



Official Newsletter  
August 2004  
Come Ride with Us

# Free Wheelin'



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## Deathride Redo

By Orangeman

I felt empowered to know that I had the ability to make sacrifices, and survive personal suffering in exchange for greater gain. Somehow, deep within the annals of my brain rested the notion that 3 repetitions up Mt. Diablo would somehow equal completing the three passes of the Death Ride: Monitor, Ebbetts & Carson. Even with nearly 12K feet of climbing, Diablo provided an analogy at best, because somehow the math didn't quite add up; there was simply no comparing any number of attempts up Diablo with the DR. The climbs are nearly twice as long and you're at altitude. But this was the type of training that helped to cement the concept of trying to push on, even when one didn't want to.

I did some pretty good training rides in the 10 weeks or so before the DR. There were the Primavera and Grizzly Peak centuries, Brit's Cazadero ride, though only 75 miles featured some of the most difficult climbing I've attempted in a long time--I still bristle at the mention of

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**Next Membership Meeting  
7 pm, August 12, 2004  
Rockridge Branch Library  
5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

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Fort Ross Road—a killer climb. These rides coupled with the early-season Fatburners with Kevin, Matt and Joe, along with the 6am spin classes, helped to get me into shape.

As I began to taper down my training the week prior to the DR, I had a chance to reflect on my routine and to compare and contrast with the program I'd followed last year. With a 13-month layoff from work last year, I'd had ample time to pursue my riding goals, not to mention such leisure activities like the numerous Wednesday afternoon ballgames at the Net. As I re-entered the workforce in April of this year, a 360 degree shifting of priorities became necessary to balance the demands of work with training.

Riding in the afternoons after work required some real commitment... coping with the frenetic pace of rush-hour traffic, smoggy air and late afternoon windiness; and the more than occasional episodes of Don't-Feel-Like-It-Is, made for less than ideal conditions which up till now were virtually unknown, since for the past 10 years or so I'd worked swing shifts which allowed me to have more time for training. Just goes to show you, work gets in the way of everything.

My weekly average mileage during the 8 weeks prior to the DR had dipped down slightly from 185 mpw to about 160 miles per week this year. Gone too, was the weight program that I'd so diligently honed over the past few seasons. The pros tell you to skip the weights during the ride season and concentrate more on cycling.

It would be interesting to see how, if any, these changes might affect my performance this year. I would try to stick to a similar strategy as last years', but this time, I would try to ride "smarter" as opposed to merely riding harder. Most notably, I'd been able to upgrade my gearing somewhat by adding a 32-tooth cog in the back. This, in theory,

would allow me to "spin" more easily on those long climbs, thus conserving energy. I'd had this tendency to reserve that top gear for the hardest climbs, but this time around, I would be taking full advantage of it early on and as much as necessary.

I managed about 4 hours of sleep and began

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## How to Contact Us



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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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my day about 3 am. Things began a little strangely as I groped around in the darkened hotel room for my glasses, and as I turned the lights on, things seemed a little woozy & off balance. “Whoa! What’s going on here”? as I extended my arms out to stabilize against the wall. Then, as I looked in the mirror, I had a sudden realization: “Oh”--I looked pretty silly in my wife’s glasses. I hoped this wouldn’t be a precursor for the rest of the day.

Each rider is assigned a bib number to pin onto their jersey. Mine was 1999 which brought to mind the old Prince tune, “Party (Ride) Like It’s 1999”. I don’t really remember very much about 1999 except that I fell asleep before Auld Lang Sine, so I decided not to add a bunch of expectations to perform well.

We arrived at the parks’ outskirts about 4:45 am where my Mrs. dropped me off and bade me farewell. Lo and behold, who should be parked right next to us but Mr. Double Century himself, Mr. Alfie Estrada. I wouldn’t see him again until the end of the ride. I hoped that some of his stamina had rubbed off on me.

Five Yellowjackets would begin the ride: Richie Jones, was back out again this year to reassert his mastery of the mountains, Anthony Eng, who has risen to prominence this year and riding very well, returning club veteran Mitch Cox, who didn’t find out until May that he’d been accepted, Club webmaster Alfie Estrada looking to pad on some extra miles and the Orangeman, attempting to go all the way this year.

It was a rather cool 47 degrees at 5 am and I didn’t see another familiar soul out there at the starting gate, so as soon as the sky began to lighten up a bit, I got on my way. It actually turned out to be a pretty decent day, with cloudless skies and warm temperatures in the high 70’s to low 80’s with some cooling breezes. Last year had been quite warm--nearly unbearable at times.

Things seemed to go deceptively well over the first two passes and I had them pretty well nailed down before 1 pm--slightly ahead of last years’ pace. Good thing I’d remembered to check my ego at the starting line, because it seemed like everybody and their mother was passing me up out there. “Slow Traffic to the Right”, someone chided jokingly. “That’s OK, I know I’m a freakin’ Turtle... So what? You got a problem with that?” I bantered back. Mostly, as part of my revised game plan, I’d resolved to ignore these insults and do the best I could, no matter how long it took, and since I’ve never been well renowned as a strong climber, it would probably take all day. I kept on pedaling.

After the lunch break, the route consisted of some descents and rollers which I took at a moderate pace. Of the three passes, Carson would prove to be the most difficult. When I reached the Woodfords’ rest stop, I took a little extra time to gather myself for the ominous climb ahead. With Monitor and Ebbetts behind me, I felt that If I could make it up here in reasonably good shape (still able to walk without falling over) then I’d have a good chance of finishing this thing.

I knew that there would be a pretty stiff grade leading up to Pickett’s Junction, and afterward it leveled off for awhile. Familiarity is 9/10ths of the battle as they say, and since I

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didn't make it this far last year, I wasn't really prepared for the 11 more miles of endless climbs that followed. And naturally, by now there was a pretty good afternoon headwind which slowed me down even more. Heck, I thought, if I went any slower, I'd probably be ahead to just get off and walk. As I saw groups of riders speeding back down hill from the summit, I was tempted to turn around and join them. I desperately wanted to be through with this whole mess, as I stopped a couple of times to console myself at the roads' edge.

Ok, I thought, that must be the end around that next turn. Nope. Another 2-3 mile climb. Then at the end of that, another, and at the end of that one, yet another. I was beginning to voice my misery, grumbling audibly, when a fellow cyclist laughingly asked "Is everything OK?" I explained that all the climbing had made me a little cranky. She pointed up toward the summit, where you could see the road snake up for (guess what) another two miles at about 8 percent. "Around that curve up there and you'll be at the tip top", she assured. "Well, OK", I figured, I've come this far, I guess I can make it up there. That pin they give you for completing all five passes had better be 18K Gold, because you'd certainly worked your ass off for it.

So I crept on up at about 4 to 5 mph and finally made it up there, parked my bike, sank down in an empty chair and indulged in a couple of fruit bars which tasted undescribably good. Richie and Anthony had already made it up there and extended their congrats. Of course, this wasn't the end of the ride yet because you still had another 18 miles to get back to the start at Turtle Rock Park, but it was virtually all down hill from here. It was after 6 o'clock in the afternoon now, so after a 30 minute rest, I got going.

Now it was my turn to relish in the 45 mph descents, which I found to be the most rewarding and definitely the high point of my

day. I'll tell you what, I don't know about all this climbing stuff, but if there was ever a strictly downhill cycling event, then hell, sign me up, because there's something about speeding down hill at high speeds that really pushes my buttons. Perhaps that's part of the allure that skiing provides.

As the now, bright orange sun began its descent toward the ragged horizon line, it seemed to wink and nod its' approval at the Orangeman as if to say job well done. I felt as warmed by the glow of my imaginary mentor as much as I did by the sound of cheers and congratulations offered by roadside bystanders. After the last little annoyance climb of the day, I rolled on up into the park entrance, the last of our group to straggle in at a quarter after 7pm. I checked in and received my 5-pass pin; and no, it wasn't 18K Gold, but I felt proud to have it. There was my darling wife waiting for me and I gave her a big salty kiss.

All in all, it had been a challenging day--a long 13-1/2 hours of riding, but surprisingly, my body didn't feel too bad for all the wear and tear and though tired as hell, I wasn't really hurting very much. I took my time on the climbs by grinding it out in a slow and deliberate fashion and relished in the harrowing descents. I guess I'm happy to say that I've done the whole thing at least once, and hopefully, my quest for endurance rides should be satisfied for at least a little while. But if anyone should hear me talking about signing up again next year, please slap me upside the head would you?

I'd like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to Jennifer Driscoll for whipping me into peak condition with her "Pain Never Felt So Good" spin classes, and to Virginia Sorgi for her expert bike care--the bike performed flawlessly!

In the days following the ride, as I began to reflect more on the scope of our accomplish-

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ment, I concluded that the OYJ were well represented by the collective and individual efforts of our group, as each member turned in a solid performance to complete all five passes of the DR. For those of you who may be considering this ride in the future, all I can say is, this is a Don't Leave Home Without Your Triple Chain Ring type of event; it's long and its very hard, but if you're in need of a challenge and train like hell, then you too can make it to the top of Carson Pass. Will it be worth it? Well once you make it up there be sure and let me know. Just don't wait too long, because the longer one waits, the more difficult it will become.

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## **Ride Like Lance In "Your" Tour de France**

By Mark Estes

With the world's premiere bike race and most grueling test of athleticism having just concluded, the American rider with the Texas-sized heart rode against the odds and made history by winning a sixth Tour de France. Do you know what Lance Armstrong and we as Yellow Jackets have in common? More than you may think!

Last week at the post-ride club picnic in Sonoma, I asked a few fellow club members a question that had been on my mind. Being a new member myself, I wanted to know why we are called the "Yellow Jackets?" To my amusement, most had no idea. When I got around to hearing original Yellow Jacket Milt

Hill's story, I found out. The first part of the explanation, told through his amused laughter, was that a woman proposed the concept that, as riders, we are like buzzing bees or yellow jackets flitting and buzzing all around, here and there. Milt shook his head confirming that he voted against the name Yellow Jackets for *this* reason. The second part of the explanation was that, in the same way the yellow jersey is worn by champions, we would be "Yellow" Jackets.

Like Lance, we wear the "yellow," in name if not in jersey color. But after watching his supreme bike racing performances that humble even the world's most experienced pros, I wondered, "could we possibly have more in common with this champion?" Here is a man who is paid millions a year to ride, dedicates his whole life to cycling, is provided the absolute best bikes and equipment, was born with the freakish physiology of having a heart and lungs 30% larger than most people and has a full time staff of coaches, managers, nutritionists and medical personnel. On the surface there do not seem to be many similarities. But I think if we look in the mirror, we see the traits of champions inside ourselves.

Do we have to win the Tour de France to be a champion? Not quite! One of the definitions of "champion" is somebody who exemplifies excellence or achievement. Like Lance, we are passionate about cycling, we pedal for health and fun and we are personally dedicated to being the best we can be. He has chosen to have his efforts measured on the international stage of pro bike racing. Our efforts and achievements are measured in the context of the life paths that we have chosen. And we exemplify many of the same qualities of champions- courage, determination, a strong personal belief system, etc. Whether Lance was growing up in a struggling, single-mom home, fighting cancer or enduring the traumatic crashes, dehydration and illness on his way to winning the 2003 Tour last year, he used these same characteristics we have to

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overcome his obstacles and make his most crucial personal decisions.

In my mind, cycling parallels life. My time on the road is as much a mental and spiritual practice as it is physical exercise. This is evident in many of the attitudes and riding skills I practice on the road:

1. Looking where I want to go instead of where I do not want to go
2. Using relaxation and breathing to increase my physical output and endurance
3. Using visualizations and affirmations to overcome my fears about biking (“Will I crash?” “Will I be able to unclip from my pedals?,” etc.)
4. Meeting challenges and achieving goals I did not formerly believe I could accomplish (“I don’t know if I can climb that next monster hill???”)
5. Being fully present and appreciating the beauty around me as I ride (I remind myself to make sure I look around and not just at the road)
6. Using cycling to benefit the greater good (riding in the AIDS Life Cycle benefit bike ride along with Amal, Lilly, Susan, Wendy and Randy or the upcoming Bike Against the Odds)
7. Practicing “Beginner’s Mind” (the positive Zen attitude of openness to your unlimited potential for achievement)

Recently, my livelihood and a major source of my income were threatened. One of the companies I work for underwent a management change. At first, I lived in fear of losing my business, imagining the worst-case scenarios and feeling unable to endure the traumatic challenge I was presented with. I lost a lot of sleep and was worn out with worry. With the help of a book entitled Thinking Body, Dancing Mind-Taosports for Extraordinary Performance in Athletics, Business and Life (by Jerry Lynch, Bantam New Age

books), I applied some of the skills learned by reading it not only to my cycling but to my specific business/life situation. Focusing on relaxing to be in the best, most positive state of mind, I exerted personal power to control my career while visualizing and affirming to “see” where I wanted to go in my life and to relieve my fears.

When I watched Lance Armstrong power up the mountains to victory in these last couple of historic years of Tour de France victories, I found myself observing on his face and in his body an intensity, focus and determination that coexisted with an attitude of calm. I recognized the traits of a champion on a bike were parallel to the traits of a “champion” required in life. Lance without this mental focus would more than likely be just another ordinary rider. But whether his fierce determination was used to survive cancer or to win a bike race, it came down to the belief system he developed.

To quote from the chapter entitled “Beliefs” in Thinking Body, Dancing Mind:

“In 1954, the entire sports world believed that it was humanly impossible to run a mile in faster than four minutes. Their limiting belief was supported by research in more than fifty medical journals throughout the world attesting to that “fact.” We now know that Roger Banister challenged and broke through that barrier. What is not so well known is that the sub-four minute mile was achieved by more than forty-five runners within the next eighteen months. It is difficult to believe that all of those athletes increased their performance within that short amount of time. A more likely explanation is that once the four minute mile barrier was broken, they all believed it could be broken again.”

I doubt that many people ever expected to see a rider win the Tour de France six times! But Lance had the belief and skills necessary to envision being the best he could be and breaking the record. I think Henry Ford was

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right when he said: "whether you think you can or think you can't, you're probably right".

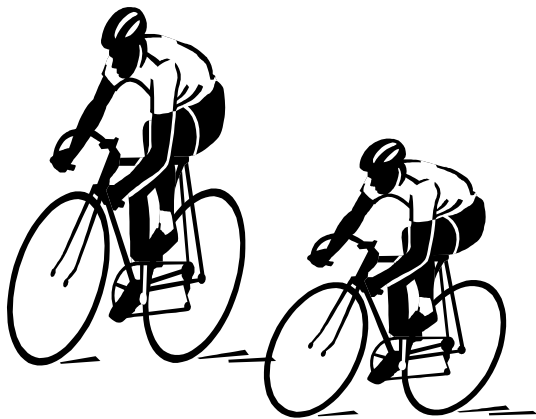
I'll remember the next time I look at one of our course maps and (gulp!) see 3000 feet of climbing scheduled or experience a business upheaval or need to face a difficult "life" challenge that I am more like Lance than it would appear on the surface. I will remember that the qualities of a champion are also mine and win my own personal Tour de France.

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## 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.

**August 12, 2004**  
**Wednesday, September 15, 2004**



## Ride Schedule

### August 7 – LAKE

#### Wildwood/Moraga

20/43 miles (Download Route Map From Website)

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Departs: 8:00 AM

Warm up on the hills of Piedmont (Wildwood and Moraga) and Oakmore (Leimert), then climb the wooded "BBR" (Burdeck-Butters-Robinson). Think you're done climbing? Think again. Head up Skyline Blvd, past the Chabot Space Center and keep racking up elevation till you reach Grizzly Peak. Finally, treat yourself to a plunge down South Park Drive in Tilden Park, then return via Moraga (the town) and Pinehurst and Redwood Roads. Humane and Light riders will enjoy shorter and a less strenuous ride.

### August 14 – LAKE

#### Calaveras

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

Departs: 8:00 AM

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.

### August 21 – AWAY

#### Petaluma

39/59/98 miles

START: Walnut Park, 4th/E Streets, Petaluma

Departs: Lake @ 7:15 AM // Ride Start @

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8:15 AM

**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.

Explore the beauty of the wine country and the southern side of Sonoma County. Advanced riders traverse Coleman Valley to the coast, then visit Jenner, Cazadero, Occidental and Bloomfield. Intermediates do a clockwise loop, traveling northwest to Valley Ford, then up to the Guernville in the Russian River valley, then return via Sebastopol. Light riders enjoy a scenic ramble to Tomales, then a return via Chileno Valley.

#### **August 28 – LAKE**

##### **Crockett Loop**

46/64/83 miles

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Departs: 8:00 AM

Start with the familiar Key Route ride to El Sobrante, then travel up to Crockett along the Carquinez Strait. Light riders finish up at Pleasant Hill BART, while others pay the 3 Bears a visit before returning via Wildcat Canyon. Option riders add miles by travelling south to Castro Valley via San Ramon, then return via Bancroft and Foothill.

#### **September 4 – LAKE**

##### **Newark**

52 miles (shorter options for Light riders)

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Departs: 8:00 AM

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.

#### **September 11/12 – AWAY**

##### **18th 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.

#### **September 18 – BART**

##### **Fog City / SF Grand Prix Option**

37 miles

START: Embarcadero at Bryant St, San Francisco

Nearest BART station: Embarcadero

Departs: Lake @ 7:15 AM // Ride Start @ 8:00 AM

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 25 – AWAY**

##### **Lucas Valley**

27/62 miles

START: Smith Ranch Rd Park-and-Ride

LIGHT RIDERS START: Nicasio General Store

Departs: Lake @ 7:15 AM // Ride Start @ 8:00 AM

**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.

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

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**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.

by signing up and getting support from our friends and neighbors. As I have stated in prior memos, the committee is doing a great job to assure that your participation will be seamless and eventful. Let's do them proud and make our mark in the fight to overcome this malady.

Safety...

Our number one concern...Let's continue to be vigilante in this arena. The bumps and bruises have been few. Ride Strong...Ride Safely...



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

Thanks Again...To Every One

This year has been a great one. We have achieved record memberships, the attendance at our rides has been excellent, the routes and maps have been right on target, yes even the mileage is accurate give or take tenths Vs miles, previously, and I have seen a great number of new friendships develop. As president I couldn't ask for more.

Reminder....Two Months and Counting

After the Monterey ride our next major event is Bike Against The Odds. We must do our best to make sure this is a successful event,

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

## **Officers**

President: Al Joseph  
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## **Standing Committee Chairpersons**

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Map Committee: Brit Harvey  
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Christmas Party Committee: Kathy Starkey  
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**Newsletter Editor** Jan Smith  
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510-465-1670

## **Ride Coordinators**

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Lynne Trestrail  
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Light: Audrey Rupe  
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