



Official Newsletter  
June 2003  
Come Ride with Us



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## Braking

By Len Smith

You must have had the experience of someone questioning something you have known to be true beyond question. The other day it happened to me. I had mentioned to Bill how comforting it was for me to know that I should prefer my front brake when descending steep slippery roads. The upper part of Shepard Canyon Road, near to its junction with Skyline, especially that last sharp right turn before the road straightens out, was the place under consideration. We had both fallen in that spot several years ago so it was a location of mutual interest. I even went so far as to say that it was impossible to lock up a front wheel at high speed on a steep hill and that under the same circumstances just a touch on the rear brake would cause the rear wheel to lose traction, slip out and cause the kind of fall that had happened to both of us.

I was surprised when he, usually a sensible fellow, said that he had learned in his motorcycling days that when seeking to control speed one should apply brakes evenly to the front and back wheels, so I de-

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**Next Membership Meeting  
7 pm, June 12, 2003  
Rockridge Branch Library  
5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

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cided to seek some authorities on the subject, only to confirm my own correct knowledge. It was a surprise to find out that the authorities, at least in some part, did agree with my position. They also were aware of the novice rider's fear of flipping over from using the front brake. This may come from turn of the last century posters of mustached men on high-wheeled bicycles showing their experience and delight with toothless grins. However, the effectiveness of front braking makes its study and practice an integral part of building skill and confidence on the bike.

The authorities, through their writings, that I consulted were, Sheldon (coasting is a pernicious habit) Brown and John Forester. They were both interested in emergency stops, that is stopping the bicycle in the shortest space possible without flipping over by locking up the front wheel or going down sideways by locking up the rear wheel. Sheldon Brown was writing from the perspective of general cycling advice especially regarding a fixed gear bike. John was writing more from the vantage point of an expert witness in lawsuits.

Both Sheldon and John are fans of the front brake. Sheldon makes the point that a front brake can apply all the stopping power available to a bike rider. You can pull on the front brake to effect until the rear wheel is about to



lift off the ground. At this point the back wheel has no traction so applying the back brake could have no beneficial effect. John recommends using both brakes but pulling three times as hard on the front brake as on rear brake. Both agree that using the front brake correctly requires some skill and practice.

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## How to Contact Us



Oakland  
YellowJackets  
Bicycle Club

2185 Manzanita Drive  
Oakland, CA 94611  
510.986.9011

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

<http://www.oaklandyellowjackets.org>

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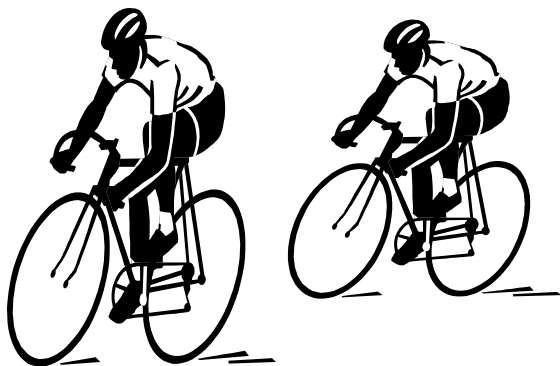
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Submit **Free Wheelin'** articles at any ride or club meeting, or call the Oakland Yellowjackets voice mail (510.986.9011) to make special arrangements. Handwritten or typed articles or hard copy with the accompanying file on diskette, are accepted.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

# 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.

**June 12, 2003**  
**July 10, 2003**  
**August 14, 2003**



## 2003 Ride Schedule

Off-Season Rides (October to April) - Sat. 9 am Every Saturday during the off-season rider's meet at the Children's Fairyland Parking Lot at Lake Merritt in Oakland, decide on a route, then depart at 9 am sharp, weather permitting. Routes during the off-season are typically shorter, 25 - 45 miles on moderate terrain.

June 7 - BART - 7:15 AM  
Morgan Territory  
START: Concord BART

June 14 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Three Bears and Some Redwoods  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

June 21 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Calistoga Picnic Ride  
START: Bothe-Napa State Park (map)  
or caravan from Children's Fairyland,  
Oakland

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those who prefer to ride locally may meet at Children's Fairyland and depart on a decided route at 9:00 AM.

June 28 - LAKE/BART - 7:15 AM  
Mount Diablo  
START: Walnut Creek BART or Children's Fairyland, Oakland (Advanced)

July 4 - LAKE - 9:00 AM  
Independence Day Decide-and-Ride  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Meet at the Children's Fairyland parking lot and depart on a decided route at 9:00 AM.

July 5 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Wildwood/Moraga  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

July 12 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Lucas Valley  
START: Smith Ranch Rd Park-and-Ride (map)  
LIGHT RIDERS START: Nicasio General Store (map)

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those who prefer to ride locally may meet at Children's Fairyland and depart on a decided route at 9:00 AM.

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July 19 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
San Ramon

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

July 26 - AWAY - 7:00 AM

Lake Sonoma Picnic Ride

START: Lake Sonoma Recreational Area  
(map)

or caravan from Children's Fairyland,  
Oakland

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those  
who prefer to ride locally may meet at  
Children's Fairyland and depart on a de-  
cided route at 9:00 AM.

August 2 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Palomares

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

August 9 - AWAY - 7:00 AM

Petaluma

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those  
who prefer to ride locally may meet at  
Children's Fairyland and depart on a de-  
cided route at 9:00 AM.

August 16 - BART - 7:15 AM

Millbrae/Peninsula

START: Millbrae BART

August 23 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Crockett Loop

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

August 30 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Arlington

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

September 1 - LAKE - 9:00 AM

Labor Day Decide-and-Ride

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Meet at the Children's Fairyland parking  
lot and depart on a decided route at 9:00  
AM.

September 6 - AWAY - 7:00 AM

Santa Cruz Mountains

START: Woodside Town Center (map)  
or caravan from Children's Fairyland,  
Oakland

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those  
who prefer to ride locally may meet at  
Children's Fairyland and depart on a de-  
cided route at 9:00 AM.

September 13 - BART - 7:30 AM

Fog City / SF Grand Prix Option

START: Embarcadero at Bryant St, San  
Francisco (map)

Nearest BART station: Embarcadero

September 20 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Calaveras

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

September 27 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Newark

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

October 4-5 - AWAY - 5:00 AM

17th Annual Monterey Ride

Check the Yellowjackets website for addi-  
tional ride information

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

REQUIRED: Helmet, waiver, ID with emer-  
gency info.

RECOMMENDED: Two bottles of water  
minimum, high energy food, pump, spare  
tubes, tools, patch kit, padded gloves, padded

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cycling shorts, protective eye wear, sun block.

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## From the Office of the President

There is a saying I believe I once heard which sounded something like this, neither wind, rain, cold or dark of night, will get in the way of me completing my appointed rounds. Oh forget it, take my word for it, I have seen the reality. People showing up at the Lake and actually taking off and riding as if they believed they could will the rain to hold off until they had completed their appointed duties...Folks it hasn't worked, but as I look at the calendar I see better days ahead. By the time you get this newsletter the rain will have stopped and your quest for perfection, so that you can ace the Monterey ride will have been achieved. Keep on pedaling....

Safety...

Again and Again I repeat the call for safety. Make reaching your final destination your most important objective. Being in shape won't mean a thing if you don't complete every ride, minus scratches and bruises..

Clothing...

I have had many inquiries about clothing, and believe me I am trying very hard to make things happen. I will keep you informed of the progress as information is fed to me... Bottom-line, I feel your frustration and am doing everything possible to relieve it.

Picnic Ride Support

As is the custom, we will be asking ride groups for their support of the Calistoga Ride on June 21 and the Lake Sonoma Ride of July 26. As of this memo we have not decided which groups would support each ride. However, I would like you to be on the lookout for e-mail messages and flyers when the decision is reached.

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## OYJ Email List

To subscribe to the OYJ Email List, send email to:

oaklandyellowjackets-  
subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You will receive email to verify your current OYJ membership. Please give your full name and address when you reply.

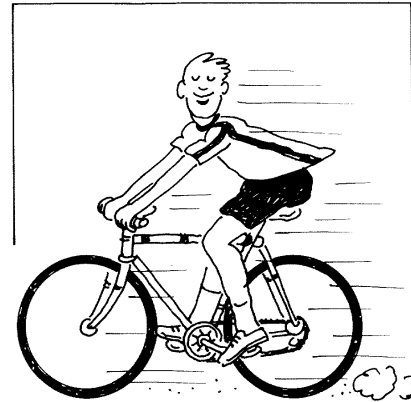
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My interest in the front brake has more to do with controlling the speed of the bike in, or hopefully before, downhill turns. From time to time, especially in wet winter riding, I find myself entering a turn faster than I want to. When that happens I become anxious, (frantic?) and rigid, never a good posture from which to control a bike. Knowing that any brake application will throw my weight forward increasing the load and the traction on the front wheel and decreasing the traction on the rear wheel, I apply the front brake with confidence and relax on through the turn. I believe that confidence and relaxation are more important than the decrease in speed.

My reading indicates that indeed one can lock up the front wheel in a downhill turn. Sheldon Brown points out that in fast, rough road riding either wheel may, for a moment, leave the ground and if the brakes are being applied, lock up while in the air. Ouch! Both Sheldon and John mention that the very conditions that make you want to use the brakes, namely, slick road, diminishes traction and makes it easier to lock up the wheel.

In order to get some confidence in the idea that your weight when decelerating moves to the front wheel think about the last time you were standing for a bus or BART ride. When the train accelerates you are thrown backwards and have to brace against that motion. When the train is stopping you are thrown forward and have to brace against that motion. Most of us will not feel the effect of sudden acceleration on our bicycles—O.K. maybe Kevin and Fred get this effect—but not most of us. However, anyone who makes it to the top of the hill can feel the effects of sudden deceleration by applying either brake.

So on your next fast descent, give your front brake some preference and see if it doesn't make you feel calm and relaxed.



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

### **Officers**

President: Al Joseph  
510-339-0454  
Vice President: Jim Collier  
510-526-0716  
Barbara Massey  
510-531-5899  
Secretary: Ann Ma  
510-482-1167  
Treasurer: Barbara Moodie  
(415) 586-3783

### **Standing Committee Chairpersons**

Monterey Ride Committee: Kathy Starkey  
510-521-6235  
Map Committee: Brit Harvey  
510-845-9122  
Christmas Party Committee: Kathy Starkey  
510-521-6235

### **Ride Coordinators**

Advanced: Leigh Costain

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510-215-7001

**Advanced Intermediates:** Fred McWilliams  
510-636-0838  
Reginald Burrell  
415-586-3783  
Mark Rutta  
510-531-2111

**Humane Intermediates:** Claudette Center  
209-858-2090  
Al Bourges  
510-530-7226

**Light:** Al Joseph  
510-339-045  
Chris Blease  
510-208-3238

**Newsletter Editor** Jan Smith  
510-893-3374

**Webmaster** Alfonso Estrada



# **Oakland YellowJackets**

## **Calistoga Ride and Picnic**

**June 21, 2002**

**Sponsored by the Humane Intermediate and  
Light Riders**

*Humane Intermediate and Light Riders bring what is listed according to the  
first initial of your name:*

*A-E Side Dish or Salad*

*F-M Main Dish*

*N-Z Dessert*

**Meet at Lake Merritt Fairyland Parking Lot at 6:45am,  
Caravan will leave lake at 7:00am.**

**Members free, Non Members \$15.00**

**Directions to the start of the ride:  
Hwy 80 East towards Sacramento  
Cross the Carquinez Bridge (\$2.00 toll)  
Exit Hwy 37 (Marine World Pkwy)  
Right on Hwy 29 (Sonoma Blvd)  
Stay on Hwy 29 though St Helena  
Left into Bothe-Napa State Park  
(across from Larkmead Lane)**

