



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB



JANUARY 2007

FROM THE PREZ

Essential Purpose

Riding bicycles is the *raison d'être* of the Veloteers Bicycle Club. And of late, the weather has allowed weekend rides of 100+ miles for those ignoring the Weather Channel, fondly referred as "The Liar's Channel" by some of us. In early January, on a weekend, we were able to get in 25 + miles from the Music City Star parking lot with an 80% chance of rain and put a metric century under our belts out of Gladeville with a RAIN DEFINITE forecast the next day. Our skillful riders have rolled the dice and come prepared to enjoy riding unique routes in some of the greatest scenery our area has to offer. Complimenting the routes are the interesting people who challenge themselves when the foreboding weather is daunting, so the rides are not only enjoyed, but also regarded as a repeatable journey; growing friendships and skills week after week; spreading the word to more and more riders.

"Opportunities are seldom perfect. But if you're not ready for them, they may not come again." -- Tiki Barber, Running Back, N.Y. Giants, NFL.

We're close to closing the first 31 days of 2007. In addition, in the next 100+ days, the Veloteers Bicycle Club will begin our fifth year; the fourth Big Hill Challenge will be completed; 45 club rides, and numerous miles will be ridden; our club's members will be present in support of community projects and events; Rider ID projects, membership growth, further training and developed skills will be accomplished. And many more reasons to continue to be a "bike messenger" - spread the word.

Come ride and enjoy your club.

William Anderson





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VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

It's Really Not About The Bike

It's mid-January and I'm reasonably sure that I'm not the only person that's already sick and tired of hearing about New Year's resolutions. In fact, if you're someone like me whose best intentions for 2007 had about as much of a chance as an American blood sample at a French testing lab, give me a call - we'll have breakfast at Krispy Kreme and let each other off the hook. Do I have goals and aspirations for riding this year? You betcha. Am I going to give them the kiss of death right from the start by calling them "resolutions"? Not a chance.

Still, I have to maintain some sense of perspective and admit to myself that no matter what I accomplish on a bike this year - regardless of how many miles I ride or how many hills I climb - my achievements are going to pale in comparison to those of some truly amazing cyclists. No, I'm not talking about the pros who probably burn more calories spinning down to the café for croissants and espresso than I do on a century. The riders I'm talking about are ones who use their bikes to make a Difference. These are people who, long after

the fact that they showed up on two wheels is forgotten, will be remembered because they impacted people's lives.

I started thinking about these riders after receiving a phone call from a fellow Veloteer. He asked whether I had been following the stories in *Velo News* about Spain's Saunier Duval-Prodir team, which recently traveled to Mali to participate in its sponsor's "100 years for a million trees" project. In short, the Pro Tour team will race against local riders and will plant a tree for every kilometer they cover. While we tend to think of planting a tree as a nice gesture to make in the name of being environmentally friendly, in Mali it's a bold act of defiance in a war against a desert that's already claimed over 65% of the nation's surface area. So next July when you're watching *Le Tour* and thinking, "Saunier who???", know that filling out the peloton is not the most significant thing that these riders have done all year.

Of course, charity does, as the saying goes, begin at home. We're fortunate enough to have rides like the Tour de Cure and MS 150 as staples of our annual riding calendar. The magnitude of the resources and effort required to execute these events each year is surpassed only by the tremendous impact that they have on the lives of those who fight diseases like diabetes and multiple sclerosis. Sure, it's easy to fall into seeing these events as just another fun way to get in a lot of miles and to pick up a cool jersey in the process. But when you contemplate the very real possibility that the shadow of diabetes could be completely eradicated in our lifetime, you realize the value of every pedal

stroke that results in another dollar being invested in research.

But the riders of whom I'm most truly in awe aren't necessarily those who saddle up for the big, sweeping causes. The ones that I invariably find myself wanting to emulate are the "guy next door" types whose enthusiasm for the sport infects the people with whom they work, carpool and sit in the bleachers. They're the people who see an acquaintance who is lonely, trying to give up smoking or, God bless 'em, toughing out a New Year's resolution to lose a few pounds and invite them to take a spin around the block on a loaner bike. These are individuals who don't set out to change the world, but yet still manage to improve people's lives just by getting involved and sharing a two-wheeled experience. Almost every rider I know can point to one such individual, and its these cycling "parents" to whom we all owe an incalculable debt.

So, will I measure 2007 by how many miles I rack up on my odometer? Probably so. After all, my resolution to be less compulsive never had much of a chance to begin with. But for the year to be a true success will take just one thing: to pass it on, pay it forward and hopefully help one person's life be just a little bit happier because of time spent on two wheels.



VELOTEERS CLUB

JERSEY

Wondering What to Wear on the Bike this Spring?



Have you seen this jersey on the road and thought you missed your opportunity to add to your spring 07 wardrobe? Then we have good news because there are still some first order Veloteers club jerseys available for purchase. Please contact William Anderson at williamsa@veloteers.org to secure your purchase today. Also available for purchase is the Big Hill Challenge at Watertown t-shirt.



A STAR TREKKER

WRITTEN BY SALLY ROBERTSON

A Day in the Life of a Bike/Train Commuter

At about 6:00 am I leave my house each Monday through Friday and ride my bike 1-½ miles to the train station in Mt. Juliet. This gets me in right on time to catch the 6:10 Music City Star bound for Nashville. It takes just 30 minutes to get to Riverfront Park.

The ride is so relaxing. Most of the time I read. The 7-mile biking part of my daily commute to work takes about 35 minutes. Once I get out of the downtown area, and across I-40, I ride one block off West End on Hayes Street. My favorite part of my ride is riding the Centennial Park Greenway and through the older West End and Richland neighborhoods. It reminds me of the town where I grew up outside of Chicago. I see a lot of

people out walking their dogs. I've discovered that I like urban dogs better than country dogs, because they do not bark or try to bite you. Sometimes I ride through the alleys that go between the streets. All the houses are so unique. It's a real study of architectural styles.

The last part of my ride is on the Richland Creek Greenway. It's really nice and peaceful. The first phase is done, and the second phase is coming along nicely. All of the bridges are now in place. The boardwalk, which goes up the bank to Nashville State Community College (where I am a librarian), is almost finished. I've been told that they are ahead of schedule.

The scariest experience so far, has been when I was riding West End right where it meets Broadway heading east when a MTA bus passed me really close. Now I ride the sidewalk there, and jump off the curb at the point. I ride the sidewalk until I get over I-40. It just feels safer to me. When I get to work, there is a bike rack next to the library where I park and lock my bike.

In writing this article, I tried to think of interesting things that have happened to me because of my commuting vs. the commuting itself. The most vivid experience happened just before finals when two Occupational Therapy students came into the library and needed to "check-out" my bike. No, they did not want to admire my ride, but actually check it out like a library book! It was for a final presentation one student was doing demonstrating getting balance back after an accident. It seems that the bike that a friend brought in for her to use was a toddler bike with two flat tires! One of the other students in the class knew that I rode my bike to

work, so they came over to see if they could borrow my bike for about an hour. Of course, I said yes. When the student returned my bike, she thanked me and said that my bike helped her presentation because she could not have demonstrated her key points on that toddler bike. That was the first time the library has ever checked-out a bike. I was glad that I helped.

Overall, the bike-train commute to work is fun. I do it more for environmental and exercise reasons, than for the savings in gasoline. On the days that there is a chance of rain, I bring my rain suit. I can also ride any MTA bus free with my train pass, which I have used a couple of times when it was raining really hard. I've also used the 12:30 bus that goes to Mt. Juliet on a day that I did not have to work all day. It works well, too. It is awesome being "car-free" in Nashville, especially during rush hour.

One more note. The trains now have bike racks. Come on and join me. What are you waiting for?



I'M STILL RECOVERING

WRITTEN BY BOB OSTOWE

I'm Still Recovering from my Recovery Ride

It was a beautiful Memorial Day weekend. A group consisting of Denise, Jane, Melly, Wm., Carl, and Mike P. showed up for our usual recovery ride out of Gladeville. Why a recovery ride? Some of us had completed century #5 for our century of the month club the day before at the CRAM in Clarksville.

A recovery ride was in order. "Shake it out & loosen up" -

recover from the long one yesterday. We're taking it easy today, just a few miles in comparison to the 100 plus the day before.

We all rode the usual Gladeville route towards Cedars of Lebanon State Park, and a planned first stop at the bathrooms. That stop being the first on my journey, and what would be the last, for many months.

Why was it my journeys last stop for many months? Let me begin to tell you what I know and what I've been told happened.

The first 7-8 miles went well, we all rode towards the park, socializing and riding easy while entering the park, heading towards the bathrooms. The group splintered inside the park, with some going ahead, while I stayed a little behind conversing with Denise and Jane. After a short distance and a small climb I looked at my cycle computer and thought, "I'm feeling good with a lot left in me" after yesterday's century.

I do remember noticing a series of speed bumps of which had been painted a bright yellow. I do not recall seeing them painted before and, having been on this road many times before, I thought you can't miss those.

That's all I remember about that day and the next few days. Denise and Jane were next up to find me laying alongside my bike unconscious, and bleeding.

To be continued.



WHAT'S ON THE BOOKS FOR 07?

SUBMITTED BY WM ANDERSON

The weather outside may be frightening but it's time to start planning bicycling highlights for 2007; letting people know you have a weekend destination, a charitable cause, or making a detailed list of this years' objectives. A seven-day-in-the-saddle adventure may interest others who will help share in preparations, inspire training, and expenses: "Companions on a journey who aid each other to persevere in the road to a happier life."

Here is a short list to get your creative juices flowing:

Mississippi River Trail
<http://www.mississippirivertrail.org/tennessee/trails.html>

18th Annual Bicycle Ride Across Tennessee (BRAT)
September 15-22
<http://www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/BRAT/>

Big Hill Challenge at Watertown.
May 12
<http://www.veloteers.org/>

Tour de Cure
June 2-3
http://tour.diabetes.org/site/PageServer?pagename=TC_homepage

Jack and Back
October 7 - 8
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/TNS/event/default.asp?g=6>

KATY Trail
June 18 - 22
<http://www.mostateparks.com/katytrail/index.html>

Virginia Creeper
<http://www.vacreepertrail.com/>

RAGBRAI XXXII
July 22-28
<http://www.ragbrai.org/>

Start planning now. And may your dream ride truly share the road.



OPPORTUNITIES

March 10, 2007 - help local Boy Scouts earn their Cycling Merit Badge. Contact Sally Robertson at 758-5750, or check out Cumberland's Merit Badge University at <http://www.cumberland.edu/>

HAPPENINGS

More information on these rides/events is available on the Event Calendar
www.Veloteers.org

Saturday, Feb 3, 7:00 PM Club Social. Dinner at Famous Dave's in Hermitage. rsvp to: breec@veloteers.org or Bree and DJ Cordes 615-316-9776.

Monday, Feb 19, 7:00 PM Veloteers Club Business Meeting, The Jolly Cyclist, Hermitage.

From the Editor ...

The next newsletter will be released in mid-February. Please continue to submit your stories, photos and items of interest as Word documents or jpg files to denise.garland@comcast.net for future publication.