



Official Newsletter
September 2003
Come Ride with Us

Free Wheelin'



Inside

- 2 How to Contact Us
- 5 Pedaluma Ride
A Pedalrama
- 5 Meeting and Ride
Schedules
- 7 From the Office of the
President
- 8 Club Officers, Chair-
persons, and Ride
Coordinators

Mount Shasta Summit Super Century

By Alfie Estrada

During the days leading up to this ride, I obsessed about ominous weather. com forecasts and doubts about being able to handle this 134-mile ride with 15,500 feet of climbing. The fact remains that I registered to do this ride many months in advance and twisted some arms to join me for one simple reason: it has undoubtedly become my favorite one-day ride above all others.

Secretly, I hoped my travel companions would understand why themselves, since I sold them the idea of doing this ride with me quite persuasively. Kevin Manning, Joe Ferrer, Matt Masters, Lisa Lestishock and I arrived at Shasta city Saturday night, having traveled through periods of heavy down-pour along the way, and checked in for the ride before dinner.

Sunday morning, August 3, one look out the window assured me that Mother Nature was going to encore her dramatic show, which spoiled my chance to climb Mt. Shasta itself this time last year. Thick, dark clouds enshrouded the whole region and the air smelled of imminent rain. Haphazardly under-dressed, I set off with Lisa and Kevin at 5:45 AM from the hotel and straight

(Continued on page 2)

**Next Membership Meeting
7 pm, September 11, 2003
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

(Continued from page 1)

onto the ride route. Although my wardrobe was decidedly minimalist, I packed a painters drop cloth in my pocket to stuff under my jersey for good measure on the chilly descents. Opting to leave the rain cape behind, all my cares were already soaked before the first drop of rain fell. An epic ride lay ahead of us.

The Main Cast of Climbs:

#1, mile 16: Parks Creek Summit, 3,820' gain in 12 miles

#2, mile 66: Mumbo Summit, 3,400' gain in 9 miles

#3, mile 88: Castle Lake, 2,240' gain in 7 miles

#4, mile 106: Mt. Shasta, 4,470' gain in 14 miles

I felt like Pinocchio the Tour Guide in the early morning, pointing in this direction and that, while assuring Kevin and Lisa the gorgeous views I promised *did* exist behind the wall of low clouds. These became more apparent to their own eyes, however, as we began the first major ascent up Parks Creek in the Trinity National Forest, when views of the evergreen valleys revealed themselves.

The descent was as much an exhilarating treat as I remembered. Long and constantly fast, though occasionally treacherous as the road surface was beaten up in a few sections and there were no guardrails wrapped around the sweeping turns. What's more, rain began to fall as we made our way down. An extra helping of adrenaline and caution came with breakfast.

Adequate support, sparse population and minimal vehicular traffic that uphold the peaceful environment true to this ride's surroundings are a big part of why I love this event so much. It appeared there were no more than 200 cyclists attempting the super century, over 40 of whom were part of an animated San Francisco based entourage called Team DFL (ask me what it stands for some time). I'd heard many of them who finished the entire ride attended a housewarming cocktail party the night before that lasted past midnight. Animals.

En route to our second climb just before reaching Gumboot Lake and the South Fork of the Sacramento River, we briefly spotted Joe and Matt, traveling the opposite way on the 100-mile course. Later on, we'd learn that they cursed the rain and called it a day after enduring 70 miles and two big climbs.

Just past the bridge over Fawn Creek, Lisa punctured her rear tire. During the repair, a mobile SAG volunteer simply looked on for lack of a floor pump in his vehicle. Somewhat amusing, we thought, perhaps only because we were adequately equipped for the repair ourselves. In fairness to the Shasta Wheelmen, however, I should say their SAG volunteers overall were extremely

(Continued on page 3)

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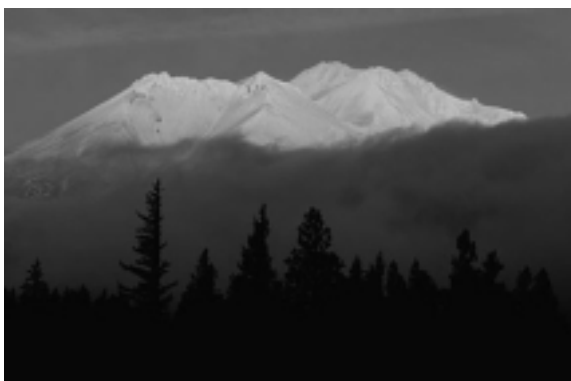
Submit **Free Wheelin'** articles at any ride or club meeting, or call the Oakland Yellowjackets voice mail (510.986.9011) to make special arrangements. Handwritten or typed articles or hard copy with the accompanying file on diskette, are accepted. Electronic files can also be sent to the club's e-mail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

(Continued from page 2)

friendly, willing and genuinely helpful. Most importantly, they stocked rest stops well and demonstrated keen experience with weather threats and radio communication. Their presence was visible and reassuring, so I never felt less than safe on the ride. And, for 30 bucks, you probably couldn't ask for more. Okay, you could. Like more accurate mileage on the route sheets for the benefit of those who don't already know that there's really nine more miles of riding than claimed.

The second climb past Gumboot Lake as I recalled was the most difficult of the day due to its grade. Even so, the boulder-strewn, rambling waters of the Sacramento River below were my favorite scenic backdrop once again. I specifically remember the agony I felt last year pressing up the steeper sections of this climb, which forced me to stop several times midway. But I felt remarkably better this time; vindicated—even—for efficiently managing the same gear ratio that just about killed me the last time. And knowing that already completed my ride in many ways.

Upon reaching the lunch stop at Mumbo Summit, we learned the roadway was closed down after we began our ascent due to inclement weather and potential flooding. Kevin, who had climbed ahead of Lisa and me, just finished lunch, appeared cold and dejected, and explicitly questioned his will to continue. Later, it was relieving to see how quickly his mood turned for the better, despite the fact that we were the very last to depart the rest stop (thanks to the road closure), and that we descended the road in—surprise, surprise—pouring rain. Adding to the adventure were seriously bumpy sections of the early descent, which felt as if they loosened all the bolts on my bike.



While we deli-lunched at Mumbo Summit, word on SAG radio announced the roadway on Mt. Shasta was still open, even as any hope of improved weather was as good as a fairy tale about the Blair Witch. I suggested skipping Castle Lake (the most “junior” of the ride’s climbs) and heading straight to Mt. Shasta while it was still an option. Lisa and Kevin trusted my judgment, as this would also alleviate our concerns about reaching the ski bowl summit before the last rest stop’s cut-off time. Besides, we were all certain to feel just as accomplished after 125 miles and over 13,000 feet of climbing.

For the first time all day, we felt bonafide sunshine on our shoulders most of the way up the big mountain. The road even dried up completely along the way, and I remarked on the humidity caused by the rapid evaporation. The climb itself was long, but its grade forgiving. Think of Tunnel Road, but seven times as long: tolerable, but quite possibly murderous on legs already put to a tough century’s worth of work.

After what seemed to be forever and a day, Lisa and I reached the summit at the old ski bowl. There was no holy grail. But there *is* something inexplicably magical about this mountain. There, we rejoined Kevin, visibly rejuvenated and rewarded by his efforts, and donning a black garbage bag underneath his rain cape for warmth.

A few minutes passed, and I was content chatting with the locals and inhaling smoked tofu in between moments relishing the breathtaking view of the towering mountain peak above. Below us, clouds instantaneously darkened and began obscuring the tiny, distant town from which started, while thunder claps grew audibly closer. Prudence told me to stop hovering over the food table, giddy up, and get moving.

The descent was—*ohmigosh*. Dee-licious. On a dry day, a rider with modest skills and confidence could probably descend all 14 miles of the silky smooth Everett Highway without once applying brakes. What a finale! Of course, as luck would have it, we would be treated to extraordinary circumstances.

About halfway down the mountain, the sky opened up and unleashed monsoon rain that leg-

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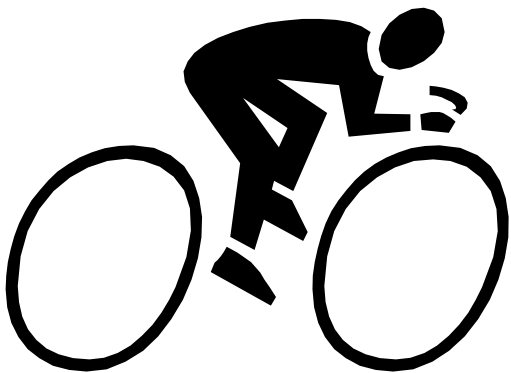
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ends are written about. Sudden dusk, dollar-sized raindrops, lightning and thunder. Water felt like it was drilling holes in my cheeks. Salt seeping from my helmet pads was stinging my eyes, a quick reminder I was actually perspiring all day beneath my sodden garb. Still, I *loved* every moment of it, yelled in utter delight and boyishly bombed down the mountain.

Twelve miles into the descent, I stopped to wait for Kevin and Lisa, whom I had passed before the storm arrived. They both refused rides from passing SAG vehicles, perhaps feeling as I had during this climactic home stretch. After all, we were mere minutes away (almost 13 hours after we started) from our hotel's neighboring café, warm beverages, a hot shower, and rejoining Joe and Matt for dinner, peppered with juvenile superlatives.

The day immediately following the ride was blessed with sunshine and a cloud-free, blue sky. Lisa and I took full advantage of this by driving back to the ski bowl and impulsively hiking up to the snow line. A post-ride tradition in the making? Perhaps. California snowballs in August: Priceless.

I'm resigned to believing the wildly fickle weather patterns I've seen here two years in a row are probably standard fare in most instances of this event. Whatever. Health and physical condition permitting, I'll be making this awesome pilgrimage again next year. We traveled a long way to get here and definitely got so much more than we bargained for. And while rediscovering the merits of enjoying a ride one pedal stroke at a time, I learned an important lesson all over again: life... is... good.



Pedaluma Ride A Pedalrama

By Independent Ride Critic

You'll notice that I changed the spelling a little so that I could attempt to convey that this August ride was indeed a cycling event worth partaking in. Riders did a fair amount of pedaling on this day. We all have our favorite rides that the Club does each year and obviously the picnic rides of Lake Sonoma and Calistoga come to mind, as does the highly regarded Monterey classic. This will be another one that gets added to my already long list.

A new addition to this year's ride calendar developed by Brit Harvey, one immediately gets the sensation from hearing his name that a fair amount of climbing will be involved. It's always nice to explore some new pathways on your bicycle and I think that since this was a ride that most hadn't done before, the result was a good turnout by OYJ enthusiasts. The route provided significant mileage and technical opportunities for all groups, especially for those who plan to be Monterey-bound this fall.

Light riders completed a 40 mile course, with Humane/Intermediate riders doing about 60 miles. Advanced riders adjusted their route on the fly to opt out of some extra climbs and 10 to 12 additional miles after the lunch stop to finish up with about 90 miles. The route will probably receive some off-season adjustments in order to smooth out any remaining rough spots.

The weather cooperated fully by providing very pleasant short-sleeve conditions with temperatures in the mid-to-upper 70's, accompanied by mild breezes in the afternoon, which actually aided riders on their return trip. Usually, the wind changes directions and you end up having to fight a headwind in both directions, but such was not the case today.

The thing I enjoyed most about this ride is that this area of Sonoma County has remained largely unspoiled by development. Sadly, its all too com-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

mon to see rural areas being bulldozed for condominiums and strip malls. Here, one can still revel in the area's bucolic surroundings which features rolling hills and grasslands, rustic farmhouses and lonely country roads. I particularly enjoyed the panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean on this clear day as we descended westward on Coleman Valley Road toward coastal Highway 1.

For the most part, all riders returned safely except for some minor equipment malfunctions, a few wrong turns, and the always annoying flat tire. However, the author suffered through a particularly embarrassing Kodak moment after changing a flat tire on a fairly stiff grade.

Being especially adept in this field of repair, he waved away any potential helpers, knowing full well that nobody really wanted to lose precious momentum by stopping on a hill. After repairing his tire, he attempted to mount up, but failed to cleat in properly which caused him to clumsily slip and lose his balance as he toppled over onto the asphalt. Slightly exasperated, he brushed himself off, looked around, and got back on his bike. This time he attempted to mount by first gliding downhill a little ways, cleating in, and then making a U-turn. However, with the road being so narrow, he quickly ran out of room and fell over again as he slipped on the coarse gravel at the roads' edge. When someone asked later, "Hey, how'd you get that strawberry on your elbow"? He replied, "Oh that? That's nothing, really", then quickly changed the subject.

You all know how tricky it can be when starting out on a grade, right? Anyway, I'm sure these spills would've appeared quite comical to anyone who had witnessed them and would have provided ample fodder for the club's Jesters who undoubtedly would've seized the opportunity to make light of this situation. Therefore, the author is extremely grateful that no one saw this little episode, because he would've never heard the end of it.

Needless to say, it was an entertaining day all around. Riders reconvened after the ride was over at starting point (Walnut Park) where a street fair was currently taking place, and cool, sweet watermelon was being passed around. For those of you who were unable to make it for this ride, you were missed, and you missed out on a great ride. Be sure and put this on your ride calendar for next year -- you won't be disappointed.

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.

September 11, 2003
October 9, 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.

September 6 - AWAY - 7:00 AM
Santa Cruz Mountains
27/19/46/89 miles
START: Woodside Town Center
or caravan from Children's Fairyland, Oakland

(Continued from page 5)

RIDE-AND-DECIDE OPTION: Those who prefer to ride locally may meet at Children's Fairyland and depart on a decided route at 8:00 AM.

The light ride is a counter-clockwise loop around the Arastradero reserve, Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Others climb up the mountain range via Old La Honda Road, from which Humane Intermediates complete their ride via a descent on Kings Mountain Road. Advanced Intermediates continue to San Gregorio and return via Tunitas Creek Rd, while Advanced riders explore the southern side of the range via Bear Creek, Big Basin and Waterman Gap.

**September 13 - BART - 7:15 AM
Fog City / SF Grand Prix Option**

37 miles

START: Embarcadero at Bryant St, San Francisco
Nearest BART station: Embarcadero

Take a scenic tour around San Francisco and get a taste of the T-Mobile International pro race course (an optional climb up Fillmore Street) if you dare! Light riders travel to the beach along the Great Highway and have the option to end at BART. Others enjoy stretches of the San Francisco scenic drive, including Twin Peaks.

**September 20 - LAKE - 8:00 AM
Calaveras**

77 miles (shorter options for Light and Humane Intermediate groups) START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

The complete route travels to Castro Valley via BBR (Burdeck-Butters-Robinson) and Redwood Rd, then traverses the Dublin Grade and Foothill Rd to Sunol before the "main event" -- southbound on Calaveras Rd. The ride ends at Fremont BART. Shorter, less difficult ride options for Humane Intermediate and Light riders to be determined by ride coordinators.

**September 27 - LAKE - 8:00 AM
Newark**

52 miles (shorter options for Light riders)
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Nearly flatter than a pancake. This ride is designed to be a pre-Monterey ride taper-off workout: an out-and-back trip to Newark via Doolittle,

Hesperian and Marsh Roads.

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

120/85 miles

PACIFICA START (120 MILE): Pacific Manor Shopping Plaza

PESCADERO START (85 MILE, no overnight parking): Pescadero State Beach

Our famous season-closer: a one-way ride to Pacific Grove in the Monterey Peninsula with dinner banquet and overnight accommodations at the Asilomar Conference Center, then a bus trip back to the start the next day. Registration and advanced room reservations required.

Please note: this caravan and ride departure times are strictly enforced on this ride. Be on time!

**October 19 - LAKE - 8:00 AM
Breast Cancer Fund BIKE AGAINST THE ODDS**

12/20/30/47/66 mile options

START: Lake Merritt, Oakland

The inaugural Bay Area cycling event benefiting the Breast Cancer Fund.

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.





From the Office of the President

WELCOME...

I would like to formally welcome the new riders, and there are scores of you this year, to our family. You are now members of a great family and I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to develop some great friendships. Ride with pride....

EVENTS...

On October 19, 2003, we are going to be involved in the most important event the club has ever undertaken, The Breast Cancer Fund, Bike Against The Odds. As I mentioned previously a number of our membership has invested a great deal of time and effort to get us to the point where the ride has become a reality. Now we need the entire membership to step up to the plate. Your participation in the actual ride will make the effort all worth while. Go to our website, oaklandyellowjackets.org, pull up the registration form, fill it out and get the process started. I know I can depend on each and every one of you to do your share. By the way if you have any friends who wish to donate to the cause please feel free to ask them for their support. The registration fee is fine but additional support is needed to make this an overwhelming success.

CLOTHING...

I know you couldn't believe your eyes when I emailed you that the clothing samples arrived and we are well on our way to sizing and placing orders. For those of you who were unable to attend the fit sessions this week, you will have one more

opportunity at the meeting on the 11th. I will be able to add to the original order. If you want to be admired by other cyclist and people in general as you sport your Yellowjacket attire, now is the opportunity to step up

SAFETY...

Is still our number one objective. You are our number one product. Together they can't be beaten.....

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