

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

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Founded 1888

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Peninsula Metric Century Shifts Into High Gear!

by Carla Gramlich

Now that the 1998 Daffodil Classic is bicycling history, we are shifting our direction towards the Peninsula Metric Century, scheduled for Sunday, June 7, 1998. A special thanks goes to the volunteers who have already put in many hours to make this event

possible. Steve Brown completed the flyer and helped place it in several bicycle shops. Dalene Moore has been keeping track of the pre-registrations since the Bike Expo. Bob Cook and Toni Matson have volunteered to mark the course, and Mat and Connie Reitzug will entertain us in their home on June 5th.

Steve Lay, resident artist for TWBC, used his talents to produce the design for this year's souvenir. If you have not heard, the give away will be a temporary tattoo. All the PMC riders will look really gnarly with the TWBC logo applied to the body part of their choosing.

Plan now to be a part of this event. Help is still needed. Remember, to guarantee a volunteer polo shirt, you must contact me by May 6th. All Volunteers will also get to ride free and be a part of the great after ride pizza party. The last planning meeting and potluck will be on June 5th, at Connie and Mat's home, 5702 80th Avenue Court West, University Place, Washington. Hope to see all of you at the potluck. (Carla Gramlich, 253-752-4038)

TWBC Elections In June

by Dena Wessels
TWBC Secretary

Attention. Your attention please! Be on the lookout for unknown characters that fit the profile for new Board Members of the Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club. The new Board Member election is held during the general club meeting in June.

The term of office runs from July, 1998 to June, 1999. It is possible that unknown characters (potential candidates) will make an

appearance at the June meeting. Citizens (general members) should be on the alert for the following: Suspect's (candidates') description: TWBC member, having various abilities, available to attend twelve Board and eight General Meetings a year, and willing to put in some of their personal time and effort into making TWBC an even greater bike club than it already is.

Citizens with information on suspects should contact me at 857-5658 for inclusion on the June ballot.

NowBike To Host Legislative Retreat

The Northwest Bicycle Federation (NowBike) is holding its post-session legislative retreat on Saturday, May 9, at Snoqualmie Pass. Bike club members are encouraged to attend.

The retreat will run from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and will be held in the Fireside Room at the Family Pancake House at Snoqualmie Summit. Early birds may order breakfast on their own at 9:00 a.m. in the same room.

Passage of the Cooper Jones Act was a major victory for Washington State bicyclists. Michael Temple, NowBike's lobbyist, will be on hand to summarize how we accomplished this feat and what it means. We will also discuss other issues of importance to bicyclists.

For more information, and to confirm your attendance for the retreat, please contact NowBike at 206-224-9252, or nowbike@accessone.com.

Past pedaling

anne heller

A historical view of TWBC's 110 years

Early wheelmen, the term used to describe all those who braved the muddy roadways on the high wheelers in use in the 1880s, had to contend with an unsympathetic constabulary. Tacoma would not have a two-wheeled police unit until 1989, 100 years after the founding of the Tacoma Wheelmen.

Just as today, conflicts arose over conflicting usage of scarce transportation resources. The streets were unpaved and therefore muddy six months of the year. Consequently, they were only of use to horses and wagons. The wooden sidewalks were the only safe refuge for pedestrians. When the two-wheelers came on the scene the streets were not an option through much of the year, and the pedestrians already occupied the sidewalks.

The City Council meeting of July 22, 1893 was much like most of the meetings of that time, a great deal of discussion being devoted to necessary street improvements. A proposal to pave Pacific Avenue between South 17th and South 24th with either "bituminous rock" or "planking" was rejected. However, the following week the Council did vote to pave that section with proper paving materials.

That same evening local cycling enthusiasts did not fare well, as the Council rushed through an ordinance to amend a previous law banning cycling on the sidewalks of Pacific and its cross streets below Broadway.

The amendment introduced by Mr. Wright prohibited the moving of "bicycles and velocipedes upon the sidewalks of the city." The Council must have felt some urgency on the matter since the ordinance had its first, second, and third readings into the record that night. They enacted it immediately.

The local wheelmen were, of course, unhappy with the new ordinance. As one cyclist said at the time: "I do not think, however, that it was the intention of the council to include within the provisions of this ordinance all wheelmen, but rather to empower the police officers to arrest (as in the case of fast driving of horses and racing) those who show disregard for the safety of others by reckless or careless riding."

"Assuredly, if the ordinance is strictly enforced and should be applied in a general rather than in a special way, the wheel will have to be discarded like a straw hat for about six months in the year, as no rider who has any regard for his wheel or his dress would attempt to use the streets after the rain has commenced to fall and the dry weather has ceased to be. A wheel costs too much money to be used so basely, without considering the additional labor imposed upon the careful rider of being obliged to clean his wheel every time after using it."

"I do not blame Mr. Wright for the introduction of the ordinance, or the council for its passage, as the city had to take some steps to save the women and children from being run down and injured by

the fellows who rent wheels and who turn corners abruptly without sending forth any note of alarm or diminishing their speed."

"The members of our club are men of sensibility and attend to the safety of all pedestrians whom they meet by the ringing of bells and the retarding of the speed of the machine. Still, I notice nearly every day an amateur wheelmen riding on St. Helens Avenue and C Street sidewalks, and usually at a high rate of speed and with reckless disregard of the rights of others. The sooner persons of this class learn that liberty is not license the better for the wheelmen of this and other cities."

(Information for this article comes from Tacoma City Council minutes and Tacoma Daily Ledger articles from 1893.)

Pancake Breakfast Huge Success

by Rena Shawver

A heartfelt "thank you" to the bikers from the Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club who attended the 13th Annual Pancake Breakfast during the Daffodil Classic. Nearly 400 people attended the breakfast, which benefits children ages 3-5 years old, at the Orting Cooperative Nursery School. Most of the nearly \$1,500.00 raised at the event will go towards replacing the school's 44 year old furnace. Again, thank you. We could not do it without you! Best wishes, and see you next year!

The Tacoma Women's Bicycle Club, or, the Biker Babes Training Report

by **Carla Gramlich**

The real training starts in May and June, and will show who is a true biker babe. The rides will get longer and faster until July 11th. Since the Daffodil Classic is over, Janice Jensen will have no more excuses, and may even get to ride over fifty miles. Toni Matson has been riding more now that the skiing season is completed and her car was out of commission for a week. I have been out whenever possible and have introduced club members to the new speed of a code 3 ride.

In May, we will attempt a fast century. The goal is a hundred miles in seven hours. Power or Cliff bars? Favorite energy drink? Steve Brown's Twinkies and Jolt Cola? Whatever works for you.

I will do the unthinkable in June and ride with Bob Myrick. 150 miles over his famous Morton Loop. Talk about pre-ride for STP.

A guy might join us on the trek south. If you have the fever to do STP in a day and still have fun, join us for some of the training rides in May and June. Biker Babes Unite!

Children's Safety Fair:

The annual Children's Safety Fair is on May 2, 1998 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. TWBC members will again help Helmets on Wheels with \$5.00 helmet sales. This day will include the International Bike Patrol Competition. Plan to attend and help with a program that

could get 1000 helmets on children. Call Carla Gramlich for information and to volunteer at 253-752-4038.

New and Renewing members

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

New Members: Gerald F. Klock and Gordon B. Unruh.

Renewing Members: Tom & Carol Cabe; James Cook; Richard & Vickie Kim; Linda LaFlamme; Beverly & Scott Pierson; and Stan & Joan Sanders, Kirby, and Puddin'.



Our committee met at the Lakewood City Hall on Tuesday, April 14, 1998. Bill Larkin, Lakewood City Engineer; T. J. Nedrow, DOT; Jan Wolcott, Pierce County Parks Director; Bob Vogel, Pierce County Public Works non-motorized coordinator; and Larry Laveen, Capital City Bike Club met with our committee to discuss the corridor along I-5. Ralph Wessels, Carla Gramlich, Steve Brown, Dave Tison,

Scott Pierson, and I represented TWBC. The City of Dupont and Fort Lewis representatives did not attend.

We discussed the I-5 corridor, particularly the Woodbrook Road closure and the new commuter rail station. Bill Larkin said the City Manager is a cyclist and he expects the Pacific Highway will be improved for cyclists as the rail station becomes active. He also said Lakewood was concerned about non-motorized access to the American Lake Gardens area.

I explained our long-standing desire to improve bicycle routes along the I-5 corridor between Tacoma and Olympia. It became apparent that this is a regional and multi-regional issue. None of the individual government agencies feels responsible for defining an integrated route system.

Following the meeting, I contacted Ned Conway at 206-587-5670. Ned is with the Puget Sound Regional Council. He indicated preliminary regional routes have been defined and the non-motorized planning effort is about to be reactivated with the reauthorization of the ISTEA program. I told Ned of our interest in signing bike routes, particularly for tourists.

The Steilacoom, Dupont road was also discussed. Apparently, Pierce County operates most of this road. The road is listed in the non-motorized plan for shoulder improvements, but it is not yet listed in the County's six year road improvement program.

Scott Pierson explained that we had previously provided a list of possible spot improvements to DOT for the agency's consideration. T. J. Nedrow said the State had made some minor improvements on both sides of the Narrows Bridge.

Ralph Wessels reviewed the list of communities that have adopted helmet laws. Bill Larkin was interested in pursuing a helmet ordinance for Lakewood.

Following this meeting by a few days, several members attended an ALTRANS developmental meeting in Tacoma. ALTRANS is an alternative transportation group. They are particularly interested in the new Narrows Bridge and the proposed "Cross Base Highway." ALTRANS is interested in a balanced transportation system. They will have another organizing meeting on Thursday, May 14, 1998, at the downtown Public Library at 7:00 p.m. in the Olympic room.

Also, following the meeting, Carla Gramlich was contacted by Susan Hardie, Tacoma Library Director, regarding seeking neighborhood grants for bike lid type lockers at other city libraries.

I have been reviewing the city's draft six year transportation spending plan and it looks like the city is doing a good job with regard to traffic calming in neighborhoods and providing curb ramps. The city appears to be programming over 25% of its budget for non-motorized, neighborhood, and landscaping purposes.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12th at 7:00 p.m. at the North End Juice Bar at North 21st and Anderson in Tacoma. Please come to the meeting with any concerns you may have, and help us change the system for the better.

Sell your car and attend the GRC meeting on May 12th!

Women less likely discouraged by rain

Dorian Smith

If Carol Davis' "birthday ride" on March 21st is any indication, women may be the hardier sex when the going gets wet.

A total of 14 riders, six men and eight women, showed up for the scheduled 49 mile ride in Kitsap County (one mile for each of Carol's 49 years). But the weather did its best to dampen Carol's celebration. On that day the skies dropped nearly a quarter inch of rain on the hapless bicyclists.

The precipitation was so discouraging that seven riders quit the ride after completing only half the distance. That is, five men and two women.

Toughing it out to the end was a reverse gender ratio. Six women and one man completed the ride which had been re-routed to 45 miles.

However, there was at least one praiseworthy note for the men. Roz, Carol's husband, was the only man to complete the ride, which was one of his first trips in the saddle after recuperating for several months from a fractured hip.

The joys of riding in the rain

Dorian Smith

All bicyclists who ventured out on March 21-22 will agree that it was a weekend to remember. The sun did not blaze against an azure sky. The temperatures weren't balmy. Instead, the clouds

aggressively pummeled every living creature with all manner of precipitation.

The late winter weather threatened with bulging clouds, and each day carried out its threats. According to the National Weather Service, nearly a half inch of rain fell in Pierce County on Saturday, then nearly doubled that rainfall on Sunday.

Usually, scheduled Tacoma Wheelmen rides carry the disclaimer "rain cancels." But, hoping for the best, both rides that weekend (led by Carol Davis on Saturday and Ralph and Dena Wessels on Sunday) were carried out. The rain was so discouraging on Carol's ride that half the original band gave up after about half of the 46 miles (see above).

The Sunday group mostly remained intact for 40 miles, but endured constant heavy downpours, which stung cheeks. During the ride home from Puyallup, the riders were bludgeoned with hailstones that viciously pierced through helmet vents. And with just a few miles left, they rode through flooded streets at water levels above the bottom brackets.

Now most people believe being outdoors during such weather, particularly on a bicycle, is a miserable experience. Seasoned bicyclists know better. Bicycling includes headwinds and strenuous uphill, as well as tailwinds and stimulating downhill.

As one two-wheeled wag said: "In Washington, if you don't ride in the rain, you don't ride."

I also like to think of John Lennon's melodic wisdom when he sang, "I can show you/that when it starts to rain/ that everything's the same"

Riding in the rain offers an opportunity to enjoy an under appreciated bicycling sensation that is missed when the temperature is in the upper 70s. On warm days the bicycling experience is overwhelmed with visual sights like gardens in full bloom and the majestic Mount Rainier hovering over bucolic pastures that stretch across the horizon.

When it's raining, and raining hard, you must focus on the pure exertion and exhilaration of your bicycle. You are not distracted by scenic splendors. You are merely watching the line of fellow riders in front of you who are beacons to your destination.

On rainy days, it's critically important to be properly clothed—rain jacket, booties, warm gloves—so that chills or overheating do not hamper the necessarily constant pedaling. On rainy days you appreciate your body's comfort which can be taken for granted in August.

Even though conversations are minimal on rainy rides, most likely the camaraderie is far more intense and bonding than a summer outing. A rainy day ride can be a more rewarding social experience.

I rode with Ralph and Dena's group on Sunday and can honestly say I have no regrets. Though my shoes and tights were wet and muddy, I was comfortable as the miles stretched on. I also felt consummate trust that Dena was re-directing the ride down streets that were best suited for the winter monsoon that shocked us at first.

And somewhere along the Levee Road, I even believe I started to enter a Zen state of consciousness. Without the usual diversions, like conversations about Internet web sites or new movies, I shared a sense of oneness with my bicycle. It was almost hypnotic.

But probably the joy of riding in the rain was best seen that day on the face of Gary Moore, who himself is a frequent ride leader. Throughout the day's ride Gary maintained a quiet and detached demeanor. He rarely talked, even during lunch at the Power House. He looked straight ahead, his face never registering approval or disdain.

Then, on the return trip when Gary took the lead, the rain began pouring with a vengeance. During that squall every last stitch of fabric was finally drenched and all presumption of staying dry was vanquished.

Some of us were maybe a little frightened by the rain's intensity, but Gary turned his head around and revealed how his great stone face had cracked into a joyful open-mouthed grin. And even though raindrops were playing a Led Zeppelin drum solo on my helmet, I could still hear Gary's fitting reaction:

"Hah! Hah! Hah!"

Cycling Ads

For Sale: Cannondale MT 2000. 18" frame, Deore XT components, Scott AT4 handlebars. \$400.00.

Set up now with fenders, rack, and slick tires for touring and commuting. The switch to trail use would be an easy one for the buyer of this bike. Call Diane or Harvey Lister at 209-5747.

For Sale: Easy Racer Recumbant with faring. \$500.00 Call Harvey
Lister at 209-5747 for more information.