

# Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

August 1998

Founded 1888

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## Fall Line-Up For TWBC Meetings

**Steve Brown, TWBC Vice-President**

This past year saw record numbers of TWBC members attending our monthly club meetings.

I am not sure if this was caused by the camaraderie, the entertainment, or the large hoagies our esteemed president Ernie Stephenson kept bringing to the meetings.

Whatever the reasons, I would like to repeat the large crowds for the 1998/1999 season of meetings.

Members are welcome to submit their ideas for club meeting activities, entertainment, subjects to be covered, guest speakers, food, door prizes, or other elements which will make our meetings a success.

You are also invited to present your topic, such as bicycle trips, ride reports, cycling concerns, etc., with narration, slides, or other media helps.

To assist me in planning our meetings please call (752-4038) or use the form below to make suggestions for up coming club meetings.

## Club Meeting Survey

- Topic you would like presented at a club meeting:
- Topic you would like to present (bicycle trips, slides, etc.) at a club meeting:
- Other suggestions to improve the meetings:

Optional: Name      Phone:

Send ideas to: Steve Brown, TWBC Vice-President, PO BOX 112078, Tacoma, WA 98411, or call 253-752-4038.

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## STP Spanaway Check Point Volunteers Come Through Again!

**Dave Zehnder**  
**TWBC STP Coordinator**

A special thanks goes out to all the volunteers who gave their time and work to run the Spanaway rest stop for this year's Seattle to Portland ride. I did not get every person's name, but we had about 38 volunteers.

An additional special thanks goes to the crew from Madigan Hospital. We set up in the tent and then moved outside when it looked like the weather was going to improve. We kept the tent in reserve. The Madigan crew worked all day Saturday along with the other volunteers. I could not believe their effort, and we did not get a chance to properly thank them. May Ernie Stephenson and the staff at Madigan make sure the Madigan crew knows how much we appreciated their work.

From our club's viewpoint the whole effort was a success. To all of you who helped out, please note that this event brings in several thousand dollars to our club budget.

Until next year, enjoy the summer.

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From the  
president

ernie stephenson

*1996 was a great year!*

During the STP that year I watched a "well oiled" pace line coming down through Algona. Changeover time came and the lead rider checked the rear for oncoming traffic, heard a "clear!" from

somewhere in the line, then gracefully swung out to the left and slowed down ever so slightly. When about half the line had gone by, he picked up his pace, reached back with his right hand and, without looking, grabbed an energy bar from the second-to-last rider. All he had to do then was tuck in behind the last rider who was still recovering, and settle down himself. It was a beautiful piece of teamwork that you had to see to appreciate.

Later in the morning I had a flat out of Rainier. I spent more time sticking my thumb up at Goldwing Riders and telling fellow cyclists I was okay than I did actually fixing the tire. It was a beautiful piece of teamwork that you had to see to appreciate.

Then came the Halloween ride that October. The Lays led a very pleasant ride from the north end to downtown. We stopped at several member's homes to trick-or-treat, looked in on one or two members who had to work that Saturday, and then got back to find Steve and Phyllis putting out some wonderful munchies in their very beautiful home. I had dropped the helmet visor and Steve figured out whose it was and was able to get it back to me some time later. It was a beautiful piece of teamwork that you had to see to appreciate.

It could be helping out an out of shape companion up Tubb's Hill, buying a round at the espresso stop, volunteering to help on a ride or other club function, or "picking up the banner" on a community issue. The list goes on and on. Most importantly, before long you will say, "It was a beautiful piece of teamwork that you had to see to appreciate."

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# September Picnic to Celebrate TWBC's 110 Years!

**Steve Brown,  
TWBC Vice-President**

September is becoming as traditional for our annual picnic as January is for our banquet. Summers seem to go by way too fast. Plan on attending the August 18th board meeting to complete plans for this year's picnic. If you have some creative ideas let me know ahead of time. (253-752-4038)

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Past pedaling

anne heller

*Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years*

As we engage in our summer bicycling adventures, I would like to tell you the experience of some early Tacoma wheelwomen, Daisy Ross, Cora Simineaux, and Zulu Upright.

In August of 1900 these three young women, Daisy was 21 at the time, decided they would like to do something out of the ordinary. What they did would be out of the ordinary even today.

They decided to ride their bicycles to Mount Rainier. Being three young, single women, they had arranged to have a married couple chaperon them. At the last minute, their chaperons backed out of

the plan. They were not willing to have this breach in propriety ruin their plans.

Early on the morning of August 15, 1900, they set off for Mount Rainier. Daisy and Zulu were on a borrowed tandem, Cora had her own bicycle. With packs on their backs they set off for the mountain, traversing roads which at best were graveled.

They arrived that day at Messler's resort, located between Ashford and Longmire. After spending the night at Messlers, they left their wheels behind and rode by pony to Longmire. The next morning they proceeded by pony to Paradise. Along the way they saw waterfalls and bears.

Once at Paradise they joined a group of about 20 people camping out in a dozen tents and a teepee. After supper nearly everyone crowded into the teepee and, in Daisy's words, "had a grand evening. That was when practically everybody decided to start early next morning and see if they could get as far up over the snow fields as Gibraltar Rock."

The next morning about half of the group, including the three young women from Tacoma, made it as far as Gibraltar Rock. Once there, Harry Carter, a guide, decided they would be foolish not to continue with him to the top. Five of the climbers, including Daisy and Cora and Miss Day, decided they were ready for the adventure.

At first light in the morning the six mountaineers set off. It was difficult going in spots, especially going across the loose rock on the face of Gibraltar. By noon they had reached the summit. The only disappointment was that it was foggy below, so the view showed them just a few peaks peaking through. Theirs was the

second group of women to scale the mountain. As Daisy later proudly recalled, "It was hard work, climbing in that altitude, but we made it to the top, just as well as the men did."

Getting down was a matter of sliding. Describing it, Daisy said, "It was simply wonderful. Dr. Redpath and Cora and I slid until we wrecked our clothes, but we didn't care. It was a funny thing about our shoes. We used our feet for brakes, whizzing down(it actually wore the heels on mine right off, clear down to the leather uppers."

Once they made it back to Messler's they took their bicycles out of the barn and headed back to Tacoma after a wonderful, week-long adventure.

Later, Daisy married, had two daughters, became a real estate agent and died in 1963 at age 84. (Sources for this article are editions of the Tacoma News Tribune from 1950 and 1963.)

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## Publicity Should Have Included A Helmet

### **Dorian Smith**

It was difficult for many bicyclists this summer to wholeheartedly get behind Gary Geddes' fund-raising 2500 mile bike ride from Eatonville to Peoria, Illinois.

Why? His intentions were admirable. He raised money for an educational wetlands and habitat outreach program. He called attention to the Endangered Species Act. And he did it on a bicycle. Before committing to the 40 day trip, which ended July 30th, Gary

had only ridden 50 miles in one day, a truly admirable undertaking by any cyclist's standards.

But safety conscious bicyclists were perturbed that Gary's publicity material featured photos of him cruising on his touring bike without a helmet.

The photos were not only seen in his colorful brochures, but also on Northwest Trek's Internet website. In images seen around the world, he was only wearing eyeglasses on his head as he pedaled on paved paths and through a herd of bison at Northwest Trek.

The absence of a helmet was a serious oversight. A primary safety concern of all bicyclists is to always wear an approved and well-fitting helmet.

Gary's efforts to promote bicycling should be praised. Instead, his publicity material sets a bad example for the thousands of children and new cyclists who saw his bareheaded image. He unwittingly promoted the impression that helmets are optional -- that there are times when a helmet may be inconvenient or even unnecessary.

Every rider knows that a fall from the saddle is potentially critical and lethal. Serious head injuries can occur at slow speeds, in a driveway, or along the meandering pathways of Northwest Trek's scenic park-like setting.

According to one report, 96 percent of the bicyclists killed in 1996 were not wearing helmets.

Human skulls are so vulnerable that helmets are required by law in Puyallup, Tacoma, Gig Harbor, and Pierce County. If Gary rode out



of Northwest Trek on June 20th (the first day of his journey) as he appears in his publicity photos, he could have been ticketed.

Headgear is so essential that the Tacoma Wheelmen participate in the Helmets on Wheels program year round. Between April 28 and December 5 the volunteers for the program will attend at least 16 community events. They sell helmets at the low cost of \$5.00 each so that they are affordable for all households. And then volunteers spend up to 20 minutes adjusting each helmet to maximize protection.

Even the club's two major rides, the Peninsula Metric Century and the Daffodil Classic, do not receive as many hours of volunteer labor as the helmet program.

We believe that Gary's cross-country trip was planned with the best of intentions. We hope his trip was enjoyable and memorable. Surely, he will have many stories to tell and the experience will be a milestone in his life.

But we are disappointed that his extensive publicity did not include every bicyclist's vital safety gear --a helmet.

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**government relations report**  
bob myrick  
*TWBC Director of Community and Government Relations*

Our committee met at Rainier Pizza and Grill at Sixth Avenue and State Street at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 14th. Bob Vogel, Steve

Bowman, Ralph Wessels, Carla Gramlich, Steve Brown, Scott Pierson, and I were present.

Scott Pierson and I had recently attended the Metropolitan Park District meeting to ask for trail monies to be included in their bond proposal.

Ralph passed around an article from the Olympian newspaper. The article described the need for a bicycle route along the I-5 corridor to accommodate commuters and tourists. We still do not have a government agency willing to take the lead on this issue. Either the DOT or a regional planning agency should take the lead.

Steve Bowman and I are now on the City of Tacoma Transportation Committee. Five cyclists are now on the committee, including TWBC member Noreen Light. Three other members are advocates for walking and transit. We discussed a list of matters requiring the attention of the committee including safety, education, maintenance, and facility construction.

Carla indicated the Helmets on Wheels program will be highlighted on the Sheriff's report on the City Cable channel.

Steve Bowman has hit some roadblocks on his quest to develop a bicycle safety video. Steve needs to find a grant, a star, and a production company. Possibly, with the new Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21), and the Cooper Jones bicycle safety law, some funding and sponsors can be found soon.

Ralph has done a lot of work this summer while I was off enjoying retirement in New Mexico. The paper company in Steilacoom has not replied to our request for safety improvements to the dangerous

railroad track crossing. A letter was also sent to the DOT regarding the three hazardous track crossings on the Roy highway. Ralph gave a helmet ordinance presentation to the South Prairie town council.

The club sent Pierce County a comment letter on the Cross Base highway environmental impact statement (EIS). We requested the separate path should be put back in the design. The U. S. Army is against that idea-for national security purposes?

The Narrows Bridge draft EIS is now out for comment. We will try to review and comment as it pertains to non-motorized transportation.

NowBike has changed its name to the Bicycle Alliance of Washington (BAW). Ralph has stepped forward to chair the BAW legislative committee. The BAW-NowBike auction will be held in November, and the group is looking for donated auction items.

Ralph has put together a government relations manual with a summary of State bicycle laws and other information, like the new federal TEA-21 funding program. Several copies will be made available for our use.

Carla is scheduled to put on a bicycle commuting booth at the News Tribune in late July.

Although vacations continue through August and September, let us try to drive or ride to Tuesday meetings on August 11th and September 8th. We will meet at Rainier Pizza and Grill at Sixth Avenue and State Street from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. I hope to see you there.

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# Tacoma Women's Bicycle Club

## Carla Gramlich

I would like to tell that the road to STP was smooth, but it got a little bumpy only one week before the event. After spending months training, my bike decided to give up the week before the event. I spent a nail biting week trying to get it together.

I had spent one week in Ohio doing the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure, riding over 300 miles. The mileage was only 50-60 miles everyday, but the weather was warm. It was like riding in a sauna everyday. This was getting me prepared for the warm July weather that STP was going to offer. On July 4th I led a ride from Tacoma to Seattle, for a little shake down ride of 100 plus miles.

That morning was cool and misty, actually nice riding weather. A couple of riders and I left UPS heading north. In Pacific we picked up Toni and continued at a nice pace to meet up with some other club members in Renton. In Kent I had a flat. I noticed that morning that my tire was soft. I put a new tube in and got back on the trail. We were close to the end of the trail in Tukwila when the only bee that was out that morning flew under my helmet and stung me in the temple. This was not turning out to be my day.

We met up with Peggy Fjetland and her group of riders, and left to pick up our STP packages at R&E. Her group was a code two, but all the riders were keeping up with our faster pace. Package pick-up was uneventful and we headed south towards home. We were having a little break waiting for the other riders when Peggy and Ray Fjetland caught up. It seems that Ray had a little bicycle

problem that had slowed them down. His seat fell off. In Renton, we left the other riders and our little group headed towards Tacoma.

I was stopping to pump up a soft tire. When I had changed the earlier flat I had forgotten to find the cause of my flat. I was now paying for it. I thought maybe I could get home, but in Puyallup I took the tire apart to look for the slow leak. It turned out to be a tiny wire on the inside of the tire. John Thomas suggested a patch over it and after a couple of inner tubes, I got it back together and started the last 15 miles into town.

Near downtown Tacoma, I heard a terrible rubbing sound. I stopped and checked the wheel and did not see any problems. I got on and rode a couple of feet and heard it again. I stopped and checked for a broken spoke. Then I saw the problem. Near the rear derailleur, the frame had broken in two. John rode the last 5 miles and got his car and came down to pick me up.

I had been thinking about a new bicycle, but I thought that my old Raleigh would be fine for this event. I bought it ten years ago, but had upgraded the wheels and most of the components. Now I had to do something and quick. On Sunday, I found the warranty. Early Monday morning I called Raleigh in Kent and they felt it was probably covered and a shop could get a new frame by Wednesday. The clock was ticking.

I went to my local Raleigh dealer, Northwest Mountain Bike Shop. On Tuesday, I saw the new frame. The old Technium model was not made any longer. This frame was the new aluminum Road series. It was a step up from my old frame. Josh at the shop felt that my old components would fit except the seat post. Things were looking up. Thursday morning, Josh felt he would be done by that

afternoon. I stopped in after an afternoon meeting at work. Things were not going together as smoothly as Josh had hoped. I left Thursday evening on the new bike, but I was going to stop in on Friday for some fine-tuning.

On Friday morning, Eric was checking the bicycle and was unhappy with the operation of the front derailleur. He swept the entire shop to find something that would work better. He settled on a Suntour from his private collection. This worked fine but the shifting was different than my old derailleur. It was the opposite! I felt after two hundred miles I would get used to it and left the shop at 2:00 p.m. to catch a bus to Seattle.

In Seattle, I rode to the University District and everything on the bike felt good. The frame was slightly smaller than my old frame, but I was hoping it would be a better fit. These are things you should not do right before STP, but it was an emergency.

We stayed in the dorms at the UW, and got up at 4:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. The roads looked wet, but I felt it was just a little misty. We headed down the hill at 4:30 a.m. and found out it was really raining. There was a traffic jam of cars and we rode in the dark parking lot to the start. STP coordinators had their own problems. The balloons for the starting arch were not staying up due to all the rain. They had to find some volunteers to hold them up so we could start the ride. We headed slowly out of the dark parking lot on to the street that was blocked off from traffic.

Some riders had flats in the first couple of miles. With the rotten weather, if I had a flat that early I might of bagged the whole thing. The only difference between this year and last was a ten degree

increase in temperature. We started south, riding in the rain and fighting a head wind. No records would be set today.

The rain ceased after Kent. Things were looking up. We got into Spanaway and said hello to all the wonderful TWBC members that were volunteering. It was surprising that most people had heard about my bicycle and were impressed that I had gotten back on the road. We met Toni Matson's husband Vern in Centralia at around 11:30 a.m. We were actually doing pretty good time wise, considering the conditions. Vern asked about Steve Brown. Toni and I felt that he was probably home taking a shower.

The ride to Portland was slow going but we made it up the hills and into Kelso. While riding into Longview, I noticed that we may have some help on the last stretch to Portland. The wind was blowing to the east. This was going to help after we crossed the Longview Bridge. We were headed to Saint Helens at a decent pace, when I heard some terrible noise from my bottom bracket. I limped into the last checkpoint at mile 170 and had the mechanic tighten the bottom bracket. This was something that could happen to a bicycle that was recently built.

The last 20 miles has some hills, and we just grinned and kept riding. Our 7:00 p.m. goal was lost because of extra time spent with repairs. We rolled across the finish line at ten minutes before eight and were greeted by Steve and Vern. The ordeal was over, and we have photos to prove it.

I wasn't nearly as tired as last year. I got a massage for my neck and we headed over to the motel. I kept going because I had some nice people that worked really hard to get me back on the road. Special thanks to Raleigh and Josh and Eric from Northwest

Mountain Bike that knew how important it was to do this event. I had received some nice compliments from members on these articles. I had to finish so I could write that I did it.

The following day I went with Steve down to Eugene for the Oregon Country Fair. Toni and Vern did some shopping in Portland. Toni was still riding a couple days after STP. I was lazy, but was getting some walking in for my next adventure-hiking up Mt. Adams over Labor Day weekend.

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Pedal Pushin'

**janice jensen**

**TWBC Past President**

Yes, summer is finally here! Hope everyone is having a great time. It seems the weather is also cooperating.

I'd like to congratulate the TWBC Biker Babes for a ride well ridden. Carla Gramlich and Toni Matson pushed those pedals to the metal all the way to Portland. Carla and Toni had a great training program going and a great season. In fact, Carla trained so hard she broke her frame one week before STP. Talk about bad luck, but it did not stop her. She got a new frame, changed a few things around and rode STP on a bike she no longer recognized. With her trusted "biker babe" Toni by her side and ahead on some of those hills, they both rode to the finish line in just under 15 hours. They truly deserve the name "Biker Babes!"

While we are talking pedal pushin', we have another club member who deserves to be congratulated. While STP marked an achievement for Carla and Toni, Dave Tison was busy racing. He



headed for Spokane that same weekend for the Mt. Spokane Selkirk Challenge. Although Dave had injured himself a couple of weeks earlier, he felt well enough for this grueling 25 mile course. In fact, he did so well he took 4th place in his division and pedaled away with a real nice medal (I saw it). Congratulations to our own "Mt. Bike Dude!"

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## The Bike

**Ernie Stephenson, TWBC President**

**The Bike:** Kona single speed cruiser.

**The Owner:** Dave Tison

Come on, be honest. How many times have you daydreamed just a little about that old Schwinn or Raleigh you had when you were a kid. It might have even been the one that first came with the training wheels. Mine was a red 24-inch, balloon tired, Schwinn, but that is another story(

Apparently this form of nostalgia is more prevalent than would be imagined. Cruisers are a "new" class of bikes that have become all the rage over the last several years. The idea is to capture some of that bygone era's charm and simplicity an uncomplicated bicycle can offer, over these highly technical, multi-gearred and even intimidating machines we tool around on today. After all, BMW has reintroduced the roadster, VW the bug, and Ford will soon come out with a new T-Bird resembling the old 1957 model. Why shouldn't bicycle builders follow suit and re-invent their wheels too?

**The Eclectic Rider**

Dave is like many of us in the club. We rode a long time ago, and rediscovered our love for spinning about on two wheels over the last few years. For Dave, this was six years ago. He started off like many of us did, on a mountain bike. Dave used a Trek 820 with slicks for both commuting and his first STP in 1993. In fact, it wasn't long after this ride that he realized he needed some sort of road machine. This turned out to be a Trek 520.

Those of you who know Dave know he is a well-rounded rider. He commutes daily, will hammer you on the road, and is a very fair mountain biker. How good is he in this latter respect? When I interviewed him for this article he had just returned from Spokane where he took fourth overall in the Selkirk Challenge. This is part of the NORBA sanctioned Washington, Idaho, and Montana series. Way to go, Dave! A Kool Kona

The Kona is primarily a mountain bike built right here in the Northwest. Dave's particular ride features much of what I spoke of earlier about the cruiser concept. This is not an article about inch variants between upper and lower cogs. The name of the game here is "simple", folks.

Dave had a number of reasons for getting this particular bike. First of all, it is just plain pretty. When I first saw the red and black paint job, I just had to start shooting pictures. I was so struck by the colors, I forgot I was using black and white film! Along with asthmatics comes the curving double top tube. Why did we like such things as kids? Was it a Buck Rogers thing? No matter. Today such lines are, simply put, an art form.

But Dave is not a guy given to glitz without practical application.

First of all, the frame just happened to fit him very well. The stem and bars offer a very ergonomically pleasing upright ride. Also, there are no quick releases on the wheels. This has a purpose. It makes the wheels harder to steal when the bike is parked in the open.

Strangely enough, this bike originally came with knobbies, but Dave soon remedied that with a set of Avocet slicks. Fenders and a light set also rounded out the retrofits. Down The Road

Dave is quite pleased with this bicycle's elegant simplicity. He had considered a rear rack, but feels it would break the classic lines of such a beautifully created machine. He has gotten used to a commuter pack and plans to stay with that until he finally makes his mind up. Words To The Wise

"Single speed bikes aren't for everyone." Such a ride has its challenges to say the least, and it is without doubt an entirely different form of cycling than what we have become used to pedaling around on. In most cases the sprocket ratios are low to allow for climbs, and because cruising itself is slow. Notable distances some of us have become used to, as well as decent little climbs once in a while, are not always within your means on a cruiser. They get you to work, or the store. In return, the pedaling can be tough occasionally, but, if you are lucky, the bike will turn a few heads along the way.

Ride well, Dave, and thank you.

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## Cycling Ad

## **For Sale:**

**Bike:** Klein "Performance" road touring model. 60cm, 6 years old, but used 2 years. Shimano 105 set, triple ring, Shimano clipless pedals. Excellent condition: \$550.00

**Bike:** Trek "1420 Aluminum" frame. 57 or 58 cm, Shimano 105 system with triple rings. \$450.00 Contact Mike Madden at 564-2718.

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## **Letters To The Editor:**

### **Different experience**

I read Dennis Azevedo's somewhat negative comments on the Peninsula Metric Century in July's newsletter. My experience was quite different. Out on the 100-mile course, I found Dave Tison standing in the hot sun and directing cyclists to a detour to avoid some miles of brand new chip seal. The detour was a great route.

The tattoo was a great idea. I wore mine for a week. I felt just like Dave T. and Janice J.

I already have more T-shirts than I can ever wear, although I do like to pick up a nice polo shirt now and then. I know that for a small organized ride it is difficult to design and manufacture a small quantity of shirts.

I started late in the day after working at the Gig Harbor rest stop. I was really happy to see Dave Parker and Thomas Harrison still manning the rest stop on Fox Island. The course this year was really extremely well marked.

Thanks to everyone involved for a great ride event.

**Bob Myrick, Tacoma, WA**

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**Many enjoyed "having a great ride"**

I was sadly disappointed by last month's letter to the editor. Comments such as those should have never been published. They should be part of the ride record or notes, in other words, what people liked or didn't. As Daffodil coordinator I received some good and some bad comments, but I alone dealt with them. You can't please everyone, everyone's different. This man didn't seem to enjoy much for "having a great ride" as he claims. The people I spoke to said what a great job we did and how much they enjoy the variety of the food we serve on our rides. I take pride in that and the people I work with.

Great rides can only survive with great volunteers, and we have the best. Many of our volunteers have full time jobs and families and still manage to give countless hours to the club for its success, and a letter such as that was very critical and hurtful. Maybe, in the future, instead of worrying so much about censorship we should be considerate of the people we could be hurting with such comments.

**Janice Jensen, Daffodil Coordinator, University Place**