

# NETA OBSERVER

The newsletter of the New England Trials Association

January 2003

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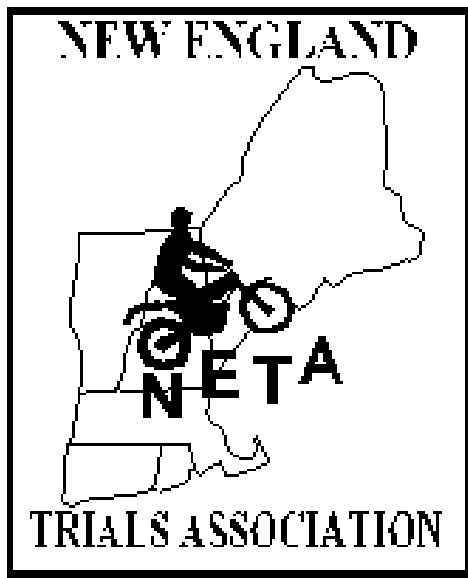
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## NETA Newsletter

Hi, this is Mike Green, and I've just finished putting together my first NETA newsletter. Thanks to Paul and Sonya Royce for working on the newsletter last year. I offered to take over the newsletter duties at the end of the season, and Paul was quick to take up the offer. Paul and Sonya can now devote more of their time to membership and secretarial duties for NETA.

Unlike most people in NETA I'm a better writer than I am trials rider. In fact I'm a professional writer and a mediocre Novice trials writer. (I'd love to reverse the order of that.) I used to ride trials as a teenager in England, but I've spent much of the last 20 years around roadracing, and only recently returned to the world of trials. I'd forgotten how much fun trials is. Having driven all over the East Coast for roadraces, I appreciate how much trials activity there is in New England, plus I can practice in my back yard. I've met a lot of good, honest people since I joined NETA a few years ago, and I think that is true of all motorcycle competitors, regardless of the sport. This newsletter is my contribution to the sport.

I'd like to build the newsletter up to something that will build enthusiasm for the sport in New England and expose other motorcyclists to the sport. Trials is the best-kept secret in motorcycling. For example, I'd like to print a few extra copies and have NETA members drop them off at their local shops. I'd like to generate an online PDF version of the newsletter and send it out to people like Trials Comp., Cycle News, and the Motorcyclist Post. I'd also like to send it to all the importers. Speaking of PDF, I plan to send a PDF version to everybody that includes an email address on their membership form. You will get it quicker, it will save printing and mailing costs, and it will take me less time to prepare a mailing. If you want a paper copy as well, you can print the PDF file, or drop me a line, and I'll put you back on the mailing list.

Let me know if there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter. You can call me at home at (860) 774 5614 or email me at [mike.green@newenglandtrials.org](mailto:mike.green@newenglandtrials.org). I'm happy to run classified ads for NETA members. We all know how hard it is to sell bike these days. And we all want the latest offering from the factories. If you know of anybody that would like to run a business card ad on a regular basis let me know, and it will help defray the cost of the printing.

## Annual NETA Banquet, East Greenwich, Rhode Island, December 2002

Over 100 NETA members and their guests attended the Annual Awards Banquet in East Greenwich in December, and a great time was had by all. Thanks to Jeff Salois of the RITC for organizing the event.

Charlie Ives  
Novice



plate of any color, but the plate must now include either an "A" or a "B" to indicate the line being attempted. The "A" or the "B" should be at least two inches tall and easily visible to the checker. The number plate must still show the rider's name, state, class, and NETA number in letters that are at least 1/2" tall. Hopefully, the new rule will make life much simpler for checkers.

Keith  
Dumaine  
Advanced



The dreaded no-stop rule came up once again. The FIM has changed the ruling for world championship events to allow stopping in a section without a one-point penalty. The NATC agreed to adopt the FIM ruling when it gets finalized, and NETA members agreed to adopt the NATC rules in turn. Any backwards motion will still result in a five, but standing still and hopping around from side to side is now perfectly legal.

There was much heated debate about what qualifies as working at a NETA event to qualify for season-end points. It was finally decided that a rider is ineligible to receive work credits for an event if their front axle passes through the start flags of any section. In addition, the organizing club will now post a worker list alongside the event score boards, and the list will become official 30 minutes after the event ends. If you work at an event, you should make sure that your name is on this official worker list.



Mike  
Helstrom  
Champ

Don Sweet  
Expert



Members voted to eliminate colored number plates to indicate class and, by association, the line that a rider should be riding in the section. Riders can now use a

Mike Helstrom was the only rider in the Champ Class at over half of the NETA events last year. As a result, members voted to eliminate the Champ Class for the 2003 season along with the Hi-Point Trophy. The winner of the Expert Class will be crowned the NETA Regional Champion.



Louise  
Forsley  
Women

If one woman enters the Novice class and one woman enters the Beginner's class, how should the winner of the Woman's Class be decided? It was agreed that the Woman's Class is aimed at the novice rider riding the Novice (B) line. A woman in the Beginner's class can aspire to riding in the Woman's class at the novice level. A woman who has advanced to the Intermediate class is now competing with riders of similar ability and is no longer eligible for the Woman's class.



Mark Leonard  
Intermediate

The helmet rule was also a topic of heated discussion. NETA President Dan Williams defended his actions during the 2002 season and repeatedly stated that the only way to get the message across about the importance of wearing a helmet at all times was to disqualify riders on the spot at an event. Dan did admit that he was over-zealous when he disqualified new rider who was registering at the Berwick event, but the rule stands for the 2003 season, and we can expect Dan to continue enforcing it despite the grumbling in the ranks.

The penalty for no on-site toilet facilities was raised to \$250.00.

Thanks to Dan Williams for the action photographs.



Charlie  
Haskell  
Senior A

Leo O'Shea said that event insurance requires each vehicle in the pits to be carrying a fire extinguisher. Buy a fire extinguisher and throw it in with your trials gear so that it comes with you to every event.



John  
Beaupre  
Twin Shock

Jareth Johnson and the Rock & Roll Trials Club offered to host the 2003 NETA Annual Meeting and Banquet at Yoken's Restaurant in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Dave Aldo Jr.  
Beginner



Joe Murray  
Senior B



### 2003 NETA Event Schedule

April 6	Stantack Road,	Meriden, CT	Meriden Motorcycle Club
May 4	815 Putnam Pike	Chepachet, RI	Rhody Rovers
July 13	Stantack Road	Meriden, CT	Meriden Motorcycle Club
July 19, 20	Old Sanford Rd	Berwick, ME	Rock & Roll Trials Club
August 17		Foxboro, MA	King Philip Trail Riders
August 24	Durgin Rd	Ossipee NH	Seacoast Trials Club
August 30, 31	TBA		Green Mountain Plonkers
September 7	Stantack Road	Meriden, CT	Meriden Motorcycle Club
September 14	Blood Mountain	Dedham, ME	Maine Trials Association
September 21	Shermantown Road	North Kingston,	Rhode Island Trials Club
October 26	Stantack Road	Meriden, CT	Meriden Motorcycle Club

### Schedule notes:

The Rock & Roll Trials Club event in Maine in July and the Green Mountain Plonkers event in Vermont in August will be two-day events with each day being scored separately. Note that the RITC event in September will be held at Smith's Berry Farm in North Kingston, not in Exeter as was originally announced.

The Rhody Rovers event at Chepachet may be the last one at this venue because houses are being built on the land. Similar development in Cumberland has forced the King Philip Trail Riders to look for a new site, and their event in August has moved to Foxboro. The traditional Pittstown event in New York has not been confirmed. Yes, there are seven events over six consecutive weekends from mid-August to mid-September.

Non-NETA events include the US CRA Vintage trial at Gunstock, New Hampshire on Saturday, June 7 and the AMA National hosted by the Rhode Island Trials Club at the Stepping Stone Ranch in Exeter on June 28 and 29.

You should be receiving NETA membership forms in the mail soon.

### Rhode Island National

Leo O'Shea has volunteered to coordinate checkers for the AMA National trial that will be held at the Stepping Stone Ranch in Exeter, RI on June 28 and 29. He would like to find checkers that are willing to work both days, but if you can work only one day you should contact Leo anyway. Checkers will receive a free lunch, sodas during the day, and a free event t-shirt. More importantly you will be helping the Rhode Island Trials Club to put on a quality event that represents New England trials to the rest of the country.

Leo moved recently. You can contact him at:

Leo O'Shea  
11 Oakland Drive  
Auburn MA, 01501  
508-832-5217  
leo.oshea@newenglandtrials.org  
leoshea@charter.net

Jeff Salois, Clerk of the Course for the National, reports that he has a loop laid out and knows where most of the sections will be located. The 2000 RITC National was criticized for being too tough, and Jeff promises to make the sections easier this year.

## New England Youth Team

Dave Allen and Steve Forsley are working creating a New England youth trials team that will on compete at the Youth Nationals July 4th, 5th, 6th 2003, a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The event is held at the Trials Training Center, 30 minutes west of Chattanooga, Tennessee. At the NETA banquet, members voted to donate \$1000 to the team, and an additional \$700 was raised during the evening from raffles. The money will be used to offset travel expenses and to buy NETA team jerseys for the riders.

Dave and Steve hope to organize a fun trial in Exeter in the spring to raise more money for the team. They are also planning some practice days for the youth riders with instruction from some of NETA's top riders. Why should you want to support the Youth Nationals? Maybe your children are grown, or maybe you do not have any yet, but it is important that we all support the Youth National program to insure that we continue to have a strong and growing trials program in the United States.

It is through many small efforts, by a multitude of people that trials can enjoy the popularity that it deserves, and potentially once again the US can rise to the top of international trials competition.

The Youth Nationals are open to youth competitors aged between 6 and 14 as of January 1, 2003. If you are interested in the youth team please contact Dave Allen at [trialsriders@hotmail.com](mailto:trialsriders@hotmail.com) or at 508\_285\_6074.

Dave can send you an information package, or you can get more information, rules, entry forms, tickets, and maps from [www.setrialsriders.org](http://www.setrialsriders.org).

Last year Danny Allen, Louise Forsley, Ron Commo III, and Nicholas Commo competed in the Youth Nationals. Dave and Steve would like to see double that number of New England kids riding for 2003.



## Choking 101

I was sitting in the dentist's office recently, and I stumbled across an article in Golf Magazine on a golfer's mental attitude to competition called 'Why you choke and what to do about it.' I've always thought there were a lot of parallels between golf and trials, and the article presented some ideas that might help your riding. Or maybe you never choke.

### How to spot a choke:

- 1) Change in pace. Under pressure, you can speed up or slow down. Look out for change in the pace of your riding, walking, talking, and breathing. Don't force your riding into another gear.
- 2) Not thinking clearly. Your mind is racing and can't grasp onto anything. Foggy thinking leads to an inability to evaluate options, consequences, or potential outcomes. You're not processing information well enough to adapt to changing circumstances.
- 3) Thinking bad things. The two biggies are past failures and what-ifs. It's healthy to remember mistakes as well as the potential consequences. But when they start to overwhelm you, get ready to choke like a dog.
- 4) Blowing a ride out of proportion. You feel like you have the world on your shoulders. If you screw up on this section, your wife will leave you, and your dog will stop fetching tennis balls.

### How to stop a choke:

- 1) Take a mental time-out. Have a favorite place in your mind, such as the beach or the mountains, and go there when you need relief. The more real you can make it, the better the escape.
- 2) Perform a simple task. This relieves muscle tension and gives your mind a distracting task. Try walking steadily through the section, adjusting your gloves, or stretching your back.
- 3) Disassociate yourself. Physically get out of the scene. Step to the side and engage yourself in a non-trials subject.
- 4) Take deep breaths. No method of alleviating tension has more research to back it up than deep, cleansing breaths. We tend to pant when the pressure is on. Instead, focus on long, slow inhales, and you'll be amazed how it can relax your entire body.
- 5) Reframe the situation. When you're riding well and face a tough section, tell yourself that this is what you want. Remember the last time you rode well and cleaned a section. Call up your good memories.

- 6) Get lost in your routine. You need a pre-ride routine to make you feel safe in tough times. Deliberately perform all the mental and physical preparations you normally do, and even the most pressure-packed situations will feel like old hat. Familiarity breeds success.
- 7) Ride under an assumed identity. Try to ride and feel like a rider who epitomizes whatever you're trying to do. Ride like Dougie. Fake it until you make it.
- 8) Call your ride out loud. This is called public commitment, and it strengthens your connection to the ride at hand. Tell the guy behind you in line how you are going to ride the section. Then step up and do it, without letting ugly thoughts creep through your head.

### How to chokeproof your riding:

- 1) Know yourself. If you have any bad habits, tension will expose your flaws. Knowing your habits will help you spot your problem areas and spot chokes before they take you down. You should know what you're doing wrong and make adjustments.
- 2) Practice like a kid. Imagine you're riding in the World Championship against Dougie and Fujinami.
- 3) Do dress rehearsals. Practice moves that you will need later in the day. Simulate the first couple of sections. Targeted practice helps alleviate the pressure of doing it at show time.
- 4) Develop a pre-ride routine. What you do before you enter a section can mean more than the ride itself. Devise a simple set or preparations to repeat before every ride. Try a physical signal to get your mental attention, like adjusting your helmet. Focus on the section and take a deep, relaxing breath. Keep your routine simple enough to be easily repeatable.
- 5) Have a good game plan. The key to making good decisions is to make them before the pressure sits in. Map out a basic strategy before the event starts or while you're waiting to enter a section. Decisions you make in the calm and quiet of the pits will bear fruit in the sections; making decision on the fly can spell trouble. You still need to be flexible however, and able to adapt to unforeseeable situations.
- 6) Practice under race-day conditions. Practice like you're riding in an event. That means no stupid dabs, no silly mistakes, no gimmes. Practice sections that are as hard as at an events. You'll build valuable experience and identify and weaknesses that you need to work on before you have to ride for keeps.

## Rider profile – Mike Helstrom

After winning NETA's Champ class for the first time in 2002, Mike Helstrom earns the right to be the first rider profiled in the newsletter. Mike grew up in the Plainfield area of Eastern Connecticut and lives there today with his wife Virginia and their seven-month old son Michael Jacob.

Mike started riding trials as a kid in the 1970's but dropped out of the sport for 13 years. He started riding trials again in 1992 with a Fantic and has been hooked ever since.

"I was going to enter the Novice class," remembers Mike, "but I was with some friends who were riding in the Advanced class. I looked at their Advanced sections, thought to myself 'this is what I want to ride,' and changed my entry."

Mike spent one year as an Advanced rider and moved up to Expert the following year. He has been riding in the Champ class since 1998 but has always ridden in the shadow of Ron Commo. When Ron was injured this year, Mike became almost unbeatable in the Champ class and won ten of the eleven events that he entered. He is sponsored by Montesa USA.

Mike says that he likes to practice during the week and on weekends, and he also likes to run and do some physical training to stay in shape. "Riders just starting out should practice one thing at a time—turning, or riding over smaller

obstacles like a tree or a rock. Build your confidence up. Then you need to work on longer sections that test different techniques with different traps. Let the bike do the work, just hold on.

"To ride well, you have to tell yourself that you really want it,--you have to have a passion for the sport."



This picture shows Mike on His Fantic as a first-year Expert in 1994.

### Classified Ads (free to NETA members)

**1974 RL Suzuki 250** Good shape, Renthal bars and throttle, fork brace, good tires, sprockets and chain. Vintage or Twin Shock ready, \$500. Mike Helstrom (860) 564 1394.

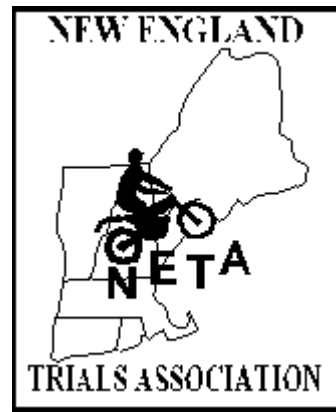
**2000 GAS GAS TXT280** Nice shape, well maintained, runs great. This bike has been super reliable. \$2750 or best offer. Call Dave Allen 508-285-6074

**2000 GAS GAS TXT200** Nice shape, well maintained, runs great. New chain and sprockets, good tires. Good bike for Youth or Novice rider. Smoooooth. \$2600 or best offer. Call Dave Allen 508-285-6074

**2002 GAS GAS TXT200 Pro** Nice shape, well maintained, runs great. You have to ride this bike to believe it. Light, nimble, smooth down low, but blip the throttle and she will jump up a 5 foot rock. This is a totally different bike than the previous year's 200. \$3500 or best offer. Call Dave Allen 508-285-6074

## **NETA Jackets**

We plan to make available to all NETA members the embroidered logo jackets the trialsmasters received at the annual awards banquet. The jackets will have the NETA logo on one side and the rider's name and NETA number on the other. Approximate cost will be about \$80 dollars. These are quite nice for the money but have to be ordered with a six jacket minimum. If you're interested, contact Dan\_Williams at (781) 938 9298. We would like to offer more NETA wearables since the logo embroidery is already paid for. To check out other possibilities, browse through the website of the vendor that sold us the jackets at <http://embroidery.bjs.com/products.html>.



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