



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB

MAY, 2008



“Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”

- THOMAS A. EDISON

Bridge links to Downtown

WRITTEN BY NICK SULLIVAN

The long-awaited grand opening of the pedestrian bridge across the Cumberland River happened on May 3 with due fanfare by public officials, bicyclists and walkers.

The bridge links the Stones River Greenway with Shelby Bottoms Greenway, making it now possible to cycle or walk from the back of Ravenwood Country Club to downtown Nashville.

Only a small section of the Greenway remains unopened – that stretch from Lebanon Road

along Stones River Road to the back of Ravenwood club (about

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.75 mile). When that stretch is complete, it will then be possible to ride from Lebanon Road at Central Pike to downtown.

If you haven't had a chance to ride this section of the Greenway for its entire open course, this is what you will find:

From the back of Ravenwood Country Club (access it now from Heartland Park) you travel a short distance through rural farmland and alongside the Cumberland River, crossing the Stones River about 100 yards from its confluence with the Cumberland. Cross over the bridge and for a few hundred yards you ride between the Water Treatment Plant and soccer fields at Heartland.

Past the entrance to the Water Treatment Plant, there is a steep climb alongside a general use road, then a tunnel under McGavock Pike to Two Rivers Middle School. The route mean-

ders through Two Rivers Park between Two Rivers Mansions and McGavock High School and the golf course. Tunneling again, you ride under Two Rivers Parkway then up past Wave Country, under Briley Parkway via two tunnels, and there is the bridge looming ahead.

Ride across the bridge, enjoying panoramic views of the Cumberland. On the other side, you exit the bridge on a steep round-about to the link with Shelby Bottoms. This Greenway runs in two directions. If you want to extend your ride, take a left and wander for a couple of miles through preserved natural river bottom lands of grasses, rushes and reeds. Sightings of waterfowl are common.

Heading back towards town, you travel alongside the Cumberland for about three miles. You don't see much of the river, because of bamboo and other foliage between the Greenway and the river.

The "Greenway" essentially ends at Shelby Park. Through the park you share the road with motorists. Upon exiting the park you travel for two or three miles through the industrial area on the north side of the river. Bike lanes on either side of the road keep you out of traffic, which is mostly service trucks traveling to the various industries along the way (not very scenic but reasonably safe).

At the Shelby Street pedestrian bridge, you can either cross the river there to the Schermerhorn Plaza, or continue on around LP Field on the river side toward East Bank Parkway and across Memorial Bridge to the Courthouse then back to Broadway via Riverfront Parkway. Plan

about an hour or so at a leisurely pace for a one-way trip.

Go to Broadway or Second

at the courthouse in 17 minutes, 52 seconds. Current Councilman Phil Clairborne arrived 2 minutes later having



Photo by Dennis Carney

Walkers, cyclists and public officials gather at the Cumberland River Pedestrian Bridge for the grand opening of the Greenways project

Avenue for a meal or refreshments. Then if you're

driven Briley Parkway north to Elmington Parkway.

fueled for the return trip. If too bushed to make the ride back, catch the Music City Star or a MTA bus back east.

Bicyclist Glen Kamka arrived in 23 minutes after taking Lebanon Pike all the way into town. Kamka, who lives in Antioch, commutes over 40 miles by bike each day to his job on Brick Church Pike.

Vital statistics: The new bridge expands 700 feet and is located 80 above normal pool of the Cumberland River.

Commute race won by a car; go Ponder
SUBMITTED BY
GLEN WANNER

For the Fourth Great Commuter Race on May 6, the car finally beat out the bicyclists on the 8-mile commute from Donelson to Downtown.

Several other cyclists from the Veloteers – Beth Travers, Brain Cox, William Anderson, David Perreault and Chip Hahn – opted to take the Stones River Greenway that connects to the Shelby Bottoms Greenway via the new bridge over the Cumberland River. Their ride, although mostly traffic free and much more pleasant, took 31 minutes. Leslie Meehan, the third driver, reached the courthouse in 32 minutes after a slow drive in on I-40.

Hermitage resident and former councilman Phil Ponder drove in on Lebanon Pike and arrived

Mike Rocco and Sally Robertson of Mt. Juliet took the Music City Star and arrived in 35 minutes. Both Rocco and Robertson frequently take the train and then ride their bikes to work in the Twelfth Avenue South area and Nashville Tech. The only difficulty occurred with bus rider, Laura Artates, who planned to ride her bike to Vanderbilt after the race. The Donelson bus already had two bikes on its rack and Artates had to wait for the next bus.

Artates, who heads the Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee, has done this commute on many occasions and has never had a problem with the rack on the bus being full. Artates arrived downtown after one hour and five minutes. Even though this was a disappointment, Artates is glad that MTA ridership is growing, and the bike racks that are now on all MTA busses are being used.

Shannon Hornsby, executive director of Walk/Bike Nashville, feels the race was a huge success even though the bike didn't win.

"It took our lead bicyclist five minutes longer to get downtown than the lead driver," says Hornsby. "There is little doubt that the bike is much cheaper, greener, and healthier."

The race began at 7 a.m. at Ace Hardware in Donelson Plaza and ended at the Courthouse.

The race organizers which include Walk/Bike Nashville, the Metro Planning Department, the Clean Air Partnership of Middle Tennessee, MTA, and RTA/Music City Star are confident that with the rising cost of gas and increasing environmental awareness, more

citizens will choose alternative modes of travel to get around Nashville.

Official Times: Phil Ponder, driver (Lebanon Pk.), 17:42; Phil Clairborne, driver (Briley/Elmington) 19:43; Glen Kamka, bicyclist (Lebanon Pike) 23:01; Beth Travers, Brain Cox, William Anderson, David Perreault, Chip Hahn, bicyclists (Stones River/Shelby Bottoms) 30:53; Mike Rocco, Sally Robertson, Music City Star 35:00; Laura Artates, bus 1 hour, 5 minutes.

Cost of 16-mile roundtrip

Donelson commute: Car, \$8.64 (based on the AAA cost estimate of 54 cents per mile); Music City Star \$7.20 (based on a 10 ride pass); MTA bus, \$2.40 (based on a 20 ride pass); Bicycle, \$2.08 (based on our estimated rate of 13 cents per mile)

Carbon Dioxide Emissions (in pounds) per Participant:

Car, 16 (more for idling or driving a larger vehicle); Music City Star, 3.2 (assuming the train is ¾ full); MTA bus, 3.2 (assuming bus is ¾ full); Bicycle, almost 0 except for the extra exhaling.

60% of automobile pollution occurs in the first few minutes that a car is driven so reducing short car trips could greatly improve our region's air quality.

Calories Burned per Participant:

Car, 100; Music City Star, 200 (assuming a short amount of walking is required), MTA bus, 200 (assuming a short amount of walking is required), Bicycle, 600.



VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

If only I were joking...

Having trouble following professional cycling these days? Now you know how all of your non-cycling friends feel when you start rattling on about your favorite riders and teams.

Sure, most people know who Lance Armstrong is, but as far as they're concerned, Leipheimer, Basso and Vinokurov could just as easily be the Three Tenors as elite

cyclists. But with many top names embroiled in doping scandals or riding for teams that have been shunned by the big races, 2008 is shaping up to be the year in which we all get to meet the benchwarmers.

No disrespect intended, but who the heck are Konstantin Siutsou, Pablo de Pedro and Loes Markerink, and what are they doing atop the podium?

But fear not, I've done my homework and have compiled the authoritative, comprehensive and 100% factual guide to everything you need to know about the 2008 pro cycling season. Memorize these few easy facts and in no time you'll be back up to speed and wowing your colleagues around the water cooler.

- This year's Tour de France (as well as the Giro d'Italia and the Vuelta a España) will be won by French rider Jacques du Milquetoast, riding for the newly formed Châtenay-Malabry squad. The rookie and former team Festina *soigneur* has been unavailable for interview, as he has spent the spring training season encased in a block of Lucite to prevent all possible contact with riders implicated in Operation Puerto. When notified of his impending victories by the team's *directeur sportif*, Dick Pound, the rider reportedly blinked once.

- For the first time in the history of the event, the Tour de France will contain no mountain stages. In a recent press conference, event organizers explained their decision by stating, "Many of the so-called 'great' mountain stages of past tours have concluded on peaks thickly covered by a substance known among confessed dopers as 'snow'. Like many of the items on the UCI's banned substances

list, this snow has a white, flaky appearance, must be maintained at sub-freezing temperatures and is quickly metabolized when ingested. Until a thorough chemical analysis can be completed by UCI-sanctioned laboratories and a reliable blood testing protocol is established, we feel an obligation to protect the Tour's reputation by ensuring that no rider be exposed to this new and insidious threat."

- On Monday, July 28, former Tour de France winner, bicycle manufacturer and USA cycling legend Greg LeMond will say something asinine.

- In a move to re-establish a high-profile presence in the Tour de France, American bicycle company and former U.S. Postal/Discovery Channel sponsor Trek will purchase the *Arc de Triomphe*. Though the terms of the unprecedented sponsorship arrangement will remain undisclosed, Trek will confirm that as the peloton circles through downtown Paris in the final stage of this year's Tour, Keith Bontrager will be perched atop the historic monument, pelting anyone not riding a special-edition Madone with day-old baguettes.

- And on a semi-cycling-related note, seven-time TDF winner Lance Armstrong's ongoing quest for obscurity will experience a 5-minute setback when he appears on the cover of the *National Enquirer*, escorting teen sensation Hanna Montana to the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards. Responding to reporters' raised eyebrows, Mr. Armstrong will challenge, "C'mon, name me three blond chicks that I haven't already dated."

Okay, maybe my sources on some of this are what some might consider less than completely reliable. (Though Tyler Hamilton's disappearing twin has never let me down before...) Still, it's a safe bet that these won't be the most bizarre things you'll hear coming out of the world of pro cycling this year. All I can say is hang on, it's going to be a bumpy ride.



ON THE ROAD

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

Hawkins resigns at bicycle shop

Gene Hawkins, a longtime bicycle mechanic and trusted adviser on all things Velo for the Jolly Cyclist, has resigned.

"I've been knocking around the bicycle business for twenty-one years, during which time I've worked at four different shops, in five different locations, and for five different owners," Hawkins said. "It's been a great part-time job for an old semi-retired guy like myself, and I've enjoyed it immensely."

For most of his time in the bicycle business, Gene worked in small one-owner, one-shop situations, which suited him perfectly.

"Two years ago our small Hermitage store was acquired by a larger corporation which operates several shops," he said. "I have the utmost respect and admiration for the new owners. But working in a larger corporate structure changed things for me to a significant degree."

"Our expanded operation necessitated more involvement than I wanted at this stage of my life. After much consideration, I decided that time was right to leave. It was entirely my idea, under completely amicable terms, and I remain good friends with everybody in the company."

Submitted Photo

When Gene Hawkins was behind the wrench at the Jolly Cyclist, you knew your bike was in good hands.



"I love the bicycle business, and perhaps at some time I'll want to return to it. But for the immediate future, I think I'll just shift into my granny gear and coast a bit."

Hawkins got into the bike business after a career with the Air National Guard. Since then he's worked at Eric's Schwinn, a now-closed dealership on Nolensville Road. When owner Don Erickson retired, he took a job with Hap Harrington at Skedaddle Bicycles in Murfreesboro, a college-oriented shop near MTSU. In 1997 he went to work for Jeff

Jolly at The Jolly Cyclist, where he was when Kerry Roberts acquired the shop and it became The Bike Pedlar, Hermitage.

Hawkins said he may still be seen sometimes at the Bike Pedlar, Hermitage, under an arrangement to help build up new bicycles. Otherwise, look for him on the road.

Wray endures At Cohutta race

Veloteer Brian Wray and friends participated in and finished the Cohutta 35/65/100 mountain bike race in April in Chattahoochee National Forest near Copperhill, Tenn. The race is part of the ultra-endurance off-road race series.

“My friends Richard and Joanie did the Epic 35, while Dan did the Big Frog 65, and I survived the 100 miler,” Wray said. “It took 11:40 and I accomplished my goal of finishing in less than 12 hours. It was a rough ride with a 50-degree start under a soggy drizzle. The first three-ish miles were on pavement to thin the herd and then to single-track where it was the consistency of wet peanut butter for about 10 miles.”

After that it was on to forest service roads.

“Now you'd think it would have gotten easier, but they were mostly packed dirt with some gravel, so the mud didn't go away (pedaling up 18% grade in mud is hard), and it was nothing but steep rollers,” Brian said. “Luckily it stopped raining around 10 a.m., but never really dried out ‘til about mile 80.

“I simply added oil to the mud on my chain at each rest station,” he said. “The last 25 miles to the finish was single-

track utilizing the Tanasi trail system. Several people had major mechanical and physical failures, but my body allowed it without cramps, thanks to salt pills.

“It was nice to say I did a race with Floyd Landis (not that I saw him anymore after the start).”

Teams, Trek/VW, Sobe/Cannondale, Ellsworth, Santa Cruz, Kenda/Titus/Hayes, and others were present - they all took top places.

“There were some amazing athletes present,” Wray said. “Myself, I'm known as a "filler" - not fast enough to place, but never last - unsponsored, just happy to be a part of the chaos.”

Journeys with Jerry

Jerry Dusterhoff has published a book, *Bicycle Journeys with Jerry*.

“If anyone has ever considered riding coast to coast, or just wants to explore bicycling vacations, either for real or vicariously, they should consider this a good investment,” Dusterhoff said.

“The feedback from readers has been very positive, and my website is quite informative: www.AcyclystPublishing.com. You can also find out more about my club at www.cyclopathsoftexas.com.”

Email
jerryd@acyclistpublishing.com

Find Me a Bike

Barry Hirsch, an avid bicyclist from Portland, Ore., has developed a web site for bicyclists called FindMeABicycle.com.

”The purpose of the web site is

to assist both experienced and novice bicyclists as they plan their next bicycle purchase,” Hirsch said. “There is nothing for sale on FindMeABicycle.com. Nor is there a fee to use the site. It is simply intended to be a free helpful service.”

FindMeABicycle.com provides two features:

- A simple step-by-step check list on how to purchase a bicycle, including a guide that will help the user decide on the ideal type of bike (mountain, road, hybrid, etc.) based on the needs of the user;
- And a comprehensive lists of virtually every type, make and model of bike on the market today. The lists, compiled from more than 100 bike manufacturers, contain information on over 2,600 bike models organized by 15 different types of bike.

If you have any questions or suggestions about the web site, contact Hirsch at info@FindMeABicycle.com.



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.