

# The Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club Newsletter

April 1998

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## Willie Weir Pedals To Our April Club Meeting

by Ernie Stephenson, TWBC Vice-President

We are honored in the Northwest to have such a wonderful author and spokesman for cycling as Willie Weir. He has pedaled worldwide, and has become famous sharing tales of these adventures to groups. Additionally, his book, Spokesong tells of his cycling through three continents.

Willie will be the featured speaker at our April meeting, and will be talking about his most recent adventure abroad, a trip through the Balkans.

Just how good is Mr. Weir at speaking? Let me put it this way; when I mentioned he would be at this gathering during the last TWBC Board meeting, Dave Tison even perked up! Seriously folks, we are lucky to have Mr. Weir with us in April, and if you are interested in just how much of an adventure you can have on that two wheeled steed of yours, come and hear how a real pro does it.

In addition to what is promised to be an excellent talk and slide presentation, Willie will have copies of Spokesong on sale for \$10.00 a copy. So join us on April 21, 1998 at 7:00 p.m. Our meetings are located at the South Park Community Center, 4851 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, WA. Good food, door prizes, and a chance to visit with other cycling members add to what promises to be a very entertaining evening.

Call me at 253-536-0197 for information.

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## **Daffodil Classic Update**

Daffodil Classic preparations are still going strong! The last meeting before the ride will be the Volunteer Meeting at Mat and Connie Reitzug's home, 5702 80th Ave C W, University Place, WA, April 17th, 1998 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting is a pot luck dinner, and will include information on what to expect on the day of the ride, and instructions on the use of the cell phones. We will be folding T-

shirts, laughing, socializing, and having a good time. Don't Miss The Fun!

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## Peninsula Metric Update

PMC meetings will continue until June. Now is the time to come to the aid of this great ride. Your help is needed and appreciated. If you sign up prior to May 6th, you will be guaranteed a TWBC polo shirt. We also reward our volunteers with pizza and the opportunity to ride for free. Sign up now to guarantee a volunteer spot on the day of the event, or to do a task before the ride.

Volunteers make the difference in our rides. Call Carla Gramlich at 752-4038 to volunteer. Our next PMC committee meeting and Daffodil Classic wrap-up will be on Monday, April 27th, at 7:00 p.m. The location is Janice Jensen's home at 5613 71st Ave C W, University Place, WA.

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## Pedal Pushin

**by Janice Jensen, TWBC President**

The pedals are pushin and the wheels are turning-just not as often lately. Preparing for the Daffodil Classic has taken up a bit of time, along with some government issues that have been pretty hot.

I did have an opportunity to go on one of Carla's rides to Orting a couple of weeks ago, and I realized how much the traffic has increased. One of our old familiar routes going into Puyallup used

to be pretty much traffic free on Saturday mornings. This last time the traffic was incredible. What are people doing out so early on Saturday morning? Don't they believe in sleeping in? Jeez!

When we finally got through Puyallup and out on the back roads again I was able to relax and actually realized how much I enjoy riding and how much I have been missing it. There is so much more to see on your bike and so much you miss riding in the car.

Spring is just around the corner, so dust off the cobwebs and oil that chain and take that bike for a spin. The numbers of rides on the calendar are increasing along with the good weather.

I hope to re-start Mountain Biking 101 this spring in the evenings. In the meantime we have the Daffodil Classic, PMC, and STP to prepare, make ready, and train for, so get those pedals rotating, the gears moving and keep the wind at your back! See you on the road soon!

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 March, 1998:

**New Members:** Ed Henderson; Stacey & Paul Jeuris; Fred Johnstone; Eugene Kelly; Kevin & Susan Mihata; Kelly Odegaard; and Paul J. Rice.

**Renewing Members:** Debbie Albrecht; Marie Bailey; Paul Binford; Gus Fant; Toni Matson; Jack Snyder; and Tony & Ruth Thomas.

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## Past Pedaling

by **Anne Heller**

"Now is the time for the young ladies to show their patriotism by presenting us with a nice banner," the ebullient president of the Tacoma Wheelmen said to the local newspaper.

Before the Biker Babes grab their sewing needles or their telephones, let me say that the president in question is not Janice Jensen, but F. A. Avery, newly elected president of the Tacoma Wheelmen in 1888.

The group had 35 charter members, and within two months they would have a clubhouse at 730 Pacific Avenue. On June 1, 1888, the Wheelmen moved into the new clubhouse furnished with "black walnut and crimson plush," Japanese screens, billiard and pool tables, a piano and a smoking room.

The 1880s saw a tremendous growth in the use of high-wheeled bicycles in Tacoma. These early two-wheeled conveyances were appealing to the dashing young men of the day who had some spare money in their pockets and a sense of adventure. Because of the high front wheel, the bicycles could travel at almost 20 mph. Unfortunately, the least impediment in the road sent the rider over the handlebars.

The high-wheelers, also known as "ordinaries" because there were so many of them, raced about the downtown sidewalks, threatening innocent pedestrians. Because of the primitive roadways, riding in the streets was an impossibility. Later, in the 1890s, when the new safety bikes became commonplace, the high-wheelers became known as penny-farthings, a term of derangement.

Politics, touring, finding well-maintained routes, and dealing with unsympathetic people in carriages were some of the challenges and pleasures facing the Wheelmen in 1888. All of this is familiar to present day bicyclists, the only difference being the carriages are now without horses. *(Editor's note: Various editions of the Daily and Sunday Ledger from the turn of the century were sources for this article.)*

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## The Bike

by Ernie Stephenson

My apologies. The recertification exams for my day job are coming up soon, and there has not been time to conduct an interview and write an article for this month's issue.

Since The Bike is so new, a surplus of stand-by features has not been written yet to cover such gaps. I promise you I will not use this excuse for at least another six years, and another The Bike will appear next month.

Plans, in fact, have been made to feature more everyday cycles and cyclers. Articles on hot numbers you often see zooming past you on club rides will still appear, but it is time to look at a couple of

commuters, social climber cruisers, and yes, maybe even a tandem or two.

The editor and I have even made plans to start featuring photos of the riders and their mounts, so get out the mousse and carnuba wax, and don't forget which goes where!

Again, sorry, and see you next month. (*Corrections: Last month's The Bike article about Steve Brilliant said he went to Stanford. He did not-he went to USC. His bicycle has 28/32 (f/r) rims, and his shoes are Carnacs, not Colnagos.*)

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## Educational Films

by **Steve Bowman**

Educational films for motorists and cyclists are being planned for a summer project at Bates Technical College. These films are to teach cyclists and motorists the fundamental skills and attitudes for sharing the road safely.

The project will include two to three PSA films 15 to 30 seconds in length, and five educational films 5 minutes in length. A 30-minute TV program is a possibility, to show motorists and cyclists how to be aware of each other on the road.

These films will address the problems we have all encountered sharing the road together. (Well, I seem to have had my problems lately.) They will also include an authoritative third party point of view to clarify the safest and correct method to avoid common problems that could lead to serious injury.

Traffic is increasing at an alarming rate, along with bicycling enjoying its most popular acceptance in history. Drivers forget that there are other cars, cyclists, motorcycles and a multitude of hazards out there. The cyclist deals consistently with the ignorance of motorists who give no right to the road to cyclists, and often do not see them at all.

The idea for these films is to educate both cyclist and motorist on the rules of the road, that both have the right to the public street, and both can share the road safely.

My hope for these films is that they be adopted for use by the state. The Department of Licensing could run the 5, 5-minute educational films on TV monitors at all licensing units. The films could also be a part of every driver educational program statewide.

I personally feel this is a much-needed program for everyone. I would greatly appreciate any assistance and volunteers. (Actors too!) Comments and ideas for these films can be sent to: [stevebowman1@prodigy.net](mailto:stevebowman1@prodigy.net).

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## Cycling Ad

**For Sale:**

53cm (21") Faggin. Black chrome. 1998 Utegra 9 SPD. STI. Classic Italian frame. Perfect condition. \$800.00 Call 752-0764

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## Website Makes Club's Messages Universal

by **Dorian Smith**  
TWBC Webmaster

twbc.org

Those seven simple characters provide club members a wealth of information on club activities and issues and opens the door to the bicycling universe.

Since June of last year the Tacoma Wheelmen have had a presence on the World Wide Web at (<http://www.twbc.org>). The club's board decided a website was so important that the club's Internet address was registered with the federal government. That's like having a copyrighted name.

The website started humbly with editions of the newsletter and current ride calendars. Gradually it has been expanded to include more information about the club and links to other clubs and bicycling-related groups.

The website is intended to provide information that is helpful for members(such as the weather link that was suggested by Richard Walter, and REI's bicycling advice that was discovered by past president Dave Tison. Over time the website will include more links and home pages as they are discovered and suggested by club members.

Comments or suggestions can be sent to: [webmaster@twbc.org](mailto:webmaster@twbc.org).

Here are the contents of the website so far:

- Weather report
- Helmets on Wheels
- Daffodil Classic and registration form
- Peninsula Metric Classic and registration form
- Monthly ride calendar
- Ride updates
- Current and back issues of the TWBC Newsletter
- Membership forms

- Invitation for volunteers
- Local bicycle shops that offer a 10 percent discount to club members
- Photos of some previous rides and TWBC-sponsored events

In addition, several lists have been developed that link to businesses and organizations that support and advocate bicycling. Club members are encouraged to search through these links. They not only provide useful information and reports, but they open up many areas of wonderment that reinforce our beliefs that bicycling is an ideal sport and mode of transportation.

- "**Clubs**" is a list of Northwest bicycle clubs, government agencies and bicycle advocacy groups.
- "**Bike manufacturers**" takes browsers directly to the makers of our favorite brands.
- "**Product vendors**" is a long list of after-market retailers.
- "**Events**" is a list of many popular organized Northwest rides.
- "**Bike info**" is a shopping cart full of links to many web sites that provide practical, technical and political material.
- **Newsgroups** are message areas where bicyclists around the world discuss their experiences and advice

. Finally, all members should consider twbc.org as their tool. It will grow as members offer suggestions and identify links. That is how the website will become comprehensive and useful.

Among some new ideas are a list of club benefits, and practical bicycle routes for getting around Tacoma. No idea is too off-the-wall or obscure.

After all, each of us is attracted to bicycling for different reasons. Hopefully, the website will touch on them all.

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## NowBike

by **Ralph Wessels**

This past legislative session demonstrated how important it is for bicyclists to be organized across our state and have good contacts with elected officials.

As you may already be aware, the Cooper Jones Act, HB 2439, was passed by the Legislature and is on its way to the Governor. This bill gives law enforcement the ability to require re-testing of vehicle operators that are involved in collisions which result in death or serious injury, and the driver who caused the collision is not competent.

Cooper Jones, a 13 year-old bicyclist from Spokane, was killed on a level, straight highway on a clear day. The driver could only be fined \$250. Another provision establishes a bicycle and pedestrian safety account to be administered by the Traffic Safety Commission. The \$100,000 appropriation will help provide money to educate youths in how to safely operate a bicycle. There are also a few other minor provisions in the bill.

The effort required to pass this bill was immense. Maybe that is why it is the first bicycle bill to pass in our state in 10 years. NowBike organized and led this effort. NowBike helped draft the legislation, worked with elected officials, distributed information to individuals and clubs so they could provide support at critical times, obtained approximately 1300 petition signatures at BikeExpo, and pushed to make it pass. Senators Lisa Brown, Jim West, and Gene Prince and Representative Duane Sommers championed the bill, and with a great deal of courage ensured funding was included.

A very bad bill that would have given adjacent property owners the ability to take trails created from rail corridors, HB 2478, was defeated. Nowbike led the effort to defeat this and enlisted

equestrians in opposition. I would not be surprised to see the bill rear its ugly head next session.

Enclosed in this month's newsletter is a flyer for membership in NowBike. I would ask that you seriously consider joining. With a Statewide bicycle advocacy and political strength, we can continue to improve bicycling in Washington. It just won't happen otherwise.

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## On The Road Repairs

by **Dorian Smith**

No matter how short the ride, all bicyclists are encouraged to bring several essential items: rain gear, water, snacks, a tire pump, spare inner tube and a basic set of tools.

But we should also be reminded that a working knowledge of our bicycle's operation and tools is equally important. This is not an idle recommendation.

Even though my bicycle was well equipped for the Chilly Hilly on Feb. 22, I was nearly stranded.

Just six miles into the ride on a slightly strenuous hill, my front tire went flat. No problem, I thought. I had a spare inner tube, a new pump and a nifty new "Speed Lever" that removes tires in seconds. But after several frustrating minutes, I couldn't get the new lever under the bead and finally resorted to my trusty "prying" tire tools.

For some reason (someone out there probably can explain this) my inner tube was "glued" to the inside of the tire. I had to yank it

violently, ripping the tube. I stuffed the replacement inside and with the flip of the Speed Lever remounted the tire back on the rim.

Then I pulled out my brand new Mt. Zefahl frame pump, attached it to the valve and started to pump. But instead of a muffled puff, I heard a loud hissing sound with every stroke. I looked down, fearing a broken valve, and discovered the cap on the new pump's valve-securing head was broken!

I allowed myself a moment of verbal fury. Then I looked on the bright side: there were hundreds of working pumps passing me by. But my problems had just begun.

Sure enough, within a few minutes I had a borrowed pump in hand. The owner was riding a mountain bike with Schrader valves and didn't think his pump would work on my Presta valves. I showed him how the mechanism could be reversed to accommodate both valves. I got the pump to work but could only push in about 60 pounds in my 100-pound tire.

After about 10 miles I learned that the replacement innertube, which had an untested patch, had a slow leak. So for the rest of the ride I had to stop every couple miles and borrow a pump.

I discovered that nearly every cyclist, though helpful, was unfamiliar with the basic workings of their pump. I demonstrated the Presta/Schrader reversible fitting several times to amazed cyclists. I also discovered, sadly, that organized rides can be woefully unprepared for helping disabled cyclists.

A Chilly Hilly volunteer with a "Support" poster on the door of his pickup asked me if I needed help. When I said I just needed a

pump, he shook his head. No pump; he was only prepared to haul my bike back to the finish line for clinical repair.

I even waved at two bicycle policemen and shouted "Pump?" The lead cop shook his head and said, "Don't have one."

I limped back to Winslow for my bowl of chili and the ferry ride to Seattle, a sadder but wiser road rider. Minor setbacks can unnecessarily spoil a day. Cyclists should not only carry repair tools and spares, but also know how to use them. And preferably test them within the relative comfort of a garage.

Because a pump that you don't know how to use is as worthless as no pump.



Our committee met at the North End Juice Bar on Tuesday, March 10, 1998. Scott Pierson, Steve Bowman, Ralph Wessels, and I were lonely sitting around the big table.

Scott reported the new locking bike boxes are now installed at the Wheelock Library. Hopefully, more protective boxes can be budgeted by the different agencies in Pierce County. Steve now represents the manufacturer and may be able to sell these fine units to libraries, colleges, transit agencies, shopping centers and others. Many thanks to Bob Cook, Dave Nielsen, Steve Brown, and the library staff for their work in making this happen.

The new Tacoma, Pierce County bike maps are being distributed by Bob Vogel.

We discussed the North End, Proctor District angle parking proposal. Angle parking has a negative affect on cycling and traffic in general. TWBC members can call Mr. Kingsolver at the City of Tacoma to voice their concern.

We discussed the nation wide Bicycle Police convention to be held in Tacoma from April 30th to May 4th. TWBC members may be asked to participate in some of the activities including the sale of 1000 bicycle helmets at a safety fair on Saturday, May 2nd.

For the April Government Relations Committee meeting, we plan to meet with two Department of Transportation (DOT) officials, Mike Dornfeld and T. J. Nedrow. We will meet at Lakewood's City Hall at 9315 Gravelly Lake Drive S. W. We will meet on Tuesday, April 14th, at 7:00 p.m.

We hope to have other interested agencies there so non-motorized transportation needs along the I-5 corridor can be discussed. Dupont, Fort Lewis, Lakewood, Pierce County, Pierce Transit, and the Capital Bicycle Club representatives will be invited to talk about the corridor for about one hour. Emphasis will be placed on a linkage between Dupont and the new commuter rail terminal in Lakewood. Later, we will discuss other concerns with DOT's operations.