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Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

February 1999

Founded 1888

Bicycling Iceland

Steve Brown, TWBC Vice-President

February 16th is our first general TWBC club meeting of 1999. Tim Bailey and John Greengo will be presenting an exciting bicycle trip to Iceland. With the added bonus of seeing Oregon's own Keiko the killer whale, maybe this is the trip to consider in 1999.

Once again the meeting is Tuesday, February 16th. The monthly meeting starts at 7:00 p.m., and is held at the South Park Community Center, 4851 S. Tacoma Way, in Tacoma. Food, door prizes, and a chance to visit with other club members add to the fun. For more information on this club meeting or future meetings call Steve Brown at (253) 752-4038.

Next month: 2,500 mile solo bike trip to Peoria, Illinois

Greater Seattle Bicycle Expo:

The Season-Opening Celebration of Cycling!

Bike Expo 1999 will be held Friday, February 19th from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, February 20th from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, February 21st from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the Exhibition Hall, Mercer Forum, and Mercer Arena at the Seattle Center.

In its 11-year history, Bike Expo has become the country's largest consumer show for bicyclists and bicycling. The decision to open to the public on Friday afternoon as well as Saturday and Sunday should attract new visitors and offer a unique media opportunity.

TWBC will once again sponsor a booth promoting our club, club events (particularly Daffodil Classic and Peninsula Metric Century), as well as cycling in Pierce County. Club volunteers will staff the booth. For their efforts, volunteers receive free admission to the Bike Expo.

Come early, enjoy Expo, and help promote cycling. If you have any outstanding pictures from a club activity, or bike rides in Pierce County you would be willing to display, please let Mike Romaine or Peggy Fjetland know.

Foothills Trail Update

Carla Gramlich

The Trail has new pavement ready for riding. About two weeks ago the trail had an additional three miles added from "Bernie's Place" near Orting toward South Prairie. This section of the trail travels over four trestles. Volunteers of the Foothills Rails to

Trails Coalition refurbished three of these trestles. The other trestle had the help of the Washington Department of Transportation, when the bridge was used as a detour for the highway.

I was walking the trail the weekend following the pavement work. It was amazing that so many different kinds of users were out on the trail. Families on bicycles, people walking, and horseback riders were enjoying the trail and getting along together. I was passed by Pierce County Parks Director, Jan Wolcott on his bicycle, and was told that he was now working to get the trail into South Prairie.

The Foothills Coalition received \$5,000 from the Green River Bicycle Club. This group has disbanded due to low membership, and the remaining members decided to make a large donation to the trail. We are saddened by the loss of this organization, but we are very thankful that the Green River members remembered the trail as a good place to invest their money for bicyclists.

Many special thanks to TWBC members who took time out of their busy holiday schedule to help the Foothills Coalition. These members spent the evening directing traffic at Fantasy Lights. For their effort \$2000.00 was donated to the Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition. With this donation the Coalition has plans to build the connection from McMillin Trail Head to the refurbished trestle. This will allow users the option of using the trestle instead of the narrow highway bridge.

Members who helped at Fantasy Lights and made possible the \$2000.00 donation are: Steve Brown; Bob Cook; Peggy Fjetland; Karen Forbush; Janice Jensen; Bob Myrick; Connie Reitzug; Mat Reitzug; Ernie Stephenson; Reggie Tison; and Kent Wienker.



Daffodil Classic, Peninsula Metric Century Update

Janice Jensen, TWBC Daffodil, PMC Coordinator

Preparations for the two greatest rides in Washington have been underway since November, and, I might add, are progressing nicely. T-shirt designs and colors have already been chosen and ordered. Flyers are being printed, and a special souvenir is being decided upon.

We have a great staff once again, composed of many repeat performers. Jim Powell is doing food again, but would probably appreciate some help when it comes to pick-up and delivery. Give him a call if you can help. Reggie Tison is in charge of the pizza party, souvenir, and volunteer list (again), so if you want your favorite spot or special time slot please hurry and give her a call. Dave Parker is taking care of parking, so if that is your forte call him soon. Or, maybe the sag wagon is your interest. In that case give Kent Wienker a call. He is in charge of the "sags." Bob Myrick is working on permits before leaving for New Zealand. Carla is in charge of publicity, and Dalene is doing registration. That is just to mention a few of our special staff. I left some others out so I'll have them to brag about next month (you know how I am always at a loss for words).

As I mentioned earlier t-shirts have already been ordered, so I hope the same volunteers we had last year will sign up again, and no one has lost or gained any weight, or your shirt will not fit! New volunteers are not to worry-I will make sure the shirts fit if I have to stretch or shrink them.

Mat and Connie have once again volunteered their lovely home for the "stuffing, folding, last minute question" party on April 16th. More details will follow later. The next staff meeting will be held at my home on February 4th at 7:00 p.m. Hope to see you there. Carol, Roz, and I thank you in advance.

P.S. I'm having a little problem with sani-cans, so be careful how much you eat, and especially drink, on the Classic. And you thought I was joking!

Future Ride Notes:

Cascade Challenge

Carla Gramlich

Aug. 14-21 is the date for a planned loop bicycle trip over a couple of mountain passes while carrying all your gear. The support will be from the few cyclists that will try this challenging trip over the Cascade Hwy, into the sun, and then back over Stevens Pass. More details later. Call Carla at 752-4038 if you feel you are up to this trip.

Activity Notes:

Bicycle Lobby Day: The Bicycle Alliance of Washington is sponsoring Bicycle Lobby Day on Thursday, February 25, 1999. It will be held at St. Johns Episcopal Church located at 19th and Capitol, about 4 blocks south of the Capitol Building.

This is an excellent opportunity for bicyclists to share their concerns on legislation and funding that affect bicyclists. Last year we were able to get the Cooper Jones Act passed, the first bicycle legislation in 10 years. This year, funding for bicycle facilities and better funding of safety programs in the Cooper Jones Act are issues on which we will want to be heard.

Most legislators welcome their constituents contacting them during the session, and many of them are bicyclists themselves. It is also a great opportunity to meet other bicycle advocates from around the state and share information. Come and enjoy a free catered lunch while listening to speakers from the legislature and bicycle advocacy groups!

Steve Bowman will be the coordinator for TWBC. Please contact him at 572-4740 if you can attend and let him know what legislative district you are in. He will coordinate the appointments with our legislators.

To get there, the plan is to take the 603X express bus from 10th and Commerce at 7:40 AM. You can also take the 601X from TCC or the 605X from the SR 512 park and ride lot. There is parking for about 50 cars at the church. Please let Steve know if you plan to drive and have room for others. Sharing our concerns with legislators is necessary to ensure bicycle facilities and programs are funded. Please join in this effort and we'll see you there!

Tour Opportunity: New Zealand in February
Bob Myrick

If you have a passport, some free time, and money, I may have a deal for you. Wayne Martin and Sue Gygax of Lake Chelan, Washington, are young retirees who put on low budget, cooperative trips to interesting places around the world. Wayne and Sue will put on three bicycle tours of New Zealand as follows: The Southern Alps. 670 Km. February 1-10, 1999. Cost is \$150.00. Otago and Dunedin. 550 Km. February 11-19, 1999. Cost is \$150.00. Bank's Peninsula Death Ride. 100 Km. February 20-24, 1999. Cost is \$80.00.

Wayne and Sue provide a sag bus, campsites, maps, and organization. You have the option of renting inexpensive cabins, and if you do not like to cook, restaurants are usually available.

To find out more about Wayne and Sue, look up their web site at www.nwi.net/~waynesue, or call me at 473-7455. Wayne started the Bicycle Institute in Ashland, Oregon, as well as the Third Hand and Loose Screws tool and parts supply businesses. He also started the world famous Death Ride in Markleeville, California, and the week long Supertour rides. Next summer, they will walk and hike through Europe.

Spring Break in Arizona's Wild West

Join Carol Davis on Scenic Cycling's tour from April 6-10, to experience the land of Saguaro in bloom. The tour begins in Tucson and goes through Bisbee and Tombstone. Call Carol at 857-5396.

Southern Oregon Whaahoo!! Experience the highlights of Southern Oregon from shining sea to purple mountain's majesty! From the evening of June 18 through July 4, we will ride about 770 miles starting with a train to Eugene. We will cruise to the ocean down to Gold beach for a rest day (Anyone for whitewater?). From there we turn inland to California Redwoods, and on to Ashland for a rest day (Take in a play?). Then it's on to Crater Lake and beyond along some of Oregon's most scenic byways. From Bend we'll head back to Salem to catch a train home.

Contact Roz or Carol Davis, 857-5396 or Ralph or Dena Wessels, 857-5658 to reserve your spot.

Tacoma Women's Bicycle Club

Carla Gramlich

Biker Babes are Back in the Saddle Again!

We have not disbanded, but we have been pursuing other activities. I tried to climb Mt. Adams and got as far as the false summit. Toni Matson has been preparing for a bicycle trip to New Zealand for a couple of months, and Janice Jensen was recovering from pneumonia and a sprained muscle from spin class. We all have different ways of having fun.

Toni and I have placed RAMROD as our goal for this year. RAMROD is Ride around Mount Rainier in One Day. This ride is about 154 miles with just a couple of hills. Janice is doing STP in one day. In fact, she is telling everyone within ten hours. Toni

and I have decided to do STP again and ride with Janice for moral support and to help our training for RAMROD. I am not sure about this ten-hour goal.

The Biker Babes have some new members. We are now holding our unofficial meeting the first Friday of each month. This meeting has attracted new members that show little interest in the above pursuits, but heard that there was food and fun at our meetings. There has been talk of having to have some goals that more people could participate in.

One option that is being developed is riding back from STP. Peggy Fjetland, one of our newest members, is calling it PTT. PTT is short for Portland to Tacoma. This will happen on Monday and Tuesday, July 12 and 13. There will be about 70 miles on Monday and 100 miles on Tuesday. You will need to carry your own overnight items on your bicycle. We will be staying Monday night in a motel in Castlerock. This option is available for anyone riding down with STP. It is possible that some people could take a vehicle down for others who are doing STP and then ride back. If you are interested in either option, contact Carla at (253) 752-4038 and I will match up drivers and riders.

Biker Babes have already started training for their summer goals. I started the year off by running a 5k and doing spin classes several days a week at the Y. Toni will keep up with her bicycling in New Zealand during January and February. Janice now has her own personal trainer. We are all waiting for better weather in March to get back on the road with some longer rides. For more information about our training rides and meetings, give me a call.

Next Month: More training and some new wheels.

Legendary dream deal

Dorian Smith

The e-mail came screaming over cyberspace to the Tacoma Wheelmen's e-mail address like a blast from the past. A bicycle dealer was offering 500 reproductions of the 1941 Roadmaster Luxury Liner bicycle for only \$495! These limited editions, the ad claimed, normally were sold for \$3,000.

It read like a gold discovery. The e-mail was peppered with more exclamation points than a Tom Wolfe novel or advertisements for thigh cream. Buyers were tempted with claims that the Roadmasters were of the same quality as the reproductions for Schwinn Black Phantoms which a few years ago were eagerly seized for \$5,000 each by nostalgic baby boomers.

When I called the phone number after hours, I connected to the answering machine of an Illinois bike store. So, I guess the offer has some legitimacy. But still it reminded me of a famous hoax that has reached almost "urban legend" status in the world of motorcycles. I remember it clearly because I fell for it.

In 1970 I commuted to my University of Washington classes via a Suzuki motorcycle. It was fun and very fast for its size. When I cracked the throttle of the 200cc two-stroke engine, I was a blur in a haze of blue smoke. But I dreamed of owning a "real" motorcycle, one with a menacing growl instead of the high pitched "rick-a-tick-tick-tick" of the Suzuki.

One day an older looking student in a large psychology class, noticed the helmet I was carrying and asked about my motorcycle. We chatted briefly about bikes, then he asked a question that was made of the stuff of dreams:

A friend of his had just discovered a warehouse full of pre-war 45-cubic inch Army-issue Harley Davidsons. The machines were still packed in grease in their original crates. The friend had the option to buy them for \$100 each. But he didn't have enough money and needed some investors to buy the whole warehouse.

Would I be interested?

In a split second, I offered to buy two. I jumped despite the fact that \$200 was a major portion of my meager disposable student's income for a year.

I almost couldn't sleep that night. For the next few weeks I asked him about the Harleys. He said his friend was still looking into it. A few weeks later he stopped attending the class. For several years I thought I lost the opportunity of a lifetime, until I read in a motorcycle magazine that the warehouse-full-of-Harleys is a well-known ruse. Tacoma Wheelmen President Ernie Stephenson said that back in the years when he rode he heard about a "lost warehouse" of 500cc Triumphs.

I laugh now, because motorcycles no longer interest me. But I must admit I wouldn't laugh if someone were to invite me to collaborate on purchasing a warehouse full of Paramounts or Bridgestones or Sun Tour components.

No matter how improved, lighter, reliable or high tech the new models, we are always susceptible to possessing a piece of the glorious past.

Depending, of course, if it's a righteous good deal.

Have you volunteered yet for the Bicycle Expo, Daffodil Classic, or Peninsula Metric Century?

Past pedaling

anne heller

Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years

An Early TTP (Tacoma To Portland)

Every year nearly 10,000 cyclists ride from Puget Sound to Portland in one of America's most popular cycling events, the STP. Assisting their efforts are the latest high tech bicycles, specially designed clothing and power bars. Sag wagons are near at hand for the inevitable mechanical problems. The route is always over paved roads.

Many who reach Portland after two days consider the one-day goal beyond imagination. In 1897 two young Tacoma wheelmen traveled that distance in one day, long before derailleurs or anatomical saddles.

By the time of his death on February 16, 1980 in Tacoma, 100-year old John P. Fink had led a full life. For 70 years he was a sports reporter for the Tacoma Daily Ledger, as well as for newspapers in Olympia, Aberdeen and Portland. Nearly 87 years earlier he made sporting news of his own when he and a friend rode their wheels 165 miles from Tacoma to Portland in 21 hours and nine minutes.

On August 31, 1897 John Fink of 814 North K St. and Will Palmer of 612 South K St. decided to demonstrate the practicality of using bicycles to travel long distances. Their challenge to themselves? To ride their wheels to Portland from Tacoma in one day. Knowing that people might be skeptical about the feasibility of their endeavor, they arranged to carry a message from the Ledger office to the office of the Portland Oregonian. Along the route they would stop at railroad stations to have the stationmaster "read their cyclometers and register over signature the distance traveled and the time of day they reached the various points."

Beginning at the Ledger office at 107 South 10th St. they planned a trip "south by city and suburban bicycle routes through South Tacoma to Rainier; thence on the railroad track to Tenino; thence on the wheeling path to Bucoda; country road to Chehalis; plank and corduroy road to Napavine; railroad track to Kalama; ferry boat or row boat across the Columbia River; county road to Linton; railroad track and wagon road to Portland."

They achieved their goal of one day with several hours to spare. Having left the Ledger office at 2:11 a.m. they arrived at the Oregonian office at 11:20 p.m.

The TTP was born.
