



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB



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“Stand not upon the order of your going,/But go at once.”
- William Shakespeare

Shaking winter blahs



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY JAMES WALLER

These scenes from last year's Veloteer rides will be repeated many times in the days ahead as the riding season swings into high gear in Middle Tennessee.

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VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

Chasing *that* Moment

First, a word to all of you dedicated cyclists who have braved the cold and dark of winter rides. Or if you've endured the boredom of dozens of hours on the trainer spending quality time with Coach Troy and the Spinervals gang, then this applies to you too: Congratulations and good job – but stop reading now. Really. Instead, take a few minutes to go wipe the mud and the sweat off your bike. Check back next newsletter; I promise I'll have something fun for you to read.

Okay, now that it's just us slackers, we can be open and honest. Your secret is safe.

I know that you still love cycling and that deep down you've never lost that spark of wanting to be out on the road, enjoying the freedom and camaraderie of a good bike ride. But somehow life got in the way over the past few months. It wasn't so much the cold and dark as it was the legitimately higher priorities that asserted themselves.

My story? A new job, a sick spouse and a cold that seemed to last longer than the presidential campaigns. Whatever the reason, it's a given that someday soon you'll open the door, get hit by a warm, grass-scented breeze and begin to feel that familiar yearning for a ride. Which will immediately be followed by the realization that that's not going to be as easy as it used to be.

The once simple pleasure of a bike ride now has the combined efforts of guilt, inertia, lack of conditioning

and those five (or ten, or...) extra pounds pushing against it. It almost feels like the crowds that swarm pro riders at the top of a mountain stage, but instead of screaming "*allez!*" and waving banners of encouragement they're pelting you with every reason why you don't have any business showing up for a beginning-of-the-season ride.

So, consider this a gentle nudge in the right direction from a friend who knows what you're going through. We both understand that you want to get back into the groove of riding regularly; the alternative of *not* riding at all is as unthinkable as it ever was.

It's just a question of facing that hurdle of building your fitness back up, putting in those base miles and getting back to being able to look at yourself in the mirror in biking clothes again. While the bad news is that none of those things will happen overnight, the good news is that you can still enjoy most of what you love about cycling while you're paying your dues. Spending saddle time with good friends? Check. Enjoying the great outdoors and favorite ride routes? You bet. Getting good exercise and burning off some stress? Absolutely. It's just that until you get back up to speed (both literally and figuratively) it's all going to be about getting to *that* moment.

That moment is the pleasant surprise – the "Eureka" experience – that makes it all worthwhile. Yes, you're out of shape, but you're still a cyclist at heart. You've logged thousands of miles over the years and not so long ago you were exceptionally fit. Your body doesn't forget that. On some level, riding a bike has become a very natural thing and your body *likes* to do it. It may take a while, but sometime after the wheezing, cramping and intimidation of the first few uncomfortable miles passes, something clicks. I'm not a doctor and

I didn't stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night, but it's always been my experience that even after a long absence from riding, your body "remembers" how to respond to the demands that cycling places on it. Your metabolism adjusts, your lungs and legs pick up that rhythm again, and *voila!*, you're back in the groove. You may have spent the first ten miles cursing every second helping you've eaten over the past six months, but somehow, almost miraculously, the next ten actually feel kinda good. You're tired and you hurt, but you're also remembering just why it is that you love this sport so much.

That's the moment that's going to get you through the ride and back for the next one.

For me, it all boils down to this: sometimes we let things slip; call it a sin of omission or a temporary concession to entropy. But as with a falling out with a good friend, there's no need to let an unfortunate slip-up ruin an enjoyable, rewarding relationship.

The sooner things are set right; the more time you can spend enjoying something that you love. If it will help, I'd be happy to ride some of those slow, painful first miles with you. Come find me – I'll be the big, slow, wobbly one at the very back of the pack.



Bike Pedlar-Hermitage moves into new home

WRITTEN BY JENNIFER GHOLSON

I think everyone knows that one of our Veloteers' sponsor members, Bike Pedlar in Hermitage (formerly the Jolly Cyclist), recently moved. Many participated in a bike parade to help them relocate bicycles.

But just in case you have been in hibernation and missed out, do not panic when you pull up to the old shop and find it empty.

The store is now down the road from where it used to be, located in a stand-

alone building at 5116 Old Hickory Boulevard. It is tucked away behind Chick-fil-A, between Electronics Express and the Golden Corral.

One afternoon when rain kept me from riding but I was still craving a bicycle fix, I went by the new store to check it out and talk with General Manager H.A. Hearn about the change. H.A. will have been the G.M. for two years this April. He summed up his experience the past two years as challenging, educational and fun.

By my observation, he should have also included very busy because that is what he was when I was there. As I tried to talk with him, he was frequently and understandably pulled away to assist customers. That left me to talk with other staff members and to browse around the store, which can often be an expensive endeavor for a weak-willed, gadget-loving cyclist.

According to H.A., the driving force behind the relocation was the need for more space and the opportunity to get a completely empty building that they could set up just like they wanted.

The new store has 5,000 square feet, 1,000 more than the old one. The Pedlar staff worked with the Trek design team and combined their ideas to create the new store. They followed the trend with Trek stores to have an open design providing shoppers with ample space for a more comfortable and pleasurable shopping experience.



Photo by Nick Sullivan

The new Bike Pedlar-Hermitage store has plenty of room for trying out bikes and for storing bicycles, many, many bicycles.

In the back, they have a large shop area that should be ideal once they get it completely unpacked and organized.

More space has allowed them to add dressing rooms, a shoe section with a place to sit so you can easily try them on, and a new bike fitting station. They also have a dedicated parking lot and a great test ride area.

The store was full of product for all types of cyclists – road, mountain, BMX and family bike path riders. According to H.A., one of their goals is to reach a broader range customer base.

BP-H plans to be more extensively involved with mountain bikes and high end road bikes as well as its long-standing family neighborhood and bike path riding customers.

Currently, they have an experienced staff of seven full and part-time employees, Hearn, general manager; Patrick Flowers, inventory manager; Steve Churchill, mechanic; Gene Hawkins, mechanic; Bart Gibbs, sales and service; Chelsie Harris, sales, and Gary Welch, sales. These guys invite you to come by and visit their exciting new store soon!

For me, the Bike Pedlar is more than a place to buy bikes and other cycling supplies. This leads me on a tangent to another subject. As far as buying bikes and other cycling supplies goes, the Internet is becoming a popular place to shop.

However, we should support the Bike Pedlar, or local bike shops (LBS) in general, because they have many additions. I, personally, like my money going back into the local economy. But aside from that, you have the assistance of employees with their mechanical skills and knowledge of products.

You can look, touch and try-out new product. They support our clubs, local event rides and our community. Also, it is rare that I do not run into fellow cyclists and get to socialize when I go in the shop.

In some ways, the LBS is to cycling what the club house is to golfing.

Local bike shops may sometimes charge a little more because of higher overhead costs but there is great value to having these guys there for us.

So take advantage of this nice, new spacious store and have fun shopping locally. Don't be surprised if you see me there.



ON THE ROAD

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

Greenway near; but how far?

Soon, perhaps within a matter of a few day, the pedestrian bridge across the Cumberland River will be open, connecting the Greenway System from Two Rivers Park to the Shelby Bottom Greenway.

The completion of the 700-foot Cumberland River Pedestrian Bridge means that pedestrians and cyclists will be able to travel from Heartland Park through downtown Nashville to Metro Center almost completely free of vehicular traffic.

For those of us wishing to travel to downtown from the Hermitage/Mt. Juliet area to downtown via the Greenway, the only current legal option will be to haul or ride your bike by road to Two Rivers or Heartland Park and go from there. The holdup to connect Hermitage to downtown remains a short half-mile long stretch of Stones River Road from the entrance to Ravenwood Country Club to Heartland Park.

Shain Dennison, director of the Metro Greenways Commission, said at a recent public meeting on Metro Parks at the Metro Police Hermitage Substation, said the Greenway actually is open from Heartland to the back of Stones River Road.

Dennison said the holdup on the Stones River Road leg involves acquiring an easement from Ravenwood to construct a Greenway section alongside Stones River Road. Dennison said “hopefully” the legal issue will be resolved by “spring”. Hopefully, she can get it done.

Work actually had begun on the Greenway section last fall, but a recent check of the site showed that no additional work has been done.

Dennison did paint a nice picture of the connector, once it and other work in the area is completed. Stone Hall at the intersection of Lebanon Road and Stones River Road will have restrooms and canoe and bicycle racks constructed this summer.

Work also continues at a steady pace on the new Stones River Bridge on Lebanon Road which, when completed, will connect Percy Priest Dam to downtown via the Greenway.

Non-greenway issues addressed during the public meeting included requests from the public for more mountain bike trails, especially of a more-gentle nature than the current trail; requests for more parkland in the Hermitage area, especially for soccer and ball parks; a blueways system that would create more access for boaters to the rivers, and dog parks. It was even suggested that some of the Andrew Jackson property could be dedicated to a dog park.

Metro did inform the public that there are plans in the works to build a dog park below Percy Priest Dam in the near future.

Big Hill Challenge

The fifth annual Big Hill Challenge will be held May 10 at Watertown. Registration will be held at Watertown High School beginning at 6:30 a.m. Entry fee is \$25 until midnight, May 3. Thereafter, it's \$30. Online registration

(http://www.active.com/event_detail.cfm?CHECKSSO=0&EVENT_ID=1526988%20) closes May 9 at 1:59 a.m.;

or snail mail <http://veloteers.org/docs/BHC5.pdf>. A portion of the entry fees benefit the Historic Watertown Society.

All rides start from the town square in Watertown at 8 a.m. At the finish, the Watertown Bed & Breakfast will host a hearty lunch for all. Showers will be provided. Water bottles and 2008 t-shirts will be presented to all registrants.

The Bike Pedlar, Hermitage, will have mechanics on hand for any last minute repairs.

The 50K, 100k and century will pass through Alexandria before heading off in separate directions riding along scenic Helton Creek, Smith Creek and Walker Creek, all tributaries of the Caney Fork River. Mt. Zion Baptist Church will provide the first rest stop. The century will travel through Dowelltown on the way to Gassaway. While the 50K route is a scenic rolling loop through Wilson and DeKalb counties, the 100K heads up to Center Hill Dam where it will provide intermediate and advanced cyclists with some challenging climbs and breathtaking descents along the Caney Fork River.

The century heads to Pea Ridge, elevation 1,200 feet, where the cyclists will encounter two very challenging climbs with one incredible descent. A second rest stop is located at approximately 50 miles out at Dry Branch Creek Baptist Church. The last rest stop for the two longer routes will be Malone Baptist Church, alongside Walker Creek. At the finish, the Watertown Bed & Breakfast will host a hearty lunch for all.

There will also a 10 mile, family-friendly loop touring beautiful Watertown. The rides will be SAG supported by professional bike mechanics including maintenance and repair, rest stops with food and hydration, first aid and restroom facilities



DANGER ZONE

With construction going hot and heavy where many of us ride, temporary hazardous areas for cyclists jump up overnight. It is the purpose of this section to alert Veloteers of new hazards when they appear, so that riders can prepare to proceed cautiously through the area or avoid it altogether. The hazard will remain in the listing until the work is complete and conditions are back to normal. If you know of a new

hazard where you ride, please e-mail nickbiker1@aol.com so that it can be listed in the next newsletter.

• **Lebanon Road bridge over Stones River going east.** Work continues on the new west-bound bridge across the Stones River, and this has left the east-bound bridge in a squeeze. The Lebanon Road bike lane merges into traffic at the east-bound bridge, and the big wide shoulder that was once there is no more. Instead, you're now in the right lane traffic crossing the bridge. If you make it across the bridge, you exit immediately into the right turn lane for traffic to Central Pike. **Extreme caution** is advised if you're trying to pick up the bike lane on the other side of Central Pike.

• **Dodson Chapel Road from Central Pike to Bell Road:** Construction continues going full guns on the Brown Farm urbanization north of the I-40 overpass. Dump trucks are in and out frequently. Use **extreme caution**.



From the Editor

Do you have content for the Veloteers newsletter? Please continue to submit your stories, photos and items of interest as Word documents or jpg files nickbiker1@aol.com for future publication.