Fat Tire Winter Riding

In October 2014, Red Rider and I bought our first Fat Bikes from Freewheel Bike. We picked out Surly Ice Cream Trucks. They are heavy steel bikes with 4-inch-wide rims and massive 4.8-inch tires and a beautiful sparkling blue paint job. Test riding them, in the neighborhood around Freewheel, was an eye-opening experience. The first thing that I noticed was the noise the tires made when riding on pavement. It made a “growling” sound like large truck tires. When we started riding on grass in a nearby park, I was impressed with how stable the bikes were and how well they made tight turns on the grass. It was like being a kid again, riding over curbs and bumpy tree roots. I fell in love with the big Ice Cream Truck on that test ride!

Over six years later, I am still riding and loving my Ice Cream Truck. During those years, I have learned a lot about fat biking, the equipment needed and bike set-up to make winter biking safe, comfortable, and fun. Proper clothing is essential for making winter riding enjoyable. Keeping my feet, hands, and face warm has always been the biggest challenge for me. But thankfully, the popularity of fat biking has encouraged companies like 45NRTH to produce winter riding apparel and equipment.

To keep my feet warm, I purchased 45Nrth Wolvhammer boots. I got them a size larger than normal to accommodate two pair of wool socks. Wearing these boots, my feet stay comfortable in temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero!

For keeping my hands warm, wearing bulky winter gloves wasn’t the best solution because they made my hands too warm. I found that using 45Nrth GripGrab wool liners in my gloves was the perfect solution to keeping my hands warm but not too warm.

Continued on page 6
Hello everyone. I hope you continue to be safe, healthy, and in good spirits. While thinking about a column for this issue of the newsletter, I looked back at my column from a year ago, in the March 2020 issue, written just before the pandemic really began to surge into our awareness. That column was filled with optimism about the upcoming bike season and it began with “Spring is just around the corner!” I went on to optimistically talk about out-of-town, overnight trips, hanging out with friends, the upcoming group riding season, in-person leader training, the swap meet, and other events. I concluded by commenting on “heading into another season of biking with friends and making new biking friends.” I remember that optimism well, because it speaks to the same eager anticipation I have had every year for more than half my life as we move from winter into prime cycling season—the time when I look forward to group rides, getting reacquainted with friends I haven’t seen all winter, and to making new friends. Little did I know, when writing that column in February, what the rest of 2020 would bring. I am still optimistic as we approach another new season of spring riding, though it is a cautious optimism. As I write, more than 225,000 Minnesotans have been fully vaccinated, with another 661,000 having received their first dose. By the time you read this, many more will have joined them, at an accelerating pace. In addition, restrictions are being dialed back across the state. While we know the situation can change again quickly, and restrictions could be tightened again, it is starting, cautiously, to feel like we are turning a corner, even though we are by no means out of the woods yet. So, I am optimistic that we will be able to return to group riding at some point this season. Maybe not as soon as some would like. Perhaps sooner than others would like. As a Board, we will continue to monitor the situation carefully and return to group riding as soon as we can do so in a safe and socially responsible manner. We are as eager to get back to group riding as you are. We will continue to strive to do our small part to be part of the solution, whether that be doing our part to be socially responsible in helping to stop the spread of the coronavirus, or whether that be working to find common ground between those who disagree, or whether that be educating ourselves and learning so that we can take actions that help lead to security and opportunity for all. We are here for you. We hope you continue to feel welcome here. And, thank you to everyone who has submitted questions, suggestions, and opinions. We read and consider all of them.

Safe & happy riding,
Shelby

Explore More

- Explore the Metro area
- Explore the Cannon River Valley
- Explore the Driftless Area
- Ride to Duluth
- Ride to Winona
- Ride the Allegheny Mountains
- Paddle the Twin Cities

Custom Maps from Bikeeverywhere
IN BRIEF

CURRENT STATUS OF THE CLUB:
No changes. Solo rides continue for those brave ones. We eagerly anticipate more of the population being vaccinated. It is still too early to make definite plans for 2021 group events. The Board of Directors discusses the club status every month.

ANNUAL SPRING TCBC BIKE SWAP has been postponed until, hopefully, this fall.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING: No plans have been set as of this writing.

NEXT TCBC NEWS DEADLINE for the May-June issue will be Monday, April 5.

SAFETY NEWS: Again with the good tidings, no accidents to report this issue!

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP EARLY: it will help TCBC if you do. Thanks!

NEW MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE is being developed, because some things have changed and it’s time.

WEATHER WATCHING: Through February 5, only two days this winter had gone below zero, which is most unusual. Since then Mother Nature has been making up for it with a subzero snap. December was 5 degrees above normal and January (6 degrees) was the warmest metro month above normal since May 2018.

MINNEAPOLIS: The numbers of cyclists injured in bike-motor vehicle crashes have fallen sharply in recent years, evidence that the city’s commitment at considerable expense to bikeways, lanes, boulevards, curbs, etc. is paying off. The injury toll has fallen 39% to around 214 annually from 2016-2019, despite increased ridership.

SOME METRO SUBURBS are considering lowering speed limits to improve street safety for cyclists and pedestrians, following similar changes made by Minneapolis and St. Paul last year. Golden Valley, Edina, and St. Louis Park may change their speed limits to 20 or 25 mph. Since 2019, the state has been allowing cities to regulate speeds on streets they control. Other metro cities may eventually follow suit.

OF FORBES’ “TOP TEN PLACES TO LIVE IN AMERICA,” all ten are officially ranked Bicycle Friendly Communities by the League of American Bicyclists. Minnesota now has 32 BFC’s and nearly 100 BF Businesses.

WISCONSIN FIGURES: According to a recent report, outdoor recreation contributes $7.8 billion to the state’s gross domestic product. Per this report, bicyclists visiting Wisconsin spend around $355 million each year on bike-related expenses, and the CAMBA trail system in northern WI attracts 25,000 mountain biking trips yearly. Research from Trek Bicycles show that of Americans who own a bike, 21% have been riding more since the pandemic began last spring.

FIVE WAYS Spending Time in Nature makes us feel healthier (from the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, from scientific studies):
1. It helps us feel healthier and happier.
2. Strengthens our immune system.
3. Lowers depression, anxiety, and stress.
4. Decreases high blood pressure.
5. Improves memory.

By Doug Nelson

THE CLUB IS LOOKING FOR A NEW BIKE U COORDINATOR.
Topics in the recent past have been on Bike Fit, exercise, and nutrition. Topics for Bike U can include: bike maintenance, trips taken. The volunteer would be responsible for setting up the meeting, currently on the club zoom account, and finding a speaker.

We always have volunteer needs that arise during the year. In addition to posting in the newsletters, I also will post in the forum on our website.

Mike Kubes
Volunteer Coordinator
volunteer@biketcbc.org

VOLUNTEER NEWS

If you have any questions about volunteering for the club, send an email to volunteer@biketcbc.org.

By Doug Nelson

BIKE TRAILS AND ROUTES

BROWN’S CREEK TRAIL: Data collected from the trail counter showed that from January 1, 2020, through September 13: total year-to-date traffic use was up 65%, with bicycling traffic up 74%. Also, a water stop has been installed at the park at Neal Avenue, midway through the six-mile trail.

GATEWAY TRAIL: The new section from William O’Brien State Park to Scandia did not make the 2020 bonding bill approved by the State Legislature last October. They will try again for the funding in 2022.

RECENTLY APPROVED PROJECTS by the Metropolitan Council for federal funding include: Building a bike/ped bridge over Coon Rapids Blvd in Anoka County. Minnetonka’s Hopkins Crossroad multi-use trail will connect with regional trails and local schools. Reconstructing Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis from Hennepin to Lyndale, including bike and ped improvements.

The list will be published in the spring. 17% of the total funding will be going to bike/ped projects.

By Doug Nelson

Fergus Falls
The Central Lakes Trail Starts Here

BikeFergusFalls.com

MAR/APR 2021 TCBC NEWS 3
April in Arkansas

Stimson, experiencing a severe case of parts withdrawal, took the van in search of a bicycle store. They came back in complete agreement that driving through the mountain passes during a flash flood was a small price to pay. Louise Olson and Sue Beulke opted for shopping, a choice that became increasingly popular as the trip went on. John Beulke, Jeff Schadegg, Becky Jackson, Kevin Olson, and Betsy Olson rode to the Blanchard Springs Caverns, which were just up the road and over a tall but scenic mountain. The caves were magnificent, and the rest of the group followed up with a visit the next day.

Sunday evening in Mountain View we came across an informal group of local musicians. We were truly entranced as they swapped instruments and songs and stories. Imagine our surprise as we discovered upon closer inspection that the banjo player was Bob Stimson!

Monday morning we packed our bags and set off for the 58 miles to Mountain Home. John Beulke, who was responsible for the sag wagon that day, rode half the way and turned back to get the van. He took Sue along to ward off any lions and tigers and bears that might be encountered along the way. Kevin set a world record for the number of times he dropped his chain in one day.

Tuesday’s 52-mile trip to Harrison was the low point of the trip. Bob H’s bicycle disappeared for a mere moment and was located under the tire of the van. Bob, always the gentleman, refrained from killing anyone. The significance of Jeff’s broken wheel paled in comparison. John M’s treasure chest of spare parts produced two new rims which got both bikes going again for the trip to Eureka Springs.

Louise and Sue, now veteran Arkansas shoppers, led us on a tour of the stores there. Becky had no time for shopping, as she was racking up miles to be the trip mileage leader. Tom, the official photographer, captured the beauty of our surroundings on film. Tuesday may have been the low point of the trip, but Saturday, as we took one last spin around and packed our bags, was surely the saddest. We had ridden 300 miles together through some of the most beautiful scenery imaginable. 13 acquaintances had become 13 friends. We had taken care of each other and found ways to laugh about the problems we met. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other.

The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other. The challenges of the terrain gave each of us a new confidence in ourselves and a trust in each other.

It was truly a trip to remember.

by Betsy Olson
Great Northern Greenway in Minneapolis

The Greenway is a largely completed five-mile recreational trail that knits together nine North and Northeast Minneapolis neighborhoods between the city’s east and west borders. We invite you to learn about the Greenway and to help us achieve the remaining pieces of the Greenway vision!

Our route largely following 26th Avenue N. and 18th Avenue NE ties together parks, schools, cultural locales and businesses. The Greenway provides pedestrians and cyclists a safe sidepath to access the Mississippi River and the Grand Rounds network of foot and bike paths. It offers a safe, convenient cross-city non-motor alternative.

Our biggest remaining challenge will be to create a river crossing with shared use of a lightly traveled rail-road bridge. While that is negotiated, the closest river crossing is over the busy Broadway Avenue Bridge. The Lowry Avenue Bridge offers another alternative, with bike lanes. It offers a safe, convenient cross-city non-motor alternative.

Our biggest remaining challenge will be to create a river crossing with shared use of a lightly traveled railroad bridge. While that is negotiated, the closest river crossing is over the busy Broadway Avenue Bridge. The Lowry Avenue Bridge offers another alternative, with bike lanes.

A two-year reconstruction of 18th Street between Monroe and Johnson Streets NE added a sidewalk-level side path. Trail improvements were added between Johnson and Stinson in 2020.

Two trail gaps remain; one from California to Marshall Streets NE will be completed in 2022 and lead people to the East Bank Trail and the future river crossing. The other between Washington and Monroe Streets NE is not programmed. Two possibilities for completing this segment are to detour along 19th Av. NE or to tunnel under the railroad berm for a more direct route. The 18th Avenue trail is nearly two and a half miles long extending from the Marshall Street intersection shared with the newer East-Side Trail and future Great Northern Greenway river crossing to the east where it connects to the Diagonal Trail and Grand Rounds. Different trail sections have been constructed over the past two decades. Nearly two-thirds of the route has been completed or upgraded since 2018 in conjunction with several street reconstruction projects.

(See more information on their website at greatnortherngreenway.com)
Fat Tire Winter Riding cont.

Continued from cover

shifters and brakes hard to use and they sometimes weren’t warm enough. I bought a pair of Poagies from Dogwood Designs, that are handmade in Fairbanks, Alaska. Poagies go on your handlebars and cover the grips, shifters, and brakes. Your hands go inside and it’s like riding with a down-filled sleeping bag on your hands. Even on the coldest days, my hands stay toasty warm with just a light winter glove or glove liner inside my Poagies.

I have to thank the downhill ski industry for the solution to keeping my head, face, and eyes from freezing. I bought a ski helmet, goggles, balaclava, and facemask. The ski helmet has adjustable vents to regulate the temperature inside and warm padded ear coverings. It also has a strap in the back to help keep goggles attached. I bought two pair of goggles, one for bright sunny days and one for cloudy days and night riding. The goggles work way better than cycling glasses for keeping my eyes from watering and freezing shut.

I found the best way to keep the rest of my body warm and dry is to wear several layers of clothing, starting with wool long underwear as a base layer. I then add or remove outer layers as necessary to stay warm and dry. I usually start out a winter ride a little overdressed so I always wear a backpack or fannypack for a place to store or stash clothing. I also put a water bottle inside the pack to keep it from freezing.

Most fat bikes sold now are set up very well for winter riding. But for Minnesota winters, one thing that I would change is to have studded tires installed. We end up having a lot of ice storms, and non-studded fat bike tires are treacherous on ice! I use 45NRth Dillinger 5 studded tires. They have 258 studs with concave carbide ends. The extra grip on ice is pretty amazing. But if you encounter icy ruts, caution is required, even with studded tires.

Proper tire pressure on fat bikes is even more important than on a road bike. Most people ride their fat bike with way too much tire pressure! For my 4.8-inch tires, I have found that 6-7 PSI pressure is the most that is needed for both comfort and control. On freshly groomed snow trails, 2-3 PSI is the way to go. Any more than that and you risk breaking through the fresh groomed surface and causing ruts, ruining all of the work that the trail groomer put in. The trail groomer and other fat bikers will not be happy with you! On hard packed trails, 4-5 PSI works really well. So, to accurately set proper tire pressure, a good quality low pressure tire gauge is something that you will need to buy and carry with you. Eventually you will learn to gauge proper tire pressure just by squeezing the tires with your hand and observing the tracks you leave on the trail. And don’t forget to bring along a tire pump in case you let out too much pressure when out on the trail. There are plenty of amazing places to ride a fat bike in the winter. Most of the mountain bike trail systems are great for fat biking. The best trail systems use special equipment to groom the trails for fat biking. Once groomed, they only allow bikes with 3.7 inch or wider tires on the trails. My favorite winter fat biking area is the Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Trails in Crosby/Ironton. There are over 20 miles of impeccably groomed singletrack trails. The local volunteers use snowshoes to pack down the deep snow on the trails, then special equipment to groom the trail into a smooth ribbon of corduroy through the woods. Riding on trails like these are like riding on a cloud. After you ride the Cuyuna trails, get a beer at the Red Raven and leave a beer donation for the snowshoers and trail groomers.

Other trails that I enjoy riding in the Twin Cities area are the Minnesota River Bottoms Trail, Elm Creek Trails, Lebanon Hills, and Murphy Hanrehan. And there are many other choices that I haven’t tried yet.

But on days after a fresh snowstorm, when the roads are slushy from salt, I most enjoy getting on my fat bike and riding down the sidewalk to Reservoir Woods to ride on the singletrack trails or riding on the paved trails in Como Park.

By Johnny Pugh

FAT BIKE RENTALS
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mesabitrail.com
When distance learning ended last spring, my youngest grandson, Leo, and his older brother, Oliver, started riding bicycle with Oliver’s bike gang, called “The Boys”. Leo was able to keep up with them on a bicycle, so they set up a game where he was at a disadvantage owing to his younger age. The prize for not losing this game was that you could stay in the gang. Leo lost.

Taking stock of his situation, things were not looking good for the summer. Leo had a new smart phone, but he had forgotten to transfer phone numbers out of his old phone before it was cancelled. Baseball was cancelled shortly after tryouts. He had made the team, but the only activities had been to pay fees, and then to get the money back. He was pretty isolated. He had even lost the company of his brother, who was off riding with his friends.

Leo had enjoyed his brother’s bike gang, until he was sent packing, so he decided he would found his own bike gang. He had a bike and one boy, himself. That was a start. All he needed was more bikes and more boys. He knew where some of his school and baseball friends lived, so he rode out on his bike and started knocking on the doors. He got three riders on the first day. They had a great time. The next day, none of those boys could ride, but he found some other boys who could spend the afternoon on their bikes.

In order to have a bike gang, you need some boys who want to be a bike gang, not just some boys who, on occasion, will be willing to ride for an afternoon. Leo soon found that not all boys can or even want to spend the afternoon out riding every day. His efforts at forming a bike gang became a matter of going around, knocking on doors, trying to find someone to ride with. That’s not really a bike gang.

However, Leo did persist, in the process of which he learned where more of his friends lived, and by midsummer had found a group of guys with the right stuff. The kind you need to form a real bike gang. These dependable boys undertook to become a gang. They chose a name which was “The Gang”. They wrote “The Book of The Gang” which contained within its pages the history of The Gang’s formation and a constitution, the main gist of which was to avoid obnoxious behavior if you wanted to stay in the gang. It recorded the identity of their sponsor, Gum Gum Gum, and of their mascot, one of the boy’s dogs. It made provision for the naming of officers.

An election for president was held, and Leo was not chosen for that position. When he pointed out that he was the one who had ridden out every day to form the gang and keep it going, the members concurred that he should have some kind of a title for having done all that, and they relegated him to the position of King. So it was, that “The Gang” became a constitutional monarchy.

The members of this gang rode around the village, stopping to play in various parks, or in one of their yards, or sometimes, if they had money, they would go to Target. They would stop for refreshments at Caribou Coffee, Starbucks, Holiday, and Cub Foods. Their base of operations was a stick fort in a small woods, a place where imagination reigned.

There was a magic to all of this. They had formed a bike gang. It was more than just something for them to do. The rituals and activities of the gang were of their own creation, and they had their own hideout in the woods. But underpinning all of this was a special ingredient, the bicycle. For it was boys on their bicycles who had formed The Gang – a wonderful “league of their own”.

Bob Brown

In our pandemic year of discontent, my wife and I got an opportunity that we would not have otherwise been able to take advantage of. We decided to travel to Arizona in January and work remotely for a month. By the time you read this, we will be back in the frozen tundra counting the days until a fair-weather cyclist like me ventures back outside from at least a shorter than normal hibernation.

While cycling down in the beautiful desert, my mind wandered to think of all the reasons that I love cycling. However, I also reflected upon how Covid has forced our great club’s continued shutdown and one of the things I’ve loved most about riding with my TCBC biking buddies – a sense of shared experience.

Group riding is so special in that together we share an experiences in conquering climbs, driving into a headwind, getting caught in that pop up thunderstorm in the summer, or for the crazier folks – riding in the winter (Why?!!). It is sharing conversation at rest stops over terrible gas station food or getting together for post ride drink or “light dinner”. The comradery of our shared love of cycling transcends all other differences we may have and prints indelible memories that continue to bond us over time.

This pandemic is a shared experience too. Nobody has been spared from the hardships that have taken place over the past year. But take heart, we are getting closer to the end of this pandemic. Vaccinations are taking place, never as quickly as we’d like, but they are happening and we will ride together again. New memories will be made and together our shared love of cycling will bring us back together.

Until that time comes when I can see you all on the road, let us not waste the opportunity to share experiences with others however you can! Jump onto a “Whole Enchilada” Zoom call to say hello to your biking friends, try a virtual Zwift ride, or a safe, socially distanced outdoor event. We are strong, we will endure, and we will ride again. Be safe everyone.

By Bob Fix
Longtime member Pete May was diagnosed with stomach/liver cancer last November and has been undergoing chemotherapy since December. You can check on him by referring to his website at caringbridge.org under Peter May. He writes every few days or daily, with observations, updates, sometimes poetry and photos.

Pete has been a TCBC member since we began in 1993, and was with AYH well before that. He is a longtime trip leader and accomplished mapmaker for rides led by many of us. As mentioned in the last newsletter, he finished third in men’s mileage last year! We wish Pete and his wife Karen all the best in these challenging times. Here are some of his recent rhymes on people you may know:

A lass I know and like loves to get out and ride her bike, I found it humorous when her flats grew numerous She said she’d rather hike.

An HVAC repairman named Tony gives hugs that are not phoney He’ll relate his life story Most parts aren’t too gory But some say he’s full of baloney.

Our bike friends Alex and Craig An R-Pod behind them they dragged, Wherever they travel On paved roads or gravel And on Facebook they’re tagged.

I don’t know all the places Patt’s been Nor all the countries she’s seen She’s travelled so far Don’t ask where you are She qualifies as our travel queen.

Jeff is our weather wizard who can predict rain, sleet or a blizzard, but with climate change our weather is strange yet hurricanes would be absurd.

No one was totally aware he could keep up his biking speed barely He tried to keep pace but this isn’t a race And we still call him “Leadout Larry”

This is for Dan, I know two, No wait, I know more it is true, They’re both a great ride To have by your side

And I can’t wait ‘til I do!

Red Rider’s a biking friend Whose knee would not bend So she got a new knee In order to ski Or snowshoe or ride tandem.

Highland Sue snowbirds Southwest, her Mtn or road bikes test her Spring returns her strong She sails right along But on hills I still can best her!

Biking buddy Mark Thornsjo Headed south to where nasty thorns grow In Santa Fe he found goat heads A puncture thorn everyone dreads And flats make him mourn so!

Dick S skis for the thrills On cross country and down hills. He likes to wear long johns Knit cap, gloves and vest he dons For he doesn’t want any chills.

My biking friends John and Colette Are a couple we have met While out on a ride We’d chat side by side But I can’t keep up with them yet

This limerick is for Jim and Kate Who led rides for us from out of state. We biked for a while From Mesa to Sundial Just make sure you don’t show up late

Johnny P took his fattie exploring His chain broke, how deploring. Back home he hiked Twaasn’t how he liked But now he’s resting and snoring.

In the Tetons he likes his skis Randall wears layers so not to freeze In April he’ll return Before he can sunburn And’ll usher for the Twinkies.

I know an editor who’d check Every word in a story for dreck He chooses this word or that Until they’re down pat But would like to be on Star Trek.
The Twin Cities edition of Bicycle Film Festival (BFF) is back! This year the virtual showings are being hosted by the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) and Our Streets Minneapolis. BFF has been celebrating everything bicycles through art, film, and music for 20 years, spanning the world with showings in over 90 cities while reaching audiences of more than one million people.

This year, due to COVID-19, Bicycle Film Festival is coming to you virtually at a time convenient for you from February 26th through March 7th. But wait, there’s more! We are also really excited to announce that your ticket to BFF comes with an incredible panel of local bicycle champions including Louis Moore, the Club President of the Minnesota chapter of the Major Taylor Cycling Club, Ashley Zapata, and Madilynn Garcia, the Founder and Secretary of the Stamina Racing Collective, Paige Ingram, co-organizer for the Revolutionary Juneteenth Blackout Bike Ride, and Wesley Ferguson, a local bike advocate, and organizer highlighted this year by Surly and Pink Bike. They’re all doing amazing, important work in our community and we’re grateful to be given the opportunity to host a discussion to uplift their voices.

The curated collection of select short films will take you on a journey around the world, covering such topics as:
- The first BMX crew in Nigeria
- A charismatic Ghanaian immigrant in Amsterdam who teaches refugee adult women to ride bikes
- A bird’s-eye view of a BLM bicycle protest ride from New York to DC
- New York City through the lens of female bike messengers
- Cycle sport as relief from genocide
- The story of Marshall ‘Major’ Taylor

You can also find the ticket site with more information on the films, including a trailer, here: https://btt.boldtypetickets.com/events/110344842/bicycle-film-festival-minneapolis

(NOTE: TCBC is not necessarily endorsing any specific content or subject matter contained in the BFF or discussed by the panel.)
A Perfect Ride
(A trip story worth remembering, written by Bob Brown in July 2011.)

On that day when a hawk flew across the sky, the sun was shining, and the air was warm, yet cool and dry. Larks flitted noisily across the green fields from the fence lines. The insects were chirping and trilling, and all the birds were singing. It was a day like many days, in so many ways; it was, thereby, a day like no other -- the day of my most perfect ride.

On this special day, which I am sure you must recall, I rolled out upon the road, riding my trusty black Schwinn Paramount bicycle. I pedaled southbound, from Lansing to McGregor, along the Iowa side of the Mississippi River. Riding through this lovely country, more than ever before, I became one with my bicycle. My wheels spun easily and quietly, smoothing the pavement as they went. My cranks turned of their own volition, according to my purpose. When the steep hills came, my bicycle and I mowed them down together. We rode them flat. There was no hard pedaling -- just me and my bicycle gliding along over hills and down into beautiful valleys, and always up and over the next hill.

Time flew by, and soon I was dropping down into McGregor. There, I met my brother. He had driven up from Rock Island so we could ride the river together, from McGregor down to Dubuque, on the Iowa side, returning northward to McGregor by way of Wisconsin. We had a great ride. We usually do. There were fine roads, some nice hills, and even a stretch of narrow, winding, gravel road, with a climb so steep you had to stay seated, in order to maintain traction, when the grade called for standing upon the pedals.

We encountered one unique challenge on the way to Dubuque. It came in the form of oncoming traffic, namely a bull trotting along on the wrong side of the road. We dismounted our bicycles, and my brother chose to stand his ground on the road, trusting to the traction of his touring shoes and his experience in a bull ring during his many travels. I lit out for the trees in the ditch, trusting neither my hard slippery cleats on the pavement nor the look in the bull’s eye.

Soon the farmer came trotting along, also on the wrong side of the road, admonishing the bull that he should come back home. The bull, quite coy for a beast of such massive bulk, was playing hard to get. When the bull and the farmer had passed by, my brother, having stayed upon the road, remained unscathed. I, on the other hand, emerged from the ditch with a greatly swollen spider bite on my leg. There is a lesson to be learned from our differing fates. I’m just not sure you have any idea what that lesson might be.

On our way back to McGregor, I stopped at a bait shop, in Bagely, Wisconsin, to fill up my water bottle. Later, as we rode along, I was drinking the water and relating to my brother how very much it seemed that my water bottle smelled like a minnow bucket. Before we reached McGregor, I was retching with considerable vigor and I didn’t feel very well either. I was not up for riding the hills back to Lansing, so my brother took me there by automobile after we first made good our return to McGregor.

Except for the smelly water and the related stomach contractions, the whole trip was great; but that lone ride, from Lansing to McGregor, has stood for all these years as being the most perfect ride of my life. I am sure there are rides like that all the time, in heaven, but down here, I can only hope it might happen again.

Bob Brown
WOW was an annual summer weekend event for more than 25 years held at various locations. Here is the 2001 recap.

A full weekend of bicycling bliss with tons of food and no drivers screaming at us to “Get off the road!” Weekend on Wheels in Winona, August 10-12, offered all that plus ideal sunny weather that made each mile a real treat.

Friday night got off to a booming start when intrepid early arrivals rode into Wisconsin for dinner and fireworks in Fountain City — followed in cars by more TCBC members who arrived later or who planned to save their energy for the weekend ahead.

Saturday offered three awesome, character-building routes, in the grand WOW tradition. Starting from Winona State University, riders climbed the scenic vistas to be warmly welcomed at terrific rest stops by TCBC volunteers and local hosts. Doug Peterson set a new standard for rest stops with the assortment of tasty snacks and sandwiches dished up at each site — Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Charles City Park, and “Pork and Plants,” a working family farm where riders could stroll through greenhouses and even pet some piglets! Several members of the club were interviewed by a reporter from the Winona Daily News, who provided event coverage.

In the shadow of Sugar Loaf Bluff on Saturday night, Mayor Jerry Miller welcomed riders to the Irv Gepner Pavilion, named for WOW committee member David Gepner’s dad! Tired riders enjoyed a picnic-style feast, followed by the presentation of an assortment of door prizes. Afterwards, everyone had the opportunity to try out diverse models of canoes and kayaks on Lake Winona, courtesy of We-no-nah Canoe and Current Designs Kayaks. Sunday’s three routes offered more great scenery, including a stop for everyone at the historic Pickwick Mill, Minnesota’s oldest industrial site. The longer routes had incredible vistas — including the 66-mile route’s panoramic view of the Mississippi River Valley. At the Aldomger dairy farm in Witoka, riders got to meet the farm’s newest addition, a newborn baby calf.

A big thanks goes out to the committee members and volunteers who did so much to make the weekend happen, to Winona and our rest stop hosts for their hospitality, and to all the riders who came, saw, and rode the marvelous miles of southeast Minnesota!

By Julie VanMersbergen

NEW MEMBERS

We so much appreciate these folks for joining TCBC recently. We hope to see many more names by spring or summer!

Duane Franklund
Benjamin Gaustad-Randolph
Christine Swick
Eric Tebben
Julie Tebben
Brad Webb

MILEAGES

Since our ride year started last November 1, here are those brave folks with the most. All have been recorded on solo rides, of course. The winter has been warmer than usual until early February arrived with a vengeance.

MEN
Johnny Pugh............................ 1788
Scott Larson............................ 1014
Mark Gregory............................ 641
Charlie Caswell......................... 614
Jim Angle................................ 613
Jon Koser................................. 604
Stephan Hodges......................... 431
Kent Furois............................... 424
Mike Nizielski............................ 387
Tim Rand................................ 386

WOMEN
Susan Evan.............................. 750
Karen May................................. 744
Jackie Battis.............................. 667
Katie Angle............................... 618
Linda Johnson......................... 608
Mary Derks............................... 489
Jessica Hagg............................. 424
Judy Emerson........................... 209
Bonnie Shoebottom..................... 152
Liesa Miller............................... 147


WINONA WOW’S ‘EM in August

(WOW was an annual summer weekend event for more than 25 years held at various locations. Here is the 2001 recap.)

35th Annual Chippewa Valley Century Ride

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Registration 7:00am - 10:00am • Chippewa Falls, WI at the Northern Wisconsin State Fair Grounds

35, 50, 75 and 100 Mile Routes

$45 before May 12 • $55 before May 29 • $65 day of

Family rates available - see web site

Ride Includes:
• Rest stops with food & water
• SAG wagons
• Brat feed

Pre-Ride Party
Saturday, May 29 6-8pm at the Leinie Lodge

Join us for light snacks and fun. Pick up your wristband and t-shirt and be ready to ride in the morning.

For more information and registration forms:

www.ChippewaValleyRide.us
FIRST AND LAST NAME
MAILING ADDRESS APT
CITY STATE ZIP
EVENING PHONE
E-MAIL ADDRESS
I consent to receiving notice of annual and special meetings of TCBC members at the above email address.
____ I do not provide this consent.
____ FIRST TIME MEMBER RENEWAL
____ I would like to volunteer.
____ I would like to receive my newsletter via e-mail also.
For statistical purposes: Gender (circle)
M  F  D.O.B.  /  /
____ $30.00 - INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP
____ $45.00 - HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP* (enables two adults in household to vote)
Please list the first and last names, gender and date of birth for other bicyclists in your household:
1. ____________________________________ M  F  D.O.B.  /  /
2. ____________________________________ M  F  D.O.B.  /  /
3. ____________________________________ M  F  D.O.B.  /  /
The TCBC membership year is 12 months from the date you become a member. Categories of membership are 1) individual and 2) household. For insurance purposes all members are required to sign a liability release annually. The newsletter mailing label shows membership numbers and expiration date and serves as your member card.