

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

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Founded 1888

TWBC Annual Banquet Time!

Bob Myrick

Please do not forget -- your Annual Banquet will be on Saturday, January 23. You are cordially invited to attend this highly subsidized event. This dinner is the best time of the year to meet old friends and to make new friends who enjoy cycling. After dinner, Connie Reitzug and friends will recognize members who have reached milestones in their ridership, and who have had notable encounters on the road of life. The highlight of the evening is a great slide show recalling our 1998 adventures. It is the best way to see what our club is about. There will also be great door prizes this year for those who stay through the whole glorious evening.

Dress at the banquet ranges from your cycling clothes if you ride in, to your best evening dress.

Send in your -- [reservation form](#) -- before you forget. Attendance is limited to the first 96 people to register. Your fellow cyclists, board members, and myself expect and hope to see you there.

Some Holiday Cheer

Steve Brown, TWBC Vice-President

Rain could not dampen the spirits of the hearty souls that joined in the fun at the December Holiday Potluck. Lots of camaraderie was evident, and yes, there were even bicycles present. Mat & Connie Reitzug appeared just in time to provide the fourth food group -- pizza. Thanks to Joyce Clifford for providing the hospitality and the entertainment -- dancing Santa Claus and bubble blowing polar bear.

River Walk in Puyallup

Steve Brown, TWBC Vice-President

The dedication ceremony for Puyallup's new linear park took place on Saturday, December 12th. This three-quarter mile paved trail is on the river side of the Puyallup Fred Meyers, next to O'Farrell's Family Restaurant. The onlookers were able to stay dry by standing in the Meridian Street underpass. Three stalwart TWBC members made the trek by bicycle. O'Farrell's provided hot drinks and pastries and a place to dry off. Afterwards the bicyclists headed swiftly back to Tacoma. They must have had a tailwind because the cyclists were able to average 20 mph during much of the return journey.

Favorite Bicycle Routes

Webmaster, Dorian Smith, has created a special page on the TWBC website called "Routes". It lists favorite bicycle routes for getting around Tacoma and Pierce County. Dorian asks if club members can think of one or more routes that are used for practical commuting, or getting around their part of the region, which he can place on this page.

This will be a web page that will grow over time as people offer suggestions. You can contact Dorian by e-mail at twbc@excite.com.

If you have not looked at our web page go to www.twbc.org with your computer browser and find a variety of information, including the ride calendar, newsletter articles, and other features.

Renewing members for December, 1998:

Karen Close; Ray, Peggy & Sonja Fjetland; Doug Jackman; John Kiner; Georgene Hawkins-Kunz; Karla Maynard; Carol Nichols; Janice Sack-Ory & Richard Ory; Joy C. Roelofsz; Bud & Fran Schroeder; Robert Warfield; and David M. Zehnder.

Cycling Ad:

Tacoma Bicycle is offering the following service specials for the month of January to bike club members:

- Tune-ups, regularly \$39.95, now \$29.95.
- Overhauls, which include packing the bearings with fresh grease, complete tear-down and rebuild, and everything included in a tune, regularly \$100.00, now \$75.00.

Take advantage of the deals and treat your bike to a well deserved cleansing. Call the shop at 253-572-2553 if you have any questions.

Government report
bob myrick
director of community
and government relations

Ernie Stephenson, Carla Gramlich, Ralph Wessels, Scott Pierson and I met at the Planet Burrito for our November meeting. Craig Francis, City of Tacoma Public Works Engineer, was our guest.

Craig administers the City's bicycle project funds. Other people administer the sidewalk, landscaping, traffic calming and similar funds that tend to benefit the cycling community. Craig discussed his draft TEA-21 project application to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and asked for our input. Craig plans to focus on bike lane projects this year, similar to what is happening down on North Stephen's street. Apparently, just the thermoplastic striping costs up to \$18,000 per mile, an incredible number, especially since some of us don't like the "feel" of the markings and the road debris that seems to accumulate on the bike lane. We expect the City will also apply for missing sidewalk projects and Thea Foss Waterway trails (esplanades). Our committee suggested the City should be bold enough to start putting up vertical bicycle route signs. We also suggested that the City should apply for safety grants to improve its' railroad crossings.

Ernie Bay and I will be reviewing and ranking project requests on an Enhancement's committee at the PSRC. We are pushing for a more defined regional route system as well as vertical bike route signage. Our orientation meeting is on Monday, December 14 in Seattle.

Washington State's proposed Transportation Plan was presented to State public officials on Friday, December 11, at the Temple theater complex in Tacoma.

Ralph is following the plans for a proposed new oil pipeline across the State. The pipeline would follow the John Wayne trail and could affect cycling. Public hearings will be held this winter.

Ralph also reported that another prominent TWBC member went down on the RR tracks near Steilacoom on October 3. He indicated State Accident Reports can be filled out by any cyclist having an accident regardless of the damage cost or involvement of another vehicle. This procedure helps to document dangerous locations and persuade officials to take corrective actions.

It was suggested we should contact Pierce County's Bob Vogel and Washington State's T J Nedrow regarding improving Mounts road and defining the regional route system. Failing action by officials, we should start working with State legislators. Following our meeting, there was an editorial in the News Tribune by the County Engineer, Tom Ballard. He indicated road reconstruction would be happening now that the new bridge across the Nisqually river has been constructed.

Other happenings in Tacoma include the recent Bicycle Alliance of Washington (BAW) Legislative meeting, the Tacoma Transportation Committee (TTC) meeting, and the dedication of the new neighborhood Puyallup River Trail in Puyallup on December 12.

At the BAW meeting, the Referendum 49 initiative was discussed, the Cooper Jones bicycle safety act was reviewed, the need for bike corridors and signs was highlighted, and the need for stronger punishments in bike versus car accidents was emphasized. Bike lobby day in Olympia will be on February 25. Mark your calendar. The TTC discussed the Light rail system in downtown Tacoma and the angle parking in the Proctor District as well as other locations. The angle parking appears to be consistent with the Business district's requests and the North End Neighborhood

Council's stance on the issue. An unexpected benefit of angled parking is traffic calming, so at least the cars and us slow down as we worry about parked cars backing into us.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 12 at 7:00pm at the Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue. I hope you can attend.

Past pedaling

anne heller

Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years

Silent Steeds of the Nineteenth Century

No, silent steed does not refer to early Wheelmen, but to their mounts.

The Tacoma cycling community in 1899 was far from silent. Early Tacoma Wheelmen were as active and vocal as today's club members in encouraging the building of suitable bicycle trails and paths. As reported in a July 16, 1899 article in the Daily Ledger, the Tacoma vicinity had 40 miles of "roadway suited to the silent steed of the nineteenth century." These paths were in "a condition favorable to the most delicate tire."

With 22 1/2 miles of paths in the city and an additional 14 miles of trails in the surrounding countryside, it was possible to ride in comfort from Point Defiance to Puyallup and American Lake.

Much of the credit for these paths belonged to Tacoma Wheelmen president John M. Bell, who was also a Tacoma city councilman for 12 years and a member of the

Pierce County Good Roads League. Mr. Bell, along with other Wheelmen, lobbied for a bicycle license fee to pay for the construction of the paths. In 1899 licenses were issued to 4,100 cyclists. This was such a successful program Seattle, Portland, Victoria, Portland and Spokane soon adopted it.

Paths newly completed in 1899 went from S.23rd to S. 8th on J St., and from S. 11th to N. 11th on L St. These connected with a path on N. I St., which allowed "a seven mile run from Wright Park to Point Defiance, taking one through a fine residence part of the city and past the race track and the athletic grounds. Another seven mile run is afforded by the 'water ditch' path, which takes the rider out to Lake Spanaway, American Lake, the road to Olympia and the road to Steilacoom. The Tacoma Avenue and Pacific Avenue paths carry us through the business portion of the city south to the Puyallup road. Still another carries us up and out 8th St. from Tacoma Avenue to Pine St." The race track referred to was a horse racing track near N. 25th and Washington, near the present day site of the University of Puget Sound.

However, not all was well on the bicycle paths. Mr. Bell had a report that the condition of the Puyallup path was such that riders were "worked into a swearing mood by the incessant jarring of their nervous systems." It seems the entire path from the "Reservation school" to Puyallup was deeply rutted from cattle crossing it during the rainy season. Mr. Bell promised to call this situation to the attention of the county commissioners.

The article ends with an ominous note. "George M. Shreeder says Gormully and Jeffrey will have the automobile here next year. They will introduce them simultaneously into Tacoma, Seattle and Portland."

Puyallup Fire Department Establishes Bike-Paramedics

Dorian Smith

Visitors to the Puyallup Fair last summer may not have been surprised to see uniformed men patrolling on bicycles.

But a closer look revealed that they weren't police officers or security personnel, but members of the paramedic team for the Puyallup Fire Department.

After years of success with bike patrols for police departments, a few Washington cities are trying out human-powered staff to respond quickly to critical or life-threatening injuries.

Olympia and Bellingham have had bicycle-mounted paramedics for a couple years. Seattle tried it for the first time this year during Bumbershoot at the Seattle Center and at crowded Sea Fair events. The Puyallup Fire Department organized its bike-mounted paramedics crew last summer.

According to Pat Donovan, a captain and paramedic with the PFD, the department found two advantages of bicycles over ambulances:

- Equipment costs are significantly lower.
- Crowded events are better served by bicycle patrols.
- They are faster at responding than an ambulance.

They are even faster than golf carts which the PFD has used at Meeker Days and the Western Washington Fair. A cart requires eight feet of width, while a bicycle only needs two feet. On occasion when the crowds have been particularly dense, the paramedics use a whistle to open up a pathway.

Donovan said he would like to use the patrol for the Tour de Pierce and other rides within the city limits where the fire department has jurisdiction.

By early October bicycle-mounted paramedics had responded about two dozen times. More than half of the victims did not need hospitalization so the ambulance remained available to protect residents in other parts of the city.

"We are comfortable working with a patient for 10-minutes," Donovan said. "We rely on the ambulance only if it is necessary to take the patient to the hospital."

The cost was right for the fire department's program. The bikes were free; the mid-range GT mountain bikes were seized during drug busts. No exotic bicycling equipment was used. The components are off-the-shelf Shimano Alivio. Only better quality tires, bar ends and a beefy Jandd rear rack were added for handling the 35 pounds of paramedic equipment. Donovan brought his own panniers.

He also recommends 36-spoke wheels and stronger hubs, rims and spokes to handle the added weight of rider and equipment that frequently must jump curbs. They use Ritchie Speed Max tires that are half-knobby and half road tread design, because the bicycle paramedics patrol paved streets as well as make occasional forays up into a watershed.

Donovan figures the total costs for each bike (not including paramedic equipment) and yellow-shirt cycling uniform came to \$1,000.

The two paramedics riders split the Emergency Medical System (EMS) equipment which is used to provide minor treatment or stabilize victims until an ambulance arrives. The pair of rack packs are loaded with an oxygen cylinder with a variety of mouth pieces, band aids, dressings, intravenous sets, heart medications, lidocaine, medication for allergic reactions, like bee stings, and asthma, heart defibrillator and a heart monitor.

They also carry a cell phone and a minimum of bicycle repair equipment. The bicycle pump has even been used on several occasions to pump up flat tires on wheelchairs.

In gratitude for the donated helmets, the paramedics hand out information and cards about the Mary Bridge/Tacoma Wheelmen Helmets on Wheels Program.

Donovan noted that the fire department employees have a "nice guy" image that they would like to expand on. He is available to talk to groups about the bicycle paramedic

program. He would also like to see the PFD paramedics heavily involved in First Aid and bicycle training.

He said the "working" members of the bike patrol are keenly aware of the needs of all bicyclists, including a proper fitting helmet and bicycle (stem and seat). And during the day they also need to gulp sufficient levels of nutrition and fluid.

"Some of our people are on a bike for six to eight hours. We don't want them to bonk at the end of the day."

Pat also emphasizes the need for training for officers, noting that bicycle police training has been strongest in the Northwest. "Ninety percent of our riding is very slow speed as we move through crowds," he said. "So, our training is geared for bike handling." The training builds confidence in the paramedics.

They use cone courses and include instruction on jumping curbs or riding down staircases.

The idea of bike-mounted paramedics was primed with built-in acceptance, Donovan said.

"We are eye-level with the people," he said. "People relate better to people on bikes. People have a huge trust in us. We are the first they see. So we want to set a role model."

Canadian Exchange Ride

August 1-16, 1998

Jan Brame

Editor's note: This is the third installment of Jan's adventure. The last installment will appear in the February newsletter.

Friday August 7th - Powell River to Gibsons-Mileage 64:

Today we cycle the "Sunshine Coast" which is so named because of the mild climate it enjoys. However, in August that translates to HOT! These were some of the hardest, hottest, hilliest miles I have ever done.

After packing up and loading the van, it was 15 miles to Saltery Bay and a ferry through Jervis Inlet to where we start again. By the time 5 miles were gone I was walking the hills. We stopped at Pender Bay (which was kind of a miniature Gig Harbor, very cute) for lunch. We pushed forward but I kept wishing for the van to appear on my horizon.

Finally, at mile 43, at the top of yet another huge hill, there it was! Plus a lake! My prayers were answered, so off came the shoes and socks and jersey and into Trout Lake I went. Roz, who was driving the van that day, joined in the swim, while Mary K (who had declared another holiday) read in the shade. The lake was so perfect, clear and cool that I hated to get out. So Dena and I joined the van club once again and on to camp. We stayed at Bonnie Brook Campground, which was very nice.

Our sites were right on the water. An eagle even flew down the beach. Some of the gang got pizza and beer so we feasted like kings. The full moon came up big and orange from behind the firs. It was awesome.

Saturday August 8th - Gibsons to Whistler-Mileage 70:

My day to drive the van! Six of the folk got up early to catch the 6:30 a.m. ferry that goes from Langdale to Horseshoe Bay by West Vancouver. The fast folk and the van people felt no need to get up that early. Bob C got the van and trailer out of the campground (it was very tricky) and we headed for the 8:20 a.m. ferry. After a beautiful ferry ride he also unloaded and drove the first couple of miles. I then drove us to a deli at Lions Bay.

After a nice breakfast at the deli, Bob C unloaded his bike and got ready to ride. Mary declared another holiday, so Bob C, Bob M, Steve and Scott headed down the road. I drove Mary and I to Squamish (the road hugged the coastline all the way) where we drank lattes and hung out waiting for them to show up.

When Scott reached us he said Bob C could not ride any further. Scott's back was hurting him so he loaded his bike and we went back up the road to pick up Bob C. We eventually caught up with the 6:30 ferry people to offer support to them. The day was hot and of course very hilly with some very long climbs.

Steve got in the van at Brandywine Falls. Mary and I hiked into the falls, which was very pretty. Greg was determined to beat Bob M and said he would eat a slug before he would let Bob catch him. Not two minutes after that, here comes Bob just cruising and passes Greg before they both got out of sight.

The rest of the crowd made it to Whistler. We checked into two suites at the Snowbird Condo's, which is a very, very nice place. I got a room to myself. Toni and I shopped for lots of beer, wine, snacks and a birthday cake so we could have a party for Mary's 50th birthday, which was today. Ralph and Dena had a jersey made that said, "I went over the hill at Whistler". Toni's husband Vern joined us with their dog, Bonnie. We went to Whistler Village for a very nice dinner and a lovely night.

Sunday August 9th - Rest Day - 0 miles:

No riding today. I ate a light breakfast and then wandered down to Whistler Village to do some shopping. I ran into Ralph and Dena there and had coffee and dessert with them. We then visited more shops. There was a high wire trapeze where they were tossing little kids around way up high. The kids were in harness and it looked like a lot of fun. Dena is afraid of heights, so Ralph and I took the double chair up to the top of Blackcomb Mountain and went for an alpine meadow hike.

It is so beautiful up there that you can see forever. On the ride down in the chair lift we saw another bear. The group has been giving me a bad time about my tires being

too fat for a road bike. So Roz got two of his spare skinny tires and a group of the guys installed them on my bike. They are convinced it will help me ride better. We then went to dinner at the Spaghetti Factory. Check out is tomorrow morning, but I wish we could stay longer.

Monday August 10th - Whistler to Lillooet - Mileage 84:

We woke up this morning to gray skies and drizzle. After breakfast we set out and it turned to rain. The first 20 miles into Pemberton would have been a lovely and mostly downhill swoop, however the rain turned it into a brake-gripping slide. We arrived at a deli and wrung out our socks and ate a little something. Mary and Dena got into the van with Scott and Bob C. I decided to ride a little more and had a great 12 miles. The rain had stopped and the country roads through a valley were unoccupied and pretty.

Then the hill (mountain) started. The van sensed my need and stopped for me. They don't call me the "Van Queen" for nothing! This was an ugly 5000 feet elevation gain on chip seal roads. The smell of the cars burning brake pads coming down this side of the mountain was overpowering. Roz, Carol, Joyce and Greg just kept going. The rest were way out front. I can't believe these people. Vern, who is driving their car as a supplemental sag, was broken down at the top of the mountain. Carol got within two miles of the top and pooped out. She was so disappointed. The van folks went over the top and down the other side and caught up with Joyce.

Since there were only 30 miles to Lillooet and I thought the worst was over, I unpacked the bike to ride with Joyce the rest of the way. It was all right at first, but then the hills began again. Inclines of 11% and worse. When we finally got to the top of what was the last hill, there was a sign warning motorists about the next 6 miles. There was 2 miles of 13% descent, then 2 miles of 11% finishing off with 2 miles of grades of 10%, to 7-8%. The road was still chip seal and very bumpy.

We set off down the hill feathering the brakes and trying not to go too fast though the hairpin turns. This was so steep I thought I was going headfirst over the handlebars.

We stopped 3 times on the way down to let the rims cool and our hands to unclench. We set up the tents in a very windy field next to the highway (of course). A puppy from the camp has adopted us as his very own. We had a great Greek dinner in town.

Tuesday August 11th - Lillooet to Boston Bar- Mileage 64:

We had breakfast in Lillooet. The puppy from the campground followed us and sneaked into the restaurant to sit under the table. The morning was sunny so we set off for some nice climbs and good downhill swoops. It was pretty good for about 25 miles. The hills got harder, the day got hotter, and I just kept getting weaker. I was riding with Mary and Vern. At first Vern would stop at the beginning of a hill and load the bike on the van and then get off at the top and swoop downhill till the next hill. I was thinking about doing that also! I walked most hills, and there was a nasty headwind.

We were three miles from Lytton when Toni came back with her car. Even though it was mainly downhill into town, by then I had had it. I loaded the bike and gave up. Lytton was a dirty stinking town with no place to eat except a grocery store. The forest fires were very close and it was smoky. I joined the others, eating sandwiches on the step of a deserted storefront next to the grocery store.

I rode the rest of the way in the van with Bob C, who is driving every day now. Mary and Dena joined me as "Van Princesses". We had another campground right next to the highway (of course). So I must get out my earplugs for tonight. Our dinner was at a German restaurant right next door to the campground, which had a great rib special. The traffic is still heavy at 9:00 p.m. The semi's are one right after the other.

Wednesday August 12th - Boston Bar to Harrison Hot Springs - Mileage 65:

The traffic in the morning is very intimidating to me. The semi's are non-stop. The road travels down through the Fraser River Canyon with lots of tunnels to go through. I chicken out and decide to be a van queen, with Mary and Dena as company once

more. We stopped at Hell's Gate and rode the tram to the bottom of the canyon. Bob M, Toni, Roz and Carol were there. Dena went down in the tram with us, clutching the center pole and closing her eyes.

Hell's Gate is a very narrow river gorge with salmon gates on both sides. We stopped for pie at a diner about 8 miles from where the road was supposed to split to the less used highway to Harrison. Mary and I decided to ride so we started out after lunch. It was at least 95 degrees. After about 5 miles we came to a hill that seemed to magnify the heat. I got to the top and looked for Mary. She was getting into the van, so I turned around, coasted back down and hopped in.

Mary says that this is it for her, she quits. She is going to try to find another way home. We get to the campground and of course there is no reservation! Not only that, they closed their tent area due to landslides. Ralph had gotten in first ahead of us and found another campground that we liked better, the Bigfoot Campground. We got cleaned up and went into Harrison for dinner. Harrison Lake is big and beautiful. I can't wait for tomorrow because it is a no riding rest day. Bob M is going to do a big hike up to another lake.