



Official Newsletter
May 2004
Come Ride with Us



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The Chico Wildflower: A Tale of Two Centuries

By Mary McGowan and Susanna Ryan

The Chico Wildflower is named the “Best Century” by Bicycling magazine and Cycle California readers according to the Chico Velo website. The name always made me think of a bike ride through lush fields and country roads. Most of my family live in Chico; I’d often take my bike on my visits there, but hadn’t found any good routes. I signed up for the Wildflower, hoping to find some new cycling routes around Chico.

As the ride approached, I learned that a few Oakland Yellowjackets were doing the ride. Everyone was driving up on Saturday; a few die-hards were planning on doing the club ride to Point Pinole on Saturday and then leaving after that. Lynne Trestrail and I decided to ride up together on Saturday afternoon; we even brought our swimsuits for the hotel pool. Lynn drove and I navigated through the back roads off

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**Next Membership Meeting
May 13, 2004
Rockridge Branch Library
5366 College Ave (at Manila)**

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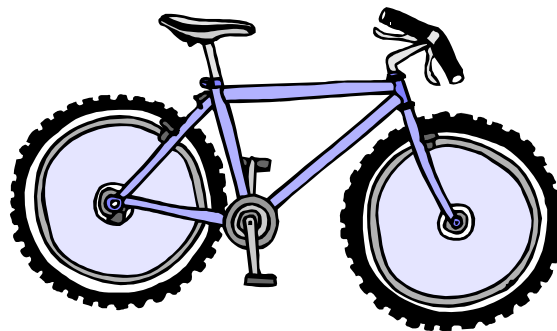
Highway 5. I mentioned to Lynn that there was a casino outside Colusa, she pointed to the quarters on her console and suggested we stop for a minute, we could each have 4 quarters. I had visions of winning my weight in gold, or at least enough to pay for dinner. All we got was a chance to walk through a smoke-filled room and an air conditioned rest room.

We arrived in town around 4 PM and went to the Fairgrounds to register for the ride and then to our hotel room. We were meeting the rest of the OYJ contingent for dinner at 7 PM. We both thought about the swimming pool, but that meant leaving our air-conditioned hotel room, and it was still too hot to go outside. When we got to the restaurant we learned the reservation had been pushed to 8PM; some folks were still arriving. Al's group had missed the 505 turnoff and had to drive up 99.

Susanna Ryan had offered her parent's house to anyone who wanted free lodging. Nine OYJers crashed at her house. The sleeping arrangements were first come, first served, which meant the hostess, Susanna, slept on the floor. According to Al J, the bathroom arrangements worked out perfectly, although not everyone was squeaky clean. Susanna got up early on Sunday and served muffins, hot cereal, juice and coffee.

The next morning came too early; our alarm went off at 5 am. We wanted an early start; the forecast was for a high of 87 that day. We drove to the fairgrounds and started to unload our bikes. Within minutes, familiar cars and jerseys started arriving in the parking lot. I bent a valve while pumping up my tires, Lynne helped me change it and Al finished the job. Al hadn't even gotten his bike out the truck and he was changing tires already.

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How to Contact Us



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The traditional Wildflower 100-miler has 4300 feet of climbing, taking riders up Old Humboldt Road and down highway 32. There are two main climbs, one up Honey Run Road to the first rest stop in Paradise. The route then goes to Oroville, over Table Top Mountain and back to Chico in the *flat, lush valley orchards and wetlands*. (Italics verbatim from the Wildflower website). The OYJers doing this route included Susanna, Robin, Lucinda, Kevin, and Elise. They took off before the rest of us, we wouldn't see them again until Honey Run.

Another group was doing the 100K Wildflower and variations, the same route as the 100 miler, leaving off the Humboldt Road and Table Top Mountain loops. The OYJers doing this route included Al, Amal, Brenda, Lynn, me, Brenda's cousin from Washington State, Harold, and a friend of Amal's from the Aids Ride training. There was another group doing the 100K route, but adding the Humboldt Road loop, to "see the wildflowers." This added another 4 miles and 800 feet of climbing to the route. This group included Claudette, Gayle, Winnie, Barbara and Reggie.

Finally we were on the road, and quickly found ourselves on the quiet country roads I'd imagined. It was only about 10-12 miles to the first rest stop in Paradise including 1500 feet of climbing in 5 miles up Honey Run. How bad could that be? There was a bathroom break at the famous Honey Run Covered Bridge. Some of us took advantage of this stop, Al kept going. As I was leaving the rest stop, I saw cousin Harold. That was the last time we saw cousin Harold, until the end of the ride at the fairgrounds.

Honey Run reminded us of Morgan Territory, lots of switchbacks and climbing. It was also starting to heat up. I had to stop several times to get my heart rate down, and to get over a slightly sick feeling I had—probably the donut I'd picked up in the hotel. I was also

wearing new road shoes for the first time and had trouble clicking back in on the hills. I found myself walking the bike to get to a flatter starting point, and praying that Reggie wouldn't come along with his famous line, "we walk our dogs, not our bikes".

I made it to the top to find the rest of my group waiting. Al and Brenda had both climbed to the top without stopping. Brenda knew Al would ride to the top without stopping, so she did too. Al later confessed that he had stopped once, because when he stood up his shorts got caught on the saddle, so he had to stop or fall. At the rest area, Al commented that he hoped someone would steal his bike so that he would have an excuse to take a ride. We filled up on snacks and headed back into the now blazing sun. It was only another 10 or so miles to the next stop--lunch. This section was uneventful for me, although there was a bit more climbing to do.

Lunch was gourmet sandwiches, fruits, cookies, organic juices, bottled water, and chocolates. A number of people commented on our jerseys, they really were the best looking on the road. We spent a lot of time looking at our maps, the environmentally-friendly bandana with the route on it. The next rest stop was 12 miles away in Durham and I was already considering the shortcut back to town that Mikkelson Jim told me would cut off the last 15-20 miles of the ride. (Mileage approximate, the bandana-map was not strong on distances). On the road to Durham, I kept hoping one of my many family members who live in town would drive by and pick me up. Since that didn't happen, I decided I would take the shortcut along Jones Road.

At the final rest stop, everyone was hurting. Lynne took a picture, I am smiling because I know I only have another 6 miles to go. Amal and her friend were determined to finish the ride and left us at the rest stop. Al, Brenda and Lynne decided to take another short-cut that was only another 10 miles to

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the finish. They said I had to go with them because I knew the way, and they would get lost. In the end, Al said I saved lives, I think the only life I saved was my own. Had I not gone with them, they would have gotten lost, (the bandana-map again) and blamed me.

Would I do this ride again? I had a great time riding with the OYJers, as always. I'd pay close attention to the forecast, train more, and have a better breakfast of champions. And I'd have my cell phone, so I could get one of my pick-up driving family members to come get me if I needed a ride. The food was good, and I imagine in a wetter, cooler spring there are actual wildflowers, and lush valley orchards and wetlands.

Susanna Ryan rode the 100 mile route. Following are her random recollections of the Wildflower.

At the last minute, when extra registrations became available, I became "Francesca Lopez" and joined 15 of my OYJ comrades to do this ride. (Nine of whom stayed with me at my parents' house – that was fun!) Although I grew up in Chico, I never cycled there when I lived there, except around town (!) It was fun to do a century along the same roads I'd been on as a kid looking for picnic spots and swimming holes. The food was really good, but since I'd heard so much about how good and gourmet it was, I think I was expecting waiters and linen tablecloths or something.

The 4-mile loop up Humboldt road, which is added so that 100-mile riders can supposedly get the full 100, was an evil, pothole-laden and deceptive gradient, and it made me feel slower than slow. I remember thinking, "How can I possibly do 100 miles when I hate the first hill???" However, it rewarded us with a fun descent, and after that, the roads were much better, and much prettier.

The shady, tree-lined Honey Run Road, in Butte Creek Canyon, follows the curves of

Butte Creek up to the historic Covered Bridge. After the Bridge, the climb gets steeper, and the shade gets scarcer. I heard a few folks opine that the road to Paradise was no paradise. Anyway, it was windy and steep in parts but still fun. Photocrazy chose to set up at a stretch that was close to the top of the hill, but not at the crest, so we were raggedy and sweaty and cotton-mouthed, and still climbing, when we were supposed to smile and look good for the cameras. They had the nerve to put up a sign that said "Slow Down." Yeah, I WAS going to blast up this infernal hill at 22, but since you asked...

The 100-milers get to climb up to Table Mountain, where the fabled wildflowers are. I think the flowers bloomed too early this year for the ride, as I could count the ones I saw. I have been up that road when the ground is blanketed with them. As we climbed, I remember thinking that it sure was hot for April 25th. We heard later that the temperature set a heat record for the day. Although it was only about 85 or 90 (does anyone know?) I heard that the temperature coming off the pavement was 99, and I'm telling you that going up Table Mountain Road, it was hot. Coming around a curve, I saw one poor guy throw up at the side of the road, and several people walking their bikes. I guess the combination of the heat and the climb, my own relative lack of conditioning, and, I realized later, a caffeine deficiency (I hate it when I forget to shoot up) was giving me a headache that threatened to turn nasty. Mostly I headed it off by hydrating and hydrating some more, but at one point I really wanted to throw my bike in the back of the sag wagon and ride on up in style. I did stop by the side of the road, twice, for a couple of minutes each, to let my heart rate go down a bit. Wow. But all good things come to an end, and so do hills, as this one finally and mercifully did. At the lunch stop they had run out of turkey sandwiches, so I chose ham instead of duck paté. (Really.) But they had good cookies.

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The last 25 miles were somewhat hot and quite headwindish, but I was so happy not to be climbing anymore that I didn't care. Also, 4 OYJs and I kept up a marvelous pace line for the whole 25 that really helped get us home. At the fairgrounds we ate yummy chicken and salad and, I think, a rice-with-sweet-spices dish -- I forget what it was, but it was really good -- and bread and ice cream sandwiches and, for those so inclined, Sierra Nevada ales and such. They also provided Ziploc bags so we could take home the extra gourmet pastries. All in all, it was a great ride, with good clean fun and lovely Yellow-jacket camaraderie, and I'm sure I'll be back for more!

Finally how hot was it? In Chico, the high was 91 for the day; experience tells me it was hotter in Oroville, Paradise and Table Top Mountain.

SAFETY OUR NUMBER ONE OBJECTIVE

**This story deserves repeating
Thanks Laura !**

Well, I wanted to write something up about tonight's ride. It was a real reminder to me that it's better to be safe than sorry and slam those breaks on at a yellow light.

On our return from Bay Farm Island, we were riding swiftly at nearly 8 p.m. (it was almost dark and we didn't have lights on our bikes), side by side and talking. As we rode up to 10th St and 5th Ave, I was watching the light (which was green) and wondering if we'd make it before it changed. I was in conversation and then as we were practically right on

the light, it turned yellow. My "alone" instinct would have been to speed up and get through the light, but as I was in a casual conversation, I didn't really speed up quite enough and I didn't brake to stop either.

For those that know, there are 3 lanes of traffic on the right - 2 were occupied and I acknowledged them and caught their eye, and one started to move, but saw us and stopped. However, the third far lane had a car coming up that was hidden behind the parked car in the middle lane. I knew it couldn't see us, I couldn't stop, and we were headed towards a serious collision.

As I screamed and everything seemed to be happening in slow motion, visions of this small grey car running me down, it stopped less than 1.5 feet from me. I stopped, foot stuck in my cleat. I sort of fell into the hood of the car with my right hand, snapping my foot out of the cleat and prevented myself from falling over.

We made eye contact, she mouthed to me, "are you okay?" I mouthed back, "yes," and moved on out of the road - shaking, heart rate up to 187 and wondering what had just happened and asking myself this question:

"WHEN AM I GOING TO LEARN THAT
LESSON - NOT TO GO THROUGH A
YELLOW
LIGHT!!!!"

So, Please, this is a reminder to all of us, to remember that things happen quickly and we don't always have control over what happens. I feel blessed to be alive, considering how many bike accidents have taken place recently.

Oh, and on another note, Shervett is a damn good singer!!!:)

Cheers,
Laura

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 13, 2004
June 10, 2004
July 7, 2004



Ride Schedule

May 8 - BART - 7:15 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 15 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Arlington

41 miles (shorter options to be determined by ride coordinators)

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Travel through residential Kensington, El Cerrito and Richmond along Arlington, a scenic alternative to Key Route to get to El Sobrante. The ride returns to the Lake via San Pablo Dam Rd, Moraga and Pinehurst.

May 22 - BART - 7:15 AM

Dumbarton-Alpine

39/58 miles

START: Union City BART

Discover a bike-friendly path across the bay via the Dumbarton Bridge bikeway. Once across the bridge, the short loop for Lights and Humane Intermediates roams around Palo Alto before returning to the Dumbarton bridge eastbound back to Union City. The longer loop continues on to Sand Hill Road, then loops around Portola Valley and Los Altos before rejoining the return path of the short loop.

May 29 - 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.

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May 31 - 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.

June 5 - BART - 7:00 AM

Morgan Territory

47 miles (shorter options for Light and Humane Intermediate groups)

START: Concord BART

A ride circumventing the foothills of Mount Diablo. Ride through Clayton and the ranch country surrounding Marsh Creek Springs, then tackle a challenging but shaded and picturesque climb. Hard work pays off with "the Plunge" on the eastern side of the Black Hills towards Livermore. The ride continues on a counter-clockwise path through Danville and ends at the Walnut Creek BART station. Shorter, less strenuous ride options for Light and Humane Intermediate groups will be arranged by respective ride coordinators.

June 12 - AWAY - 7:00 AM

Calistoga Picnic Ride

20/47/53 miles

START: Bothe-Napa State Park 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.

The ride travels south on Silverado Trail, which Light riders will cruise on until Yountville before returning to Calistoga. Others will head East along Hennessey Lake and travel through the lesser known of Napa County's wine region along Chiles and Pope Valleys. The return features a climb to the town of Angwin and an exhilarating descent on Howell Mountain which bottoms out at Silverado Trail and the home stretch back to

Calistoga.

Post-ride picnic and ride support sponsored by OYJ members. Non-members must pay a nominal fee to cover ride support costs. Bring your swimsuit and enjoy the pool at the park after the ride!

June 19 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Dublin Grade

33/62 miles

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

This ride warms up on Doolittle Rd by the Oakland Airport into San Leandro, crosses over Castro Valley via Fairmont and Lake Chabot, then traverses the Dublin Grade (Dublin Canyon Rd). Light riders end in Pleasanton and return via BART. Option riders continue north through San Ramon, Lafayette and Moraga, then ride back over the ridge via Pinehurst.

June 26 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Palomares Option

31/37/80 miles

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

All groups climb "BBR" (Burdeck-Butters-Robinson) and ride to Castro Valley via Redwood Rd. Light riders finish up at the Dublin-Pleasanton BART station. Others climb and descend Palomares Road in the southbound direction. Intermediate riders finish at Fremont BART, while advanced option riders return via Niles Canyon, San Ramon, Moraga and Pinehurst.

July 3 - LAKE - 8:00 AM

Three Bears and Some Redwoods

40/57 miles

START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Climb up the Broadway Terrace, Old Tunnel Road and part of Grizzly Peak Blvd, then descend from Tilden Park on

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Shasta Rd and Wildcat Canyon. Light and Humane Intermediate groups finish at the Orinda BART station, while others complete an hourglass loop around the Briones reservoir with the Three Bears, San Pablo Dam Rd and a return via Moraga, Pinehurst and Redwood Rd.

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 10 - AWAY - [Start Time TBD]
Peninsula
[Routes and distances TBD]
START: TBD

[Ride Description Coming Soon]

July 17 - LAKE/BART - 7:30 AM / 8:00 AM
Mount Diablo
20/30/55 miles
START: Children's Fairyland, Oakland

Light riders shuttle by BART to Orinda and enjoy a ramble around Contra Costa County's residential bike trail system, finishing the ride at Pleasant Hill BART. All others learn just what quadriceps and gluteus muscles are good for: a warm-up climb through the Montclair district of Oakland after which Humane Intermediates rejoin the Light rider route. The rest venture on to the summit of Mount Diablo at 3,850 feet and finish in Pleasant Hill.

July 24 - AWAY - 7:00 AM
Lake Sonoma Picnic Ride

25/48 miles

START: Lake Sonoma Recreational Area 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.

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From the Office of the President

A BIG THANKS

To the membership for making our kickoff ride a success. We had a record number of participants, and my conversations with the non members, during the picnic, indicate that you did a great job of making them feel welcome. As usual you came through when it counted. The fruit of your labor is evident as many of the guest have now signed on and become full-time members.

To Audrey Rupe and her gang of volunteers who took on the task of making sure our light ride group is alive and well. During the off season they drove their cars, cycled the roads, and developed legitimate light ride routes and maps. And, believe it or not, they even had Virginia Sorgi, conduct a tire changing clinic, for the group after the first ride. Now that's a

Club Officers, Chairpersons, and Ride Coordinators

Officers

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first!

Thanks again to the Map Committee group. They have worked long and hard to update our maps and assure correct mileage. I appreciate the miles they have put on their autos and bikes to develop, climb, distance, turns etc. Brit Harvey, got us started in this direction and, as usual, Kathy Starkey has taken up the mantel to make it all come to fruition. The job is still a work in process. Because of the massive hours involved in the process maps are being developed on a weekly basis. Our long term goal is to make the maps available on the website so that you will not have to deal with a massive amount of paper. We are asking for your understanding until we get it done. As usual I will always have copies available at the start location.

WELCOME:

To all of those who are joining our group for the first time this year, I would like to extend a welcome. You have become, (a little prejudice here), members of the most outstanding cycling club in the area. Remember it is now your club and you have the obligation to make it better. Your input is always welcome, so don't hesitate to make your desires known.

SAFETY:

IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY...

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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.