



Official Newsletter  
August 2002  
Come Ride with Us

# Free Wheelin'



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## Washington, DC AIDS Ride

By CC Rider

Al B, Al J, and I agreed we were never envious of those dedicated riders who rode the AIDS ride. Although it was for a worthy cause, we all thought people who rode the AIDS ride were foolish. Who would agree to ride 100+ miles four days in a row? And sleep on the ground? And raise more than \$2800 in donations? We smirked as we watched them train, pushing themselves to ride centuries, to ride in the rain. We laughed aloud as they spoke weight training in the gym, getting stronger and building muscle mass, so that they could endure the punishment they planned to inflict on themselves. Really, riding was NOT that serious. Riding is fun. And the AIDS ride did NOT appear to be fun.

Then, in April, Al B announces that he will ride the Washington DC AIDS ride. It's only four days, he reasoned. We laughed and laughed as we gave him our blessings and good wishes because, after all, we weren't suckers! We even "helped" Al B train. We forsake our granny

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## New Meeting Location



### Next Membership Meeting

**7 pm, August 8, 2002**

**Rockridge Branch Library**

**5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

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gear and climbed Tunnel and Park. We put in extra miles with Al B. By the end of April, while “training”, Al B suckered us into joining him in the AIDS ride. He told us we would just be getting our ride on. In ways I have yet to fathom, we managed to raise \$8,000.00 by the May 27<sup>th</sup> deadline. We packed our bikes, our gear, and headed off, June 10<sup>th</sup>, to join the Washington DC AIDS riders. We were going to get our ride on!

**DAY ZERO:** Washington DC. As we drove up to the clinic, it was as if we were on the movie set of “New Jack City”. Abandoned, broken down buildings, drug dealers, addicts...you get the picture. And in the middle, stood Max Robinson Clinic, a beacon of hope and positivity in the middle of despair. Sobered by what we saw, we realized that maybe this AIDS ride was a good thing and that the money would do come to good use. We connected with a group of riders called, “Brothers to Brothers, Sisters to Sisters,” an African-American group associated with the clinic. The group formed six years ago for the first AIDS ride. Their main goal is to provide support and training during the year for the AIDS ride. One person in particular, Wallace, embraced us as if we were “cousins from out West.” He introduced us to everyone and made sure we would be comfortable during our stay. It felt wonderful. We rode the bus with the group to Norfolk, VA. It was just as if we were on a Yellowjacket ride, food, fun, laughter, fellowship, and a lot of women for Al B to photograph!

**DAY 1:** Norfolk, Virginia. 105 miles. Mostly flat, zigzagging through farmland. The heat and humidity were unbearable. The two Als can't stop acting like ride coordinators; we spend HOURS fixing flats and repairing bikes. I remind them, if we don't make the time limits, that we'll end up in the broom wagon. We're finally off. Then I crash. Nothing seriously injured (except my pride). I try to look cool by jumping back on my bike

and speeding off with blood dripping off my knees and shoulder, ignoring the obvious pain. We're hot, tired, and hungry and the lunch stop is at mile 65? Then thundershowers began. Hey! WE DON'T RIDE IN THE RAIN! We rode the last 28 miles in a down-pour. At camp we wait in line for everything, food showers potty. Thank God, someone put up our tent. It's after midnight when we get to sleep. The hard ground and loud snores

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## How to Contact Us



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Bicycle Club

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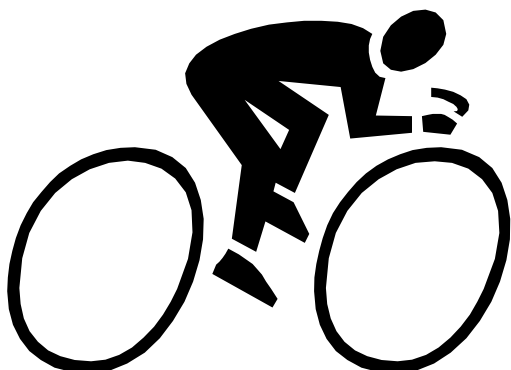
Submit *Free Wheelin'* articles at any ride or club meeting, or call the Oakland Yellowjackets voice mail (510.986.9011) to make special arrangements. Handwritten or typed articles or hard copy with the accompanying file on diskette, are accepted. Electronic files can also be sent to the club's e-mail address.

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aren't enough to keep us awake after what we've been through. 3 am, the rain pounding on our tent wakes us up. We're too tired to care.

**DAY TWO:** Somewhere in Virginia. EVERYTHING is soaked when we awaken. There is at least 3 inches of water inside our tents! But we're determined to ride the 110 miles. There's a little climbing, nothing hard. The countryside is beautiful. We don't have a clue as to where we are. We just ride and follow the signs. Then the rain starts about mile 35. HEY! WE DON'T RIDE IN THE RAIN! Al B and I call it quits at the lunch stop (about 48 miles). Al J, our courageous president, wants to tough it out and finish the ride. We leave our bedraggled, despondent, soggy president using the underside of a semi truck as cover from the rain and eating the driest bag lunch in history. He later encounters a thundershower so severe, all riders were pulled off the course until it was safe to continue. Meanwhile, back at camp, the thundershowers catch Al B and I off guard. Despite all our attempts to water proof the tents, everything; tents, sleeping bags, and gear is soaked. We abandon camp, leaving the soggy mess behind, and seek comfort and warmth (real food! a bed!) of a hotel. A wet, bedraggled, and starving Al J joins us later that night.

**DAY THREE:** Somewhere in Virginia. We get a warning sign that it's going to rain on our way to the campsite. The cab driver tells



us it isn't going to rain today. Relieved, Al B is detailed to get the bikes (which need minor repair), Al J and I to break camp and get the gear on the moving van. KABOOM! ANOTHER DOWNPOUR? I can take no more. I go into meltdown, quick. Al J and I cringe in the safety of the tent. Leaving poor Al B to suffer in the rain. The camp staff is yelling at everyone to break down camp and get on the road. Not me! I quit! No breakfast, soaking wet (again), and we're supposed to ride 85 miles in the rain! This AIDS ride is not that serious! I want to go HOME! Al J STILL wants to complete the ride. Al B. talks me into riding out of camp, then sagging to a rest stop. We go out. Out into the rain. Out into the mud. Our chains have begun to rust. Our shoes are so muddy it's almost impossible to clip in. We can barely see five feet ahead. We're lost, because we don't know where we are. We don't know how far we have to ride, because everyday the mileage has been longer than what the AIDS people tell us. But we ride. About one mile into the ride, we see the most incredible sight we have ever seen: HUNDREDS of bikers, single file, walking their bikes, up a hill! It looks like a scene from the Ten Commandments or one of those war refugee movies. As we ride up the hill, Al B announces to the walkers, "Ladies and Gentlemen, you walk a dog, not your bike". People start to laugh. Just then, the sun breaks out of the clouds! A sign, that perhaps this ride will get better. So we ride on. Ten miles later, it's as if it never rained. The sun is shining, it's pleasant, and the country is beautiful. A great ride...until we lose Al J somewhere between mile 45 and 50. No one knows what happened. Al B and I spend over an hour looking and searching, contacting the SAG people, everyone. Only to be told to just ride into camp and look for him there. So we hammer and we hammer. Suddenly, Al spots a sign: Women with big melons. He makes a sudden turn, looking for the woman (women) of his dreams. He finds her. A woman (with a couple of guys) passing out ice cold WATERMELON to the AIDS riders!

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## 2002 Meeting Schedule

Membership meetings are on the second Thursday (unless otherwise noted in the newsletter) of every riding season month. Meetings are held at the Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library, located at 5366 College Ave. (at Manila). Meetings start at 7:00 p.m.

**July 11th**  
**August 8th**  
**September 18th (Wednesday)**

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## 2002 Ride Schedule

**August 3 Livermore - 8:00 AM:** Departs Fairyland parking lot at Lake Merritt 8:00 AM. This ride is a variation on the June 8 Dublin Grade Option ride. The route passes through Alameda, San Leandro, Castro Valley and Dublin before branching out to an extended course in Livermore. Maps still in development, so mileages as well as the return route for each ride group are TBD. Stay tuned.

**August 10 Santa Cruz Mountain Option - AWAY - 7:15 AM:** Caravan from the Fairy-

land parking lot at 7:30 AM to Woodside on the peninsula. This ride starts at the Woodside Town Center with varying climbing challenges through the wooded peninsula woods. Light riders 22.4 miles, Humane Intermediates 19.3 miles, Advanced Intermediates 45.9 miles, Advanced Riders 88.7 miles.

**August 17 8:00 AM - New Crockett Loop:** Departs Fairyland parking lot at Lake Merritt 8:00 AM. Starting from the lake the route is through Oakland, Berkeley, follows the Key Route to El Cerrito. San Pablo Ave to Carquinez Scenic Drive and in to Martinez. Intermediates break off to Concord Bart Station. Advanced Intermediates and Advanced riders follow Alhambra Ave to Alhambra Valley Road, Climb Pig Farm, Three Bears, Wildcat Canyon, descend Spruce and glide back to Lake Merritt. The Light Riders have an abbreviated 46.4 mile route; Humane and Advanced Intermediates 63.6 miles; Advanced Riders long option 80 Miles.

**August 24 8:00 AM - Calaveras Loop:** Departs Fairyland parking lot at Lake Merritt. Get ready to ride! This ride starts at Lake Merritt, climbs up to Skyline via Joaquin Miller, down Redwood Rd to Castro Valley, up Dublin grade, South on Foothill Rd to Niles Canyon in Sunol, (Intermediate riders break off on Niles Canyon go to Fremont, and return to Oakland by a route designated by the ride coordinator), advanced continue South on Paloma, climb Calaveras Rd, down into Milpitas, return to Fremont and take Bart back to the lake. Approx 67 mile for the main route. Light Rider and Humane Intermediate group leaders will lead modified routes appropriate to their groups skill level.

**August 31 8:00 AM Newark/Union City Ride:** Departs Fairyland parking lot at Lake Merritt. Flat and fast route The route goes South on E. 12th St., crosses into Alameda on Fruitvale, continues South on Doolittle to San Leandro and then on Hesperian to Union City. Return on same route, approx 40 miles.

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**September 7 Pacifica to Monterey** - Pending Map Review

**September 14 - AWAY - 7:30 AM Tiburon (Paradise) Loop:** BART to start or caravan from the Fairyland parking lot at 7:30 a.m. or meet at Bryant and Main Street in San Francisco at 8:00 am. in the parking lot across from Red's Java Hut. Ride departs from the start at 8:30 a.m. Route takes you from S.F. to Tiburon via the Golden Gate Bridge. Advanced and Adv. Intermediate riders will do the Marin Headland loop, Corte Madera, the Tiburon Paradise Loop and return to S.F. over the GG bridge. Intermediates skip the Marin Headland loop, ride on to Corte Madera, the Tiburon Paradise Loop and return to S.F. Light riders will ride directly to Tiburon and return by ferry. Route subject to modification by group ride leaders. Light riders 17 miles, Humane Intermediates 46.3 miles, Advanced Riders with Marin Headland loop, 53 miles.

**September 15 - AWAY - 7:30 AM Fog City-San Francisco:** BART-to-start. Depart the Fairyland parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to Lake Merritt BART station. Disembark at the Embarcadero Station in San Francisco and ride to the start opposite Red's Java Hut on the Embarcadero at Bryant and Main Streets. This is a scenic tour of San Francisco starting South of Market and riding along the Embarcadero past the Financial District, Fisherman's Wharf, Crissy Field and the Golden Gate Bridge. Continuing through the Presidio and Richmond district to Golden Gate Park with a hearty climb to the top of Twin Peaks for a grand view of the city. Then it's down to the beach and south to Daly City, a climb over Mt. San Bruno to 3rd Street and back to the start. Approx. 37 miles. Light Rider and Humane Intermediate group leaders will lead modified routes appropriate to their groups skill level. Bart to Start.

**September 28 - AWAY - 6:45 AM Gilroy/Fremont Peak:** Pending Map Review

The Yellowjackets have a no drop policy and will leave no light or humane intermediate rider behind!

**REQUIRED:** Helmet, waiver, ID with emergency Info.

**RECOMMENDED:** Two bottles of water minimum, high energy food, pump, spare tubes, tools, patch kit, padded gloves, padded cycling shorts, protective eye wear, sun block.



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## New Yellowjacket Website

The Yellowjackets have a new website and a new webmaster, Alphonso Estrada. The new address is:

[www.oaklandyellowjackets.org](http://www.oaklandyellowjackets.org)

We also have a new e-mail address:

[info@oaklandyellowjackets.org](mailto:info@oaklandyellowjackets.org)

The website is very nice, with lots of information. Check it out!!

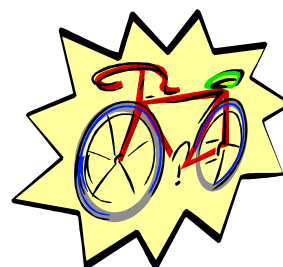
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I drag Al B away; reminding him that Al J is lost and needs us. After 40 miles of anxiety, we arrive to camp. We search for Al J. Al B finds him first. I find Al B with his hands around Al J's neck! I have to pry them loose. Al J is getting massage from a twenty-something chick! "MMMM...you need to relax," he says. A true Yellowjacket comrade! So much for friendship!

**DAY FOUR:** Washington DC. It's almost over. 55 miles and it's over. We all agree to NEVER do this again. So far, the ride has sucked. Camping has been more like swimming in mud. Then, as we ride through suburbs leading to DC, people start to cheer us on! They're waving signs, giving high fives, and passing out Popsicles as we ride by. The police cordon off the intersections. The Fire Departments have the engines and lights going. It's as if we are returning war heroes! I never thought of the ride in this manner, but hey, it was an ordeal. By the time we reach DC, there are thousands of people lining Constitution Avenue. We ride in the midst of the BBSSU club, two by two, with our own motorcycle escort. We are thrilled and excited as we reach the Washington Monument. Hey, we did it! It's time for good byes and group photos. The BBSSU has become our DC family. Coming back next year, they ask? NO WAY! we say. We DO NOT RIDE IN THE RAIN! Goodbye! We make the final parade down Constitution Avenue to the Capitol Building and Memorial Park. Closing ceremony is amazing. 1100 bikes in the air at the same time. Speeches. Music. Cheering. And then...as the riderless bike moves through the crowd, approaching the stage to signal the end of the ride, we see Wallace. Our Wallace. He is one of the riders holding the bike. Neither have the Als nor I realized that Wallace was one of *those* people. Not one of *our* friends. Part of our family. In that moment, Al B, Al J, and I, independently of each other and yet somehow collectively, realized why we did the AIDS ride. For Wallace. For all the Wallace's all

over the world. We can't let Wallace die. We realize this terrible, horrible, devastating disease needs to be stricken off the face of this earth. Suddenly riding in the rain was not such a big deal. Sleeping on the wet ground didn't matter. We could see how 1100 bike riders could make a difference. We realized, all the AIDS riders, marathoners, and walkers were not just riding, or running, or walking, for fun, they were do so to save lives. We realized that we had helped to save someone's life. I couldn't stop crying. We looked at each other. And without saying a word, that moment, we knew we'd be back, again, next year.

**STATS:** Crashes (1) CC, Flats (5) all Al B, Mechanical problems: Al B and CC  
Medical: numbness in fingers and toes, sore feet, sore buns (all); sore back and neck (Al J); Mileage: Al J (350), Al B and CC (300)



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## Ride for a Reason

By CC Rider

I hope you took time to read the article regarding the AIDS ride experience. I know others who after completing their AIDS ride, returned committed to ride again. I was baffled by their enthusiasm. I had considered the monies I raised to participate in a charity ride as a, "fee", until I participated in the AIDS ride.

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While riding in the AIDS ride, I met riders who use their bikes to make a difference in their communities. They were, riding for a reason. Sure they rode for all the reasons we get on a bike. But they had turned their riding season into a challenge to make a difference in their communities by supporting different causes.

Why can't the Yellowjackets do the same? Sure a few of us ride charity rides. Some of us have done the AIDS ride. But aside from a small contributions to a couple of groups who have asked for support, to my knowledge, the Yellowjacket do little else as an organization other than ride for fun, fellowship, and adventure.

We are more than 200 members strong. What if we turn one of our scheduled rides into a charity ride? What if we all agreed to raise a minimum of \$250? Do the math. \$50,000! How many new bikes could we donate to group, here, in Oakland? Bed space at a homeless shelter? Anything is possible. My imagination keeps spinning.

I know the idea is not new. But the Yellowjackets has evolved with time. Our members today weren't all members ten years ago. I know what I'm suggesting takes WORK. And we all know Yellowjackets ride AWAY from work! But is not impossible. It can be done. It doesn't have to be big. It may or may not become complicated. Let's talk about it. Come to the August 8th meeting and let's share thoughts. Maybe get a committee going on looking at the idea.

When I ride with other clubs, I see that our club is really special. We're organized. We care about our members. We're proud of our organization. Let's spread some of that OYJ love on our community. Let's make the Oakland in Oakland Yellowjackets really stand for something. Let's get our ride on, but let's also ride for a reason.



## **From the Office of the President**

### **A PLEA:**

As our membership grows the tasks we perform, as officers and committee chairs, have become ever more time consuming and challenging. I have asked the same members to perform tasks over and over again and they have willingly, I think, done so. My plea, to the group, is for more members to participate in the operation of the club. What does that participation look like? Attend the meetings, help set the agenda, volunteer to serve as officers, committee chairs or sit on a committee. Bottom-line helping to guarantee that the organization thrives. I would really appreciate your thoughts as to how we can make this happen.

### **MONTEREY:**

The ride is fast approaching and things, thanks to the volunteers, are falling into place. Those, of you, who will be riding will have a great experience. Guaranteed.

Remember, The Joseph's will again host a pre-ride pasta potluck. Details follow:

Location: 2185 Manzanita Dr. Oakland Ca.

Time: 6:00 PM until we kick you out

Phone: 339-0454 someone always gets lost.

The Menu: WHAT YOU BRING

### **SAFETY:**

Again I want to thank all of you for riding safely. Our accidents have been minimal, scratches and bruises. Let's keep it that way.

# **Club Officers, Chairpersons, and Ride Coordinators**

Light: Al Joseph  
510-339-0454

Newsletter Editor Jan Smith  
510-893-3374

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## **Officers**

President: Al Joseph  
510-339-0454  
Vice President: Jim Collier  
510-526-0716  
Barbara Massey  
510-531-5899  
Secretary: Alice Ross Leon  
510-532-0606  
Treasurer: Sherry Bell-Perocier  
510-526-7987

## **Standing Committee Chairpersons**

Monterey Ride Committee: Kathy Starkey  
510-521-6235  
Map Committee: Fred Morgan  
510-278-7971  
Christmas Party Committee: Kathy Starkey  
510-521-6235

## **Ride Coordinators**

Advanced: Fred Morgan  
510-278-7971  
Josh Rodman  
510-521-8733  
Advanced Intermediates: Reginald Burrell  
415-586-3783  
Mark Rutta  
510-531-2111  
Humane Intermediates: Claudette Center  
209-858-2090  
Al Bourges  
510-530-7226  
Mary Dimitruk  
510-749-7134