

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

Founded 1888

August 2001

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Attend the meeting for this informative presentation by Tim De Jong...

Traveling in New Zealand people often comment that it is like “seeing the world in one country!” This is because every day you are confronted with a new landscape and the variety of scenery is amazing. With its spectacular wilderness areas, encompassing alpine and desert landscapes, magnificent empty beaches, rain forests and crystal clear rivers, as well as tranquil farmlands, spectacular thermal areas and a proud indigenous (Maori) culture,..New Zealand has it all in a small area, easily accessible by bicycle.

Tasmania, (Australia’s southern-most island state) has a lot in common with New Zealand.

Underpopulated and with large wilderness and World Heritage areas, Tasmania also has a variety of wonderful scenery, strange native wildlife and an interesting history dating back to the first convict settlements in the 1700’s.

Tim de Jong (from Pedaltours) has been guiding bicycle tours in this region for ten years and has combined his love of cycling with a passion for photography. This presentation is a selection of his shots from the 2000/2001 southern cycling season and is sure to tempt you to travel Down-Under!

Upcoming Rides in August and early September

Aug 10-11 — Ride from Seattle to Vancouver and Party (RSVP), Cascade Bicycle Club, 185 miles along scenic backroads of Washington and British Columbia. 206-522-BIKE

Aug 12 — TRYBYR, Capital Bicycle Club, Ride loops are 20, 30, 50, 80 and 100 miles. Starts at the Tenino City Park. 360-956-3321

Aug. 19-25 — Ride Around Washington (RAW), Cascade Bicycle Club, www.cascade.org/raw/

Aug. 19-20 — Courage Classic 3 days and 175 miles in central WA. Meals, entertainment. Includes rides through the Snoqualmie, Blewett and Stevens passes. Benefits the Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and the Children's Trust Foundation. 800-433-0528.

Aug. 25 — The Torture 10,000 Century, Portland Wheelmen's Bicycle Club, www.pwtc.com/event.html

Aug. 31-Sept. 3 — Sleeping Lady Tandem Rally Leavenworth. 1-800-574-2123...also... www.sleepinglady.com/tandemrally.htm

LETTER from the EDITOR

by **Richard Patrick**

Dear TWBC Members and readers;

I volunteered to be the TWBC Newsletter Editor and this is my first attempt journalism. My occupation gives me experience in technical writing, i.e techy instruction manuals...so this job is pretty challenging. This issue will probably have some things left out...like most of the want adds. I am in the process of becoming established and organized for this task and it will take a few editions to work things out. I apologize in advance for omissions.

To make this the club's newsletter...I am looking for ideas of what the membership would like to read about in addition to the usual established stuff. Some of my ideas are: Ride reports submitted by club members, about your bike (in previous issues a few years back), New/ beginning cyclists information,

product reports, good books for cycling (like a book report), “Can you top this”- stories of embellishment or boasting. These are some of my ideas...but I want to know your ideas, readers. Also, thanks to the regular contributors like Eddy Johnson for his excellent Bike Tech column, Bob Myrick and Anne Heller...and others that I am not aware of just yet. Please e mail me at rpatrick@harbournet.com...or call me at 253.274.8657 and let me know what you want and what you think. Thanks!

From the President's Handlebars

Anne Heller

Are you like me? Do you hate it when you have to agree with someone you disagree with? Do you cringe when forced to admit that the Republicans/Democrats/Libertarians/Greens have a point? If so, you know how I felt when I read the text of a commentary by Ken Schram, a KOMO TV commentator. On July 11 Mr. Schram had a few well aimed comments about bicyclists and their propensities to think they are immune from both traffic laws and common courtesy. I wish I could write to him and tell him that he doesn't know what he is talking about. I wish I could say that 99.9% of cyclists understand that if they want to be treated with respect on the roads, they need to show respect to other vehicles. Notice I said “other vehicles.” When on our bikes, we are “other vehicles.”

Would you run a red light when driving your car? (Please say “No.”).

Would you dart in and out of traffic, switching from lane to lane in order to save yourself 30 seconds of commute time? (Again, “No” is the answer I hope to hear.) Have you ever ridden against traffic? (Please, please, say “No”). Until bicyclists accept the fact that they are vehicles and must obey all traffic laws, they will not be treated with the respect they deserve on the roads. The following are Mr. Schram's observations.

Beware The 10-Speed Terrorists

By Ken Schram

I get to work the old fashioned way. I drive. Most of my commute is on surface streets. I've learned to live with the traffic mess because I have to. But I figure I shouldn't have to live with self-absorbed, holier-than-thou bicyclists.

I'm talking about the people who peddle through red lights and stop signs. I'm talking about two-wheeled commuters who zip around me while I'm in the middle of a right hand turn. Dressed in spandex or business suits, they're the 10-speed terrorists who create their own paths between two lanes of slow moving cars.

Streets too slow? No problem. Hop on the sidewalk and carom among the pedestrians. Then hop back into the street. One way street headed North? So what?! Mr. Mountain Bike heads the wrong way, riding south.

Bicyclists often exceed the speed limit heading down a hill; impede traffic as struggle up. They blow through crosswalks almost daring pedestrians to get in their way. Am I the only motorist who would, just once, like a degree of satisfaction by seeing one of those peddling anarchists pulled over by a cop and getting a ticket?

I know this is a bike-friendly region. I know those of us who use a car are supposed to feel shamed by those with a greater environmental conscience. I Don't Care. They want to share the same road. Let 'em start by obeying the same laws.

Lest you think I am too auto-friendly, I know drivers have their share of the blame when bicyclists and drivers clash, just last week I chased down a driver who ran a stop sign because he was chatting on his cell phone. The driver/chatterer in question claimed he ran the stop sign because I distracted him, which I know is untrue; he never made eye-contact with me. He was still chatting on the phone when I caught him.

Nonetheless, when bicycles and cars clash, the cars always win, no matter who was in the right. So, please, exercise your good judgment, your common sense,

your manners and your self-preservation instincts; the next time you are on your bike, flagrantly obey the law.

Bike Tech

Eddie Johnson

Your bicycle seat, excuse me, saddle, is probably the most personal component on your bike. Miguel Indurain, 5 time Tour de France Champion, used to carry his saddle with him when his bike was not in sight. Lance Armstrong, gram counter extraordinaire, uses a saddle that came out more than 20 years ago and is a boat anchor by today's standards. Those guys found the right seat, broke 'em in and will not give them up.

If you bought a bike off the rack, I'll bet you changed the saddle. There are so very many types and materials used today for saddles, just how do you know what's right for you? Unfortunately, one must ride a saddle, for a bit, to determine if it's right. Not many retailers will let you do that. It can be a costly hit or miss proposition.

There's no way anyone can tell you what's "best". If you listen to Bicycling Magazine they'll scare you into thinking that if your seat ain't got a hole in it, you're going to ruin your body. I'm sure there are people who have tried the "cutaway" type saddle and swear by it's comfort. I think that's swell, for them. I would hate to discourage anyone time for a new saddle I decided to try a Brooks. A miracle transpired brothers and sisters! No more neck and shoulder pain, Halleluiah! I was literally carrying my weight on my shoulders with the Turbo. The Brooks is wide, firm and contoured perfectly. I can feel the contact with my sit bones on the Brooks and I no longer have to hold myself up. Just set it up correctly and what a difference.

A Brooks may not be right for everyone (that's hard to imagine) and it's probably the heaviest saddle made for serious bike riders. Don't let weight

make the decision for you. This is way too important to count grams over, just ask Lance Armstrong.

The problems you hear about bike saddles causing organ dysfunction can be attributed, in my opinion, to poor set up on the bike. Ultra marathon riders that spend a lot of time on the Aero bars seem to have the highest instances of numb body parts. From what I've seen over the years, in the shops I've worked, on a number of bikes, the nose is pointed too low. This forces your weight farther forward (gravity you know) putting pressure on your crotch area.

Start with your saddle centered on your seat post and the nose parallel to your top tube. Move the nose up a fraction of an inch, no more than 3/8. Grab whatever tool you need to adjust your saddle up and down and fore and aft. Go for a test ride. Make adjustments on the ride until it feels right. If it never feels right maybe your saddle is wrong. Eddy Merckx would stop during a race and adjust his saddle. I'm not sure why, but he was always fiddling with his saddle position, even before he was having back problems.

There are tons of bike seats out there. The competition is fierce and they all have a gimmick to catch your eye. Brooks has been making saddles for over 80 years and the only difference today is that they offer a choice of rail material.

The last time I was in R.E.I, they had a sort of carousel set up with about 8 different bike seats. You could sit on each one right there in the store. What a great idea. Maybe your favorite shop will let you sit on it before buying it. Doesn't hurt to ask. Eddy (eddyj@galaxy-7.net)

Government report
bob myrick

Editor's Note: The June report was omitted from the July newsletter...so it is included in this edition....

Our committee last met at the Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue on Tuesday, June 5. We discussed several issues, but generally we are thinking that Summer is here and we should get out and enjoy our bikes as much as possible. Steve and

Carla were downtown listening to two women who are riding across the country to bring awareness to the Arctic Wildlife Preserve. Scott was home sick with a severely stuffed up head and wishing he was healthy and riding his bike.

We are hopeful that Dr. Ray McGroarty will write an article or letter to the editor about his concerns. Ray really believes that the provision of cycling facilities and safe walking facilities is crucial to a more livable city. He said that people should be responsible for their own health and need to ride and walk to take care of themselves.

Along those lines, Anne Heller attended the second Tacoma Walkable Communities Workshop. She indicated that Al Tebaldi and Bill Pugh seem to be serious in listening to and responding to the Neighborhood Councils' concerns about walking and bicycling. Al is the head Traffic Engineer and Bill is the head of the Public Works Department. Li Wung is also attending the meetings. He is the transportation planner in the Economic Development Department. The work group will continue to meet on a monthly basis. Anne or I plan to attend on your behalf.

I attended the Sound Transit's Bicycle Community Forum at REI in Seattle on June 4. It was fun to ride the bus to Seattle. REI is at the end of the line and is very easy to get to. The five dollar cost is very reasonable. The meeting was well attended mostly by Seattle cyclists and the government folks had excellent exhibits showing the efforts being made to snag pedestrians and cyclists.

On a related note Ralph and I attended the Bicycle Alliance of Washington meeting at REI on June 10. The Legislative Advisory Committee met from 11am to 3pm to discuss the current legislature and to consider our future actions. Ralph and I had an enjoyable 43 mile ride to Seattle and then decided to take the bus back home. Every aspect of our trip was great and very convenient. I hope you try this trip sometime. It's a great way to go.

During the past month, I have been investigating the Kimball Drive Park and Ride Lot in Gig Harbor. It seems that Pierce Transit was given a TEA21 grant to integrate the Cushman Powerline Trail into and thru the parking lot.

Unfortunately, it looked like the trail would only get halfway thru the parking lot and Pierce Transit neglected either by accident or intentionally to design in the trail. So Pierce Transit has tried to transfer the money to Pierce County Parks to help with the trail construction up to the edge of the parking lot. The trail is probably over budget so it would be good for the parks people to have some more construction money.

The Foothill's Trail Coalition had a field trip to walk the four mile rail corridor from Van Lierop's Bulb Farm to McMillin. The trip was very informative in being able to visualize the future trail. I found out a new traffic stop light was being designed for Old Military Road and the Orting Highway. I called WSDOT to make sure they were aware that a trail was coming thru this dangerous intersection. They didn't know about the new trail so they were happy to take this new information into their design considerations.

Several of us committee members will be out enjoying our summer in July, but the committee will still meet again on Tuesday, July 3 at 7pm at the Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue. I will be in St. Louis visiting relatives and riding my bike. I hope that someone will take the minutes and report back to you. Since it will be so nice out, I hope you will ride to the restaurant and have dinner with your fellow clubmembers.

Government report
bob myrick

Our committee last met at the Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue on Tuesday, July 3. We discussed several matters. Mostly we mourned the recent loss of Scott Pierson and thought about what a visionary he had been for our community. Scott's interests extended to the Tacoma art's community and to the creation of Green spaces within our City. I will have a ride later on this year to visit Scott's final resting spot.

We decided to purchase an engraved brick as a remembrance to Scott. It will be placed with the others at the Orting trail head. Hopefully, we will continue our efforts to remember Scott by promoting the idea of honoring Scott by naming the SR 16 trail, the I-5 pedestrian bridge, part of the new Esplanade on the Thea

Foss waterway or some other feature in the community for Scott. I have recently seen a good friend honored with a street name on a State owned facility.

It was gratifying to note that Governor Locke vetoed a clause in the Transportation Bill that could have delayed the construction of the Lake Sammamish Trail. The funding is now secure so we should have a trail in the near future unless there are further legal challenges.

In February, there will be a livable community conference for the Gig Harbor community. We hope to participate in some way to promote non-motorized transportation and the recreational use of the road system. The organizers hope to have yearly conferences thruout Pierce County. John Ladenburg is very involved in this effort.

The next meeting for Tacoma's Walkable Communities effort will be on July 16 at 5pm at City Hall. Anne or I will continue to attend these meetings to promote cycling. We intend to ask Al Tebaldi and Li Wung to designate an engineer and a transportation planner to be the specific contact for non-motorized transportation. This committee is the most appropriate way for us to promote our interests with the City at this time.

Doug McDonald is the new head of the State Department of Transportation. He brought four bikes with him from back east. He used to ride his bike to work. Barbara Culp from the Bicycle Alliance of Washington will be meeting with Doug and Mike Dornfeld in the near future. It sounds like we may have friends in high places.

It was decided to draft a letter to Barbara Skinner, mayor of Sumner, regarding the poor condition of the roadway on Valley Avenue by the Cannery. We will give constructive notice to her, the public works director, and Andrew Neiditz, the City Administrator. Hopefully, this will encourage the City to maintain the road properly before it is rebuilt sometime in the next six years. The road continues to be a hazard to cyclists and we are just lucky that a serious accident has not yet occurred next to the Cannery.

Several of us committee members will still be out enjoying our summer in August, but the committee will still meet again on Tuesday, August 7 at 7pm at the Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue. This time I really will be away, up in Jasper, BC trying to ride the Rockies down to Whitefish, Montana. I hope that someone will take the minutes and report back to you. To remember Scott, I hope you will ride or walk to the restaurant and have dinner with your fellow clubmembers.

from Ken Kifer's Bike Pages

<http://www.kenkifer.com/>

Printed from a collection written for cycling newsletters

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I received a call from John Smith, who was going to be on "Who Wants to be a Millionaire". He said that since he considered me to be a "major expert on the topic of bicycling" that he wanted to use me as a lifeline if they should happen to ask him a bicycling question. Of course, I had to get him to explain to me what the show was and what a "lifeline" was. Then I agreed. Well, the unlikely happened. Not only was he selected to play but he also was asked a bicycling question.

The question he received, worth one million dollars, was, "When was the bicycle invented? A. 1870, B. 1866, C. 1885, or D. 1802." My answer to him was that the bicycle was invented in 1498 by Leonardo da Vinci, and the proof is the drawing that Leonardo made of his invention, which is found in his notebook.

In a strained voice, he told me that there were only a few seconds left and that he had to pick one of the four options or lose a million dollars. "Then," I told him, "the best thing to do is to answer 1498, because the truth is worth much more than a million dollars." Well, he answered "1802" and lost. You just can't help some people!