

# Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

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Founded 1888

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## RR Crossing tamed

After a long campaign of several years, the railroad crossing on Chamber's Creek Rd. near Steilacoom was paved in mid-October to make a safer crossing for bicyclists.

The total project cost the owners of Atitibi Corporation about \$9,500, minus a \$2,500 contribution by The Tacoma Wheelmen Bicycle Club.

The notoriously dangerous juncture of road and tracks frequently caused bicycle accidents because the shoulder was too narrow for a safe 90-degree approach for cyclists. Cyclists risked catching wheels in the tracks and being thrown.

Atitibi Corporation not only paved a wider shoulder but engineered the laying of asphalt so it is as close as practical to the tracks.

TWBC club member Ralph Wessels complimented the assistance of Dave Gebert, Steilacoom's city engineer, and Daryl Lantz of Atitibi for their assistance.

"I'm glad that through the cooperation of Atitibi and Steilacoom, we were able to fix this road hazard," said Wessels who took part in negotiations. Bob Myrick, the club's Government and Community Liaison, wrote several letters of concern, detailing the danger.

Wessels noted that the company also gained in the project by eliminating a potential liability.

"Now we have to focus our attention on other dangerous railroad tracks," he said. Topping the list is the Tacoma City-owned crossing on State Route 507 near Roy.

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## **Pave the Goose!**

### **International news of interest to TWBC**

The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (GVCC) recommended paving sections of the Galloping Goose trail through Colwood and Langford on Vancouver Island.

Local community councils will ask government district to seek funding for the project. The club also suggested that the pathway be paved three meters wide.

The trail attracts more than 4,000 users daily, including a contingent of Tacoma Wheelmen who make an annual trip on the Galloping Goose, led by Scott Kubiszewski.

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## **Few bidders for a bike in a class all its own**

**Dorian Smith**

They laughed when I started the bidding.

On Nov. 6, I joined nearly two dozen Wheelmen at the Bicycle Alliance fundraising auction in Seattle. Our tables had already taken the winning bids for a couple vacation getaways. And one member missed out on a customized Davidson touring frame (for \$1,400).

The evening was gay, exciting and fueled with red wine and custom beer in the spirit of donating for Washington's preeminent bicycling support group.

At the propitious moment I waved my bidding number when the auctioneer asked for the opening bid of \$200 for a Raleigh SC200. There were a few chuckles, mixed with gasps at our table. At first no one competed with me. Then quickly the auctioneer shouted in his staccato chatter as the bidding started to climb.

At \$375, the bike was mine. I felt like I hit the Trifecta at Emerald Downs.

Probably my fellow club members were nonplussed by the 3-inch thick seat, supported by springs. Or the straight bars mounted high like a proud hybrid.

Or maybe it was the sight of the chainguard that launched their guffaws. Or the pedals that were neither clipped nor clipless. Certainly this was no bike to keep up with Dave Parker's sleek "Jake the Snake" or Bob Myrick when he's steaming up to Packwood.

But the SC 200 is an aluminum swan surrounded by mallards. It is the bike of the future. I know Scott Pierson will understand because he's raved about the hordes of practical bikes that fill European streets.

At the heart of the Raleigh's soul is a maintenance-free Shimano Nexus 7 rear hub with seven internal gears. Both wheels are fitted with drum brakes.

The gears are changed by a grip shifter and the drum brakes are activated by traditional handlebar levers. But that is where tradition ends. The gears can be shifted at any moment, even when stopped. And the fully enclosed brake drums are protected from rain.

It is truly an all-weather bicycle.

Due to its frame design the bike is not a long-distance traveler. But no other bike can match it for commuting practicality. I've already installed fenders. It will be the bike I use to run errands, cross a couple neighborhoods or zip down to the Grand Cinema.

This bike could easily double my riding time, because it will take bicycling beyond pure recreation.

The only downside so far has been wheel removal. A couple extra cables need to be unhooked to free the wheel for tube repair.

But it is a breeze to ride. The 7-speeds are nearly the same as the gearing on a '70s 10-speed. The top end is sufficient for in-town trips and I cranked up a steep side street off N. 30th with little difficulty.

Unfortunately, due to the finicky bicycle market, the bike is no longer in production with the Nexus 7 gearing. The SC200 models for Year 2000 will be equipped with derailleurs and cogs, according to a Raleigh representative.

"You've got a rare bike," he said. I'm betting I'll also have the last laugh.

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## **In Y2K Warfield will be getting around (the world)**

*Bob Warfield is a long-time member of the Tacoma Wheelmen and a community activist. During the Year 2000, he will join a group of 250 cyclists aged between 17 and 81 on a 20,000-mile around-the-world bike trip, the ultimate cycling expedition. Organized by Tim*

*Kneeland Associates, they will visit 45 countries and every continent except Antarctica. They will camp 60 percent of the time and travel on 18 planes, 11 boats and one train.*

*You can see them as the lead unit in the Tournament of Roses parade in Pasadena Jan. 1. Bob has accepted the additional responsibility of dispatching progress reports on his trip via a Sharp TM-20 Internet-ready hand-held computer. These reports will appear in the club's newsletter and on the club's website (twbc.org).*

## **Bob Warfield**

Summer 1990, I rode my big bike north to Canada, east to Quebec, south to Georgia, west to New Mexico and northward home to Lakewood. It was a wild tour of sights, friends and family over some 9,000 miles through Rocky Mountains, expansive plains, piney woods, urban ganglia, familiar Appalachian hollows, western isolation, showers, sunsets and postcard viewscapes. Music was a powerful run-up whisper from the stainless muffler strapped to the side of a BMW, K-100 motorcycle. Exercise consisted of periodic sets of extending extremities into the wind where the road straightened and scenery granted recess — now there's a publishing opportunity for someone.

I love speed and managed the trip with only two tickets.

Occasionally I would pass cyclists, burdened with packed panniers, colorful pedalists persevering against wind and hill toward uncertain adventures. Always, I would regard them with odd envy, thinking that's what I'd rather be doing — rather be riding.

Don't get me wrong. I've traded up to a newer, lighter, faster BMW; but after several days on the road, cycling held more appeal.

Since "Toad's wild ride," I've discovered more fun on the road with the Courage Classic fund raiser for Mary Bridge that many Tacoma cyclists enjoy each summer.

Several years ago, I confirmed a rumor that Tim Kneeland — creator of this Cascadian delight — was planning a supported ride around the world for the entire Year 2000. At first, I didn't know whether to say "Whoa" or "WOW!"

But the more I thought about it, the more I knew that I would spend a lot of Y2K wishing I was along if, in fact I wasn't.

Certainly, there are more imaginative and cost-effective routes to adventure travel that may offer superior rewards than investing your confidence in someone else to arrange an itinerary. Perhaps, I'm just a dilettante who requires such assistance.

But I knew that I was far too distracted by other projects and interests to "eat the elephant" without such arrangement. Besides, I reasoned that I could afford it (\$36,000, discounted substantially for early commitments) and it seemed opportune for one of life's grand transitions — retirement.

Now there are detractors out there who will yell that I've been retired for 20 years, but don't you believe them. With obligations few and manageable, how could I resist a dream bicycle ride around the world?

So, betting on the mare, in 1995, I sent TK&A my deposit and proceeded merrily with life unhindered by need of further grand stratgey or thoughtful planning.

Once a "Toad," ... Well, it's one thing to jump on your bike for a few sunny days of dining with the Rotary in our handy outback. But it's another to pack up for a whole year — even when someone else is going to carry your gear and feed you twice a day.

What was I getting into, for a fairly serious, soon-to-be unrefundable piece of change? To be continued:

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## From the President's desk

**Steve Brown**

Do something crazy to celebrate the new year. Start riding your bicycle to work. Ride across the country. Lead a ride every month for a year. Take a bicycle repair class. You get the idea — do something you've never done before.

Don't forget to turn in those ride logs to Connie Reitzug. Not only can you earn mileage awards at the annual banquet Jan. 15, but it helps us lobby for better bicycle facilities when the club has written documentation on just how much bicycling is really going on around here.

Because of the great fall weather I rode 3,500 combined club and commute miles last year. Unless my wife talks me into riding across the country next year, that is probably the most miles I will ever ride in a year.

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## Food and friends overcome Tour des Lac's dust storm

**Janice Jensen**

The Tour Des Lacs was held Sept.25-26. My husband, Ray, and I left Tacoma on Friday and headed for Yakima to meet Ed and Linda Thoms. I met Ed and Linda On Wheelin Washington in 1997 and have kept in touch with Ed via e-mail.

We'd been trying to hook up for a ride since. We met at their home in Yakima and car pooled to Spokane. We talked all the way to Spokane — okay — I talked all the way to Spokane but Ed's from the Bronx so he helped. We settled into our rooms at the Shilo Inn and met in the lounge for a complimentary drink and toast to good friends and a good ride.

Later, at the Bayou, we met up with Karen Forbush, Kent Wienker, Jan Brame and Gus Fant. As we picked up our packets and introduced our friends to club members, we could feel the ride's excitement rising. We all had dinner and returned to the hotel where some of us met at the hotel hot tub to relax.

The next morning we met for a complimentary breakfast in the hotel restaurant (yum) except for Kent and Gus, who left early for the long route. Our ride didn't start til 8 a.m. We piled into Ed's big van and headed for the start, tummies full, well-hydrated, we could hardly wait.

We started on the Centennial Trail with wind to our backs. What more could you ask for? Great friends, great trail, great tail wind until we noticed the skies slowly turning brown. The wind was blowing so hard at times we didn't have to pedal.

We couldn't figure out what was going on until much later when we learned that there were two neighboring fires and the wind was actually a dust storm. We still had a great time and wonderful food.

At Coeur d'Alene we could hardly see the lake, the skies were just brown but we managed to run into Ralph and Dena Wessels on the trail and headed to their hotel room. The rooms, of course, weren't ready because as Wheelmen we were just too fast. So we invaded each other's rooms as they became ready.

A little later it began to rain. I never thought I would be happy to see rain but it changed the brown to blue. My helmet was brown and so were many of the faces coming in from the long ride.

The air finally cleared and it was nice and crisp. Some of us walked all over town checking out the sights and buying up hard candy from the Candy Store (yummy). A few of us met up in town for dinner while others enjoyed the hot tub and a late night supper.



We all managed to meet in the hotel lobby the next morning where we enjoyed a continental breakfast before heading back down the trail for Spokane. I had a bad headache due to the dusty weather and Ed ate something the previous night that didn't agree with him. He stayed ahead of us most of the way trying desperately to get back to the start and his van where he could just lie down.

Even with my headache getting worse I was still having a great time, it was nice to be on my bike again. My Stevenson that is! We ate plenty of food at the rest stops which were about 10 miles apart.

The ride back was wonderful, no dust and the tail wind was with us again. Just as we entered Spokane, Ray got a flat so I showed him Steve Lay's short cut to fixing a flat without taking the tube off the rim, just a small section. The section you fix! Everything put away and back together we finished the ride.

We met everyone at the Bayou once again and had baked potatoes with all the fixings. Later we said our goodbyes and piled into Ed's van for Yakima.

In Yakima we moved bikes to our van and Karen, Jan, Ray, Linda, Ed and I went inside to view the pictures Ed had taken with his new toy (digital camera). After the movies the rest of us headed for home and of course work the next day! It was a great ride and weekend, hope to see more of you there next year.

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## Ride notes

The West Sound Cycling Club and TWBC will again join forces to do the Olalla Polar Bear Jump ride on New Year's Day. If you've never seen several hundred people jump into the frigid waters of Puget Sound, this will be the time to do it. Brrrrr!!! There will be 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 it is not so nice, we'll go 15 miles before having a nice, warm lunch with good camaraderie near the start. Give Ralph Wessels a call at 857-5658 if you have questions.

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 Bob is interested in bearing south to Colorado and picking up the old Santa Fe trail to Sedalia, Mo. Then, Bob would ride on the KATY rail trail across Missouri to St. Louis. He could also turn south to Missouri. Several club members have already expressed interest in this self-contained tour. Please feel free to leave your thoughts regarding departure times and routes.

**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.

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Past pedaling

anne heller

*Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years*

Nicotine patches, hypnosis and aversion therapy have nothing on No-To-Bac, a "guaranteed tobacco habit cure" from the 1890's.

A full page advertisement for "No-To-Bac" in the April 11, 1896 issue of Harper's Weekly decries the physical and moral degeneration caused by the use of tobacco. Some of the physical effects of smoking mentioned are, "the parchment-like skin, wrinkled as with age, the face lengthened by the poisoning and consequent reducing of the pancreatic gland and maxillary muscles, eyes hollow, haggard and restless from nervous disorders and lips and teeth showing constant contact with the dark ooze of the damp tobacco."

The advertisement quotes at length several professional bicycle racers on how tobacco affected their performance. For example, Julian P. Bliss said, "No man is allowed to use tobacco when in training, and if he uses it up to the time of training, as many do, it will give that dryness of the throat and choking sensation the first weeks. Your wind is so short that you have to stop pedaling to catch your breath — the heart does not seem able to furnish the long breathing necessary to long-continued action. I always quit smoking three months before I begin training, and I have never gotten down to work as in the spring of '92, when I had used no tobacco during the winter rest."

Even more frightening than the physiological impacts of smoking were the psychological consequences. A "leading" neurologist said, "The cigarette is often responsible for the worst sort of insanity — moral insanity. More than half the shocking crimes we hear of being committed by young lads are directly traceable to the cigarette habit. It deadens the sensibilities, wrecks the nervous system, weakens the brain, and all the evils of over-stimulation are the natural result." Indeed, there are several accounts of men who murdered their families for no reason other than the fact that they "smoked continuously." One man "asphyxiated his wife, himself and four children. His friends testified that he was an inoffensive man, and, though a saloon-keeper, he drank very moderately, but was an inveterate smoker."

Perhaps instead of the tepid surgeon general's warning about smoking as a "hazard to your health," the warning label on cigarettes should mention the possibilities of turning a smoker into a mass murderer.

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*Government report*  
bob myrick

Last month, the TWBC Government Affairs Committee meeting included Steve Brown, Carla Gramlich, Scott Pierson and myself.

**Tacoma Narrows Bridge:** I was contacted informally by a representative from the Department of Transportation regarding cyclists' opinions on placing the new bike lane under the new bridge rather than on the car deck. Opinion seemed to be slightly in favor of placing the lane under the bridge.

**Cushman Powerline Trail:** The county finally has a good easement permit agreement with Tacoma Power. Pierce County Parks can now proceed with the design and construction of the new trail which will parallel Highway 16 in the Gig Harbor area.

**Lakewood Comprehensive Plan:** Steve will send a comment letter to Lakewood supporting walking and bicycling as basic modes of transportation and recreation in a community. If you live in Lakewood, please try to attend the comment meetings. The draft plan has proved to be quite controversial and some residents would just as soon see only cars along the streets in Lakewood. Others fully support walking and bicycling.

**Tacoma Innovative Grant Program:** We applied for small grants in all the Tacoma Neighborhoods ranging from bike parking to lane marking to the opening of trails.

Each neighborhood is eligible for \$20,000 in improvements. Grant decisions should be made by late December.

**TEA 21 Grants:** I reviewed the Puget Sound Regional Council's proposed grant awards to communities in the region. About \$15 million in federal grants are available to help build projects amounting to \$26 million. The Foothills Trail, the Tacoma Dome pedestrian enhancements, the Puyallup Riverfront Trail, the Neighborhood Business District improvements, the LeMay Transportation Museum, the Thea Foss Waterway esplanade and the Point Robinson Lighthouse restoration are all projects proposed to be funded in this area.

**ABITIBI:** We sent \$2,500 to ABITIBI's Steilacoom paper mill to assist in a \$10,000 paving project on the dangerous railroad crossing. Thanks to Ralph Wessels for all his help and efforts on resolving this matter. Please try the new crossing and report your results and views to one of us.

**Bike Safety on South Tyler:** Carla reported that travel on South Tyler Street is now more hazardous due to the new golf course facility near S. 44th Street. It seems the city has installed lanes that obliterate the very narrow road shoulder in this area.

**Cooper Jones Bicycle Safety:** Carla attended a meeting down in Olympia to plan a strategy for an upcoming meeting with a State Legislative Committee. The meeting will hear testimony on preserving the bicycle safety program.

**Sound Transit:** This agency is proposing quarterly meetings to discuss bicycle mobility within their three business lines: bus travel, light links, and heavy rail. I indicated quarterly meeting were all right with us as long as more frequent meetings could be called as necessary.

Steve discussed his unpleasant experience with Sound Transit. He was stranded in Seattle because two bikes were already on the bus he wanted to take to Tacoma. He rode home in the dark as a result of Sound Transit policy.

**Puyallup Avenue Bridge:** Scott reported to me earlier that ramps have been added to the bridge across the Puyallup River. Try them the next time you are in that area.

**TWBC Name Change Proposals:** Carla reported she has to spend a lot of time with legislators explaining our glorious, historic name. This hurts when only five minutes may be available to influence a legislator. I suggested she should just say "I represent Tacoma's Bicycle Club".

The controversy continues. Please write our newsletter editor ([newsletter@twbc.org](mailto:newsletter@twbc.org)) with your opinion on the issue.

The next meeting of the TWBC Government Affairs Committee will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 7 pm at Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue. You are invited to come out, have something to eat and participate.

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## Holiday Potluck

The annual Holiday Potluck and celebration will be held Saturday, Dec. 11. The club will provide drinks. The potluck will start at 5 PM. A ride (weather permitting) will start at 7 p.m. Reflective clothing and lights are urged.

The location is Joyce Clifford's home, 3811 N. Madison in North Tacoma. Due to limited parking, car pooling, parking around the corner or riding bikes there are suggested.

Attendees may come for the ride, the potluck or both

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## Daffodil meeting set Dec. 13

Jan Brame will host the next planning meeting for the Daffodil Classic on Monday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at 1209 No. Anderson.

Call Jan at 253-759-6984 or Karen Forbush at 253-572-0764, or e-mail  
daffodil@twbc.org.

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## Members

**New:** Erik and Randi Sevigny; Robert Hopkins; Chuck, Glenda and Taylor Hust;  
Michael A. Doyle

**Renewing members:** Chris and Joel Goodman, Dorian Smith, Santana Harris, Patsy Lavelle, Sue Mathews, Mae Bassett, Walt Boepple, Lonna Cain, Georgene Hawkins-Kunz, Harold E. Arborgast, David Barton, Ruth and Jocko Burks, Bill and Ruth Daugherty, Steven L. Forsness, James F. Henriot, Lewis Jones, Dough Ringenbach, Joy C. Roelofsz, Terry Rosberg, Suzanne Schodlbauer, Greg Torfin