

# The Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club Newsletter

March 1998

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## A REALLY BIG SHOW

by Ernie Stephenson, TWBC Vice-President

There is a commonly asked question posed to some serious riders that, when you think about it, is pretty valid, "Why would you spend so much money for a (mere) bicycle?" And the famous line from Sir Edmond Hillary just doesn't quite fit, "Because it was there"? I know this sure didn't work with my wife when I brought home that shiny new(Well, that's another story.

But seriously, the more I hear the question, the more complicated and maybe even philosophical the answer can become. In other words, there is not a simple answer, but it would be a great theme for a meeting, and that is just what the March meeting will be about.

Arrangements have been made to have the March meeting in a larger room at the Community Center. Estelle Gray and Bill Stevenson, both renowned custom

frame builders, are slated for sure. I am also hopefully going to have representatives from two high-end manufacturers, both of whom have had examples of their better bikes featured in a number of national magazines in the past few years. Right now I have firm "maybes" from both of them, so keep your fingers crossed. A point to stress here; none of the reps will be retailer/shop owners. These will be the actual people who build the machines. This is not meant to be a sales night and you won't be dodging pitches.

The whole format of the meeting will break tradition. After I am able to tactfully wrench the administrative proceedings away from our president (Thee Biker Babe) we'll get her to introduce each representative, tell a little bit of their background and give them a chance to each answer the big question. Then we break for munchies which you can take around the room and talk cycling and ask questions to your heart's delight. The idea of the meeting is to come away having problems and questions you may have had answered, seeing an example as to what is out there, and maybe pick up a few new ideas and inspirations. It is also meant to be the first of several preparation meetings for the upcoming riding season.

Join us on March 17, 1998 at 7:00 p.m. Our meetings are located at the South Park Community Center, 4851 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, WA. In addition to our program, you will find good food, door prizes, and a chance to visit with other members. Call me at 536-0197 for information.

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## **Pedal Pushin**

**by Janice Jensen, TWBC President**

I have not had a lot of time to lead many mountain biking rides this past month. With Bike Expo and going out of town for a weekend my time was cut in half, but the two rides I did lead were fun and a true learning experience. March does not promise to be much better for mountain biking, but with the days getting longer maybe we could squeeze some evening rides in early this spring.

We have our first club camping trip this month. Here is your opportunity for a fun filled back to back ride. I always enjoy the camping trip, even when it rains. Of course, I sleep in a trailer, not a tent. If you need someone to carry some or all of your equipment we will have the trailer available to help haul stuff. You have the responsibility of getting your things over to my house, and to pick those same articles up at the end of the weekend. The ride will be led by Steve and Phyllis Lay.

We also have the McClinchy Mile and a Daffodil pre-ride this month and in early April. Keep your newsletter handy and please let me know if you do not receive your newsletter!

Ride smart, ride safe!

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## New and renewing members

TWBC welcomes and thanks the following new and renewing members for the month of February, 1998:

**New Members:** Julia Ehr; Dorothy Nelson; John Palmateer; Pierce County Parks Department; Steve & Lori Thompson; Katharine Ward; and Jack Woods.

**Renewing Members:** Dan Austan; Louie W. Boitano; Herman Diers; Margaret Elofson; Alan Goldston; Noel Hagens; Doug Jackman; Sondra Johnston; Enid Larson; Harvey & Diane Lister; Joyce Marriel; Dave Marquez; Will Marquez; Ken & Mary Neukom; Doug Ringenbach; Ed & Sylvia Schroll; Mary Ellen Swatta; David & Reggie Tison; Robert A. Warfield; Don White; and David Zehnder.

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## Wow! What A Start

by **Bill & Ruth Daugherty**

On our first date Ruth and I discovered something in common(each had ridden bikes alone the day before. That was in 1974. Not long thereafter we joined the Club(and each other in marriage.

An early Club ride started in Orting. We were supposed to go to Eatonville, but that sort of thing was beyond my comprehension. None of that riding out there on regular highways with all that traffic for us! People did not do things like that. At Electron we peeled off, going back to Orting on our own.

In time, we began going on about all rides, thinking up and leading a number of them. With practice we got bolder, and supposed France would make the best possible bicycling country. So off we went, taking our bikes with us. We bicycled to our heart's content for about three weeks, then took a train and ferry to Britain for another week or so.

Besides other parts of Britain and France, we have bicycled through Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Ireland, Yugoslavia, the mainland of Italy as well as Sicily, and behind the Iron Curtain through Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Our most recent trip (1997) was, again, France and then Britain.

We learned much about the politics, geography, culture, and the people of the places visited. We would have seen and experienced much less had we traveled by any other means. The Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club must be credited with giving us the start.

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## **Daffodil/PMC Update**

**by Janice Jensen, TWBC President**

The Daffodil/PMC committee is marching on in preparation for the two greatest rides in western Washington.

Registrations are already coming in, and list after list is being made and completed (we hope!). The beginning weeks of February were spent getting ready for Bike Expo. The 1997 T-shirts were hauled out, along with the 1996 shirts and water bottles. Beautiful signs were made for these special items, which, by the way, sold like hot cakes!

The 1998 rider T-shirts were also available, and the new registration forms were in place. Phone calls are next on the list to verify our rest stops, and contracts are being made and signed.

Carla has been making the rounds at our local bike shops with flyers and membership forms in hand. Miss Tiffany is busy getting the folders prepared for the rest areas, Jim is busy with the food list, and Daleen and Carol make ready for registration.

Steve Brown is checking our equipment and keeping me up to date on any new items needed. We failed to retrieve our water hoses last year, so they will have to be replaced, a mistake we won't be making again. Connie Reitzug has volunteered to host the volunteer party once again this year. The date will be listed in the April newsletter.

The next meeting will be on March 24th. Call me for the location at 566-1822. The time will remain at 7:00 p.m. Please remember that early volunteer sign-up means a choice between a long sleeve or short sleeve T-shirt. March 15th is the cut off date for choices, after which all remaining shirts will be short sleeves. Thank you all in advance for volunteering!

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## Newsletter's late?

### Call Don Izenman Call The Post Office Do Something!

**by Dorian Smith**  
**TWBC Web Site Manager**

All TWBC club members should be assured: their newsletters should arrive in time to plan their rides for the next month. And no club members should have to wait more than a few days after the month starts.

In a letter to the editor, Bob Myrick reported that members in Auburn were still waiting for the delivery of January newsletters-three weeks late. He added that the newsletter was regularly delivered more than a week after the beginning of the month.

If your newsletter has not arrived in time to make plans for the coming month's club rides, you should not hesitate to call Don Izenman at 759-7381. For years Don, a postal system employee, has arranged and handled TWBC's newsletter mailings. To save on postal costs, the newsletter is mailed at third class (bulk rate). But this does not mean that the delivery is significantly delayed.

Most members receive their buff-colored newsletters, complete with current news and opinions on our favorite sport, the next day. Some members in outlying areas receive their copies two or three days later.

Any longer delay indicates something is wrong and Don should be notified.

Members should be confident that their newsletter arrives on a reliable schedule. Editor William Hoehne sticks to a rigid deadline schedule so the newsletter is completely edited, printed, and delivered to Don at least a week before the month starts.

The newsletter is a vital link for all members who are interested in bicycling as a sport, casual recreation, and a solution to regional transportation.

And for those of you who have computers, you are reminded that the club's newsletter also is available on the club's web site, [www.twbc.org](http://www.twbc.org).

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Have you sold your car yet? Call William F. Hoehne at 759-4464 for a list of benefits.

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## The Government Page

### THE END OF TRAILS IN USA?

**Submitted by Scott Pierson**

**Bulletin from NowBike:** Immediate Action Required!

There is a bill (HR 2438) in Congress that, if passed, would effectively repeal the federal railbanking statute and stop future trails along abandoned railroads.

Railbanking is the federal law that allows abandoned railroad corridors to be used as public trails instead of reverting to abutting property. Railbanking also

keeps the linear right-of-way intact and preserves the option to revive rail service in the future. Washington State Co-sponsors:

Jennifer Dunn (District 8, Bellevue)  
Doc Hastings (District 4, Pasco)  
Geo. Nethercutt (Dist. 5, Spokane)  
Linda Smith (District 3, Vancouver)  
Jack Metcalf (District 2, Langley)

All Congressional members are currently working in their home districts. Please contact your representative today and let them know that you oppose HR 2438. (If you are a constituent of one of the co-sponsors, it's especially important for you to make your opposition known!)

**Two points to make:**

HR 2438 is anti-transportation. It would eliminate railbanking, the most widely used way to keep rail corridors intact for future use. Once gone they are gone forever.

HR 2438 is anti-trail-It would eliminate hundreds of miles of bicycle and hiking trails as well as wildlife habitat and conservation corridors.

**Examples of railbanked trail projects in Washington State:**

- Foothills Trail, Pierce County.
- Sedro Wooley to Concrete, Skagit County.
- Part of Centennial Trail, Snohomish Co.
- Cedar River Trail, King County.
- Part of Burke-Gilman Trail, King County.
- Chehalis to South Bend, Pacific/Lewis Counties.
- Yelm to Tenino, Thurston County.
- Pullman to Moscow, Eastern Washington.
- Pasco to Fish Lake, Eastern Washington.
- East Lake Sammamish Trail, King County, proposed. (If passed, this bill would stop this trail!)

**Contact Legislators (If you send e-mail, include your mailing address):**

Bill's Co-Sponsors:

Jennifer Dunn (#8)

Bellevue office: 425/450-0161

432 Cannon HOB

Washington, DC 20515

dunnwa08@mail.house.gov

Doc Hastings (#4)

Kennewick: 509/783-0310

Yakima: 509/452-3243

Wenatchee: 509/662-4294

1323 Longworth HOB

Washington, DC 20515

George Nethercutt (#5)

Spokane: 509/353-2374

1527 Longworth HOB

Washington, DC 20515

Jack Metcalf (#2)

Everett: 425/252-3188

Bellingham: 360/733-4500

1-800-562-1385

1510 Longworth HOB

Washington, DC 20515

**Local Representatives:**

Norm Dicks (#6)

Bremerton: 360/479-4011

2467 Rayburn HOB

Washington, DC 20515

Adam Smith (#9)

Tacoma: 253/926-6683

1505 Longworth HOB

Washington, DC 20515

[adam.smith@mail.house.gov](mailto:adam.smith@mail.house.gov)

For more information contact Louise or Susie at Northwest Bicycle Federation (NowBike):

206-224-9252



nowbike@accessone.com

[www.nwlink.com/~mcw/nowbike/nowbike.html](http://www.nwlink.com/~mcw/nowbike/nowbike.html)

Phone calls, e-mail, and letters to your representative and the co-sponsors are important.

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## Government Relations Report

by **Bob Myrick**

**TWBC Director of Community and Government Relations**

Our committee met at the North End Juice Bar on Tuesday, February 10, 1998.

Scott Pierson, Ralph Wessels, Steve Brown, Carla Gramlich, and I were joined by Bill Swanson, a club member living in the northend.

Dave Tison applied for and received a \$500.00 grant from NowBike to promote CarLess Commuting. Many thanks to Dave. Scott may yet get his CarLess Commute billboard.

We received a copy of Bob Vogel's letter to Lakewood commenting on their draft park plan and non-motorized routes. Bob's comments were very favorable, but he pointed out that Lakewood should provide connections to Pierce County across S. Tacoma Way near the SR 512 and I-5 Park and Ride lot.

Scott now has the permit to proceed with installation of the two bike box lockers at Wheelock Library. TWBC members Bob Cook and Dave Nielson are providing construction support. Steve Brown has shepherded this project from start to finish. The Tacoma library staff is excited about this project and I hope Carla and the rest of you northenders use this nice locker all the time. Then, maybe, we can get similar lockers installed all over the city.

Our Tacoma Neighborhood Innovative grant has been approved for installing signage on the City Water Ditch Trail. I am looking for ideas for an attractive sign design. Call me.

Carla suggested we apply for a grant to improve bicycle access to the Narrow's Bridge. Scott said he and T. J. Nedrow from DOT have met to look into ramps

and other amenities on the Narrow's Bridge. I asked Scott if the City was ready to ramp the Puyallup Avenue Bridge over the Puyallup River.

The new Tacoma, Pierce County bike map was also discussed. The map will not be ready for Bike Expo. Look for it at our March club meeting.

Ralph reported that the Cooper Jones Bicycle Traffic Safety Bill passed through the Senate and House of Representatives Transportation Committees. Now, we must get it passed on one of the full floors before the deadline expires. Ralph also reported that a trail "take-back" bill was not yet defeated. Later, after this meeting, we found out the odorous bill was killed.

I reported that Tom Ballard's crew at Pierce County had done a really nice job in building shoulders on Knoble Road near Fredrickson and Graham and on Waller Road. We are gratified to see the results of our lobbying work on Pierce County's roads.

Carla reported the Proctor Business District is pushing angle parking on North 26th Street. We need to react to keep the District safe for bicycling. Bill Swanson said he would write a letter to the District expressing his concern.

Ralph reported that Janice Jensen has requested by letter that the State appoint a Tacoma representative to the Bicycle Advisory Committee. Ralph also reported that nothing is happening at the Steilacoom RR tracks. He will try again to get the town and the paper mill to improve the RR crossing for our safety.

T. J. Nedrow and Mike Dornfeld from DOT will meet with us in April to discuss our concerns. We plan to emphasize the need for a trail on the north side of I-5 from the Lakewood RTA railroad station to Fort Lewis and Dupont. We hope to invite people from different affected agencies including Fort Lewis, the RR, Lakewood, Dupont, Pierce County, RTA and Pierce Transit.

Our next GAC meeting will be at the North End Juice Bar at N 21st and Anderson, Tacoma, WA, March 10th at 7:00 p.m. Come join us for the ambiance and fine food and drink.

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**An update for you on the Cooper Jones Act:**

Please contact your State Senator and express your concern on the lack of funds to address Bicycle Safety Education.

The 1-% sales tax on bicycles, which would have raised an estimated \$1.1 million per year, was replaced with a 25% surcharge on traffic violations that involve bicyclists. Since tickets on bicyclists are seldom written, it essentially strips away all funding.

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## Remembering Louie With A Smile

by **Dorian Smith**

After reading Dave Tison's touching eulogy about Louie Marret in last month's newsletter, I remembered that Louie made a positive impression on my early bicycling.

A couple of years ago I joined one of Louie's 20-mile rides to Lakewood for Saturday breakfast when I was a novice rider. (Those were the days when a roundtrip ride from North Proctor to Sixth Avenue left me breathing heavily.)

On that day most of us were casual or new riders. I was riding a clunky French 10-speed that I had resurrected from St. Vincent de Paul's back lot. Another rider pedaled her mountain bike with vigorous determination, not knowing her rear tire had only half the necessary air pressure.

It was a sunny spring morning and for most of us the first ride of the season. We were serious and chilled. My own rear tire leaked slowly. Others were concerned about chains, ill-shifting derrailleurs, and various mechanical details. The swift traffic frightened all of us.

Except Louie, who pedaled quietly in that slow, but sure cadence. Sometimes leading; sometimes riding behind; always smiling.

When we finally reached the restaurant, nearly all of us were neurotic basket cases. We pulled off jackets and collapsed in the chairs. As we ordered eggs and hotcakes, we talked about every danger imaginable to bicycling. In particular, I

remember someone describing "hitting the wall" (collapsing from lack of food energy) halfway through a ride to Vancouver, B.C.

Some of us were wondering out loud if we'd make it home.

But, during our tales of woe, we heard a soft chuckle coming from the end of the table. We stopped talking and saw Louie put his hand over his mouth as he tried to stifle a series of snorts which erupted into a laugh.

"What was so funny?", we asked. "Oh, sometimes when I ride I feel a rush of endorphins," he explained. "And I just can't stop myself from laughing." Then he couldn't help himself and doubled up with laughter as if he had just seen a Robin Williams concert.

We looked at each other. His laughter was infectious. Gradually our faces broke into grins, and before the first cups of coffee were delivered all of us were laughing along with Louie. When the laughing subsided, the food arrived and we dined on pleasant, not gloomy, conversation.

That early ride with the Wheelmen taught me that there is a lot to worry about, being a bicyclist. But once you get in the saddle, bicycling is a lot of fun.

And my lasting impression of Louie is watching him disarm a table of panicky bicyclists with spontaneous laughter.

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## THE BIKE

**by Ernie Stephenson**

**Owner:** Steve Brilliant, MD **The Bike:** 1992 Look KG 76, custom built from a blank frame.

### **In The Beginning**

I've known Steve and we have worked and ridden together for a year now. It has always been interesting to watch him approach problems and solve them, and whether at work or at play, he goes about doing so in much the same way, gathering all the information he can.

By the time he is ready to take action he has studied problems, products and solutions to a fair level of expertise. He will know exactly what he wants to do or what product to buy when the time comes to do so. He does not have a lot of spare parts and components that are not already on one of his rides. It's almost as if he did not care at all for trial and error. Steve is a scientist and he leaves the alchemy of cycling to others.

Steve, like most serious riders, has ridden most of his life. His avid cycling career began during his college days at Berkeley. An old Centurion touring bike served his commuting needs where he would put in as many as 180 to 200 miles per week. While in medical school at Stanford, both serious cycling fever and a need for some extracurricular aerobic activity came together and he upgraded his mount to a Centurion steel framed Iron Man.

Los Angeles is a paradox to many outsiders, and Steve pointed out this is true for cycling. LA is a great place to live but not such a nice place to visit. It is very spread out and you have to know where to go and find those pockets of special activity you want.

Before long however, he and his partner were zooming around Anaheim and the Rose Bowl, rubbing shoulders with serious cat I (professional) and RAM (Race Across America) riders. Organized rides abounded almost the entire year as well, thanks to Southern California's favorable climate.

Graduation found Steve in the Army and doing his Internal Medicine residency at no where else but Madigan Army Medical Center.

It was also here on that first tour of duty that the old Iron Man met its doom nowhere else but while doing laps in behind the Point Defiance Zoo. It was not a serious fender bender, but it did tweak the fork and top tube. The Ultegra 600 gruppo (Remember, this is an upper level Shimano product) was still very much intact, so what Steve now had was some pretty decent components bolted on to a lower end frame and fork cum spaghetti.

**From The Ashes**

By this point in his riding career, Steve had pretty well figured out what he wanted from his next bike. Even though he is a sport-touring rider, he is a serious and even competitive one. Thus he wanted what was then (and even now) referred to as a racing frame.

He aspired to Greg Lemond's philosophy of a racing mount, however. Lemond felt even a peloton cycle should be comfortable over a very long course and it wasn't necessary to sacrifice everything about the ride for the sake of bone jarring snappy performance. This pioneering concept certainly lends itself to the idea of a sport-touring bike by today's standards.

Steve's next step was to call up an old Cat I rider friend and shop owner for advice. The friend wisely did not just look at Steve's preferences and riding character, but went on to look at where he would be doing a lot of his future riding. Lest we forget, this area is hilly by most other regional standards, not only that, but it's wet up here...

The friend smartly then looked to choosing appropriate frame material for a bike that would go on long arduous rides in this area. His choice for Steve was carbon.

This was a fairly new material in those days, but it had been around long enough to be a proven product. It didn't rust, there would be low after ride maintenance required after winter rides, and its low weight is now legendary as is its unique shock absorbing qualities, especially under a medium sized rider like Steve.

A Look KG 76 frame was chosen. It was and still is a popular competitive frame which has been used extensively internationally as a peloton frame. But there was one more little trick up this special friend's sleeve. Before shipping the blank frame and fork up to Tacoma, he installed a Mavic mountain bike head set. He reasoned the extra weather sealing qualities would serve Steve well through December deluges. This final little trick certainly did prove its worth, and even though Mavic no longer makes such components, a number of people have marveled at the idea.

### **Snips And Snails**

All this time Steve had conducted that painstaking research he is noted for. When the frame arrived, the cleaned up Ultegra gruppo went on it, but there were also a few new innovations to be applied. The seat tube was sized slightly too small and a Campy post had to be fitted. A Vetta saddle topped this off, but that was replaced and in fact, Steve is presently researching seats at this time. The wheels were rebuilt around the old Shimano hubs using Mavic Op CD4 rims.

### **Ankle Float?**

These are not the traditional 32 hole wheels, but instead uses only 24 spokes. This not only cuts weight, but also enhances the already comfortable ride offered by carbon fiber. Cinelli bars and stem directs the beast and for pedals, Time clip less were chosen with Colnago shoes. These are the most popular clip less sold in the world at present, but at the time also happened to be the only ones offering a decent ankle float.

Steve likes technology. A few lights and bells are fun to him as long as they serve a need. This is why he chose a Cateye HB 100 computer. This is a high-end piece of cockpit equipment. In addition to the speed, average speed and so on that are similar functions on other computers, this one offers heart rate, average heart rate and kilo calories burnt over a ride. Simply put, Steve noted, "Ya gotta train to your heart rate (lactic acid threshold)." He went on to point out that you can fool yourself when pushing yourself; "Perception of effort is important, but you need to have objective data too." Trust me, the man has real fun when he rides, but like I said before, Steve is a scientist.

Another problem Steve went on to address was a known leg length disparity. His right leg is one cm shorter than the left. This would usually not be an issue and in fact, might be considered almost a normal anatomical difference. If this is factored in with clip less pedals however, problems can arise. This minor variation will be transferred into a precision machine and will at the least cause back pain and a jerky uneven cadence.

Steve went to another California company, High Sierra Cycle.

They first took a series of body measurements sent by him and custom fabricated a special set of elliptical rings. At first they look a bit like the old Biopace sprockets, but the long axis of the oval is not just generically set to increase the leg push of the rider. Instead they are designed to be used in combination with a shoe block under the short leg's clip in order to smooth out the riders jerky spin.

Additionally the system seats the rider more squarely on the bike, thus decreasing back pain. The system will supposedly increase a rider's speed by as much as 1-2 mph. One way or the other, Steve is quite happy with the system other than having chosen a 42 tooth small ring. This makes for a bit less forgiving hill climbing capability.

### **Down The Road**

True to Steve's analytical approach and foresight, he has a litany of plans with good reasons for each:

First, he plans a new wheel set. This is an area where there seems to have been some recent and notable change. The old Mavics are starting to show their stress, and in fact had to be replaced earlier in the year. There are three candidates in consideration now; Mavic Heliums, Experts, or he may go with the new Rolf.

There will definitely be a new gruppo. Steve is a dyed in the wool Shimano man, so he will either go up to a Dura Ace system or will try the new nine speed Ultegra. Either way, the old bottom tube shifters will give way to new STI's. This is Shimano's version of what is known as a double action shifter (Campagnolo's are known as Ergo Shifts). These are derailleur controls that are co-located on the brake levers of a road bike.

He is also looking for bars that have a steeper, more angled, and ergonomic lower bend. These will be combined with an adjustable stem.

The idea is to offer a more upright position earlier in the riding season that can be stretched out as training, fitness and speed progress. They can be simply readjusted to repeat the process the following year.



## **Words Of Wisdom**

"If you enjoy it, you will ride more." Steve believes strongly in putting a scientific process to work for a better ride. He feels that every rider should analyze themselves and their machinery. Things like identifying existing or potential problems and solving them are keys to pleasurable cycling. This should be combined with acquiring the best equipment you can afford for the purpose. Catching a good bargain is one thing, but purchasing something impulsively and cheap can be downright disappointing later on. "What value can you put on a bike that handles, feels and fits well? It's worth more than the (just) pennies you would save on more inexpensive parts."

Thanks, Steve.

## **Addendum**

In last month's article I mentioned Mike Romaine had managed a great deal on a Campagnolo seven speed Chorus system. He pointed out to me that it has an eight speed cassette.

## **Feedback**

People are already coming to me telling me how much they like this new column. There is some good constructive criticism as well.

One reader mentioned it seemed a bit "techno-speak". Guilty! I am shooting for a number of things besides this as well. Remember that the column is about YOU. I don't want to feature a particular model of bicycle, but want to focus on a special ride and the owner as well. The "techno-speak" will hopefully serve two purposes.

The first is to show how and why the rider made that individual bicycle unique, and then there is an attempt to offer a running primer for those riders that have heard terms or of technology, but they don't understand it.

Finally, if you have a bicycle you have done something with and are proud of, let me know. It's your club and your newsletter. You have a right to be in the spotlight too!

Would you like to learn how to build a bicycle? Would you like to ask questions of professionals who do? Do not miss the March club meeting.