



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB



MAY 2007

FROM THE PREZ

Stay the Course

Bicycling is a sport of individuals, each riding toward personal goals. And, like the peloton, integrating individual goals in an effort to move forward faster is the ultimate objective of our club. And, when our club works as a team, everyone wins, not the select few in the breakaway.

No team is strong without leadership. It is leadership that directly impacts the ability to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of an organization. Leadership is the ability of an individual to set an example for others and lead from the front. It is an attitude that influences the environment around us.

Our membership has a vested interest in shaping the growth, the future, of our club. The 2007-2009 elections will be held in June and each member has the opportunity to decide who will fill leadership roles for the next term.

Take a moment to consider what role you would like to play in the challenges we face together: Do you want to provide the leadership to put our peloton in a better position to win as a team? Do you know someone who is capable of being a leader and will seize this opportunity?

The Board of Director 2007-2009 nominations should be emailed to info@veloteers.org , or mailed to The Veloteers Bicycle Club, PO Box 8555, Hermitage, TN 37067. If you are nominating someone other than yourself, please make sure to let them know.

Our Mission: Promote interest, educate, and encourage fun and safe participation in bicycling of all forms.

Towards this primary endeavor, we strive to:

- Make regularly scheduled group rides and other cycling events and activities available to cyclists of all abilities.
- Foster fellowship among cyclists and/or those interested in cycling.
- Encourage and support bicycle safety education by providing related information and services to club members, the community and government officials.
- Advocate, defend, and protect the bicycle as a legal vehicle used for recreation, health, and transportation Represent the interests of cyclists and advance "share the road" values with legislative and administrative groups on proposals relating to matters affecting cycling activities (i.e. the establishment and maintenance of bicycles facilities, traffic regulations and enforcement, educational efforts and programs, etc.).
- Provide a channel of communication to members, other cycling clubs, and the community, via the website and newsletter, to share information about club activities and other information related to cycling.
- Promote the positive image of cyclists in the community through example.

William Anderson



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VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

Cyclists: Here Are Your Lemons. What Will You Do With Them?

I finished mowing the lawn and stopped at the computer in my workshop for a quick e-mail check. One clearance sale coupon from Performance Bike and one message from a distant biking buddy. Subject line: Basso. "I'm sure you saw that he's confessed to being involved in OP," it began.

My heart sank. In spite of the sweat that was running down my face, the chill that I felt was no more refreshing than a swig of hot Gatorade. A few minutes on the Velo News website filled in the details. Just days after his resignation from the Discovery Channel squad and, apparently, only days before an official re-indictment, Ivan Basso – the rider who Lance singled out as his probable heir to Tour de France victory – confessed to being involved in the Operation Puerto blood doping scandal. There was suddenly more tainted blood in the water and the sharks were already in full frenzy. UCI president Pat McQuaid was quick to chime in. "Our constant efforts, with our other cycling partners, to put cyclists under pressure are paying off." Yeah; congratulations, Pat.

In the past few years since illegal performance enhancement in professional cycling began making headlines, my reactions, like those of most people who even remotely care, have run the full gamut. I've always conceded reluctantly that, yes, there are riders for whom advancing their competitive status has become a more compelling need than maintaining their integrity. Making that acknowledgment of some semi-abstract level of corruption was one thing. Seeing beloved individual riders – men with reputations and families and sweat and blood - ground down over the course of years while trying to mount a defense within a system that seems stacked against them... that's been something else altogether. These are individuals whose accomplishments on bikes have transcended mere athletic performance to become raw, inspiring lessons in human spirit and determination. Tyler Hamilton winning Stage 16 of the 2003 Tour with a double-fractured collarbone. Floyd Landis making up an eight-minute post-meltdown deficit in stage 17 in 2006. If these accomplishments were somehow artificial or ill achieved it would be hard to conceive of a punishment equal to that betrayal. However, if even one innocent rider has had to endure the shame and ignominy of having their accomplishments wrongfully diminished and their reputation irrevocably tarnished, then those behind the witch-hunt that results in such a miscarriage of justice should fare no better than their victims.

In another e-mail the same friend joked that by the time Operation Puerto and its like have run their course we may find ourselves being the only riders eligible to race in a pro peloton. Her joke

provided a good chuckle and helped make light of a sad situation. However, as I mulled it over it occurred to me that therein might lie the silver lining to the black cloud that's lingering over professional cycling. Theoretically speaking, what would happen if the current lineup of elite professional cyclists simply went away? After all of the drama and emotions played out, what would be left? How would pro cycling pick itself up and move forward? Let's contemplate that worst-case scenario while it's still a hypothetical.

I imagine that what we'd be left with would look something like last year's Tour de France: teams who lost their first-string players would turn to their bench and field the best roster that they could. Riders who otherwise would have very little hope of making the squad would suddenly be front-and-center. Granted, the overall level of performance might be diminished somewhat and it could be quite a while before any new records are set. But would the drama of cyclists going head-to-head be any less compelling? Was stage 17 of last year's tour any less exciting because it was Landis instead of Basso or Ullrich heroically pulling away from the field?

Now, take it one step further. If, as the old adage says, a rising tide lifts all boats, would a vacuum at the top of pro cycling have a trickle-down effect throughout the entire sport? Would international pro squads start looking to the next tier of riders to complete their rosters? Could we see someone from the Jittery Joe's team or the Navigators riding with the really big boys? How would such a situation impact amateur

development and recruitment programs? Would we begin to see real money being invested in training young riders and immersing them in high-caliber racing experiences?

Imagine the opposite outcome for a minute. Assume that Operation Puerto blows over once and for all. Dick Pound and his buddies are forced into a world-class *mea culpa* and then fade off into the sunset to the cheers of cycling fans everywhere. No big vacuum to fill in the pro rosters and the junior squads go back to their places on the bench. What then? Do we return to believing that everything is okay or do we realize that, one way or the other, the people at the top of the sport aren't going to be there forever. Do we acknowledge that the sport desperately needs to improve the way that it builds and nurtures the next generation of riders to someday stand on the podium? Do we figure out ways to turn junior sponsorships into smart investments for big companies? Do we still create more sanctioned races in which the next Lance Armstrongs will be forged?

These are definitely dark days for professional cycling. Many recreational riders tend to shake it off and assume that what happens on the pro circuit is as removed from them as the doping scandals of pro baseball are removed from the local little league team. And that may be true to a certain degree.

However, in the world of cycling – as with life in general – things are often much more interconnected than they seem. A fallen hero can disappoint even the youngest novice. Corruption can lead to disenchantment that casts a long shadow. While it has yet to be seen whether it's too late to save many of those who currently make up the top levels

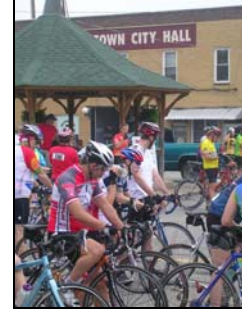
of our still-great sport, I'm convinced that there's a lot about cycling that's worth saving. I also believe that there are enough people who are dedicated to cycling's continued success to carry it through even this crisis. The question is, are we prepared to learn our lesson – whatever that lesson proves to be – and to re-build the foundations of this sport while we can? If not, the day may yet come when we see a Veloteer riding for Team Pasty White Legs rolling into Paris some strange July afternoon. And seriously, does anybody really want that?



BIG HILL CHALLENGE 07

Thanks to everyone who worked to make the 2007 Big Hill Challenge a success. A special thank you to Melly Anderson who chairs this event each year.

This year we had 232 registered riders – our largest turnout to date. Who knows what next year can bring? A few photos from the day follow – thanks to Jay Swafford and Charlene Allen for submitting.





3-STATE-3-MTN

SUBMITTED BY MARK ROBERTSON

"Hands down the hardest ride I've ever done."

The 3-State, 3-Mountain Century ride was unbelievable! Hands down the hardest ride I've ever done in my life and probably the hardest THING I've ever done in my life. We traversed 3 mountains over the course of 100 miles, with the last and hardest one coming at mile 82, for 2.4 miles. The ride started at 8a in the rain at Finley Stadium in downtown Chattanooga, but with a temp around 68 degrees, so not bad. We hit the first mountain, Suck Creek Mountain in TN, about 5 miles in and it was a 5 mile mountain at a grade of about 4-6%. So, not ridiculous, but just long where you had to settle in and turn the pedals over. There were 2400 riders going up that mountain, so it was pretty crowded, but really cool. Once we crested it, the downhill was absolutely amazing. I felt like I was in the Tour de France, going downhill at almost 40 miles an hour and could have gone even faster if not for safety concerns. There were cars coming the other way and a few switchbacks. Four Veloteers, myself, Scott Andrews, Tom Carter and Roger McAleese were not deterred from our purpose in conquering the mountains.

One of the group had a flat at the rest stop. We were there probably 20 minutes longer than we wanted to be, but we were committed to riding together at that point. When we pulled out, my legs had tightened up and it was hard to get warmed back up. Not to mention that we were now towards the back of the pack. As we neared the second mountain, there were lovely

views of Nickajack Lake and the mountains. We went over this really cool iron bridge after the second rest stop, and then the metric riders split from us, the full century folks. There were clearly more people going metric than century. We hit the second mountain, Sand Mountain in AL at mile 52 and it lasted for 3.8 miles at a grade of about 6-8%, pretty tough at that point. At this point, there weren't a lot of riders around, and my back started to hurt. My buddy from Seattle who had flown in to do the ride, Darwin, pulled on ahead of me and rode up the mountain a bit ahead of me. I settled in and did my best to stand at times and shift my body to ease the back discomfort. I ground it out and made it to the top feeling really good about myself. The view was pretty cool, though you couldn't see all the way down into the valley because it was overcast and foggy. We rode that ridge for a while, hit the rest stop, then made the descent back down and went into GA. The ride was fairly flat for about 10 miles and then we hit the last rest stop at mile 82, right before THE mountain.

I had heard a lot of stories about how hard the last mountain was, and let me tell you, it lived up to it. At this point, I was tired of hearing about it and ready to "Get it on". We were told to dump all fluids and any weight you didn't need as there was a rest stop right at the top, so we ate, drank and dumped the rest. My buddies who were riding with us had all done it last year and they all had gotten off the bike at some point and walked up. I didn't want to get off the bike, so I set my mind that it was only as an absolute last resort that I would do that. We left the rest stop at mile 82, went about .2 miles, then turned left and started up Lookout Mountain on Burkhalter Gap Rd., 2.4 miles of

HELL at 10% grade, with a kick up the last .4 miles to 14% - BRUTAL! As we turned left and started up, the road just went straight up and you could see everyone way out in front of you. I geared down to what is affectionately called by cyclists the "Granny Gear", the lowest gear on my bike, and started turning the pedals. Literally, I went about 4 mph, or less, up the hill for around 30 minutes. It was really weird in that I wasn't used to going that slow for that long, but you learn to settle in pretty quickly. My back started hurting a little again, but as I checked in with my lungs and legs I thought "I can do this!" I didn't feel like I was really over stressed on either, just a little sore and tired in the legs. But, I wasn't feeling pushed to my max point at this point. So, I settled in and rode. After a while my back started bothering me more, so I'd stand and climb a bit, shift my riding position and so on to ease the discomfort. But, I was determined to get there without getting off. On the way up, I probably passed about 10 - 15 people who were off their bikes and walking up the road - no shame in that, believe me. Several of them cheered me on like "Go man" or "Go get it".

Well, here's where it got fun. After 30 minutes of riding at 4mph it flattened out for a short time, flattened being the relative word from about 10% to 8%. At that point I hit almost 6mph. Yee haw! Then, life as I knew it changed. The road turned slightly right and went UP! It was .4 miles of PUNISHMENT! I set my mind and hit the stretch and immediately started to slow down. I could see up the hill and see almost all the people off their bikes and walking. There were two guys still on their bikes, one of them winding back and forth across the road to get up it. I

started up the last stretch and literally just hunkered down (we were still in GA, after all, where they say “Hunker Down Hairy Dogs” at UGA football game). I was bent way over, still in the saddle, hands in the hoods and grinding all I could to turn over the pedals. I was literally barely moving, my heart rate spiked, legs ached, and my chest burned – BUT I WAS GETTING UP THAT HILL! Many riders had stepped off their bikes and were walking along the side of the road. I stood to climb for a second, but didn’t have it, so I sat back down. It was all mind over matter at this point. As I was about half way up, I was really hurting, but I could hear people yelling at the top, shouting for people to get to the top, and ringing cow bells for support. I felt a bit of a surge at that point and kept pedaling. I literally felt like a crab, I was bent so far over towards my handlebars, but I was moving. As I was about ¾ of the way to the top, I could see the stop sign and several riders who were off and walking said “Way to go man!” At that point I saw my buddy Darwin, in his bright orange jersey with the white Power T for UT, who yelled “Come on Robertson; get up here!” I felt a surge of energy and then heard someone else say “All the way to the stop sign”. I bore down, turned the pedals over a few more times and then I was at the top! At that moment I was almost overcome with emotion – a truly amazing feeling. I felt I had pushed myself to the utter limit and had conquered it! If I had let myself, I think I would have started bawling right then and there. I screamed out a couple of times and raised my fist in the air. I saw my friend Tom, rode over towards him, he stuck his hand out and congratulated me, and I noticed that I was shaking all over. An

amazing accomplishment! And, we weren’t done!

We had a lot of energy from the summit, but quickly encountered some challenging rolling hills. When we took off from the rest stop, we were at mile 85 of the ride. We did about 8 miles of “rollers”, which were extremely hard at that point. I remember wondering when we were going to start down off Lookout Mountain, but overall we knew the end was near and we’d be heading down soon. The descent didn’t disappoint. We turned right on Red Riding Hood Rd and started off the Mountain. We quickly picked up speed, but there was a lot of traffic coming up. The view off to the right was amazing down into the valley, and the road was very curvy. We were careful to watch our speed, but going about 38 mph or so. It was an amazing feeling as we sped down. We came off the mountain with about two miles left, to be greeted gloriously by the far right lane shut off by orange cones for riders only with police escort at all the lights – HUGE! So, we didn’t have to stop at all as they directed us back to Finley Stadium. As we got to the stadium, we made a left turn in front of it to come up to the finish line and there were people lining both sides of the road cheering us on to the finish – REALLY COOL! I pumped my fist in the air, a la Lance Armstrong, and crossed the line, feeling the sense of relief and accomplishment. Darwin and I high-fived, man-hugged and congratulated each other. We set our bikes on the wall and I proceeded to have two of the best slices of pepperoni pizza I’d ever had in my life, washed down by two of the coldest Miller Lites I’ve ever put my hands on! We hung around the finish line, chatted with some folks, cheered Tom, Scott and

Roger on to finish and then headed out.

All told, I was on the bike for 7 hours and 17+ minutes, 9 hours of elapsed time (8a – 5p), covered 99.2 miles and averaged 13.4 mph over the whole ride. It was a truly amazing experience and I felt so good when we finished. I have a sense that whatever comes at me in life after this, I can handle it, because I made it up Burkhalter Gap Rd. without getting off my bike!



Scott, Tom, Roger, Darwin and Mark


LADY VELOTEERS TO SUPPORT HOW 100

WRITTEN BY JENNIFER GHOLSON
Calling All Women Veloteers!

Just one week after riding the HOW100 last year, one of our fellow Veloteers, Cynthia O’Toole, was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was already riding and fighting this disease for others before it became personal for her. Her personal battle has been successful. She just had her last surgery this week and is on her way to a full recovery. Cynthia’s experience has inspired her to ride again this year and to raise even more money for this cause.

She is not alone. Many of us have had firsthand experiences with this disease. Some are survivors while others have been by the side of loved ones battling

the disease. We should all be so inspired by our trials!

Together we can make a difference! This year, let's rally around Cynthia and form a Veloteers How100 team to do this ride. Everyone is welcome! Veloteer members or not! Invite your friends. Guys! Forward this to your wives, girlfriends, mothers, daughters and all your women friends!

The ride is September 8 so there is plenty of time to get in shape for those who don't cycle regularly. The club has regularly scheduled rides for all levels. I am just getting back to riding and Cynthia plans to in another three weeks or so. We already have several team members! Beth Travers, Bree Cordes, Denise Garland, Jane Bacon, Lynda McGuire, myself and more. We will be planning some fun training rides that will accommodate all levels!

More information is available at www.how100.org. There are fundraising prizes and a good time is planned for all! Cynthia wants to win the bicycle and then auction it off with all proceeds going back into the HOW100 cause, breast cancer research by the Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation. I plan to help her with that and let her turn in any extra money I raise. You, of course, have no obligation to do that! Although I am sure she would be thrilled if you did! Maybe you have your eye on the prize for yourself! That is great too! There are some really cool prizes. The overall goal is more money for Minnie!

Please send an email to deniseg@veloteers.org if you would like to be a part of our team or join our google group at veloteers-how-100-team@googlegroups.com. This

email group will allow us to plan training rides and keep in touch.



I'M STILL RECOVERING

WRITTEN BY BOB OSTROWE

I'm Still Recovering from my Recovery Ride, The Finale My new home - Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital and the 3 R's - Rehab, Relearn, Rebirth.

Rebirth is what the doctor's have termed will be the new me. If I'm going to recover, I'm not going to come out of this injury like the old me. Whatever lingering deficits, problems or effects that may remain will be remnants of a traumatic brain injury. Serious or not, they cannot say what your prognosis is or will be - only that you will be different, reborn.

I'm finally able to get out of bed and into a wheelchair with assistance. Unfortunately, I am not fast enough to hide from my cognitive therapist. This is the therapy I dread the most because it is my largest deficit from the injury. In physical therapy, I am working to regain balance and use of my left side. Occupational therapy works with me to learn how to take care of myself from the chair. A good sign shows itself daily bringing more feeling to my left side. Each night they put a special boot on my left foot to prevent "foot drop." I am working as hard as I can in rehab every day. It is so tiring; I must take a recommended nap whenever I can.

I have many visitors during the course of a day who stay through rehab, meals, and sometimes into the evening for long talk sessions. The nurses remind me of how popular I must be and I feel grateful for these long visits by family and friends.

The days go by in what seems like an eternity and I am getting stronger. Yes! There is "light at the end of the tunnel." I'm almost walking without the use of the Auto Ambulator, (photo below) a robotic device that is used to aid one who is disabled regain their stride. I constantly shut off the machine by dragging my left foot which automatically stops the process. I've got to do better, I want to walk out of here.



The days turn into weeks and I've graduated to the walker and pronounced okay to be discharged by wheelchair to home and a Home Health Care Rehab Service.

I'm finally home and it is so nice to be back in the familiar surroundings of my own home. The July 4th holiday finds me relearning how to do things as a disabled person with the assistance of Home Health Service therapists who visit 2-3 times a week.

Once again, the hard work brings fatigue and takes a toll on me - even with two naps a day. However, I am able to get around relatively easier than anticipated. It is only a matter of a few weeks and their recommendation that I be discharged from their care to an outpatient basis at any other rehab facility. I've now graduated to a cane, no wheel chair, no walker.

Denise's research and follow-through gets me to the TBI rehab at Vanderbilt's Bill Wilkerson

Center, known as Pi Beta Phi. It is there I meet a new team of therapists led by Amanda Potter, Speech/Cognitive Therapy and an experienced road bike cyclist. What a relief to have something in common with a new therapist. Amanda takes immediate charge, finding solutions with her recommendations to help me overcome my many deficits and daily problems. Additionally, a Physical, Occupational and Psychotherapist are now on "Team Sponge Bob." I continue therapy there 3 to 4 times per week re-learning the many skills lost to this injury. I've learned to walk without the cane and soon I'll be certified to drive our car and truck. Physically speaking, they have me sit and ride my bike a few feet at home and ride a stationary bike during therapy to learn re-balance. My therapy continues until the very end of October. It is now been over five months since the day I crashed and I'm soon to be a graduate of Pi Beta Phi. Although ambivalent about leaving the great care at Pi Beta Phi, most importantly, I feel that I am ready to return to my new, normal lifestyle.

As I end this story, I would like to reiterate that words that alone cannot express my gratitude to each of you for helping me find the inner strength to recover. Having a strong support system is a proven indicator of recovery from a traumatic brain injury such as mine.

Presently, I am relearning life on my road bike and going to recommended spin and water aerobics classes. I hope to see you all on the road one day soon.
Sponge Bob



SAMSRIDE.ORG

WRITTEN BY TUCK WATTS

Hello. My name is Tuck Watts and I am contacting bike clubs and associations along the Chattanooga-Nashville and Nashville-Memphis routes to let them know of a very special event coming to your area this October.

Samantha Gilley, a very special young lady who has been diagnosed with cancer nine times in her short life, plans to ride her bike from Chattanooga to Memphis, via Nashville to raise money and awareness for St. Jude Children's Hospital.

What I am asking of the clubs is their help in getting the word out about this ride. A web site has been set up at samsride.org. You can get all the information you need there. Anything you can do to assist me and drive people to the web site is greatly appreciated.



From the Editor ...

The next newsletter will be released in mid-June. 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.

Thanks to our sponsors:

The Jolly Cyclist
5514 Old Hickory Boulevard,
Hermitage, TN 37076.
<http://allanti.com/index.cfm>
615-885-0881

The Leukemia & Lymphoma
Society's Team In Training
For more information call
Monica at 331.2980 or visit
www.teamintraining.org/tn

HAPPENINGS

More information on these rides/events is available on the Event Calendar

www.Veloteers.org

**Monday, June 18, 7:00 PM
Veloteers Club Business Meeting, The Jolly Cyclist, Hermitage.**