

Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club

# Newsletter June 2000

Founded 1888

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## **Other bicycle information**

- Rideline:  
(253) 759-2800
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## **Leisurely is the bicycling style in southern California**

### **Herman and Dorothy Diers**

We are leisure bikers (10 m.p.h. on the road with frequent stops to rest, snack, enjoy the scenery, etc.), traveling 25-35 miles a day.

In contrast to our son, Brent, who bicycled 34,000 miles in 22 months, crisscrossing the equator four times circling the globe.

On Feb.12 we threw our bikes on the Rhode Gear carrier strapped to the back of our car and took off on a 4-week vacation to southern California. We stayed for three to five days each in cities that had bicycle trails to suit our style.

Surprisingly, we most enjoyed the South Bay Bicycling Trail, which runs for 18.4 miles along the ocean in back of the Los Angeles International Airport from Torrance Beach to Santa Monica. It is a continuous ride along uninterrupted beach, riding

past the front doors of small street-front homes in Hermosa Beach, swinging through the middle of deep sand beaches, rising higher at the L.A. Scattergood Power Plant with the crashing waves immediately below, dodging around the marina at Marina del Rey, stopping for some time at funky Venice Beach, walking the carnival-ride midway on Santa Monica's Pier and concluding along its

exquisite beach with the palisades towering above us to Will Rogers State Beach.

□• San Diego's trails also rate high. A 7-mile trail hugs Mission Bay, keeping bicyclers in close touch with the birds and boats on the Bay. It's a quiet place during the cooler months. Just a few blocks over is a 3-mile trail alongside the surf of Mission and Pacific Beaches.

It's a lively and busy place also in winter, with shops and rides and more competition for space on the pedestrian/bikeway.

We took the ferry from the embarcadero downtown across San Diego Bay to Coronado. A 12-mile trail took us alongside the Coronado Golf Course, past the City's famous hotel and around Glorietta Bay and marina before heading down the Silver Strand, a narrow neck of sand stretching all the way to Imperial Beach.

• Palm Springs is an attractive community for winter bicycling — the warmest and driest town in the area. Its residential streets are ideal for the leisure bicyclist — wide with little traffic and quite level.

Many high-traffic streets have bicycle lanes.

A 4-mile ride northwest of town leads to the wind farm — 1,200 "windmills" generating Palm Spring's electricity.

A 10-mile trail winds its way along the Tahquitz Wash through Palm Springs and Cathedral City into Rancho Mirage. It begins in Palm Springs, and ends in Rancho Mirage.

The "wash," a dry riverbed, has been made into residential developments, parks and the inevitable golf courses while a short piece still retains its desert character. (Washes in the area also still carry flood waters down the Coachella Valley to the Salton Sea.)

A few downsides include: crossing 10 busy city streets and not clearly marked crossings trail. Stay on the streets and trails. After crossing a vacant lot I got 13 punctures in my rear tire and four in my front tire. Puncture vines have nasty seeds that look and act like anti-personnel mines.

- In Ventura County we rode 16 miles from Ojai (elevation 750 feet) to the ocean pier in Ventura. We enjoyed the path (and the bakery) so much that we took it three times. The grade back up was no problem even for our leisurely style.
- In Santa Barbara we cycled along the ocean and took a bike path on a one-way street with one-third of the street for bicycles and 2/3 for one lane of car traffic. It was like we had died and gone to bicycle heaven.

Getting through the freeway underpass at the end of this street was a pain, however, like the underpass that took us to the street in the first place. Still the treacherous underpass did take us directly to the trail that went all the way to Goleta Beach and through the campus of UC Santa Barbara.

This campus was even more bicycle friendly than the much-flaunted UC Davis campus. Pedestrians stopped for bicycles. There must have been 1,000 bicycles parked at one residence hall.

We got rained out of the Monterey Recreation Trail. Next time.

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## **Join the Wheelmen's team for carLESS Commute 2000**

### **Pierce County**

#### **Parks and Recreation**

Ride the bus. Walk or bicycle. Join a carpool or vanpool during carLESS Commute 2000. Now in its ninth year, the carLESS Commute Program will be held June 12-25.

This Pierce County program is an innovative effort designed to minimize the heavy reliance on single occupant vehicles (SOV) by promoting bicycling, transit, walking, ride-sharing and other alternative forms of transportation.

TWBC has been a team sponsor and a financial sponsor for all nine years.

The great thing about participating in carLESS Commute 2000 is that you can count all your destination-based trips, not just your work commute!

You can count your walk to the grocery store or your bike trip to the video store. This is a fun way to get the family involved and learn how driving alone impacts our environment. And carLESS Commute 2000 is FUN! Everyone who participates is eligible for prizes. The individual grand prize is a TREK mountain bike donated by Bike Tech. Team grand prize is four sessions of tennis lessons donated by NW Tennis Corporation located at Sprinker Recreation Center. TWBC's team will compete for the awards.

It's easy to join carLESS Commute 2000! A Personal Participation Log is inserted in this newsletter. Just write TWBC on the "Team Captain's Name" line or create your own team at your worksite. Then, follow the easy instructions on the form and return it by mail. You can help protect the environment and ease traffic congestion.

More on the program is on the website: [www.co.pierce.wa.us/parks](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/parks).

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**Government report**  
bob myrick

The Wheelmen's Government Affairs Committee met on May 9 at the Shakabrah Java at 2618 6th Ave. Where were you?

It takes a village to keep the government moving in the right direction. We need people from all the jurisdictions in the county. You may be aware that Tacoma recently canceled the Citizen's Transportation Committee. At one time, three TWBC members were on that committee.

Seattle, Olympia, and King County all have citizens' committees representing cyclists and walkers. Tacoma has none. Advocates are needed throughout the county to monitor government and to make cyclists' needs known.

Please consider becoming more active in the local community.

**Traffic Calming:** On May 30 Tom Ballard, the county engineer, met with the Pierce County Council to discuss traffic calming. This meeting was requested by Harold Moss. The next Tuesday, June 6, the public is invited to make comments.

**Narrows Bridge:** The state Department of Transportation's Bicycle Advisory Committee met in Tacoma May 13. Two topics discussed were the Narrows Bridge and riding in Roundabouts. Several TWBC members have suggested that roundabouts should be evaluated for use when cyclists are leaving and entering the new bridge configuration on the Gig Harbor side.

The state says there would be problems obtaining property and that the grade and topography of the roads would be difficult to provide roundabouts. Some members suggested the state could do a feasibility study of installing roundabouts.

Others have suggested that a national expert, Dan Burden, could be brought in to do a quality analysis on the bridge's non-motorized amenities.

**Trail Video:** Ernie Bay and I (mostly Ernie) have worked on a video that compares Seattle's Tolt River Pipeline Trail and Tacoma Water's Pipeline Road. Tacoma Water was asked to consider opening the road as a soft surface trail from Portland Ave. to Meridian in South Hill Puyallup.

**St. Helen's Avenue Angle Parking:** City Councilman Kevin Phelps has reportedly asked the Public Works' Department to install several more blocks of angle parking on St. Helen's Avenue. Too bad the city doesn't hold public hearings on these requests. Last time, the city claimed this type of action was just maintenance, just operating the road system, you know.

TWBC members are divided on angle parking. Some people think it is more hazardous for cyclists. Other people think the moving cars slow down because they are scared, too, and then the cyclist can travel further out in the lane with the moving cars.

What do you think?

**Cushman Trail:** Apparently, Claudia Peters with Pierce County Parks has gotten the State DOT to accept a proposed easement from Tacoma Power so that the Cushman Powerline Trail can move forward.

Tacoma Power has not budged on its proposal to only grant a weak easement for a trail. Bad Tacoma Power, bad, bad, bad.

I hoped these people would have become enlightened, but on the other hand, they are only engineers. Great job, Claudia!

**Other Issues:**

- We continue to worry about the fate of the Murray Morgan Bridge and a link for us non-motorized people to the City Waterway.
- The State DOT may allow a demonstration project or two in the Port Townsend area for our bike routes signage proposals.
- The City of Tacoma may apply for safety grants to improve the rail road crossings near Roy.
- The City of Sumner has not made much progress on its river trail alternative to the new 5-lane road on Fryar Ave. and 142nd Ave. E. It may be possible to put in a trail that is paved half the way with soft natural surface the rest of the way.
- We will continue to attend the Sound Transit cyclists' group meeting to advocate for good access on the bus, Sounder trains and Light Link trains.

The next meeting of the TWBC Government Affairs Committee will be held 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 13 at Shakabrah Java on Sixth Ave. You are invited to ride on over. It is quiet there and the food is pretty good.

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## From the President's desk

**Steve Brown**

Spurred by at a recent article by Dave Tison, TWBC Safety & Education Coordinator, the Board unanimously approved a policy that requires bicycle helmets on all TWBC rides. Because there is no statewide bicycle helmet law, many of our rides cross through jurisdictions that require helmets and those that do not.

I don't remember anyone going on a club ride without a helmet, but I do remember my wife sending a club member off to a bicycle shop to purchase a helmet before a ride last year. In June I will retire as your President to fill a term of Past President. It has been another great year and I am amazed at how fast it

went. My employer is moving to Federal Way so ends my 2-mile commute, which I enjoyed for 17 years.

The board meeting is June 6 at 7 p.m. and held at Shakabrah Java 2618 6th Ave in Tacoma.

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## **Good times had by all at the Daffodil**

I did the Daffodil last Sunday after driving up from Portland the night before. To my horror, I had forgot my helmet and I wanted to do a century for the day. To my relief, I was directed to the registration desk where I was provided a helmet for \$5. It really saved my parade for the day as this was my first century of the season. Thanks so much for having these helmets available for a very reasonable price!

**Alan McGuire-Dale**

**Gresham, OR**

I wanted to let you know that the Daf ride was wonderful--not only a good ride--but some good food and great people. If we could only figure out a way to coral the rampant redneck population it would be wonderful.

Thanks for a great ride.

**Kate Comis**

Thanks for a very nice ride. This was my first organized ride and I really enjoyed it. I hope to make many more. I live in Aberdeen, so it is sometimes tough to make some of the rides. Again thanks for a job well done.

**Tom Cook,**

**Aberdeen**

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## **PMC registration at Medical Center**

Riders at this year's Peninsula Metric Century will register at a new location, the Medical Center at 6401 Kimball Drive, a block from fire station.

This year there are lots of great prizes for raffle and more delicious strawberry shortcakes at the end. Volunteer potluck will be held at the Reitzugs' June 2 at 6 p.m.

PMC Riders can get a discount at the Best Western Wesley Inn.

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## Scout Camp volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to do a safety check of bicycles during a week long Cub Scout Day Camp. The bicycle check is currently planned for Thursday, Aug. 3. Approximately 100 scouts would rotate during that day.

Give Steve Brown a call at 752-4038 if you are interested.

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## New and renewing members

**New:** Russell G. Matthews, Carmel M. McGann, Ken Colburn, Ed and Angie Littleton, Joy M. Brown, Steve Matson, Brian Riddle, Sue Tjardes, Lize Savage, Lori Wollen.

**Renewing members:** Carolyn L. Nelson; Richard and Linda Walter; Jim Andruess; Doug Jackman; John and Shirley Morgan; Philip Blenkush; James W. Porter; Roy Bueler; Duane Githews, D.C; Gerald Klock; Mike and Nancy Henderson; Tony Thomas; Rick Olexick and Nancy Block-Olexick; Linda Kimbell; Jim Davis; Toni Matson; Jim and Ming Ming Kurtz; Stan, Joan, Kirby and Puddin Sanders; William D. Hill; Robert Cook, Sr.; Bert Dionne; Cynthia and Steve Hammer; John, Mary and Alicia Herem; Charles and Mary Morrison; Scott and Beverly Pierson; Sheila Pudists; John Woods; Peg Winczewski; John C. Woodard; Pat Donovan and Family

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## Want Ads

**Looking for English 3-speeds:** Preferably Raleigh, but also Robin Hood, Hercules, Rudge, etc., in rideable or fixable condition. Rust and dirt OK. Call 752-9050.

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## Around the world report

*Club member Bob Warfield is bicycling around the world on the Odyssey2000 tour. He has been writing prodigiously, mixing travelers' observations with sociology, local*

*politics, international economics and history. This is one of his four e-mailed reports from Marrakech.*

We left our bikes at Caleta Palace, a 7-story stack of white mortar, timid glass and tiny balconies squared and rising above a seaside restaurant hard against the southern face of Gibraltar.

Anthony, a "yellowhead" (Odyssey riders' sporting helmet color) from Orsono, Chile, youthful and alert, angled a sympathetic motorist from the few and improbable vehicles passing under the gray drizzle toward La Linea (Espania border). We five, in our odd assortment of colored parkas and day packs, piled into his car. Happy to escape the rain, we were off to Morocco.

From La Linea, a bus brought us to Algeciras, the geographic spigot of Europe. Here we bought round-trip tickets for the voyage to Tangier, our continental portal and train connection south. We booked space for a second class sleeper and set out for food and the Internet.

McDonalds provided food, toilets and a place to hang out through the steady rain that followed us from Europe. My two-fifty Mesina umbrella was paying its way again.

First and second class accommodations aboard our divided sleeper car were distinguished by four or six bunks per compartment. Fifth-class toilets at either end were indifferent to the fare. A porter issued pillow, case, sheet and spread to each traveler. Sleep quickly overcame the lurching rail of rolling steel. During the night our twenty-dollar express fares closed Marrakesh, some 800 k south, and delivered us dry to flawless day.

Estimation of Tangier lacked requisite antiquity for our Moroccan experience, hence the choices of Marrakesh and Fez for a hasty taste. Our first destination is the end of the line. Track extending beyond the station is sufficient only to reverse a train, most of which has trouble telling direction unless moving.

Tangier, historically strategic and once occupied by nearly everyone who was anyone, including USA in a allied consortium between 1923 and 1956, seems to have acquired too many layers of varnish over its origins to hold the tourist's eye with brighter gems at hand.

If any part of Tangier eluded a "third-world" distinction for Morocco, Marrakesh confirmed it. Walking from the station, along broad tree lined boulevards past circles radiating urban design, and newly constructed ambitions left largely vacant and unfinished confusing it, we soon arrived at the Koutoubia Mosque. Dating from the late 12th century it is the best preserved of the three oldest ones in the world. Proceeding left brought us into the heart of Marrakesh, the Djemaa el-Fna, a vast sea of asphalt large enough to land a "747." It is surrounded by low rise ochre colored shops, cafes a few administrative offices and lots of small streets leading to lots more smaller ones.

By mid morning, hundreds of el-Fna stalls and impromptu merchants, came to life, selling everything imaginable. Several European styled restaurants offer safe haven and good fair to fainting tourists needing a break from one more snake charmer, henna hand painter or self-appointed tour guide.

The Cafe de France affords a second level balcony to view the multitude or the remote Haut Atlas, rising to 4,166 meters. There's even a remote possibility of stealing a breeze from this vantage or an sunset before the fire eaters come on stage.

We found lodging and set out promptly to gain some comprehension of the city's well-earned reputation for the bizarre and extravagant. There was no lack of the astonishing and proximity gave immediacy and vitality to an amazing bazaar of amusements and goods.

Even the dead stuff wiggled.

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## **Newsletter editor sought**

Do you like to write about your favorite sport? Would you like to help others with grammar and punctuation so they can write about their favorite sport?

Do you like assembling the pages of a dynamic publication?

The job of newsletter editor for the Tacoma Wheelmen will be open at the upcoming elections in June.

The job takes less than 10 hours per month, using electronic e-mails and PageMaker software.

But any software can be used.

Interested? Call Dorian Smith at 253-752-9498.

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## Ride notes

**RAGBRAI XXVIII.** Join 10,000 cyclists July 23-29 for the Des Moines Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa. This is a unique ride that includes church picnics, homemade ice cream on rhubarb pie, music and dancing, rural hospitality and outrageous costumes (helmets are required, but not much else). Also included is a 449 mile ride across southern Iowa (the hilly part) on good roads with virtually no traffic. See <http://www.ragbrai.org> or call Anne Heller at 253-761-0709 for more information.

**A ride** is being organized leaving June 5 or 6 and taking the northern route to Minot, N.D. It will consist of wilderness camping (no camp grounds) with a few motel stops. Daily travel distance will average 80 miles. Anyone interested contact Ron Menge at 253-845-8496

**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.

**TWBC jerseys:** get yours before they are gone. Price is \$53 and still a bargain. Features 15-inch zipper with reflective strip on back pocket and arm bands. Highly visible colors.

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**Can't you hear, can't you hear the cycles' thunder in  
the land down under**

## **Janice Jensen**

Tom and Donna Shirey, Ray and Peggy Fjetland, Bob Myrick and myself set out for an adventure that would take us half way around the world — Australia. The land down under. The ride took us from Tweek Heads to Sydney, a 16-day bike ride March 25 to April 9 with only two rest days. I added two extra rest days while the other Wheelmen trekked on.

There were 1,500 cyclists. Along the ride were 300 internationals, 250 full-time volunteers, 4 St. John ambulances, 9 police offers (2 in cars, 7 on motorcycles), 2 bike shops, a traveling brasserie, 2 luggage trucks, 3 show trucks, 3 toilet trucks, live local entertainment and a different movie every night.

It went pretty smoothly; I was impressed! We arrived at camp anywhere from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. depending on how much time was spent taking pictures and visiting. The rides ranged 45 to 55 miles a day, the longest day was 65 miles.

The terrain was very hilly and bumpy but the scenery was magnificent.

Temperatures were in the 90s in the northern half with very high humidity but we poured water over our heads and did fine. The southern half was a bit more tolerable with temperatures in the 80s and a bit of wind every now and then, never thought I'd appreciate a head wind before!

After we arrived at camp and did all the necessary camp stuff — like collect luggage, set up tents and locate clean clothes — we were off to the showers where women never waited and the men had to queue up (line up).

It was great! Never before has it been that way and we can't figure out why. The men would have 20 in a queue and we women walked right in. The same for toilet trucks. Never waited!

After the shower there would be many activities to choose from. Some unique to the area such as boom netting at Port Macquarie or a camel on the beach or a disco evening party cruise. There was hang gliding, parasailing, sea-kayaking, waterfronts to visit, white water rafting, 4WD tours, bus tours, ultra lights, tennis, volleyball, hiking and climbing. And the list goes on.

Every afternoon there were several activities to choose from. It was so well organized. The people were wonderful — I loved the accent. Some of the roads

were lousy and we won't mention the wooden bridges that promised to take out half the cyclists. The Aussie favorite road surface is chip seal!

People stood in their front yards or along the side of the street and cheered us. The children hung over school yard fences waving and shouting. They're so easily impressed aren't they? Pitching a tent near an ant hill, being tossed into the surf by my kayak, covered in mud one day and sun burnt on others — what a great adventure!

So many exotic birds, wild kangaroos, water dragons, bats, koalas. I saw and heard many noises for the first time. Never will again, unless . . . I return. And some day I will.

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## Gratitude is finding a good shop when your bike derails

### **Anne Heller**

A full-service bike shop, open when you need it, ready to take care of every emergency. This is the dream of bicyclists who do not have a fully equipped shop of their own in the garage. Of course even the best equipped garage wouldn't do much good without the expertise to make those emergency repairs that always need doing just before a weekend ride.

So, what is a person to do on a sunny Saturday morning when a person is ready to start on a 40-mile trip and finds their rear derailleur is kaput? Recently, I encountered that scenario. Dave Parker and I were about to head to Steilacoom and Fort Lewis when my derailleur decided to derail for good.

Luckily, Spoke and Sprocket was just across the street. Unluckily, it was 9:30 a.m. and the shop did not open until 10 a.m. Luckily, Jim Finnell was inside, vacuuming the floor in preparation for opening. With just a bit of cajoling and promises of me taking over the vacuum cleaner if he would look at my bike, Jim let us in.

Jim quickly diagnosed the problem and replaced the 5-year old derailleur. While Jim was busy with the bike, Dave took up the task of vacuuming, which left me a chance to meditate on the happy state of the world while I browsed in the shop. Somewhere in this tale there is a moral.

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## Bicycle tips:

**Emergency tire boot:** When someone sends you priority mail in a Tyvek envelope — save the envelope and cut it into 2" x 6" strips and put one in your fanny pack as an emergency tire boot in case of a tire sidewall tear. It will get you home.

**Ken Colburn**

**Hand cleaner:** Also, save a couple foil packed hand wipes from your last chicken dinner at KFC — makes a great/lightweight hand cleaner to have on the bike.

(Baby Wipes aren't bad, either.)

**Ken Colburn**

**Home brew chain lube:** If you prefer wax as a chain lubricant, but want to avoid spending \$8 for a small squeeze tube, try this concoction.

Pour a few ounces of camp fuel or white gas in a container. Then shred a couple tablespoons of paraffin using a vegetable shredder in the white gas. Continue adding wax until it won't dissolve and lays on the bottom.

Let it sit overnight to dissolve as much gas as it will allow. When poured over your chain, the white gas will deliver the lubricant to hidden crevices in the links and then evaporate, leaving the wax.

**John Campbell**

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## California bikin' Napa Valley

**Cynthia Hammer**

It was a dream cycling trip taken by four Tacoma Wheelwomen in early April — Carol Davis, Joyce Clifford, Cynthia Hammer and Mary Kubiszewski. ( Stan and Joan Sanders joined us for a few days, on a drive up from Arizona.)

We spent 15 hours driving down to Napa on Sunday, five days cycling various routes (300 miles total) , and then returned on Saturday. If you ever have a chance to go on a trip organized by Carol Davis, do it.

It was the perfect trip — except one evening meal where we waited over one hour, late at night and after a long day of cycling, for lousy food.

Carol discovered a delightful Best Western where we stayed. (You'll have to believe me on this one. ) It was small, only 12 rooms, served an excellent breakfast, and had a hot tub. It was our base of operation, as we did our loop rides from there each day.

We had wonderful weather, gorgeous scenery, memorable meals, and varied cycling experiences — flats, headwinds, but alas, no tailwinds, steep climbs, heavily traveled roads, and vacant, rural roads.

Oh—and I forgot to mention—the wineries. It took us a few days to realize our cycling experience was enhanced by visiting and sampling at least three wineries a day. We plan to return next year — so, women, mark your calendars.

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