any more. Just seems right.



SFMC Holiday Banquet Reflections

SFMC Honorary Member, Pattie Prestidge Frost

It might have started with SFMC President Bud Outlaw suggesting that we ought to have a feed after an event, but usually the Club had two or three big banquets or holiday gatherings a year. I do remember when mom, Babe Prestidge, and I went shopping for a new twist on a Holiday Dinner. Born in the house at 56 Bonview Street on Bernal Heights in the Mission district, we always did our shopping at the Yosemite Meat Market. Mom had gone in and talked to Joe the Butcher and got prices on a baron of beef. I was like, "Wow! That must mean a half a cow for sure." Mom talked what seemed to be an hour at least. She had picked me up from Le Conte Elementary School just across the street. The deal was go by Joe's, give him a quarter, and he'd whack off a chunk of bologna and I'd eat it on the way home so to keep me quiet. I sat in the bay window, feet dangling and ready to wait out the haggling that was taking place. A baron of beef, well it had my attention, but the price must have not been good cause Mom said she'd let him know. We soon found our way down to the Clam House, now I use to go there with my dad Lance - we'd stop by if we were out riding his BSA GoldStar. I always drank warm clam juice, had chowder and French bread, while dad had tomato juice with celery and olives - I was an adult before I learned it was called a Bloody Mary! But today Mom and I sat at the bar and talked with Hank the cook. Mom told him she thought Joe wanted too much for the baron of beef and she wanted to show people how they could experience something different for the Holiday Dinner. Hank asked if she was going to use the steam table. I sat there trying to figure out how they were going to make steam - like I saw come out of the sidewalk in front of Ye Jung's, my favorite Chinese cafe in China Town. It was the only place where the steam was warm and I stood over the grate to get warm before we'd go down the stairs, and Charlie would be butchering ducks in the window. You would walk down the stairs and they would greet you at the door with a bow and you held up your fingers how many people, and they would take you into a private room closing the white curtain once they got you set with a big round table on a giant turn table in the middle, where they would bring so much food (a story for another time). So Hank tells mom that she has a good idea and asks her if she was going to bingo on Wednesday at Church - well I knew the answer to that one! Yes!

By the meeting night, mom had an idea of what she was going to have for a menu, but when Old Business came up and President Outlaw asked what the menu, was she told him and the club members it was going to be an ethnic banquet.

Even my dad Lance didn't know what Mom had up her sleeve.

You had to remember that back in the 50's, San Francisco had areas much like today. If you wanted good Italian food, you went out to the Avenues. Mexican food was at 24th Street for the best spices and tortillas. If you wanted seafood, you went to the fishmongers either in Half Moon Bay at Pillar Point, or the Wharf. It depended on what you were looking for and what was in season. That was the big thing, at 7 years old I didn't know what "in season" meant! Maybe the Baron's Beef wasn't in season?

Friday was shopping day, and it started out at the New Geneva Bakery for cheesecake with red cherries on top (it did not look like cake). Then a big champagne sheet cake with so many decorations, two dozen cup cakes for the kids, plus the 36 sourdough loaves. We took that home and put it on top of the freezer on the back porch, as it would be cool.

Then we stopped at The Clam House and saw Hank, got the makings for cioppino - no idea what it was, but knew he would bring up the live stuff Saturday morning. We drove by the San Francisco General Hospital and reached 24th Street.

Betty Gekias (The Greek) met us at the store she owned that made Mexican food, and we got 144 beef hand rolled tamales and 4 platters of baklavas pastry (Betty's contribution). One more stop at the Venetian for Meatballs, and we were ready - or so I thought! Spaghetti would be cooked on Saturday.

Now I don't know about you, but I was like mom. Lunch any time would be ok! But we were off to the Green Grocer Farmers Market to get the salad, 15 heads of lettuce, green onions and I have no idea of how many cherry tomato's, and big ones as well, for the Cioppino. After all, mom had only \$300.00 of the Club's money.

I cannot think what \$300.00 would buy today.

Saturday began at 6am, when the men would set up the steam table and all the tables and chairs. The ladies would show up later. Hank came with the live crabs, clams, and fish, along with the prawns – no itty-bitty shrimp for this crew! I do remember the Club had over 150 adults and kids, and we ate the same food as the adults. Trust me, you ate what was on your plate, salad and all, before you got dessert.

This has been fun and I cry now. I live in Kansas, and today I paid \$8.00 a pound for small shrimp for a salad. Oh, and I know that a PRIME Baron of Beef for 150 Adults in the Beef Capital of the US, would run about \$12.00 a pound.

Please remember it doesn't matter what you fix to eat. But remember to feed those who don't have food to eat.



How to find us:

The San Francisco Motorcycle Club is located at the corner of Folsom and 18th Streets, in the Mission District of San Francisco. We meet every Thursday night, and motorcyclists are always welcome! Meetings start at 8:30 PM.

Find us online at <http://sf-mc.org>

The Newsletter Committee is chaired by Ian Bardecki

San Francisco Motorcycle Club
2194 Folsom Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

SFMC 2011 Official Ride Schedule

The 2011 ride season is officially over!

Please join us next season for more fun and
adventure!

All ride details are available on our website at:
<http://sf-mc.org/calendar>

Guests are always welcome to join us on all
rides!

SFMC 2011 Official Runs

Mar. 17-22 — By the Time I Get to Phoenix
Mar. 26 — Lover's Revenge (His Lordship in Berkeley)
Apr. 2 — A Cheesy Captain's Run
Apr. 24 — Easter Marathon, Mt. Tamalpais
May 7-8 — Lunch in LaPorte
May 21-22 — Sheet Iron or Street Iron (Highway 1 & 36)
Jun. 4-5 — Skylines, Boulders & Ice Cream — Clay's Day!
Jun. 17-19 — Can You Say Elko?
Jul. 1-3 — Foothill Follies / Gary's Backyard
Jul. 30-? — Blind Run
Aug. 13 — Ride With the Maniacs!
Aug. 20 — Redwood Run (Official AMA District 36 Event)
Sept. 3-4 — SRRR Campout / Hollister
Sept. 17-18 — Ride to the Beach (Pismo)
Oct. 2 — AFM Racing at Thunderhill
Oct. 9 — Memorial Ride / Brian's Song