

DIRT RIDER

**COLOSSAL!
SPECTACULAR!
THE SUPERDUPERBOWL!**

**ROCKY
MOUNTAIN HIGH**

**PIKES PEAK HILL
CLIMB COLOR**

NOVEMBER 1976 PDC \$1.25

EXCLUSIVE

**YAMAHA IT 400
LAST TEST!**

**SPECIAL
ENDURO
TREATS**

**JACK AND TOM
PENTON EXPOSE**

**ENDURO
COMPUTER**

**HOW TO GET
STARTED**

PLUS

**THE YELLOW
PERIL, THE
HANGMAN,
TECATE 500 AND
FLOWER POWER**



DIRT RIDER

Vol. 4, No. 11

November 1976



COVER: Jack Penton at work. See the Penton interview starting on page 18 of this issue for an in depth look at the Penton Brothers, Jack and Tom.

ED SCHNEPF/Publisher
RICK SIEMAN/Editorial Dictator
CHET CARMAN/Dictatorial Editor
MARK KIEL/Assistant Editor
DICK MANN/Legend
BRIAN FABRE/Free Advice
DAVID SWIFT/Ringo Springs?
CARL CRANKE/Wherever

DENIS SNOW/
Western Advertising Director
7950 Deering Avenue
Canoga Park, California 91304
(213) 887-0550

LEE SALBERG/
Eastern Advertising Director
333 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611
(312) 263-4569

HANK UHSMANN/Advertising
Coordinator

BOB RATNER/Production Director
JOHN ERNSDORF/Executive Art Director
JOHN HERNANDEZ/Art Director
RICH GEHRUNG/Graphics Director
SVEN CARLSON/Circulation Director
JIM BUCHANAN/Circulation Services
DAN WHEDON/Promotion Director
CAROL VAN ORSDOL/Business Manager
JANET GRAHAM/Consumer Relations

Test:

- 29 **YAMAHA IT 400**
This is IT . . . 400cc's worth

Events:

- 25 **SUPERBOWL OF MOTOCROSS**
Bring your own berms
- 41 **PIKE'S PEAK HILL CLIMB**
Room at the top
- 57 **TECATE/GREENHORN ENDUROS**
THIS is enduro?

Features:

- 14 **YOUR FIRST ENDURO**
Tying up the loose ends
- 18 **PENTON BROTHERS INTERVIEWED**
- 34 **FLOWER POWER**
Top this, Woods
- 36 **THE SUZUKI MOTOCROSS SCHOOL**
DR gets an education
- 49 **THE LEGEND OF HANGMAN'S GLEN**
The return of Ihabod Crane?

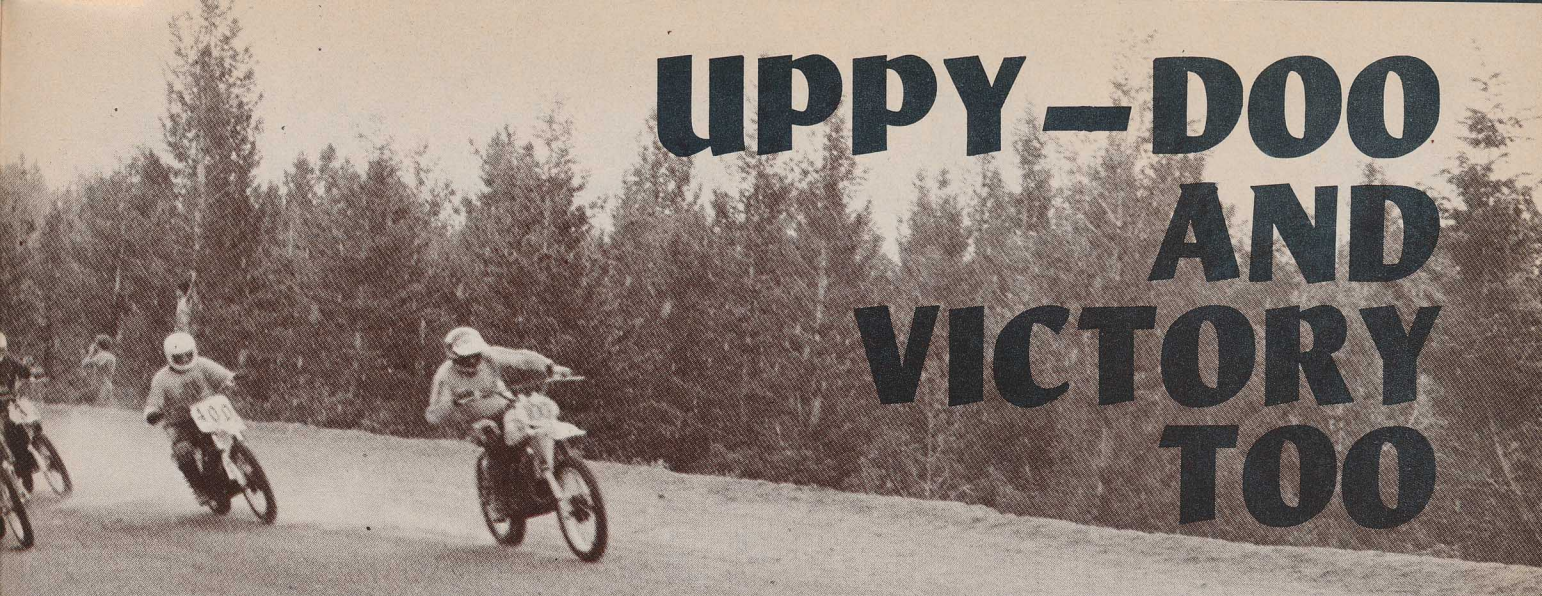
Technicalities:

- 50 **PROJECT YELLOW PERIL**
Getting lit

Departments:

- 4 **GETTING PUMPED**
Up
- 6 **MAIL**
Probably the best part of the whole magazine
- 9 **BUGS**
Live and learn
- 10 **FABRE**
And you
- 12 **DAS BITCHEN**
Primary drive
- 24 **BFD**
A new beginning
- 47 **THE EQUIPOPHILE**
A new name
- 52 **DR RECOMMENDS**
Some really good stuff this time
- 66 **MOTOGRAPH**
Another offensive photo

UPPY - DOO AND VICTORY TOO



"54th RACE TO THE CLOUDS"

By Nancy Carter

PROJECT 370 COMES OUT OF THE CLOSET

By the Staff of GRAVEL RIDER

Bulletin . . . *Dirt Rider's* famed project bike, "Yellow Peril" was unveiled at the famed Pikes Peak Hill Climb this past July 4th. At the controls of the famous RM 370 was none other than Chuck Harmon editor-in-chief of this country's hardest to find motorcycle magazine, *Dirt Rider*.

As many of you already know, the project RM 370 was begun last month as an experiment in quality. An answer, as it were, to the nagging question, "Who the hell do you mugs think you are, knocking the 370 Suzuki, anyway?" or something like that. In this project, the whining DR editors have taken it upon themselves to demonstrate some of the lesser known attributes of the much-maligned RM 370. The idea was to end up with the all time killer enduro bike, awesome in its brutishness, breathtaking in its macho appearance and flawless in its

execution. Perhaps even unridable for any but the most sensitive of riders. In other words, a real man's machine.

Picture, if you will, a seething pit area, all gaga with mile bikes, 1/2 mile bikes, shorttrackers, triples, twins, MXers, street bikes with knobby tires, knobby bikes with street tires . . . you get the idea. Definitely a go for broke, hang it all out horsepower contest. Everyone there has his own ideas about what combination of engine, chassis, tire size and tread, gearing and jetting will get him to the top of the 14,000 ft. mountain ahead of all the other guys.

All of the other guys have come up with different combinations, some odd, some downright exotic. Perhaps none as exotic as the *Dirt Rider's* RM 370. There it was, right there in the middle of all that expensive horsepower, a funny looking yellow motorcycle with a great big gas tank (more than ample for a 13-mile race), bash plate, weird fenders and more inches of travel than Marlon Brando, Burt Reynolds

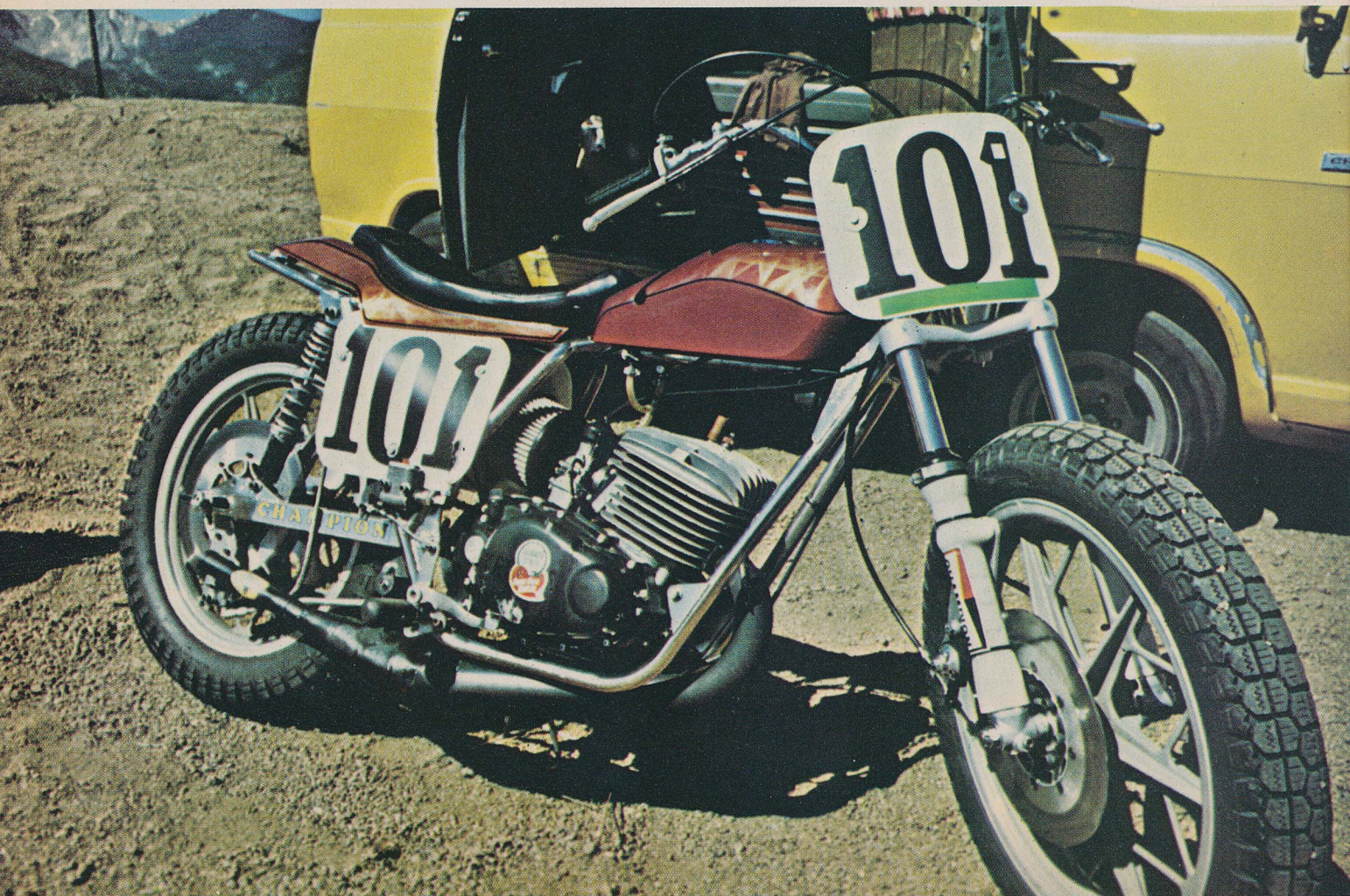
and Muhammed Ali combined. It brought more than a little comment. Mostly ribbing.

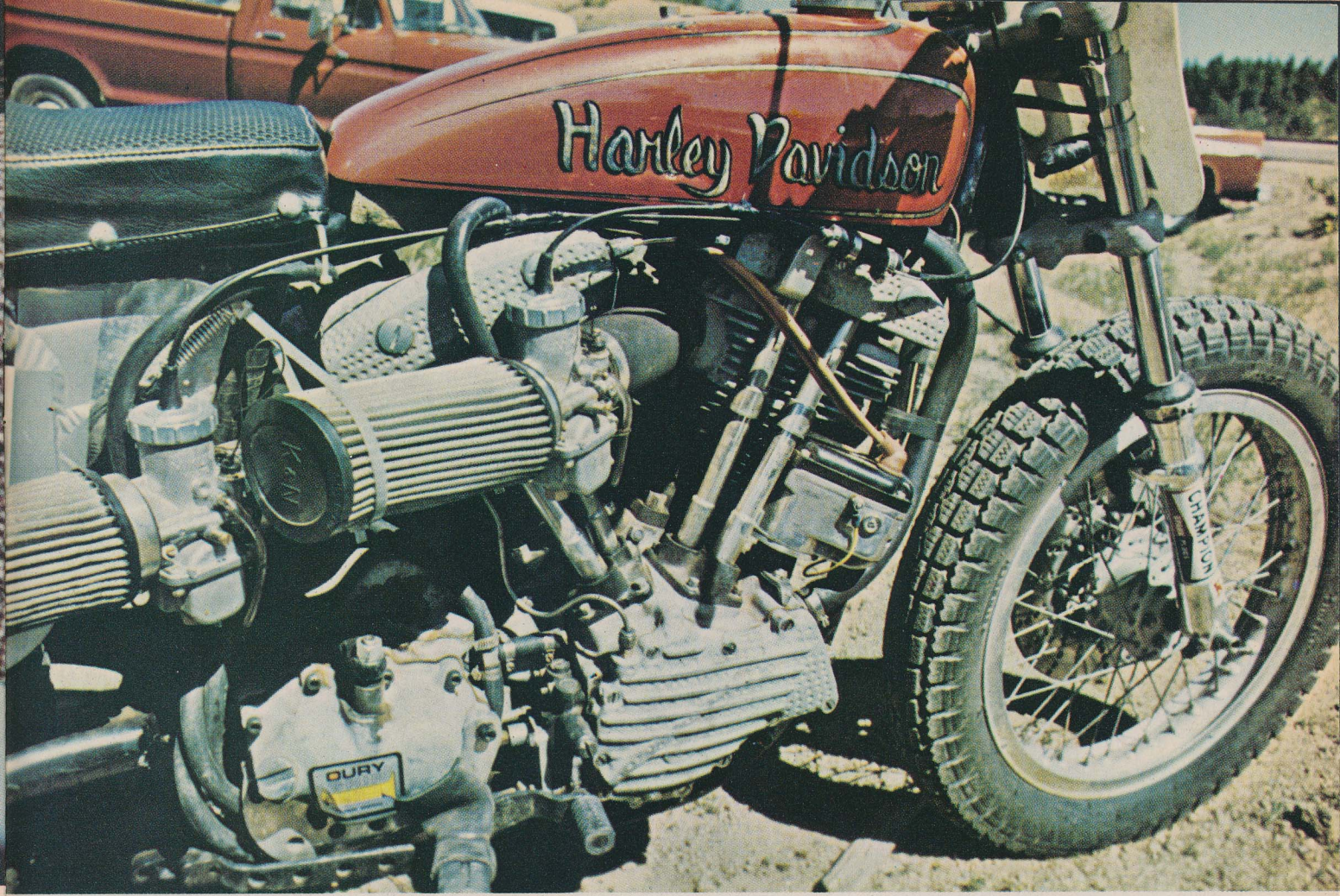
We were stalwart. We could not be dissuaded. We knew that Yellow Peril was more than equal to the task. Especially in the sportsman class, where they don't go so fast. Did it work? Did it go fast? Did it hold back the unbelievers?

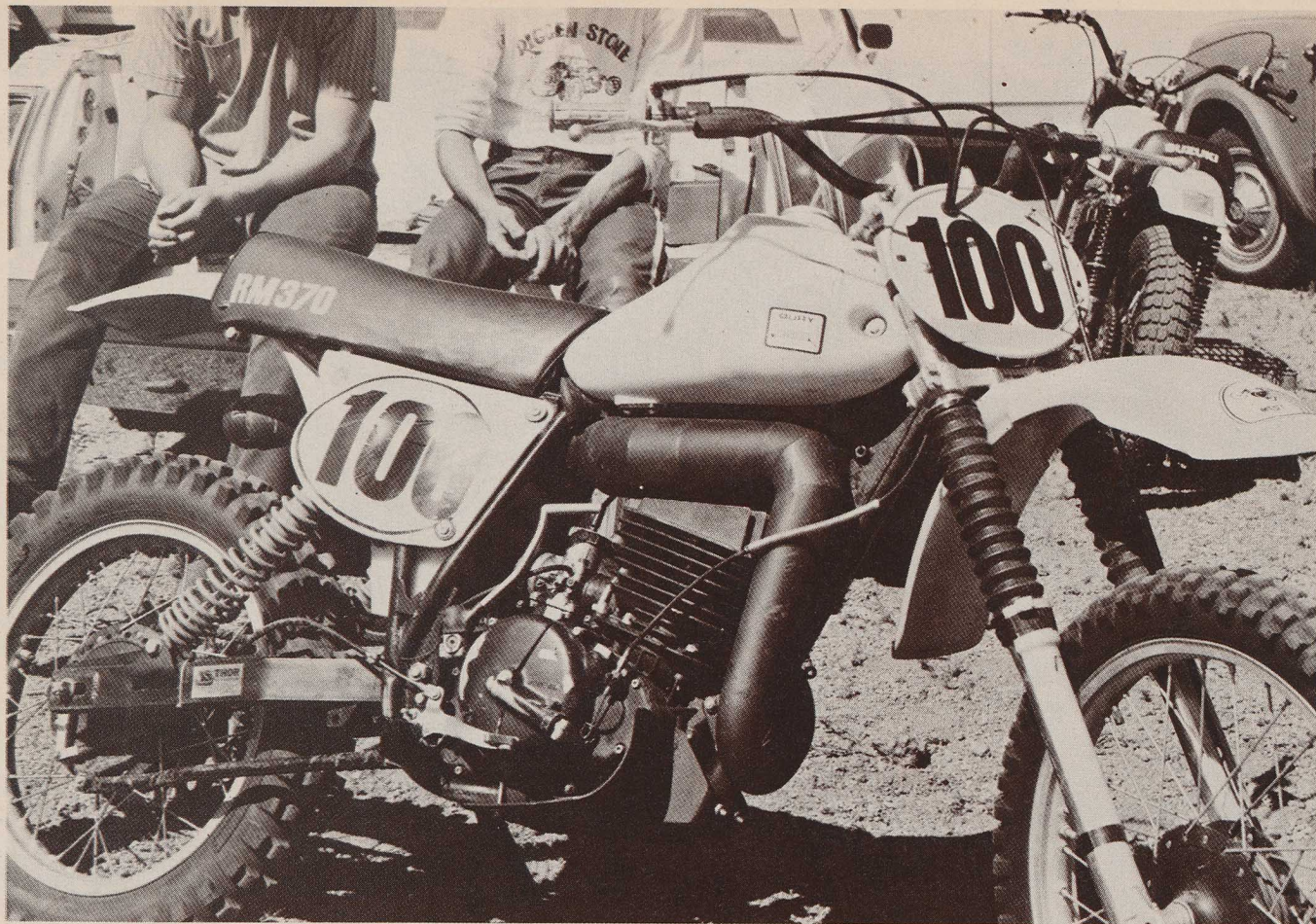
It kicked butt. From the flick of the green to the flash of the checkered, Yellow Peril held the teeming masses of open sportsmen at a respectful distance. It appeared that on the way to building the killer enduro, we paused long enough to build the definitive fireroader. See our update on project 370 for more details.

What next? Baja? The desert? Scrambles? Has the taste of power and glory gone to our heads? You bet! Stay tuned, there's no telling where we might show up with that yellow sucker.









Fellow kids, let's take apart a ticket together. It's this little blue thing here. I'll hold it up for you . . . looka that!

Easy, easy, ride 'er easy. Save your cheers and jeers for later. Let us for now fill this auditorium with silence while I recount the recap, buzz your convolutions of inner ear with dainties cooked up on the Anniversary of Thishere Great Country, 200th to tell it all.

First, fellow friends, let me express my involuntary indebtedness to Chester P. E. (Perceptive Editor) Carman. My Venerable Colleague hath donated the germ—the kernel, as it were— of thought from which trickled out this pithy account.

"Race," he said, spacing on larger issues. "Race," he whispered, "second class citizens, the bee-hind of the runners," and other such passionate obser-

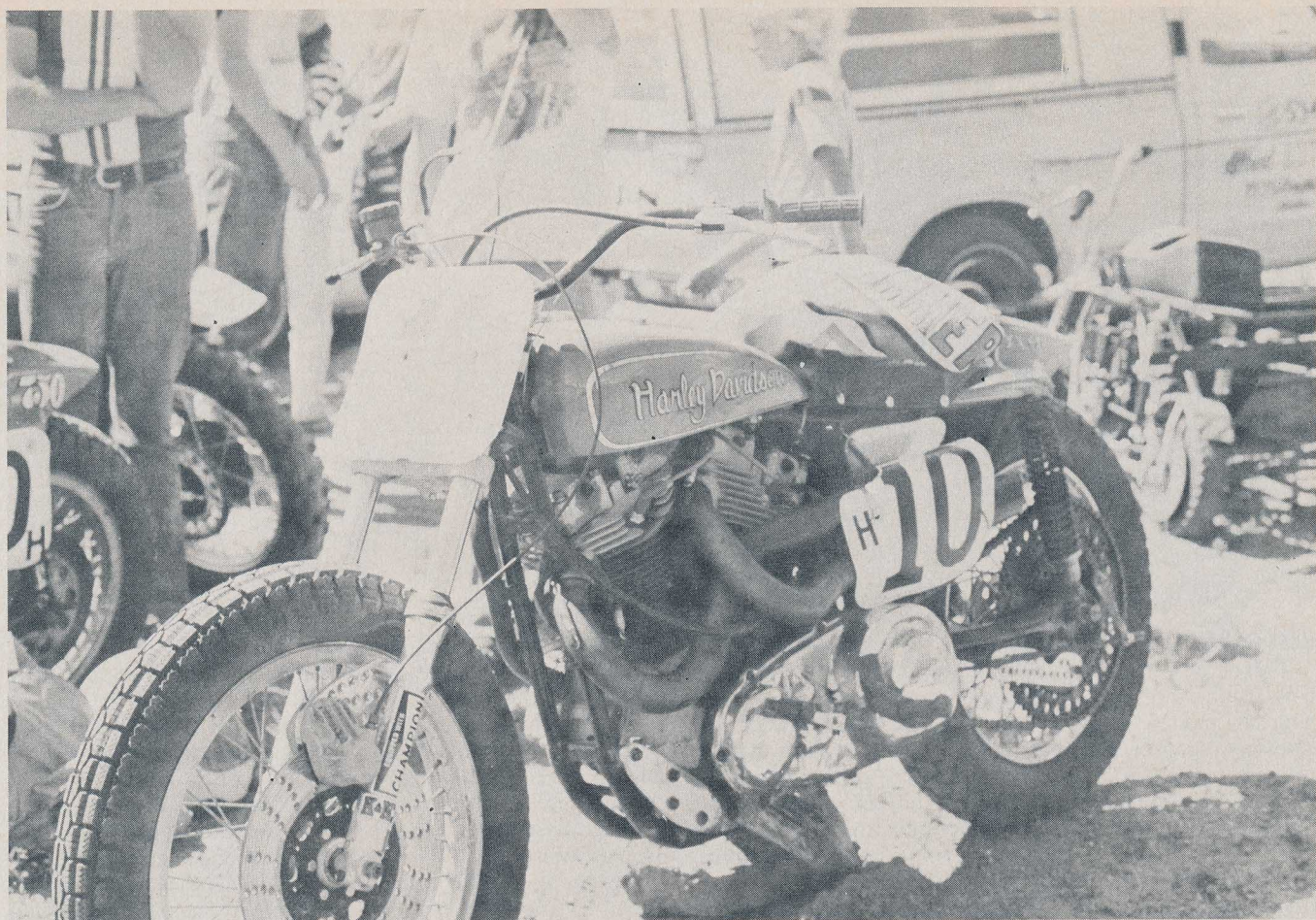
vations.

I see your thousand eyes aglow with the question: To what did he owe his newfound astuteness?

Newsmen, is my own breathy answer. Reporters. The Fourth Estate of the First Water. I am about to knock 'em, so if it's too much for you, skip a page or something.

But let me regress for a few hours. Carman will cool down, and you will





understand. There is nothing, for therapy, like going backwards.

This little blue thing is what the guy at the toll gate to the Pikes Peak Highway gave me in exchange for a fistful of dollars that fateful day. It is not a particularly awesome piece of card stock. Which is nothing like stock car, but has something to do with it.

This race of which we are trying to speak of is for cars. Stock. Open wheel.

Everybody admits that. Almost unbeknownst to the promoters, who by custom and limits of intelligence deal only in one coin, Car Money (q.v., no relation to Carman), and who are probably ignorant and therefore innocent of all charges, there are bikes on the end. Some pressure, social, financial, industrial, we don't know, and which is buried in unwritten history, caused the bosses to allow bikes to run along.

Well actually, behind, which is the Significant Other of this chapter.

Ask anyone. Walk up to the man on the street, the tourist who keeps apace in his motel room until the big morning, the shopkeeper with his teeth bared for the tourists. Anyone will tell you it's a car race. Ask the guys down the alley from me who take their car apart and put it back together repeatedly throughout the year, and they'll say "Car race."





There's power, of course, in numbers. Not numbers of cars, but numbers of bux. The money lies in the cars. Bigtime investors sponsor the cars and their drivers, keep them in cherry shape with frankincense donations so they'll be all smoky and fierce when the gun goes off.

Race. You can still feel Chester's breath in your ear, but you still don't know why. Is it the black-white business? Okay, that's an interesting issue too. But another time, on another page.

Look at the machines. All of them, dear friends, not halting the shift of your eyes when the last of the cars has dragged past the starting line. Lookee there at the motorcycles. They are not running, like the cars, one at a time, not pitting their whizz against the clock only. No, they're in packs. They run, as you can see, all the risks.

They move, rather typically, on two wheels each. Of course, some riders drag something, which is like having three wheels, but we don't want to get into that. They're no threat, so they don't count here. As you ripple in your seats, I recognize that you are beginning to understand. You already know that most of the bikers racing are doing it for love. Aw sure, there's a big bike with a machine shop behind it, and a construction company backs that one over there. That guy in the purple helmet has two old ladies who keep him in silk. (Editor's Note: Lecturer is gesturing at slides flashed on screen at rear of stage).

But few bike racers can count on the kind of sponsorship that makes the worry go out of the preparation.

All that is bad enough. Hang on, it gets worse. I hiked, just for you, up the mountain, BEFORE the bikes let go.

On the highway, daydreaming my way up that wide scraped swath which

is better maintained than the local city streets, I kept hearing voices. Thinking them part of the mental meanderings, I tried to put them back. But the voices grew clearer and louder. Back in the bushes were the spectators huddled over their games of Stack the Beer Cans. Tucked in their pockets were their radios. Funny to be up there, in the middle of things, learning about the event from the radio guys. Them on top of the hill counting finishers, beaming back downtown the drivers' names, then downtown beaming them back to the transistors. (Editor's Note: Romantic flight a symptom of oncoming altitude sickness).

What's worse is that right then when I was going up, a lot of spectators were coming down. "Ain't over yet," I yelled to one bunch. "Heck, just the bikes left," they called back. And they meant it.

Okay, Electronic Marvel, I thought to the radio guys, YOU back me up. I walked on, and waited for more voices to finish the story. In a way they did. More by Miniscule Mention than Sin of Omission. In passing, you might say. Dirty trick.

The newspapers played the same game. If there was any improvement, it was that you can read the same thing twice if you want to. But you get squinty from the fine print lists of finishers, which is about all the bikers got in terms of "coverage," that being a very loose term. Oh yes and Mike Farmer, notable racer from Colorado Springs, made the hospital reports with his latest bones.

Your faces are glowing. You KNOW. Bikers, in this race, in the press, and to the spectators who go home early, are the lesser breed. Second class. Dad-bustit, we must unite! Make more noise.

Rise up and be heard. Point out that we paid full fare.

Carman is right. His Muse, riding the Great Suzuki above the clouds, knew he'd win in his class, never lost faith, but dogies, he had to bring along a pile of relatives and camera-persons to root for him. Being among the faithful, they rooted too for other classes, even the pro riders. It's just that it's tough being a minority person. You have to keep in tight little groups just to survive. You remember to take your beer cans back home. You do not sully the face of the rock. You do not express your fear of the W's up the mountain where car people kept going off in the prelims.

You just keep trying to win year after year after year, until some confident manufacturer foots you the right bike. You stand tall, hearing only your Muse and changing your main jet. You look great, beaming from within with Rightness. You try not to let anyone see you sneering at the cars, as their highly paid and well dressed crews do to you. (Editor's Note: Kind of like cheerleading uniforms). It's the Brass Rule of Biking, boys and girls. And you talk in quiet tones, tantalizing almost, to tell the minority story so that maybe next year the sports pages will sing the whole song, not just the first verse.

Be not too modest, however. Gathered here, with these tape recorders running, amass your voices. If you believe in cycles, clap your hands!

(Editor's Note: We did not tell her to say this stuff).

(Writer's Note: Mark Twain said the editorial "we" stands for "I and my tapeworm.")

(Editor's Note: Das Bitchen, in the January issue, will offer concrete suggestions for wising up sports editors and radio guys, in the same down-to-earth voice of always. Stay tuned). ●