



Official Newsletter  
May 2003  
Come Ride with Us

# Free Wheelin'



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## Inside

- 2 How to Contact Us
- 3 Meeting and Ride Schedules
- 5 From the Office of the President
- 5 OYJ Email List
- 7 Club Officers, Chair persons, and Ride Coordinators

## The Main Attraction

By Maynard Hershon

Steve Smilanick lives in Roseville, near Sacramento. Smilanick owns a high-tech machine shop, S and S Machine, making all sorts of precision stuff.

His sideline, his passion really, is the S and S Torque Coupling, stainless steel or titanium devices that allow bicycles to come apart for travel. He sells them to 55 framebuilders around North America.

I have an S and S-coupled bike made by Waterford in Wisconsin. A road bike with normal 700C wheels, it fits in a case the size of the wheels (with deflated tires) and 10 inches deep. The cased bike qualifies as luggage, thus comes up the airport luggage conveyor, at no extra charge. Saves \$50 per flight in the States

Smilanick asked if he could display my S and S Waterford in his booth at Anaheim. I put the bike in a car and took it to his home. We agreed we'd go for a ride while I was there. I thought I'd ride the Wa-

*(Continued on page 2)*

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**Next Membership Meeting  
7 pm, May 8, 2003  
Rockridge Branch Library  
5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

(Continued from page 1)

terford, but it was immaculate, ready for the show. I dreaded getting it dirty again.

Smilanick looked at me a few minutes after I arrived and asked, "How open-minded are you about bikes?" And walked me out on the patio behind the house where there was a tandem, a RECUMBENT tandem. Oh, I thought: THAT's why he wanted to know.

It was a Ryan, a long-wheelbase recumbent, SandS coupled by the way. How long is it? Two inches longer, axle to axle, than Smilanick's Toyota pickup: 104 inches long. Your road bike's about 39 inches long.

It has two lawn chair-looking seats with handles near the arms, mirrors on the handles and umpteen water bottles. The stoker (rear rider) has a single brake lever for the drum in the mountain bike-size rear wheel.

The guy in front, the captain, steers with handles that came up from under his seat. Too weird.

You adjust the seats fore and aft, to set "saddle height." You can adjust their tilt, like some electric car seats, and the degree to which they wrap around your bottom, front to back. Don't say it; I know...

It was, no contest, the dorkiest bike I'd ever seen.



Let's ride THIS, Smilanick said. I thought about it. No one knows me around here, I thought. Why not? It'd be the purist roadie bike-writer riding the pocket-protector bicycle. But it MIGHT be fun...

So off we went.

(Continued on page 6)

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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.

## 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.

**May 8, 2003**  
**June 12, 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.

May 3 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Lake Chabot  
29/35/42 miles  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

A counter-clockwise loop around Oakland and San Leandro. The outbound route is a flat cruise along Doolittle Rd by Oakland Airport and a modest climb up Fairmont Rd in San Leandro. Lights and Intermediates descend the south side of Lake Chabot and return via Bancroft Ave. or Foothill Blvd. Advanced riders complete the loop via Redwood Rd and Joaquin Miller Ave.

May 10 - BART - 7:30 AM  
Tiburon Loop  
17/46/55 miles  
START: Embarcadero at Bryant St, San Francisco (map)  
Nearest BART station: Embarcadero

A Bay Area favorite. This ride takes you across the Golden Gate Bridge and through Sausalito. Light riders go directly to Tiburon at the end of the Sausalito bike path and return to San Francisco via ferry. Others traverse Camino Alto and Paradise Drive, then return along the north shore of Richardson Bay. Advanced option riders add the Marin headlands loop after crossing the GG Bridge northbound.

May 17 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Tunnel & Grizzly  
38 miles  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Climb up the Broadway Terrace, Old Tunnel Road and part of Grizzly Peak Blvd, then reap the rewards of your effort with an exhilarating descent on South Park and Wildcat Canyon Rd. Practice your paceline skills along San Pablo Dam Rd into El Sobrante and return to Lake Merritt via Key Route. Light and Humane Intermediate riders may have alternate routes as determined by their respective ride coordinators.

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(Continued from page 3)*

May 24 - BART - 7:30 AM  
Mines Road / Mt. Hamilton Option  
25/86/99 miles  
START: Dublin-Pleasanton BART

Light and Humane Intermediate riders enjoy a scenic tour around the Livermore area's vineyard country. Advanced Intermediates ride out to the San Antonio junction and back along Mines Road. Advanced riders continue up the "back side" of Mount Hamilton to the Lick Observatory, descend the West side of the mountain and finish the ride at Fremont BART.

May 26 - LAKE - 9:00 AM  
Memorial 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.

May 31 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Dublin Grade  
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

June 7 - BART - 7:15 AM  
Morgan Territory

June 14 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Three Bears and Some Redwoods

June 21 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Calistoga Picnic Ride

June 28 - LAKE/BART - 7:15 AM  
Mount Diablo

July 4 - LAKE - 9:00 AM  
Independence Day Decide-and-Ride

July 5 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Wildwood/Moraga

July 12 - AWAY - 7:00 AM

Lucas Valley

July 19 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
San Ramon

July 26 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Lake Sonoma Picnic Ride  
August 2 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Palomares

August 9 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Petaluma

August 16 - BART - 7:30 AM  
Dumbarton/Alpine

August 23 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Crockett Loop

August 30 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Arlington

September 1 - LAKE - 9:00 AM  
Labor Day Decide-and-Ride

September 6 - AWAY - 7:00 AM  
Santa Cruz Mountains

September 13 - BART - 7:30 AM  
Fog City

September 20 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Calaveras

September 27 - LAKE - 8:00 AM  
Newark

October 4-5 - AWAY - 5:00 AM  
17th Annual Monterey Ride

Check the Yellowjackets website for additional 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-

*(Continued on page 5)*

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gency 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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## From the Office of the President

I have always believed that the beauty of being president for life, of the Oakland Yellowjackets, is that I can never run out of the words, THANK YOU. You the, membership, gave me this opportunity once more on Saturday, April 26, 2003. You were not going to let a little thing like rain, stop us from having the traditional kickoff ride, so you delayed the kickoff ride for two weeks, ordered up a perfect day, and got it. And, as usual, came through with a flawless performance. That performance included, an accident free ride, a great turnout, outstanding and ample food and drink, great camaraderie and members giving up their normal ride to help out. Of course this resulted in a lot of, "you guys are great," comments from the first timers. All that you did and said encouraged a large number of the first timers to join on the spot. So here I go again... Thank you.

## REMINDERS

### Map Book

The map books, thanks to the generosity of Fred McWilliams, are available to the membership. I will have them with me every Saturday, so please check with me and pick yours up. The committee did a great job and they are guaranteed to be perfect.

### Safety.

A safe riding season is our number one objective. Please obey the rules of the road and be extra careful. Remember the entire group you are riding with is dependent upon you doing the right thing.

### Ride Coordinators

I want to thank Leigh Costain for volunteering to take on the responsibility of advanced ride coordinator. If you are in that group you are aware of the challenge and, therefore, I am asking that you make life comfortable for Leigh. Although she has taken on the task she shouldn't have to do it alone. Therefore, I would like to have one or two more people step up and assist her...Please contact me if you wish to be recognized.

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## OYJ Email List

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

oaklandyellowjackets-  
subscribe@yahoogleroups.com

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

*(Continued from page 2)*

And it WAS fun. I was immediately comfortable in that back seat, legs nearly horizontal in front of me. You sit so close to the ground you feel safe, somehow; you could fall, sure, but you couldn't fall FAR.

The bike felt fast on the flats, as tandems do, and not all that slow on the moderate hills on our ride. We wobbled a little at first on up-hills, but got smoother and steadier as miles slid under us.

We didn't have to learn how to stand up together; on a recumbent, you don't stand up. You do the whole ride sitting in that lawn chair. The passenger, incidentally, is pretty far behind the captain. He or she can see nearly everything, not just the material of the captain's jersey.

As Smilanick warned, I used some muscles I don't use on a normal bike, on the sides of my knees and in my lower back. I could feel them post-ride. Smilanick says he mixes up riding the recumbent with riding normal bikes (like his full-Campy Merlin). Switching back-and-forth works like cross-training for him.

He says, by the way, he wouldn't have been caught dead on a recumbent until someone he trusted got him to try a solo one at a bike show demonstration. He found himself smiling as he rode; he'd been seduced.

The Ryan tandem rode over the road quite smoothly. The long frame absorbed more shock than a wedgie-bike (that's what recumbent nerds call conventional bikes) would.

Unless I miss my guess, a recumbent would be kinder to your body than a regular bike. There's no weight on your feet or arms. The seats support your back and butt over a far greater area than conventional bike seats would. You're not going to get saddlesore.

Smilanick rides in regular walking shorts; no need for a chamois insert on a recumbent.

Once you were on the road, not just looking at the Ryan on Smilanick's patio, you forgot how unforgivably dorky it was and enjoyed the ride.

As different as the Ryan was from your usual bike, more different was the reaction from people along the road from the one you usually get.

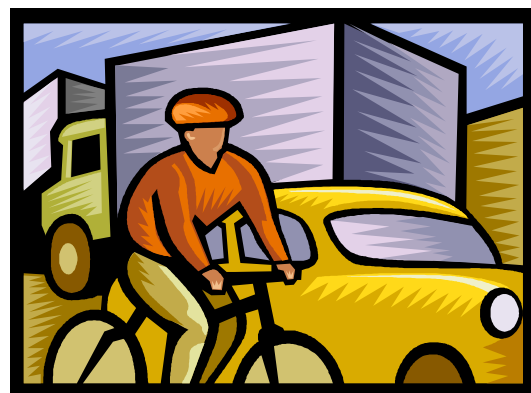
The guy on his lawn tractor would yell, "Nice bike." The lady getting into the Camry parked in front of the suburban home would wave and grin. The two moms with kids in the park would stop their conversation, wave and smile and talk about you as you passed.

You imagined they were going to invite you to stop and help them eat their picnic lunch. You expected to hear, "Please. We've got plenty of sandwiches and potato salad. It'd be our pleasure. Glass of lemonade?"

That part made me kinda sad.

Somehow, we cyclists have worn out our welcome on suburban roads, and urban roads too, I guess. Smilanick and I were the same two guys no one would've paid a bit of positive attention to -- had we been on solo road or mountain bikes. But on that funny-looking recumbent tandem...

We were the circus, just come to town, the main attraction. We just pedaled by, and they loved us.



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

Light: Al Joseph  
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Newsletter Editor: Jan Smith  
510-893-3374

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## **Officers**

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## **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: Leigh Costain  
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Advanced Intermediates: Fred McWilliams  
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