

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

November 1999

Founded 1888

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‘Bicycles from Heaven’ fixes 500 bikes a year for local children

Kent Wienker

Tapping the generosity of cyclists with too many bikes and the skills of inmates at the McNeil Island Corrections Center, Bicycles from Heaven has become a Christmas tradition.

Sponsored by the Clover Park Kiwanis Club, the redistribution program refurbished 500 bicycles and has set a goal to fix 700 this year.

In the past two years the Tacoma Wheelmen board voted to donate \$500 to the program which is largely funded through the profits from the Kiwanis concession stand at Clover Park High School.

Under the supervision of acting Superintendent Don Snyder of McNeil Island, bicycles are barged to the facility where inmates repair, paint and install new parts on donated bicycles.

Mike Thomas, a prison guard, has taken the program to heart. He has enlisted the support of inmates and their families and helped organize fundraising dinners, auctions and raffles.

Major donations were received from Raleigh Bicycles and Seattle Bicycle Supply, a parts and BMX wholesale company. Sherman Williams donated paint and Spoke and Sprocket donated many usable parts and bicycles.

TWBC members have contributed about 100 bikes and held many work parties. Over the years Lee Fowler, a member of the Kiwanis Club, has guided the program over the years to become an ongoing charity activity that has brought happiness to hundreds of children. The program now focuses on children's or smaller bikes.

Club members who would like to donate bikes or parts should call Kent Wienker at 253-752-0764.

Separate checks worse than flat

Dorian Smith

Ride leaders have several tasks to perform: Organize the ride's starting time and location. Choose an adventurous, scenic and safe route. Assist slower or novice cyclists. And, finally, select a bakery, cafe or restaurant so hungry riders can replenish hundreds of calories in a hearty and convenient atmosphere.

In the last few months that final, critical experience has been shaken by a few eating establishments that have been favorite destination sites for cyclists. The food was sumptuous and the seating places were comfortable. But the servers' insisted that all orders must be recorded and paid through a single bill.

According to a waitress at the Redhook Brewery, that rule is unilaterally enacted to prevent nonpayment by one or more diners from a large group.

But cyclists ride and dine in packs. They travel lightly with just a few bills or sometimes only a debit or credit card. The mathematical chore of dividing up individual orders from more than a dozen meals is a hassle that is greater than a flat tire on rainy January day.

A sad example occurred during a club ride on the Burke-Gilman Trail Oct. 17. About 14 Wheelmen at the Redhook were curtly told that all parties over eight must pay together. The Wheelmen grumbled but accepted. But the hassle was magnified when they tried to pay at one cashier and were redirected to another counter. Each then was instructed to take a moment to compute their share of the total bill — including meal, beverage, tax and gratuity — on a hand-held computer.

The procedure took about 20 minutes. They were penalized for being customers.

Last summer another group of Wheelmen were given the same demand by a waiter at the Powerhouse Restaurant and Brewery in Puyallup. When they were refused an appeal by the manager, they left without ordering. Instead they rode to the Fred Meyer plaza and dined sumptuously at O'Farrell's (highly recommended).

In a later phone call Powerhouse manager Francisco was perplexed. He said the Wheelmen should have been allowed separate checks and service should not have been refused for such a trivial accommodation. On occasion to avoid confusion in large groups, he avoids single bills for parties spread out over a couple tables, which makes sense.

He said he'd to talk to his waiter and graciously invited the Wheelmen back.

In a phone call to the Redhook, the waitress was less gracious. The Wheelmen could have ordered individually at the bar, she said. (They weren't given that option by the waitress, she was told.) But single checks for groups larger than eight were "our policy."

The Wheelmen should have a policy for the Burke-Gilman Trail: Dine at the Grill and Tap Room which is about 10 miles from Gasworks Park, near the Juanita Parkway and one mile from the first large bathroom stop. It's on the water.

They offer lots of water and bread while you wait for your order. And they welcome separate checks.

Bicycle dates to note

By-laws reviewed at Nov. 2 board meeting

At its November meeting, the TWBC board will discuss possible changes to the club by-laws. A by-law change is not a simple matter and indeed it shouldn't be. By-laws protect the long-term interest of the club. Key club information like the club name, dues, officer description, election procedures and disbursement process are all protected by the by-laws.

To receive a copy of the by-laws (adopted in 1993) by mail call Steve Brown at (253) 752-4038. Club members' opinions are welcome at the board meeting, 7 p.m. Nov. 2 at the downtown Tacoma Public Library.

All day Effective Cycling class Nov. 13

An Effective Cycling class will be held at 9:30 a.m. Nov. 13 at the Tacoma Main Library. The cost is only \$5 for TWBC members. This class will be excellent instruction for riders of any skill level. The day will be spent in the classroom and another afternoon will be needed for the road portion of the class. TWBC club member Lisa Quinn will teach the class, using material and information she acquired at a training class in Salem. To sign up call Carla Gramlich at (253) 752-4038. Limited to 12.

Banquet reflects on millennium's end

Each year the Tacoma Wheelmen holds its annual banquet to reflect on the past year. This year the banquet will be held January 15, 2000, at the Tacoma Mountaineer's Club, 2302 North 30th Street.

The evening starts at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$13 for adults and \$9 for children. Mail your reservations to: TWBC, PO Box 112078, Tacoma, 98411.

The event is traditionally the largest gathering of club members. Master of Ceremonies, Bob Myrick promises a few new surprises. Club members are reminded to send ride logs to Touring Captain Connie Reitzug.

TWBC Y2K RYDS 2B GR8

The first meeting of the joint ride planning committee was held October 11 at Karen Forbush's house to start preparations for the club-sponsored rides in the year 2000.

The 25th Annual Daffodil Classic will be held Sunday April 16th, the 18th Annual Peninsula Metric Century will be held Sunday June 4 and the new Headwater Century will be held Sunday, Sept. 10. The club's booth will be on hand at the Bike Expo in Seattle Feb. 18-20 (Friday to Sunday).

The club coordinators received many new and fun ideas to make each ride really special. Volunteers are now needed to make it happen. Many committees are shared for all the rides for ease of coordination and to maintain TWBC's standard of quality service.

Anyone interested in helping the club stage these rides and promote bicycling in the community, is invited to help! For instance, registration personnel are needed.

This task could be handled by someone with good computer skills to be responsible for the pre-registration and possibly another person to handle day-of-ride registrations.

Also needed are people to captain the food stops along the route. One idea is a big finish line celebration.

Who in the club is a party person?

Openings also are available for dealing with Promotion and Publicity, T-shirt's, Souvenirs, Sag Support, Parking, Equipment, Course Markings, and as Volunteer Coordinator. Anyone can lead a committee or be a member of a team. There are many opportunities meet other people in the club and use unique talents.

Jan Brame is hosting the next planning meeting on Monday, Nov. 15 at 7 p.m. at 1209 No. Anderson.

Call Jan Brame at 253-759-6984 or Karen Forbush at 253-572-0764, or you e-mail to daffodil@twbc.org to help make TWBC's rides the best in Washington State in the new millennium.

Past pedaling

anne heller

Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years

While researching the history of bicycling in the local area I am continually struck by the similarities between today's cyclists and those of 100 and more years ago. Then, as now, the concerns of the avid wheelman deal with improving roads, finding the best routes, riding etiquette and purchasing the newest and most advanced equipment.

In this spirit of TMTCTMTSTS (the more things change, the more they stay the same) I offer the following poem from the April 11, 1896, issue of Harper's Weekly.

A Multitude of Counsellors and no Safety.

I am an ardent bicyclist, and so perhaps you'll feel
That it is rather strange that I was never on a wheel;
And yet the reason's plain enough -- I cannot yet decide
On which of all the many makes I ought to learn to ride.
I've pored through countless catalogues descriptive of machines,
And the advertising pages of the monthly magazines;
And its certainly perplexing, when I want to get the best,
To read that each has some advantage over all the rest.

I've questioned every man I know who rides upon a bike,
And though they all have different kinds (which all look just alike),
Each one about the merits of his own alone will talk --
And so, when I would ride my wheel, I take the cars or walk.

W. Aken.

Members

Renewing members: Brian Wester and Sylvia Russell, Robert A. Warfield, Fay Tong, Michael Smith, Douglas Shipman, Sheila Pudists, Robert C. O'Hara, Margo M. McClellan, James Howe, Linda Higgins, Mike Hassur, Janelle Baldwin

Major rides of 2000 scheduled

On Oct. 9, the Bicycle Alliance of Washington hosted a meeting for clubs around Washington to set the major rides next year. Here are the rides planned so far. Some clubs have not given information. Compiled by Ralph Wessels.

February

18-20: Bike Expo, Cascade Bicycle Club

27: Chilly Hilly, Cascade Bicycle Club

April

16: Daffodil Classic, Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

May 6: Ride Around Clark County, (360) 892-8765, Vancouver Bicycle Club

7: Camano Climb

13: Rhody Tour, Port Townsend Bicycle Association, (360) 385-3912,

14: Two-County Double Metric Century

19: Bike to Work Day, Seattle

20: Inland Empire Century

June

3: MS Mountain Bike Ride

4: Peninsula Metric Century, Tacoma Wheelmen

18: Tour de Pierce, Pierce County Parks

24: Cannonball, Redmond Cycling Club, www.blarg.net/~rcc/

25: Flying Wheels, Cascade Bicycle Club

30 to July 3: NW Tandem Rally, (360) 452-9408,

<http://www.olympen.com/nwtr2000/>

July

1: Midsummer Nightmare Double Century, Spokane Bicycle Club,
home.att.net/~Loyd.Phillips/

8-9: STP, Cascade Bicycle Club

15: S2S, Redmond Cycling Club, www.blarg.net/~rcc/

22-23: MS Bike Tour

27: RAMROD, Redmond Cycling Club, <http://www.blarg.net/~rcc/>

August

11-12: RSVP, Cascade Bicycle Club

18-21: League of American Bicyclists, Cascades to Coast Rally,
Western Washington University, Bellingham, Skagit Bicycle Club and
Mt. Baker Bicycle Club, <http://www.nas.com/bikeclub/> or
<http://www.bikeleague.org>

20-26: Ride Around Washington, Cascade Bicycle Club

September

10: Headwater Century, Enumclaw, Tacoma Wheelmen

17: Autumn Century, Spokane Bicycle Club,
<http://home.att.net/~Loyd.Phillips/>

30: Issaquah Salmon Days

October

1: Kitsap Color Classic, Cascade Bicycle Club

7: Manashtash Metric Century Fall Colors, Ellensburg

Bike to Work Fair surveyed commuters, dispensed info.

Lisa Quinn

The Bike to Work Fair held Aug. 19 at the Tacoma Downtown Farmers' Market was a huge success. Information was available on the Bike Buddy, a new program from the City of Tacoma allowing experienced cyclists to provide information to novice bicyclists.

A City of Tacoma Bicycle Police officer was on hand to answer questions about the bicycle unit in downtown. A representative from Tacoma Bicycle provided free bike checks ups and chain cleanings.

Of 87 individuals who completed the bicycle survey, 31 currently bike to work. The number one reason given was for exercise and to improve health. Other reasons given for bike commute, in order of response, was environmental, non-motorized travel faster than car, and economic.

Reasons for choosing NOT to bike included unsafe traffic or road conditions, lack of shower/lockers, lack of bike storage, flat hair and bad weather.

Amtrak, City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Pierce Transit, Tacoma Bicycle, Tacoma Wheelman and Weyerhaeuser sponsored the event.

To get general bike information call Pierce Transit at 253-581-8038.

For information on the Bike Buddy program, call Lisa Quinn at 253-591-5380

Riding Vashon

Robert Deehan

My favorite local bicycle ride has got to be Vashon Island. I first “discovered” Vashon in the summer of 1996 before I had gotten back into riding a lot. At that time riding around Vashon was a major undertaking but has gotten a lot easier since. For anyone in the club who has not ridden Vashon, it is a beautiful rural island with lots of small hills. There are few flat spots.

The scenery, hills and sparse traffic are what I find appealing about Vashon Island. Right after the Tahlequah ferry dock, at the beginning of the ride, one encounters the first hill. This is a great hill, just about the perfect grade. It is steep enough to feel like a hill but not so steep that I have to be in my bottom gear. Because the hill comes right after a 15-minute ferry ride I am not warmed up and can't push as hard as I would like.

At the halfway point of a counterclockwise ride, I usually turn off of Vashon Highway to 140th Street to get to the west side of the island. This makes a loop of about 25 miles that I typically complete in about 90 minutes.

The west side of the island has breathtaking scenery. At the crest of many of small hills riders can see over to the Colvos Passage, the body of water between the island and Kitsap Peninsula. The final downhill into the Tahlequah Ferry Dock is fun and fast especially if when trying to make the ferry.

Many times during a torrential downpour, I flew down this hill to catch the ferry. The ferry schedule is a good training tool.

I believe that nearly all the Wheelmen have ridden Vashon at least once if not many times. Despite the hardships of the hills, many bicyclists can be seen on the island on any sunny Saturday or Sunday.

From the president's handlebars

Bunnies endangered, too

Sound Transit policy strands cyclists

Steve Brown TWBC President

My pet peeve of the year will no doubt be the new Sound Transit buses inability to handle more than two bicycles per bus. They refuse to allow bicycles IN the bus like the customer-oriented Pierce Transit system has done for years. My frustration became very personal when my bicycle was refused access to a nearly empty bus going from Seattle to Tacoma.

I had a few hours to vent my frustration with Sound Transit while I rode in the dark south through the Kent/Auburn valley. I now have a greater appreciation of how difficult it is to avoid those little bunny rabbits running across the Interurban trail near Auburn.

At first it looked like cotton blowing across the trail, but I soon realized it was cottontails running rapidly across the trail. Though I have never fallen on railroad tracks, I didn't want to be the second TWBC member in recent history to be downed by one of those tiny rabbits.

Newsletter Deadlines

December 1999

Copy and photos: Nov. 9

Ride calendar: Nov. 16

January 2000 Copy and photos: Dec. 14 Ride calendar: Dec. 21

February 2000 Copy and photos: Jan. 11 Ride calendar: Jan. 18

March 2000 Copy and photos: Feb. 8 Ride calendar: Feb. 15

Four tips for sharing roads with cars

From Adventure Cycling Association

Riding a bicycle in traffic can be very dangerous. However, adhering to a few simple principles can greatly reduce risk.

Anticipate

Anticipation is a kind of controlled and relaxed paranoia. Assume that all motorists are out to kill you. That way you will not be surprised and caught off guard. For example, a car that turns right or left in front of the cyclist. Through anticipation, the bike rider will “sense” when the car will make its sudden turn. This is referred to as “Zen radar.”

Inform

Bike riders should always let motorists in on what they intend to do through bike position, proper hand signals and eye contact. Make no sudden moves. Never weave. Signal every turn. Always ride with the flow of traffic, never against.

Plan

One component of planning is a sane route. Give priority to streets with wide bike lanes, paved shoulders and low traffic volume. Get a copy of the county's bike route map. Every bike commuter should have one.

Obey

Don't run stop signs, stop lights, or even yield signs. Don't pass by crossing double yellow signs. In other words, obey all traffic laws as though you were a car. Your job as a bike commuter is to harmonize blend and flow with the motorized traffic.

TWBC E-mail list developed

TWBC is building its e-mail list as another means to better inform club members of club activities. E-mail also can provide a quick way for club officials to hear back from members.

New e-mail addresses can be added to the club roster by sending them to newsletter@twbc.org. In the past few years e-mail has become a very effective means of communication through the use of computers. For TWBC it could be a way to inform members of last-minute rides or even ask for volunteers for the club's several community projects.

In the future e-mail will be more frequently used to ask members to submit information or articles for the club's newsletters or to participate in surveys on bicycling.

Are We Weird?

Reprinted from Bikehighway.com

According to a study by the Transport Research Laboratory, cycling is perceived as a good thing for the planet, society and the individual. But cyclists are viewed as possibly eccentric.

It's official. The general public (or at least our English cousins) apparently hold schizophrenic views about cyclists. According to a major British study, bicycling is seen as "healthy exercise, a way of relieving stress and a good family activity". However, cyclists are not accorded equal status - cyclists are considered the lowest of the low in the road hierarchy. And "cycling as something you give up when you grow up and buy a car."

It seems the decision to reject cycling as a means of recreation or transportation is heavily influenced by three factors that cycling advocates have previously glossed over — image, inertia and negative peer pressure. That's why folks will drive a car a few blocks to a suburban train station rather than use their bikes.

It may also help explain why road bike clubs often fail to attract 20 and 30 year olds. Cyclists are viewed as the poor who can't afford cars, eccentrics, retirees out for a spin on the bike path, students, or muscle bound athletes flying up a hill at impossible speeds.

According to TRL, the public does not have a mental picture of the mainstream recreational or commuting cyclist; and therefore does not relate to cycling as normal middle class adult behavior.

The report emphasizes that large corporations and institutions "have a crucial role to play.

By endorsing cycling and providing facilities, they could effectively "legitimize" cycling as suitable and desirable. Although driver behavior

and traffic speed were cited as the principal deterrents against cycling, in both the U.S. and the U.K. " segregated cycling lanes have not proven sufficient to induce" folks to ride bikes.

It seems no amount of segregated cycling infrastructure will induce people to leave their car in the garage and pedal to the station, to shops or just for the fun of it. The problem is evidently based upon image, not reality.

Ride notes

The Fort Flagler Ride is with the Boeing Bicycle Club led by Pete and Hannahlore Maas. The ride starts at Edmonds Ferry but others can start at the Kingston side and meet the riders at the ferry. Saves ferry fee! The ride is to Fort Flagler where we stay in the barracks. The \$22 fee includes SAG to carry gear, dinner and breakfast. 425-255-4192. Or Steve and Phyllis Lay at 253-759-1816

The West Sound Cycling Club and TWBC again will join forces for the Olalla Polar Bear Jump ride on New Year's Day. This will be the time to see several hundred people jump into the frigid waters of Puget Sound. Hot lattes available for spectators. The ride will start at 10:30 a.m. at Jerisich Park in Gig Harbor (on Harborview Drive along the water). If the weather is nice, we'll do 27 miles. If not, 15 miles before a nice, warm lunch with good camaraderie near the start. Ralph Wessels, 253-857-5658. Foothills at the Movies ride that was scheduled for Dec. 8 has been postponed until after the first of the year.

Cross Country 2000: If you are interested in riding across the United States or part of it in the year 2000, call Bob Myrick 253-473-7455 Last minute rides: If you would like to add a last-minute ride for a weekday, contact Connie Reitzug at 460-1533 by Sunday afternoon. For a

weekend call Thursday afternoon. Riders' essentials: All bicycle riders are urged to wear a helmet, carry repair items — such as spare inner tubes — and first aid supplies on every ride.

Ride leaders: Cue sheets or maps are recommended for rides longer than 35 miles. Also turn in your ride sheets if you are a ride leader. Or else the club won't know how many rides you led through the year by the annual banquet in January.

New TWBC jerseys: In small, medium, large and extra large. 2XL and 3XL. Some sizes are limited so get yours before they are gone. Price is \$53 and still a bargain when you compare to similar quality from retail outlets. Features 15-inch zipper with reflective strip on back pocket and arm bands. Highly visible colors.

Cycling can be a brain tease

Dorian Smith

When they're not boasting about their 23 pounds of exotic metal, cyclists like to rave about the medical benefits of pedaling.

Few sports have transformed so many sluggish bodies to lean sinew.

Many Wheelmen are recovering couch potatoes who spent evenings barely able to twitch finger tips over a remote control. Now they brag about losing 25 pounds in a single year (as I did during my first active year with the Wheelmen). Or leading the pack up alpine highways.

And cycling provides these benefits without sacrificing joints or tendons. Club member 80-year-old Phil Blenkush took up cycling at age 72 when his knees could no longer handle moderate walking and hiking.

But surely cycling brings mental benefits. Cerebral activity must be stimulated as a quickened pulse pumps nutrition and oxygen to the brain.

Just watch a group of cyclists when they stop for lunch. The conversation is animated and eager. The topics are creative and outrageous. That's because their brains are engorged with blood and their synapses are popping like mosquitoes on an electric patio bug killer.

I call it the "steep hill inspiration" and first experienced it while climbing Tubb's Hill during my first Daffodil Classic. Before I started up, I had been trying to remember the names of the three well-known guitarists who had performed with the '60s British rock band, The Yard Birds. I recalled Eric Clapton and Jimmy Page. But the third name escaped me.

As I climbed the hill, I wasn't aware of anything — only the pavement, Granny gear and aching lungs. When I hit the top, my physical exertion relaxed and my leg muscles didn't need the blood. So my still heavily pumping heart redirected the red corpuscles to my head. And suddenly my mind was invigorated with visions and ideas.

Jeff Beck! Yes, Jeff Beck was the third guitarist! For the next quarter mile I hummed "I'm a Man," grinning like an idiot. Pretty soon, though, my thoughts went back to their moderate tempo.

Curious, I paid attention as I climbed the next hill. My head began to numb as blood was diverted to my straining quadriceps. But I tried to focus on a minor web page coding problem: how to create a banner headline with reverse type.

With sweat dripping off my chin, I hit the top and it happened again. Yes, of course! The answer was so simple: Set the font color to white in a table cell with black background!

It has become a favorite game of mine. Every time I come to a hill I ponder a problem. The answer appears — only briefly — while blood flow to the brain is at a peak. Now I know why Ralph Wessels attests his love of hills. It's like a psychedelic rush.

Once on a trip to Vashon Island — which is all hills — a revolutionary design for an electrical generator appeared in my mind's eye. (But I forgot it on the ferry ride back.) Another time after climbing McCarver Street to I Street, Einstein's theory of relativity became clear. He was wrong on one critical point but I forgot the reason by the time I reached the 24th Street pedestrian bridge.

But the most perplexing experience of all was last summer during an Oregon trip. I was alone on the highway up to Mount Bachelor. With no one to talk to, I pondered over the age-old question: what is the meaning of life? The highway was cold and foggy most of the way up, snow was piled up on the sides of the road. But when I approached the peak, the clouds parted and the sun blazed against blue sky — the perfect setting for an epiphany.

As I hit the top and my muscles relaxed I could feel an inspiration brewing in my head. But instead of a vision or a spark of universal truth, I was urged to look down at my bike. I gazed at the top tube, the handle bars and the brake levers.

For the next 23 miles as I coasted to Bend, I studied the simple yet elegant lines of my front forks and the curve of the downturn bars. They never looked lovelier. I listened to the gentle harmonic hum of the tires

and marvelled over the perfect geometric structure of the wheels. I was enraptured by the shifters, the derailleurs and how the chain always perfectly meshed with the cogs for hundreds and thousands of miles..

And then I realized the answer to the meaning of life. It didn't appear on a cosmic billboard, but in the form of my trusty road-soiled bicycle.

STP roundtrip, Hurricane Ridge warmup for RAMROD

Carla Gramlich

On July 3, I led a group from Tacoma to pick up STP packets in Seattle. A cold monsoon drenched us before Puyallup. After a coffee break the group's consensus was to head back. Despite Noel Hagen's comment that "Biker Babes never turned around," we've become very good at cutting rides short this season due to rain and cold.

Janice Jensen felt that she could make STP in one day this year. I told her that I was willing to help her make that goal. So on July 9, the Biker Babes met in Seattle at a University of Washington dormitory.

In true form the babes snuck a man into our dormitory room. Vern Martin (better known as Vern Matson) also decided to ride STP in one day. He had replaced his large chain ring with a 56-tooth ring, the largest chain ring I had ever seen. We nicknamed him, "Sprocketman."

We arose at 4 a.m. on Saturday. Janice had trouble sleeping all night which was an omen. Toni Matson, Janice and I headed for the lobby and waited for Vern. After a few minutes, Toni took off. Eventually

Janice and I decided Vern was on his own and we headed for the start line to take off shortly after 5 a.m.

The weather was nice and we headed south on the new route. I led and kept an eye on Janice. I just wanted to keep her at a steady pace. I rolled into the Spanaway checkpoint at 8:30 a.m. When Janice arrived a few minutes later, I knew that she wouldn't make it.

Steve Lay helped her to the EMT paramedics where she was given oxygen and a glucose test. When her blood sugar registered very low, an EMT suggested the hospital. But Janice promptly refused. I waited until her husband Ray arrived.

By then the check point was busy and I changed my plans for the day. I became a two-day rider with Steve Brown who had planned to ride to Centralia and camp.

It was a nice trip down to Centralia. The next morning I woke up early to beat the heat. I had trouble sleeping on the ground without a sleeping pad. So getting on the bike seemed to be the best option.

I left Centralia shortly after 5 a.m. determined to ride a fast century. At Napavine, after climbing hills, I stopped for a pancake breakfast, which changed my goal of arriving in Portland before noon. The day was sunny and I was pushed by a little tailwind along the Columbia River into Portland by noon.

I found Toni on a massage table. I also got a massage. I found Janice and Ray. Janice was feeling better and gave me an "honorary" one-day rider patch. STP in one day was last year's goal. This year I had my eye on RAMROD.

I also found the missing Sprocketman. He took the elevator down to the garage and left before Janice and I. He also got lost in Longview. A couple miles from the finish line an STP official told a group he was riding with that they were officially off the course.

He finished in under 24 hours. I always thought you should arrive before dark if you do STP in one day. Vern proved that there is more than one way to do this ride.

Riding back in a headwind

We had dinner at a nearby brewery. On Monday morning a small group headed north for home.

The Columbia River tailwind was now a headwind as we slowly headed for Rainier. We crossed the Longview Bridge and stopped at the park, that was the Kelso checkpoint the day before, for an afternoon nap. Then rode to Castlerock.

We rode 65 miles that day and 100 on Tuesday. After four days of riding I was tired but closer to RAMROD.

I had one more training ride: a short ride up Hurricane Ridge. The day started with a slight drizzle but sunny a mile from the top. After lunch at the top, we put on all our clothes and headed down.

A short distance from the top we were in a drizzling cloud with low visibility. This was the first time I had ridden my Mondonico down a steep pass. It handled wonderfully but I had to keep the speed down due to the fog. I beat John Thomas and Steve Brown which is surprising since I am a real wimp on descent.

RAMROD in 13 hours

July 26 was Ramrod. I met Toni at the start around 5 a.m.. The first light of dawn made the start safe. Near Orting, we broke from a long line of riders.

As I passed one man, he commented that my tire looked low. I spent some time looking at my rear tire before I figured that he was messing with my mind. A few minutes later, Toni really had a flat.

After a short stop at the Eatonville bakery, we climbed the hill to Alder Lake. In Ashford we stopped for a snack. The first food stop was at mile 64 before Paradise.

Toni quickly passed me. We agreed to meet at the next food stop. I slowly ascended Paradise and then quickly down to Box Canyon. By early afternoon I was on time.

I ate more food to prepare for the climb up Backbone Ridge. Then the climb up Cayuse Pass. At the water stop, six miles from the top, I ran into a bunch of Wheelmen. Peggy Fjetland gave me some ice for my hydration system and I started up the section that I really dreaded.

I took short breaks and ate a power bar. It was hot but I had climbed this road on a hotter day. I got some relief from the spray of waterfalls near the roadway.

At the top of Cayuse Pass, I descended to the next food stop and learned that Toni had waited at the top. We rode down to the Crystal Mountain turnoff for the "Deli," and ate a wonderful sandwich made by another Wheelmen, Cythina Hammer.

With only 34 more miles we were on the home stretch. Bob Myrick had warned me that we could hit a head wind on this section. It was going to

be harder than we thought as we headed downhill into the wind. We rode together on Mud Mountain Dam Road. The end was near.

Toni booked down the last hill as I took it carefully. If you have an accident it probably will be in the last five miles and I was having trouble seeing with the sun.

At 6:30 p.m. — after 13 hours— I finished RAMROD.

We celebrated at a local Mexican Restaurant. At home and took a hot bath and some ibuprofen for my left quadracep (thigh muscle) that was slightly swollen.

I went to bed at 10 p.m. and slept well. The next day I had to get up early to take care of some errands. I relaxed in the afternoon with a massage and packed in the evening for a weekend bicycle trip.

After RAMROD, the planned weeklong trip over the North Cascades Aug. 7 was a piece of cake.

Do you want a T-shirt for riding 2,000 miles?

Connie Reitzug
Ride Captain

As the 1998-99 TWBC riding season comes an end, it's time to start determining the nearness of our goals: Do we need to sprint to reach that 2,000-mile mark?

Or is the sheer ecstasy of riding our bikes all that really matters?

The 2,000-mile mark is a benchmark of pride in the Tacoma Wheelmen. It is the accumulated “fiscal” mileage (October to October) of a club member’s attendance on club rides exceeding 2,000 miles.

From a ride captain’s perspective, I’m looking forward to our Y2K celebration, the annual banquet in January. Some folks have sights focused on that symbol of a 2,000-mile season, the “2,000 mile club shirt.”

Others are more cavalier and view this shirt as just another in a collection of T-shirts that sit unused in the drawer. Either way, our club will accommodate all club members’ wishes. But as the manager of the touring budget, I would prefer not to order and print up shirts for those who don’t want one.

Therefore, this year the newsletter and website will feature a response form which will request the following information:

- What is the tally of all your club and commuter miles?
- Is a verbal acknowledgment at the banquet adequate?
- Will you attend this year’s banquet?
- If you want one, what is your shirt size?

Remember, this information must be submitted by Nov. 15. The response form must be returned to me with your Ride Log or shirts cannot be ordered.

Happy trails and I hope you all reach your goals.

Do you qualify for a 2,000 mile T-shirt?

Mail to PO Box 112078, Tacoma, WA 98411

Name _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (incl. Area Code) _____

Total club miles _____

(Ride events listed in the ride calendar)

Will you attend this year's annual banquet? Yes No

Do you want a 2,000-mile shirt? Yes No

If yes, your T-shirt size? S M L XL XXL

Puddles to motorists: roads are hazardous

From Adventure Cycling Association

Following are some of the hazards you may encounter on your commute.

- Sand and Gravel: on pavement, sand and gravel can cause loss of control.
- Glass and Debris: they can cause a flat tire and/or loss of control.
- Puddles: you never know the depth of a puddle or what is hidden in it.
- Sewer grates: your wheel can get caught in them.
- Cracks in the Road: the edge of the Pavement and sharp bumps can throw your bicycle out of control.
- Railroad tracks: always cross railroad tracks perpendicular to the rails (straight on). If tracks are poorly maintained, walk your bike across them.

- Parked cars: always stay a car doors width away from parallel parked cars. Assume that a car door may open into your path even though you cannot see anyone in the car.
- Snow and slush: it is hard to steer and pedal in excessive snow or slush and requires a great deal of energy. Under these conditions, bicycle transportation is not the best choice.
- Ice: ice is sometimes hidden, particularly black ice and ice under new snow. It is hazardous to cyclists as well as motorists. If it is icy, don't ride in traffic, even if you are outfitted with studded snow tires. You may be able to maintain control, but the motorists may not. If you have to ride in icy conditions, reduce your tire pressure and relax, allowing the bicycle to find its way.
- High winds: high winds can blow cyclists off the road or threaten them with blowing objects.

Being passed by large trucks becomes more of a hazard because the intermittent blocking of the wind makes it harder to control your bicycle. If caught in a wind storm, it may be necessary to get off your bicycle and find an alternate form of transportation.

Lightning: cyclists make good lightning rods! Do not stand under a tree Find a ditch or depression to crouch in while remaining on your feet — do not sit or lie down.

Irate dogs: most dogs can be deterred by eye contact, a commanding tone of voice or a squirt from your water bottle. If those techniques don't work, get off your bike and use it as a shield while you walk away. The best insurance against a canine encounter of the worst kind is to carry dog repellent. Spray repellents are available in canisters which secure

to your bicycle for easy access. Dog repellents also make good people repellents, so carry one for personal protection.

Irate motorists: when you encounter motorists having a bad day or a bad attitude, be cordial even if they are in error. This can defuse a potentially hostile situation and prevent motorists from finding a reason to run you or the next cyclist down. Under no circumstances is the use of an obscene gesture appropriate or safe. Besides you don't want to give them the satisfaction of knowing they irritated you.

Bike Quotes

The following quotes were compiled by Adventure Cycling Association
“Cleaning a bike’s like cleaning a toilet. If you do it regularly, it’s fine and easy. If you wait, it’s a truly disgusting experience.”

— **Steve Gravenites**

“Variable gears are only for people over 45. Isn’t it better to triumph by the strength of your muscles rather than by the artifice of a derailleur? We are getting soft. Give me a fixed gear.”

— **Henri Desgrange, 1903**

The best rides are the ones where you bite off much more than you can chew, and live through it.”

— **Doug Bradbury**

“Cyclists have a right to the road, too, you noisy, polluting, inconsiderate maniacs! I hope gas goes up to eight bucks a gallon!”

— **The dad of Calvin & Hobbes,” responding to Calvin’s request for traffic safety poster ideas**

“The bicycle is the most civilized conveyance known to man. Other forms of transport grow daily more nightmarish. Only the bicycle remains pure in heart.”

— Iris Murdoch, *The Red and the Green*

“The bicycle is a curious vehicle: Its passenger is its engine.”

— John Howard

I delighted in the supreme sense of freedom that comes with the first mile of a bicycle journey. No bills, no messy relationships, no job. All I needed was stuffed into four sturdy panniers.

— Dan Buettner

Want Ads

Wanted: Recumbent tandem. Noreen or Al, 253-952-8812.

For sale: Bianchi Volpe, 52 cm, 2.5 years old. Complete except for pedals. \$350. Jan 253-759-6984.

Wanted: 2 kids bikes. There are two boys in my neighborhood, age 8, who do not have bikes. If you have a bike (or 2!) gathering dust in your garage, please consider a donation. Thanks. Noreen 253-952-8812.

P.S. I will buy helmets.

Lost and found

Found: A nice lightweight jacket and cap that belonged to a female bicyclist on Anderson Island, on Aug. 21. It apparently fell off her bike as she rode off. Call (253) 584-7284.