

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

Newsletter

February 2000

Founded 1888

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Bike Expo 2000 goes international

The name of the 12th Annual Greater Seattle Bicycle Expo has been changed to the Seattle International Bicycle Expo to reflect its growth and the increasing attention the Seattle area market has received from companies and organizations around the world.

The public bicycle show will be held 4-8 p.m. (Friday) Feb. 18; 10 a.m.-7 p.m. (Saturday) Feb. 19; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Sunday) Feb. 20 With more than 150 exhibits, forums and special presentations, Expo attracts more than 10,000 visitors to the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall, Mercer Forum, and Mercer Arena.

Some features of Expo 2000 include talks by cyclists Willie Weir and Joe Kurmaski, the Romp Family adventures (Vermont to Alaska on a quad pulling a trailer) and a larger test ride area with more bikes and interesting terrain.

Tacoma Wheelmen again will staff booth 509-510 to promote the club, club events (Daffodil Classic, Peninsula Metric and Headwaters Century) and cycling in Pierce County. A few more club volunteers still are needed for the Sunday 2.p.m. to 5 p.m. shift and move out.

Volunteers receive free admission to Expo. For information call Peggy Fjetland (253) 841-4458.

Austad, Myrick, Reitzugs top mileage and ride leaders lists

On Jan. 15, nearly 70 members of the Tacoma Wheelmen attended the annual banquet to applaud awards, share stories and thank volunteers.

Bob Myrick (who rode more club miles than anyone last year) hosted the event with his patented dry humor. President Steve Brown presented appreciation to the club's board members and staff and offered a historical perspective on the 112-year-old club.

Ride leader Connie Reitzug held forth over the largest portion of the meeting presenting awards for miles ridden during club rides, miles ridden during commuting and ride leaders. Connie won the bicycle wreck award when she knocked off her roof-mounted bicycle driving in a parking garage.

Here are the award winners:

Top ride leaders

(Number of rides/Total riders)

Connie, Mat Reitzug 19/183

Ann Dahl-Barb Root 41/139

Louie Boitano 20/129

Roz, Carol Davis 17/109

Phil Blenkush 18/95
Ralph Wessels 8/87
Steve, Phyllis Lay 8/83
Dianne Koch 11/65
Connie Reitzug 6/42
Gary Moore 4/42
Ernie Stephenson 5/36
Peggy Fjetland 8/35
Dorian Smith 3/31
Jan Weiser 3/28
Toni Matson 6/27
Jan Brame 3/24
Carla Gramlich 4/20
Steve Brown 5/19
Bob Myrick 2/15
Ralph, Dena Wessels 1/14
Gus Fant 3/13
Doug Ballor 2/10
Mike Romaine 2/8
Dena Wessels 2/7
Daphne Hay 1/6
Mary Neukom 2/6
Joy Roelofsz 2/4
Dave Nielson 1/3
Paul Buckmaster 1/3
Cynthia Hammer 1/3
Bill Newman 1/2
Barb Root 1/2
Noel Hagens 1/2
Marcia Madden 1/2.

Top mileage on club rides

Bob Myrick 6,566
Toni Matson 4,756
Carla Gramlich 3,293
Carol Davis 3,183
Roz Davis 3,011
Steve Lay 2,756
Phyllis Lay 2,712
Phil Blenkush 2,523
Steve Brown 2,323
Connie Reitzug 2,319
Louis Boitano 2,304
Ralph Wessels 2,269
Barb Root 2,123

Robert Deehan 2,115
Ann Dahl 2,072
Peggy Fjetland 2,064
Noel Hagens 2,000
Greg Torfin 2,000
Dan Austad 1,829
Scott Kubiszewsk 1,752
Dianne Koch 1,347
Linda Walter 1,184
Nancy Olexick 1,103
Rick Olexick 1,099
Dena Wessels 1,087
Richard Walter 795
Ray Fjetland 687
Mike Romaine 54
Bill Newman 103

Top commuter mileage

Dan Austad 7,523
Steve Lay 4,891
Phyllis Lay 4,311
Hank Giddings 4,025
Nancy Olexick 3,121
Carla Gramlich 2,198
Carol Davis 1,793
Rick Olexick 1,332
Steve Brown 1,200
Louis Boitano 1,062
Ralph Wessels 1,009
Bob Myrick 581
Phil Blenkush 501
Toni Matson 473
Bill Newman 295
Connie Reitzug 260
Robert Deehan 70
Noel Hagens 70

Estelle Gray featured at Feb. 15 meeting

Back by popular demand — Estelle Gray, owner of R+E Cycles in Seattle — will present a talk at the club meeting of the year. R+E manufactures the Rodriguez line of bicycles

specializing in custom fits, women's bicycles and tandems. She will talk about fitting a bike and her woman's bicycle camp this year. Check out the web site at www.rodcycle.com.

Government report
bob myrick

The last TWBC Government Affairs Committee meeting included Chuck Morrison, Ralph Wessels, Scott Pierson (representing Tacoma as the non-motorized coordinator) and myself.

Murray Morgan Bridge: We discussed the possible loss of this important bridge across the Thea Foss Waterway at 11th Street, providing pedestrian and bicycle connection between downtown Tacoma and the Tideflats Industrial Area. It also provides access to the future Puyallup River Levee Trail that the city should have built by now. The city's project manager, Charlie Solverson claims the city understands and fully supports the need to continue a multi-modal route across the waterway near the present location.

Replacing the crumbling Murray Morgan bridge would cost \$31 to \$69 million so the city, the Port of Tacoma and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are prepared to discuss alternatives. The city is authorized to enter into an agreement with the port and the state to study access alternatives using a consulting firm.

The study is funded up to \$150,000 shared among the three parties. In a 1998 agreement the state must replace the bridge after consulting with the city on bridge design. The city was reminded to use its Citizen Transportation Committee to review the report.

Pennsylvania Miracle: This state recently approved a \$1 million TEA-21 grant (Transportation Enhancements Act) to provide up to 10,000 touring route signs throughout the state. A thousand miles will be signed to begin this program.

We have pleaded for signage both in urban and rural areas in Washington. A letter will be sent to Sid Morrison, the Director of WSDOT, requesting a similar program. Signed by the Bicycle Alliance of Washington, copies of the letter will be sent to the governor, the State Transportation Commission, key legislators like Jim Kastama, Pat Lantz, and Ruth Fisher, and Mike Dornfeld, the state's Bicycle Coordinator.

The letter would suggest that Mike apply to the state Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) for a \$1 million TEA-21 grant. Funding also might come the Surface Transportation Program (STP) as a safety program.

Money might also be available from a program to boost the economy in rural areas. The directional signage will provide cleaner air, ease congestion by getting cyclists off busy arterials and out of their cars, provide safer routes for cyclists, and will provide for economic development in rural areas.

Rail Road Crossing Safety Grants: Ralph suggested we encourage Tacoma to apply for grants to fix the crossings on the Roy highway (SR507). The city's railroad operators also could apply for grants. The crossing on Chamber's Creek near Steilacoom seems to be much safer since Abitibi Corporation joined TWBC to pave a wider shoulder and fill in the tracks.

Sumner Blues: Recently, several club members travelled the traditional route north out of Sumner on Fryar Avenue and 142nd Ave. E. Unfortunately, they discovered a new 5-lane road with sidewalks and no bike lanes or shoulders. When called, Public Works Director, Bill Shoemaker (253-891-3315) said Sumner expected bicyclists to use the new trail along the Stuck River. The 5-lane road will connect to SR 167 and the West Valley Highway.

Well, there is no trail and I haven't seen Sumner apply for any TEA-21 grants to help build a trail. Some employees along the new arterial will have a hard time biking to work. This is another example of a local government ignoring or not understanding bicyclists' needs.

I guess we will just use up a whole lane on our club rides through this formerly tranquil area. This project stinks about as much as Tacoma's so called improvements on Marine View Drive which included an unused sidewalk and no bike lane or shoulder.

Narrow's Bridge: There was concern with how the state plans to route cyclists on the Gig Harbor side of the bridge. Cyclists could be sent off on a busy highway or arterial. We agreed the matter should be investigated and possibly a letter of concern sent to the state.

Possibly the path will exit onto 14th Ave. NW which becomes Reid Dr. SW and joins with the proposed Cushman Powerline Trail to Gig Harbor. Reid Drive is the road we usually take onto Gig Harbor. It has a good rideable shoulder. Some of us will visit the local project office and check out the proposal. I was told the non-motorized amenities on the bridge are cost estimated at \$30 million so you should use it a lot.

Sound Transit Access: I will attend quarterly meetings in Seattle to represent cyclist's interests on the three modes of Sound Transit: buses, Sounder trains, and Light Link trains. Train stations are being built in Auburn, Sumner, and Puyallup. It would be nice to live within biking distance of these new transportation centers.

The next meeting of the TWBC Government Affairs Committee will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. at Planet Burrito on Sixth Avenue.

Members

New: Marlyee McCormick, Howe J. DeYoung

Renewing members: Susan Hardie, Janet Stanley, Joyce Marcier, Paul Jakeman, Dan Aystad, Michael J. Wood, Karla Maynard, Karen Hertzog

Want Ads

Children's bikes: a fixed gear 18" Mongoose w/hand brake in excellent cond. A 6-spd. Grip Shift 20" in good cond. A 6-spd. Grip Shift Burley Piccolo trailer bike in excellent cond. Best offer on all. (253) 851-8623.

From the President's Desk

Steve Brown

Thanks to Bob Myrick for coordinating the annual banquet with lots of help from other club members.

As always, everyone is invited to the monthly board meeting at 7 p.m. Feb. 8 at the downtown Tacoma Library. I will be dining at the teriyaki restaurant across the street before the meeting if anyone wishes to join me.

Biking weather and longer days are around the corner!

But as I write this article, it is snowing in Tacoma. Last month I put a Ski Weekend in the calendar that ended up in Cle Elum. We stayed at the Iron Horse Inn (formally the Moore House). We were lucky to have snow and more dry eastside snow fell overnight. The John Wayne trail is a couple blocks from the Iron House Inn and is a great place for flat cross-county skiing. We also skied from Cle Elum to Roslyn on the Coal Mine Trail.

Around the world report

Club member Bob Warfield is bicycling around the world on the Odyssey2000 tour. This report was dispatched by e-mail somewhere in Baja California

Bob Warfield

San Ignacio, BC, comes as an emerald surprise deep within the bleak crust of Baja. Past the chunky bleached display of a gray whale skeleton, we wheel in over a pickled asphalt road determined to jiggle lose everything without a weld. Over a dike dividing a what appears to be a broad green pond holding the mirrored face a distant volcano, we continue into a thick rambling grove of neglected date palms to another edition of La Pinta, the "Holiday Inns" of Baja.

Proceeding on, the charming town of San Ignacio emerges abruptly, with small square domed by enormous venerable deeply green hedge-like trees set before the grand old mission.

Its weathered walls rise in worn dignity having long let go most of the odd stucco pretense that must have seemed fashionable in past decades.

San Ignacio was a delight; one of a string of missions established by Jesuits led by Father Kino. One of the carvings alcoved in an inner wall of the church must honor him. I imagine the one up front to be his boss.

Mulege is different. Its mission holds more curiosity than serenity, with plaster replicas of holy figures and an odd assemblage of natural representations. Included are a desiccated pelican head and a shop-worn rattlesnake together with carved and woven crafts and artificial flowers.

A dozen roads in town are paved, but the main road that parallels the river flanking expatriate row is primitive for a Jeep. One could do a coffee table book on the tropical fancy crafted into many of these leasor-designed homes. A fairly respectable two-bedroom with date palms and fenced regard can be had for 36K with \$220 the going

monthly lease. That includes water, and you can park your sport fisher out front. Mulege is "cold" two months of the year. It's dusty 12.

Time to get back for supper. A little reading and bed. Five hundred miles to La Paz, then on to Costa Rica. Wish I could chat with Rich and Candy Stewart to learn what must not be missed with only 24 hours in San Jose. CR will probably be cold too (heading into the hills), but grand.

Ride notes

You may have survived Y2K but are you ready for I2K? **Idaho 2000** is a TWBC two-week bicycle excursion this summer. The ride starts in Boise on Sunday, June 25, and ends in Sandpoint on Friday, July 7. We will have rest/fun days in Sun Valley and Salmon and will celebrate the July 4 in Missoula with thermal hot springs in between. The total length is about 730 miles and cost \$200. Cost and logistical details are still being worked out. The fee covers the sag support vehicle, camping fees, occasional community meals, and miscellaneous items. Everyone takes a turn as the sag driver. We will eat out as much as possible since, after all, we are on vacation. For information or reserving a spot, contact Roz and Carol Davis at 253-857-5396 (BicyclGuy@aol.com) or Ralph and Dena Wessels at 253-857-5658 (ralphdena@earthlink.net). The trip is limited to 16 so call early.

California wine country: For mostly women, a little spring break is being planned the first week of April. From a motel base camp, the group will tour Napa and possibly the Sonoma wine regions which are listed in Adventurevelo.com. Carpooling is planned (one long day). Contact Carol Davis at 253-857-5396.

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.

The Foothills Trails Coalition will offer another afternoon at the movie Feb. 13 at the Grand Cinema. The \$10 donation includes choice of one of three movies and refreshments. Selection will be posted at www.grandcinema.com and in the local paper the week.

A movie ride will start at 11:30 a.m. from Starbucks at N. 26th and Proctor and arrive about 1 p.m. Tickets can be purchased from Carla Gramlich or at the door. Movie-only donors may call. For more information, call Carla at (253) 752-4038.

Past pedaling

anne heller

Historical highlights of TWBC's 110 years

It's all been said before

Every age thinks it's modern. We see ourselves and our time as new and different, not like the world of our parents or grandparents or even great grandparents. Are we and our concerns really so different? Are our worries more complex than a hundred and more years ago? Being a firm subscriber to the TMTCTMTSTS theory ("the more things change the more they stay the same"), I don't believe we differ significantly.

For instance, today's magazine articles on physical exertion and the effects on the body are no different than those written in the 19th century.

In the April 11, 1896 Harper's Weekly Dr. Henry Smith Williams wrote a lengthy article about bicycling. His perspective is so "modern" that it begins with his observation on the bicycle saddle.

"Bicycling has, it is true, one danger peculiar to itself," Dr. Williams wrote, "the possibility, namely, of injury through pressure of an ill-adjusted or improperly

constructed saddle; but this is a danger that may be minimized . . . by reasonable care in selection and adjustment of your saddle." Sound familiar?

Dr. Williams' observations were timeless. He compared bicycling to mountain climbing; both work the lower body while "exhilarating" the mind.

But, he believed "bicycling has two patent and very noteworthy advantages", cyclists breather easier than climbers and is "available for pretty nearly everybody."

He claimed bicycling's "greatest danger" was the strain it puts on the heart. "That all-important organ tends, like other muscles, to lose tonicity under the sedentary conditions of the average life and readily becomes embarrassed if asked to perform an unusual work."

He noted several reports of people falling dead while riding bicycles. But he allowed that thousands of others "have similarly fallen dead while riding in carriages, or while sitting in easy chairs at home."

"It does not follow, I presume, that we must all eschew easy chairs and carriages, but it does follow that any one who has reason to doubt the normality of his heart may wisely consult a physician before deciding to undertake any active exertion, bicycling included."

Because even healthy hearts may suffer permanent injury under prolonged and excessive strain. "This fact should be borne in mind by every novice in bicycling, for it is peculiarly easy to overdo under the exhilarating influence of this pastime."

The doctor called for reasonable discretion in bicycling and offered a prescription. "The person who rides for pleasure and health and uses reasonable judgment will not feel obliged to cover ten miles in a half hour, or to pedal up every hill that someone else has managed to climb."

“Above all he will eschew such inane and harmful performances as ‘century runs’ and similar attempts to cover distance for the mere sake of covering it, regardless of consequences.”

He called for common sense even in the selection of bicycles, and warned that ". . . Most bicyclists however, are human enough to follow the fashion rather than their individual predilections, and fashions in bicycles have gone to rather ludicrous extremes, particularly in the way of palming off racing-machines upon the general public of amateurs.

“Fortunately, there are hopeful indications that feather-weight machines, with high gearing, light tires and drooping handle-bars, are soon to be supplemented, or in large measure supplanted, by road machines of a more sensible pattern.”

So, the next time you eagerly scan the newspaper for the latest information, remember, it has all been said before.