

SPRING 2017



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORANGE COUNTY WHEELMEN

21ST ANNUAL
**BREATHLESS AGONY
CENTURY +**

107 MILES

12,007' OF CLIMBING

05.06.2017

Onyx Summit
ELEV 8443 ft.

OCWHEELMEN.ORG

Bristol Farms
Your Extraordinary Food Store

HAMMER
NUTRITION

WHOLE
FOODS
MARKET

The poster features a central illustration of a grimacing figure in a grey hooded robe, holding a scythe. The figure is positioned against a blue background with stylized mountains. The text is arranged in a structured layout with blue and orange horizontal bands. At the bottom, there are logos for OCWHEELMEN.ORG, Bristol Farms, HAMMER NUTRITION, and WHOLE FOODS MARKET.

OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

CALENDAR: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar

OFFICERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419328-officers

DIRECTORS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419332-directors

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-supporting-memberships

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Held the first Sunday of each month starting 11am at Carl's Jr., Newport Beach. Take the 405 Freeway to the MacArthur exit. Go south 0.8 miles and turn left on Campus. Go 0.3 miles and turn right into Carl's Jr. (at Von Karman). All Officers and Directors are expected to attend to conduct business. Other interested members may also attend.

MONTHLY BRAINSTORMING PARTIES

Held once a month, typically the last Thursday or Saturday of the month. These special "parties" are a way for OCW members to get together and "brainstorm" articles and ideas for our monthly NewsBlast and quarterly Chain Reaction while enjoying food and beverage. **COME JOIN US!**

If you would like to host a Brainstorming Party or supply food or beverage please contact Monica McCarthy at monica.mccarthy@cox.net. **OCW REIMBURSES UP TO \$150!**

REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

All Registration for OCW events require the registrant to be logged in. Be sure to always check for discount codes. You will only see the discount code if you are a current member of OCW. The discount code if applicable will be located on a separate page in the specific event area. To confirm if you are current, check the membership data base. If you do not see the link for the membership data base, your membership has expired by at least a month or more.

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. The website functions are different and I have learned new ways within this site logic, to apply new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. I am continually upgrading the website when there are better ways to protect your personal information, but have it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW.

Mike Lee, Events

Spring 2017

Editors Musings



Michelle Vester, LCI

Wow, hopefully everyone has had a chance to get a great ride in, whether road, mountain, or both, and see the beautiful flowers that are scattered among the green, green hills and mountains around Orange County.

Those were some monster storms we had this winter, but we needed them so much. As per the U.S. Drought Monitor for Southern California, <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>, we are now down to a D1 (Moderate Drought). Hopefully we will see a couple more minor to moderate storms in the spring so our area can recover even more.

On another subject, this issue is packed full of great articles, and also some different graphics and illustrations, including the Chain Reaction logo. Hope you enjoy.

Have a fun-packed spring everyone, and of course.....

Enjoy the ride!

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EVENTS 2016

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Spring Metric | April 1 |
| Breathless Agony | May 6 |
| Amtrak Century | September 9 |



John Renowden

The President

Well the time has come for me to move from VP to President. I have to thank Miguel for keeping us on the straight and narrow for two years and I am pleased that he is going to be working on Communications. He is now looking around for a book advance on his presidential memoir. No doubt it will contain an account of our exploits on the recent Joshua Tree Double Century. Like the curate's egg, good in parts. As with many cycling events the more you suffer the greater the achievement. We were so happy to finish; doubles are a great test of cycling endurance. If you can do a century you can do a double, so give it a try.

We have a new VP, Joe Bernhardt. Joe is full of enthusiasm for the role and has already been working hard on the program for the General Meetings. His first GM was a talk by Kevin and Ximena Ansel about their self-contained, unsupported bicycle tour along the Trans America Route from Astoria, Oregon to Yorktown, Virginia. Riding 4,269 miles over 86 days is quite an achievement and presented so well with stories of the people they met along the way. Next up is a review of Breathless Agony that Joe is putting together while waiting for his broken leg to heal. Joe, skiing is bad for you, stick to cycling.

Breathless Agony brings about a new era for OCW. It's sad to see the end of Ride Around the Bear after 32 years but the falling number of riders, increased traffic on 330 and the opportunity to stage Breathless was too compelling. The great thing about Breathless is that there are three options: 51 miles climbing 4,400ft, 75 miles climbing 7,800ft and the Full Monty,

107 miles climbing 12,000ft. So something for everyone; with the opportunity to progress to new heights.

If you think that Breathless sounds hard it's important to remember that everything is relative. We had Rebecca Rusch speak to us at the Annual banquet. Besides record-breaking mountain biking achievements she excels at rock climbing, whitewater rafting, adventure racing, cross-country skiing and somehow manages to be a firefighter in her spare time. In her presentation she was only able to touch on a small part of her exploits. Her book "Rusch to Glory" is a highly recommended compelling read that details how she progressed from a fragile teen to a world-class multi-discipline athlete.

So my message for 2017 is, try something new and challenging. We have a great club with wonderful people, lots of rides and fun events. There are rides for all levels with the ability to start easily with a short ride, progress to the longer rides and then even on to the big events. Most of all do what you like doing.

Enjoy riding and be safe.

John



Trans America Bicycle Tour



Story by Kevin & Ximena Ansel

On June 18, 2016 we embarked on our self-supported, self-contained Trans America bicycle tour leaving from Astoria, Oregon to Yorktown, Virginia. 2016 was the forty year anniversary of the Bicentennial Bicycle Route, now called the Trans Am. Our plan was to follow the route as designed by the Adventure Cycling Association (www.adventurecycling.org). We had purchased maps from ACA and used them to their full extent. Besides showing the route, the maps display locations of campgrounds, hotels, stores, bike shops, post offices, etc. for each town along the way. Every bicycle tourist we encountered were also using the maps.

We headed down the Oregon coastline then turned east and made our way over the Cascade Mountains. Crossing Idaho into Montana we experienced beautiful rushing rivers and high-density forested lands. The mountains continued in Montana as we climbed over the cold and wet Chief Joseph Pass at 8200 feet. Traveling southeast we entered Wyoming through the gates of Yellowstone and continued on through the Grand Tetons. We were awestruck at the beauty of these National Parks. Wyoming led us to Colorado where we climbed over the Rocky Mountains at Hoo-sier Pass. This was the highest point of our tour at 11,539 feet and it was the eleventh time we traveled over the Continental Divide. Descending the backside of the Rockies took us into Pueblo,

Colorado, the halfway point of our trip. We had trekked over 2100 miles and experienced the country in a unique way.

The mountains gave way to the flat plains of Kansas. For 500 miles Kansas was as flat as a pancake. We dealt with high headwinds and cross winds that did not let up until Missouri. Thirty miles into the state we entered into the Ozark Mountains. The Ozarks were some of the toughest climbing we had ever done. The grades were extreme with no flats at all. We were either climbing or descending. Even the locals told us that they did not like driving these roads.



Crossing the Mississippi River into Illinois led us into the "Little Ozarks", meaning the climbing continued. We crossed the Ohio River via a ferry into Kentucky. We had a few days of rolling hills until we reached the Appalachian Mountains. The Appalachian climbs were different than the Ozarks. Typically the climbs were longer with six to nine major climbs a day.



For our Trans Am tour we climbed a total of 220,000 vertical feet. Dogs were also an issue on the tour. We were chased by approximately 75 K-9s from Missouri through Kentucky. We started hearing about the chasing dogs from other cyclists starting back in Oregon. We did not get bitten but they sure gave us a run for our money.

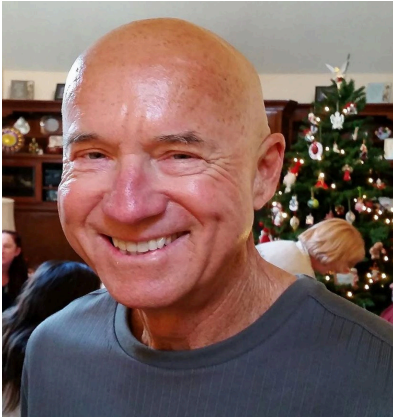
Virginia, our tenth and final state, was green with lush fields and rolling forested hillsides. Finishing our tour in Yorktown was a treat. Yorktown is full of history and is where George Washington beat General Cornwallis and won independence from the British in 1781. The Trans Am route finishes at Victory Monument which commemorates the triumph over England.

The tour was a total of 4268 miles which took us 86 days. 79 riding days with 7 days off for rest, sightseeing, and visits with people. Along the way we camped, stayed in churches, hostels, hotels, and were hosted by Warm Showers hosts. WarmShowers is a website where individuals list their homes as a place to stay for traveling cyclists (www.warmshowers.org). Many have asked us what the best part of our trip was. It is definitely the people we met. The people gave us faith in humanity. We learned that America is nothing like what you see on the news. It is a great place with warm, gracious, caring people.

We hope that someday you will get the opportunity to experience a bicycle tour like we did. The adventure is life-changing. Add it to your bucket list. We encourage you to get out of your comfort zone and give it a try. You will not regret it.

Happy Touring!





the *VICE* President's Message

By Joe Bernhardt, Vice President

As the new Vice President of OCW in charge of obtaining speakers for our monthly general meeting, I was extremely fortunate to have as our March presenters, Kevin and Ximena Ansel, who shared their three-month odyssey of biking self-supported across America. Their presentation contained all of the components we like to see and hear: true adventure, great pictures, insightful commentary, and perhaps most importantly leaving everyone in the room wishing they could make a similar journey.

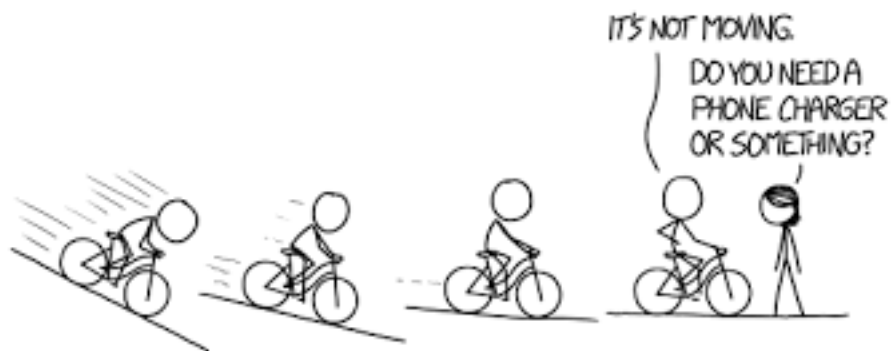
This is a callout from me to everyone reading this to help me source out other quality presentations. If either you or someone you know has a topic of interest to the club, I would love to speak with you (or them). In the next few months, we will hear from Paul Martin, Active Transportation Coordinator, for the Orange County Transportation Authority, Jim Brewer who will talk about one of our favorite rides, Glendora Mountain Road, and our own John Renowden who will share his pictures of Cuba, Mexico, and Eroica Britannia.

Another feature we will have at each meeting is "Show and Tell." This is just like when we were in first grade, we would bring a new toy to share with the class. If you have a new bike, helmet, wheel set, bike computer or some other cycle accessory that you love, we will have time at each meeting to share your new toy. Miguel Perea kicked off show and tell at our last meeting when he shared his new Lightspeed titanium frame - very cool! For this segment of the meeting, just bring and we will give you time to share.

I can be reached on my cell or by emailing me at joseph.bernhardt@live.com and I hope to hear from many of you soon.

Ride Safe,

Joe Bernhardt
949 439-8225





MONDAY LADIES EVENING RIDE

15 TO 20 MILES, MOSTLY FLAT, SOCIAL PACED, NO-DROP RIDE

6 PM MONDAYS THRU DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

COL. BARBER MARINE MEMORIAL PARK, CORNER OF BARRANCCA AND HARVARD, IRVINE

(MEET IN THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE PARKING LOT)

JOIN US FOR A LADIES RIDE, MONDAY EVENINGS THROUGH DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTING ON MONDAY, APRIL 3RD. ROUTE AND SPEED WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RIDERS. WE WILL BREAK INTO GROUPS AND ALTER THE DISTANCE AS NEEDED. THIS RIDE IS GREAT FOR BEGINNING RIDERS, RECOVERING SUNDAY HARD RIDERS, OR THOSE RETURNING TO RIDING WANTING A FUN, SOCIAL, NON-COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE. MEN ARE WELCOME, BUT REMEMBER THE WOMEN WILL SET THE PACE. ENCOURAGE YOUR NON-RIDING PARTNER TO MEET WITH OTHER WOMEN AND LEARN WHY RIDING IS REALLY FUN.

WE ROLL AT 6 PM.

RIDE LEADERS: THERESA NELSON, 949-355-7675 OR JULIE MOREY

CHICKSTHATRIDE@GMAIL.COM

CYCLECHIK21@GMAIL.COM

Welcome OCW Officers



Above Officers and their titles from left to right: Jim Walker, Treasurer - Irene Walker, Membership - John Renowden, President - Jeff Driscoll, Ride Captain - Michelle Vester, Editor - Jim Pugh, Stats - Joe Bernhardt, Vice President.



Training Topic: Preparation

By Randy Profeta, OCW Training Officer



Before any event, I need to make sure my gear is up to the task, especially my bike. So, let's discuss bike preparation.

Basic maintenance:

Don't wait until race week to have your bike serviced. That is a recipe for disaster. Instead, plan on having any maintenance work done at least 30 days before the event. Cables will settle in and shifting/braking performance may not be as crisp as the day it came out of the shop. If you have been neglecting your chain and it exceeds the maximum wear limit, you may also be looking at rings and a cassette. While most shops stock several cassettes, there is a huge list of chain rings to fit the vast array of cranksets, so if you need to replace chain rings, your shop may need extra time to get them ordered.

Make sure tires are in excellent condition before your big event. Many riders doing longer events have been opting for wider tires. You will be limited by your brake calipers and frame dimensions. Most bikes will accept a 700x25 tire. Disc brake bikes can usually go up to a 28. Why the wide tires? Comfort and traction. Research has also shown that a 700x25 on a wheel that is relatively aerodynamic gives up little by way of aerodynamics to even a 700x20. While tubulars give you great ride qualities, unless you have a support car with spare wheels and tires following you, save them for crits and closed-course races. Instead, consider going tubeless. Most tubeless tires have similar ride qualities as tubulars and can also be made virtually flat proof with a sealant. Yes they are heavier than a tubular setup because tubular wheels are so much lighter than clinchers.

Gearing:

Better to be on a compact crank (34-50 rings) with a 32t cassette cog than to struggle up that last hill at mile 80. I know I'll get opposing opinions and the macho among us will say that bailout gears are for the weak, but I'd rather have low gearing on a ride with lots of elevation gain than not have the needed gearing and struggle. Look at how your bike is set up. At a minimum, a compact crank with a 28t cassette. Ideally, you want a 11- or 12-32 out back. The conversion may not be simple. You may need a rear derailleur with a longer cage and maybe even a longer chain. Most bikes we sell have compact cranks, so your bike is probably so equipped. If not, you may need to replace the crankset and possibly the front derailleur. At this point, it starts to get costly. The real question is why the standard crank to start with? Shimano does offer their new Dura Ace crank in a configuration that allows for multiple chain ring setups. Check with your shop to see if a chain ring swap is possible with the crankset on your bike now.

Pedals:

Yes, I said pedals...and cleats too. Pedals need periodic maintenance. Many have bushings and/or sleeves that may need replacement or adjustment. Most pedal axles need lubrication occasionally and may even need to be repacked with grease. Have your cleats looked at as well. If a fitter set the position of cleats as part of a fit session, have the fitter or the fitter's bike shop replace the cleats, or at least have a bike shop take care of this for you.

Saddle comfort:

This is where a fitter comes into the picture. DO NOT, DO NOT, NEVER buy a saddle based



on a friend's recommendation or just because you see everyone else riding on them. No two people are the same. Get some assistance from a certified fitter and try several saddles before making a change.

Shift quality:

Goes away over time and is so gradual that most riders don't notice until the shifting gets vague, they miss gears, or the shifting starts to skip. Shimano now has some great options. Their PTFE (Teflon coated), Polymer, and new Optislick cables and SP41 housing eliminate most cable friction. Have your shop install a fresh set of these cables if yours are over a year old. If you really want to go high tech, consider SRAM e-Tap or Shimano Di2 electronic shifting. For endurance rides, electronic shifting minimizes the muscle strain caused by manipulating shifters for five or more hours. It doesn't sound like much, but my right hand would sometimes go numb from having to make thousands of shifts during a 24-hour solo race.

Bar tape or grips:

Have roached-out bar tape (or grips) replaced before your event. Your hands will thank you.

Bike Fit:

If you never had a bike fit, make some time to get one done. There are many protocols and as many fitters and fitting devices. The key is to find a fitter who knows what they are doing, not just a person with a computer that spits out "perfect" fit dimensions and adjusts a bike to what the computer says. Feedback from the rider is key to a good fit. Most fits take about 45 minutes to an hour. Think about a bike fit. It makes a lot of sense.

In all cases, sort out the bike starting now. Don't wait until the first week of May to get needed repairs taken care of. And, unless an emergency comes up, NEVER make changes to the bike setup within 30 days of the event.

Randy Profeta

Trail's End Cycling Center - OCW Sponsor

New Address!

17145 Von Karman Avenue
Suite 108
Irvine, CA 92614
(949) 863-1982
(949) 525-6070 c





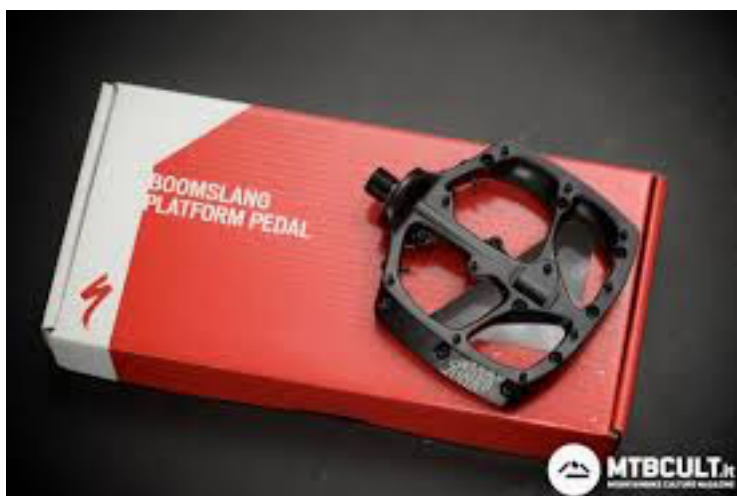
Goat Hill

By Alan Vester, Mountain Bike Dude

The World is Flat....

You heard it here first. Mountain bikers will always be divided on the topic of pedals. Some riders are adamant that you should always be clipped into your pedals just like a road bike. Some riders swear they would never be clipped in and ride with flat pedals and shoes that are flat on the bottom. I'm a mountain bike ride leader and I always recommend flat pedals for beginners, because it is often intimidating for a new rider to be locked into their pedals when they are off-road on dirt trails for the first time.

I realize the term "clipless" is often used as a description for cleated shoes and pedals. I think of pedals and shoes with cleats as being clipped or locked in for this article.



I have ridden with both styles for over 20 years and with the latest technology in pedal and shoe design, I prefer flat pedals and compatible shoes.

There are several reasons I like the flat pedal/shoe setup over being clipped/locked in.

Mountain Biking Geared Toward the 50+ Rider



Mountain biking often involves mud, rocks and technical terrain. You never have to stop and clean out your cleats when you are forced to walk in the mud and it sticks to the bottom of your shoes. Flat shoes are easier to walk in when you are forced to walk your bike due to technical sections of trail or extreme steepness.



Your feet are not locked into one position, with the only real movement being yaw, which is side to side pivoting. Flat pedals allow you to move your foot around, fore and aft, and reposition your foot as necessary. The ability to move your foot around, especially when climbing, is very important to me.

Proponents of being clipped in will argue it promotes more efficient pedal strokes. Personally I don't believe that to be the case. The studded mountain bike flat pedals and shoes currently produced allow for efficient pedaling without being locked in. I think it is more relaxed and more fun to ride a mountain bike knowing you are not locked into your pedals.

The flat pedals I really like are the Shimano Saint PD-MX80 Platform pedals which sell for \$60.00 (MSRP \$100.00) on Amazon, and the Specialized Boomslang Platform Pedals which retail for \$180.00. The Boomslang are more expensive due to lower profile and special design which uses micro bearings and bushings and are lighter than the Saint pedals. The Shimano pedals also are made using bearings.

Generally speaking, bearings are superior to bushings. The only advantage to bushings is the manufactures can produce a lighter, lower profile pedal. My personal experience with mountain bike pedals made using bushings is not very good. They tend to wear out and make noise after only a few months of use. I like pedals that are made from bearings instead of bushings.



Shoes. No brainer with this one. The company, "Five Ten" makes the best flat shoes for mountain biking with flat spiked pedals. Five Ten has a unique "Stealth SI" sole which stands up to spiked flat mountain bike pedals. If you ride with a normal mountain bike shoe with a cleat on the bottom, the pedals will destroy the sole of the shoe.

I wear the Five Ten Freerider shoes, which are the entry level flat pedal shoes and retail for about \$100.00. The company has a great web site: www.fiveten.com which showcases all their products.

Keep in mind, Five Ten makes both flat-soled

shoes designed to be used with flat pedals and conventional mountain bike shoes with the provisions to use a cleat.

The only disadvantage to Five Ten shoes is, they tend to be slightly heavier than high dollar cycling shoes. It's not a deal breaker to



me, but for the weight conscious, they may not like the extra weight.

I plan to both ride and race this year in flat pedals. I honestly don't know if I will ever go back to my cleated mountain bike shoes.

See ya on the trails



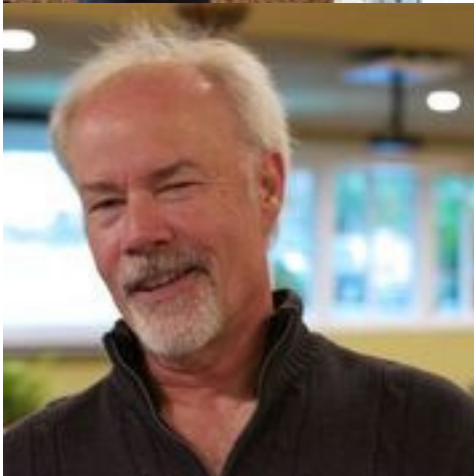
For more information on Goat Hill or to be added to the e-mail list just send me a note at: alanvester7@gmail.com

Awards Banquet Wrap-Up



Fun and inspiring evening for Orange County Wheelmen members at the Awards Banquet held in Orange at The Villa Banquet Facility off Katella. The evening started out with cocktails and appetizers and led into a wonderful dinner featuring chef cut to order roast, along with chicken, fish with wonderful side dishes. There was even a delicious vegetarian lasagna. After dinner coffee and desserts were waiting and then it was time for Rebecca Rusch to talk to us about her long and adventurous career with Red Bull and also as a part-time firefighter with the Ketchum, ID fire department. She presented some amazing slides and video of her past races and other adventures in mountain biking, white water rafting, rock climbing, trail running, and some of this in the early days while living out of her Ford Bronco. She also highlighted when she raced the Eco Challenge and Leadville 100. Not to mention climbing Mount Kilimanjaro with her bike! Rebecca pens a column called "Rusch Hour" for Dirt Rag Magazine and she has written a book about her adventures called "Rusch to Glory."





My Great Adventure.....

By Jacob Hosey

The day started with a Triathlon, it was a mid-distance triathlon, which just wasn't enough challenge for that day. The race was in the foothills, and all morning long the mountain above was daunting me, something inside kept begging me to go cycle up that mountain. After the race was over, I regrouped; I had to get my mind right for this steep 50-mile-roundtrip mountain climb ahead me. I grabbed my Condor, which is my Endurance Elite pack, it provides the perfect amount of space for me to stow my day's worth of adventure into.

The morning was escaping from me, so I quickly stuffed my pack with my micro down jacket, a few bars and GU's, some cash, a tool and few odds and ends. So the ride begins with a steady cadence, mind clear, and still elated from my race earlier in the morning. Starting out I needed to use MapQuest, and luckily my Condor has a wearable speaker system that connects to my cell so I can conveniently get

directions hands-free. Now secured in my route to the top the worries are minimal.

The first ten miles consisted of small towns that have not changed since the 1960's, wide quiet streets that are shadowed with big beautiful Oak trees, with the smell of early morning dew.

People waved from their front porches, in yards I see family picnics and kids playing. I felt a very nostalgic emotion overwhelm me at that moment, and then I was abruptly

interrupted from MapQuest telling me to hang a left that led me directly to the belly of the beast. This climb was now! Looking up to this peak I couldn't help but notice that it was surrounded by a dark luminous rain cloud. I had an option to turn back, to avoid the uncertain conditions, but at this point what would be the fun in that, I had everything I needed.

Usually I am a very less-is-more kind of cyclist but today I was glad to have taken my Condor. Cycling up this mountain was just another challenge that presented itself that day and the higher up the mountain

I went the more unexpected challenges were presented. After the first hour of climb-



ing through this hot dry high desert landscape I had tapped out both of my water bottles, but luckily the Condor hosted a 2-liter water bladder which was plenty to finish the ride. However, as I continued to cycle up this mountain the clouds started to surround me, the temperature quickly drops, and I begin to feel it sprinkling. Most people I think would have turned around, but I am not like most people, I thoroughly enjoy the added challenges, so with that being said, I charged on. Wearing nothing but cycling shorts and jersey the weather was not ideal at this point for what I had on. But I considered I have made it this far, so there is no need to wimp out now. It is now raining and sleeting and I remembered that I had stuffed my micro down jacket in my pack, so I decided now would be a good time to stop.

I worried that my jacket would be drenched because I was unsure of the Condor's water-resistant abilities, but when I pulled my jacket out I was stoked to find it dry from the elements. With this very cold quick stop now over my upper body is now warmer and I know that I have 5 more miles of arduous climbing to go. Now I know from this point there will be a lodge with a fireplace and something hot to drink at the top to thaw me out, so I begin with urgency to finish to the top. Roughly an hour later of cycling up this monster of a climb I had finally made it to the top. The sleet had piled up on parked cars like a snow day, I could see my breath in the cold air, and I was drenched from head to toe.

While sitting by the fireplace warming up and drying out, I was reflecting on how thankful I was for deciding on bringing the Condor. Before starting the adventure I didn't think I would need so much equipment, however having the Condor made it an easy decision to pack for any surprise. After thawing out it was now time to head back down the mountain, with it still sleeting and raining I knew becoming wet was just part of the adventure.

The downhill ride was a very fast, wet, and cold ride that was going smoothly up until I had a flat tire. Still cold and sleeting I had to

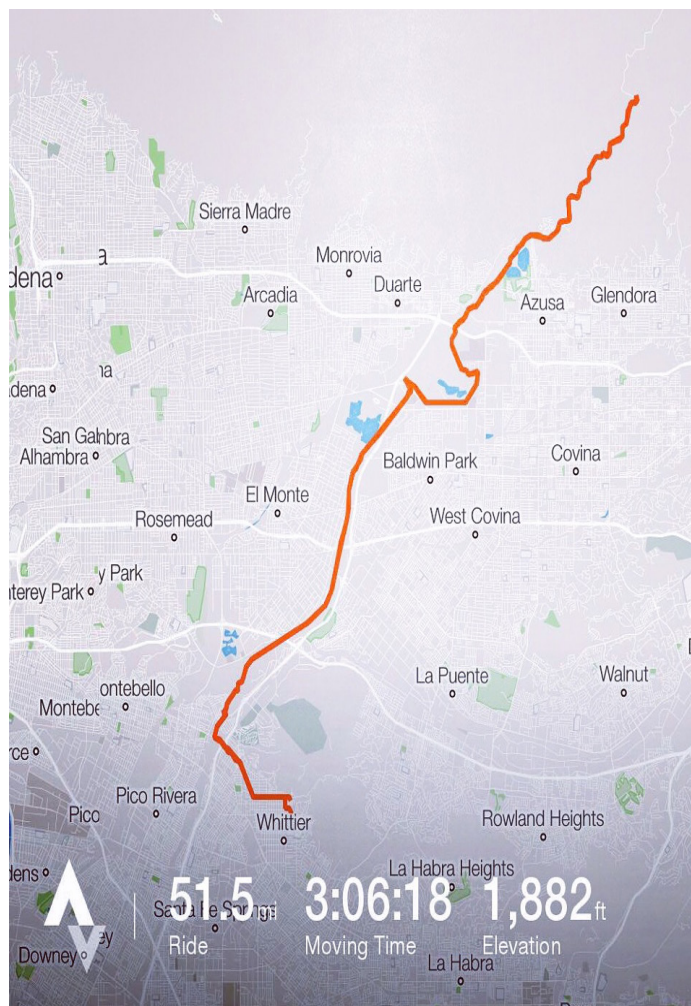
stop again and deal with the unexpected nature of cycling. Changing a tube in the cold rain is never fun, but I am glad I had decided to pack an extra tube and Co2 in the Condor that day.

Eventually making my way back off the mountain I soon came back below the rain clouds and back into the foothills where the weather became warm and sunny once again. I was so pleased to feel the dry warm air and to be back on flat roads so I turned on my wearable speakers, and blasted my music all the way back to where the day began. What a great adventure.

Article submitted by James Lee

If you would like to find out more of the Condor that Jacob used on his ride:

www.enduranceelite.com
sales@enduranceelite.com





By Jay Doyle

CYCLOCROSS RACE

The morning was cool-ish. Dampness held in the air. The mood seemed festive which belied an underlying tenseness. Faces were smiling but weren't truthful. It was race day.

Nervousness abounds. What's the course like? Do I have all my equipment? Gloves, dammit, where are my gloves? Oh, right next to the extra two pairs I brought. Maybe I should have checked that tire. Do I have my bib number? How many times do I climb. Where's registration. Should have gotten here earlier, the line is long. Is that dude in the yellow and white jersey racing? Good, dang, I really want to beat that guy!

And so it goes on Race Day for cyclocross in southern California in autumn. Cyclocross has its origin in Belgium. In autumn, when the cold nasty weather sets in, a ride on a road bike is an uncomfortable endeavor. So, the Belgians thought it would be a great idea to take a road bike, alter it a little and ride through mud, grass, dirt, concrete, asphalt, snow or anything else which happened to be under their tires. If you wanted to come up with the opposite climate to race cyclocross, you could pick SoCal in September and October. Mud is less a problem than dust. Heat more a problem than cold. Rain? Most likely not. And if it

is raining, the race may be cancelled! Yikes, don't tell that to the Europeans! Climate aside and talent for that matter, I am sure the racers experience the same thoughts on either continent.

It has been an interesting time for me. For three seasons, I have attempted to compete at cyclocross. Starting with a physically underutilized 60-year-old body, no bike handling skills and just 5 months of riding, I had my first race at Eldorado Park in Long Beach. I had no idea how difficult cyclocross racing is. I mean, I have been riding the road all of 40 to 50 miles a week. Hills? Nah, I don't do hills. But I have trained 5 whole times here at Eldorado Park. How hard can it be? I soon realized just to finish was my primary goal this early in my 'career'. I was not DFL but close.

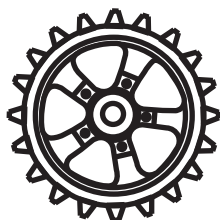
The strange thing of cyclocross racing is, it is like an abusive girlfriend who you keep going back to. You know there will be a fleeting moment where you'll feel really great but in the end she makes you feel foolish and you wonder why you are there. The guys and gals who line up to be put in the pain locker for 40 minutes do so under their own volition. There is no mandated court order to compete. This is elective surgery. No, you get your butt up

early on a weekend, lather on the various creams, ointments and screens and the 33-second tape loop starts playing; gloves, helmet, course, yellow and white jersey guy, hill climbs, stairs...

My nervousness about racing has subsided a bit. It is as much excitement now. It is OK for me to admit to myself I will probably not win in my class. I know now to finish is good and to be as far away from DFL as I can, is a reasonable goal. My overall fitness has improved immensely. And in training for cycling, I went from never climbing to once or twice a week of an hour of climbing. Other things like better bike handling skills and no duh, if you can go faster, go faster during the race, have helped shave a few minutes from my times. When I am well off the back I can slip into an easy little cadence. Pedal harder! Net-net, I do enjoy cyclocross racing. The camaraderie with teammates, the competition, the typically nice settings and yes, even the satisfaction of being physically spent after a two-race day is something which keeps me coming back.

Training to the point where I can be a little more competitive in my class at cyclocross racing has great physical benefits. And on the road, I will be attempting 7 centuries this year. (1-1, so far) Breathless Agony is one. I attempted 6 in 2016 of which I completed 4. (O-1 on BA)

Whether cruising my neighborhood on my Schwinn Black Phantom cruiser or doing 28 on PCH on my road bike or negotiating a ridiculous grade on a descent in a cross race, I thoroughly enjoy it. I love cycling. I never thought it would take over my life as it has. And I am extremely grateful that it has.





Weekend on Anacapa Island - Channel Islands National Park

In March, Ken Fry and Barb Tomita put together a kayak and camping trip to Anacapa Island which is part of the Channel Islands National Park. Anacapa consists of three small islands, East Anacapa, Middle Anacapa and West Anacapa and visitors are allowed only on East Anacapa. On Friday morning, Ken and his kayaking friends Gennifer, John, Louai and George paddled to Anacapa from Oxnard. Barb and I took the Island Packers boat which fortunately has an engine from Oxnard to the island. The kayakers left two and half hours ahead of us and we all arrived at the cove with the dock around the same time. Unfortunately while hauling the kayaks up to the dock with the davit, John's loaded kayak fell back into the water and cracked. John took the afternoon boat back and didn't stay the weekend. Our group took up four of the seven campsites available on the island. We watched a gorgeous sunset on Friday evening from Inspiration Point. On Saturday, Gennifer, George and Louai went kayaking around the island while Barb and I did laps hiking around the small island. Ken didn't go kayaking and was supposed to hike laps with us, but he seemed too busy socializing with the other campers and later was taking a nap. There were only about a billion western seagulls on the island and they don't sleep at night. Everywhere you looked, the landscape was covered with gulls. They don't like each other and fight a lot. One seagull insisted on perching on top of Ken and Barb's tent. Other birds seen on the island although in much smaller numbers were pelicans, cormorants and sparrows. The coreopsis were in full bloom with beautiful yellow flowers. The island has a visitor center and an operating lighthouse with a foghorn blaring every ten seconds or so. On the way back, we saw grey whales and dolphins. Seagulls and pelicans were drafting the boat too. Beautiful island and we had mostly great weather. ☺ — Doris



TASMANIA

BY PUSH-BIKE

Story by Lee Painter

Push-bike is the Australian phrase for bicycle, as we learned when locals repeatedly asked "You're riding your push-bike where???"

A group of thirteen riders, including OCW members Gloria Nafel and Cathy and Lee Painter, rode the Giro Tasmania route. This is a tour that circles the Australian state of Tasmania. Bicycle Network Tasmania has an online guide to the route:

http://www.biketas.org.au/giro_tasmania. We did the route in 16 riding days, plus 3 rest days. We rode 580 miles with 35,000 feet of elevation gain, plus 90 miles driving the luggage van. We also hiked 27 miles during the trip. We chose to ride the route counter-clockwise hoping the prevailing westerlies would be at our back during the second half, and did the ride in February (late summer in Australia), which is supposed to have the least rain. We were lucky with the weather - one day with

bad crosswinds, one rainy day, but mostly cool and pleasant. Locals told us we were very lucky to have no rain in the rain forest on the second half of the trip.

There were many approaches to avoiding the fees airlines charge for bicycles (on the order of \$200 each way). Most riders brought bikes with S&S couplers which make it possible to separate the frame into two pieces, allowing it to fit into a case the size of a suitcase. Four riders rode bikes designed to be disassembled and packed away - either the full-sized Ritchey Break-Away, or the small-wheel Bike Friday. One rider rented a bike. We put our full-sized touring bikes in carrying bags, which met Qantas limits to travel as luggage. Our bikes lost a little paint on the trip, but we don't know if that was on the plane or when they were thrown in the back of the luggage van.

We stayed in a wide variety of accommodations, including campgrounds, backpacker rooms, cabins, lodges, motels, worker housing in a former company town, and a bunkhouse in a former penitentiary. Most every place had a community kitchen, with a kettle, a burner or two, and a barbie. The barbie isn't what we think of as a barbecue, it's a flat stainless steel cooking surface, what a short-order cook would call a flat top.

In Australia, you ride on the left side of the road. One rider printed a reminder she placed in her map holder saying "<- LEFT" - not a bad idea, since most of us briefly reverted to riding on the right a few times. When riding along the road, staying on the left was easy enough, but making turns meant you had to think through which lane you wanted to end up in. Perhaps the hardest adjustment was remembering your mirror was on the right.

feet high. Happily, all four bridges had a dedicated bicycle lane.

Our tour started on the outskirts of Hobart, the largest city in Tasmania (population 220,000). We headed over rolling hills to the east coast, then turned north. The scenery reminded me of the California central coast, except with eucalyptus trees instead of oaks. Plus the fact that most of the towns were very small, less than 1,000 residents. How small were the towns? In Swansea, we tried to exchange US dollars for Australian dollars, only to find the bank was closed on Tuesday. At the grocery next door, we mentioned that we'd have to go to the



Traffic was light by our standards, but at least a couple of times a day a logging truck or caravan (travel trailer) would come too close.

You could do the entire tour on pavement, but we chose to ride dirt roads two times. The first was to avoid traffic as we left the Hobart area, the second to avoid about a thousand feet of elevation gain going into Tarraleah. The dirt roads were in very good condition, easy to ride on a road bike. The route included crossing four bridges. The largest, the Tasman bridge, is a mile long and 200

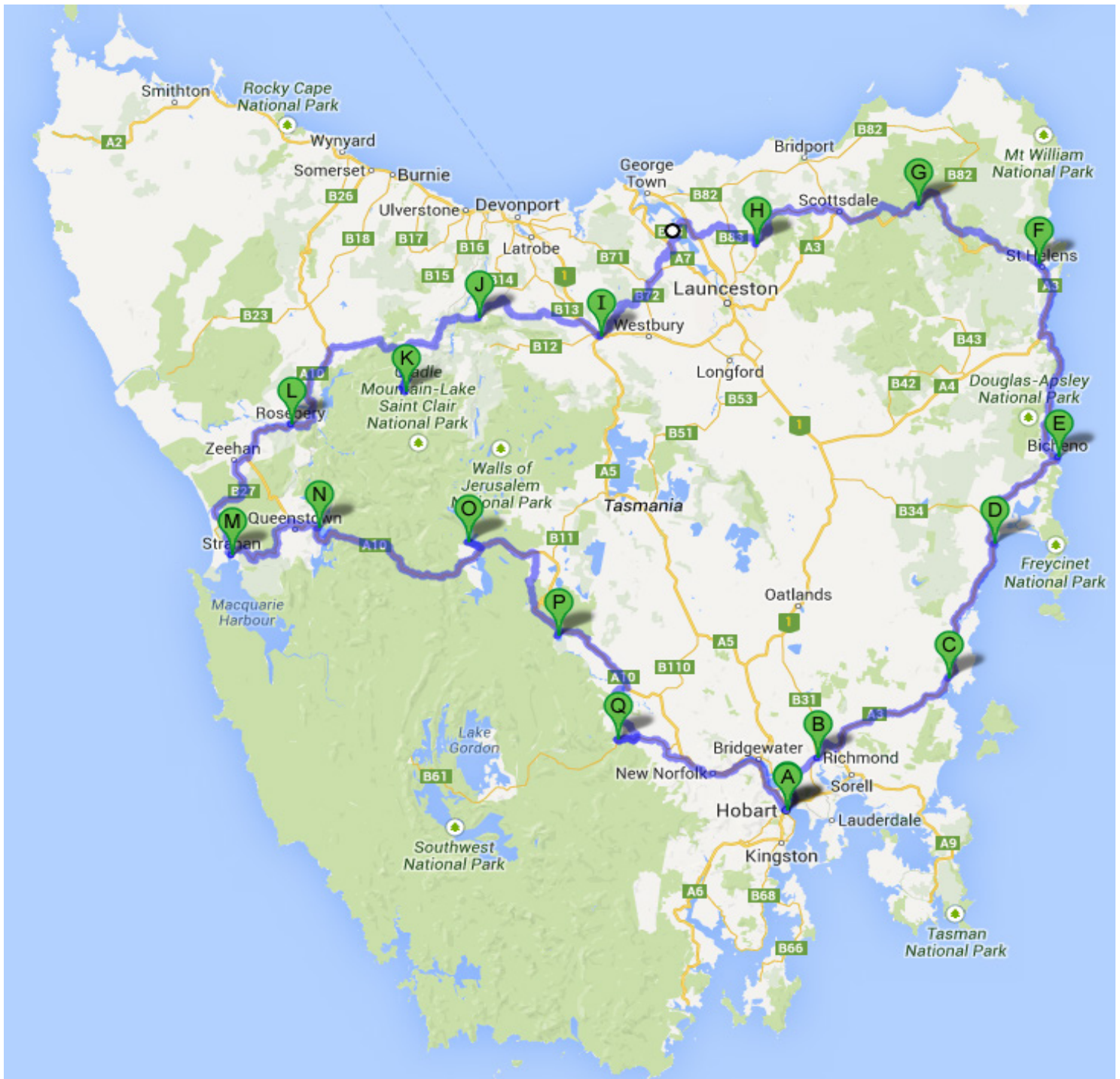
bank in Bicheno on Wednesday. They told us the bank in Bicheno was closed on Wednesday, the same staff alternates between the banks. Fortunately almost everywhere took credit cards, so we could wait till we got to Saint Helens.

After reaching the east coast, we took an hour-long ferry ride to Maria Island National Park. Since there are no cars on the island, it was a great place to ride and hike the dirt roads. Beautiful beaches, rivers, cliffs, forests. Best of all, at dusk all the wildlife came out - dozens of

kangaroos, wallabies (like a kangaroo but smaller) and wombats (short and round, sort of like a miniature bear, with its nose always down eating grass). The animals didn't seem bothered by all the humans taking pictures.

After a ferry back to the main island we spent the next three days continuing up the east coast. We then turned west and into the mountains and rainforest. A rainforest in Tasmania includes conifers, ferns, and of course, eucalyptus.

After a few days heading west we reached Cradle Mountain National Park. On the road into the park, we saw our first echidna, a football-sized marsupial with quills like a porcupine. The echidna is a mammal that lays eggs, I'm always amused when nature messes up biologists' desire to neatly categorize things. Beautiful waterfalls and lakes, but the namesake mountain was hiding behind the mist. Would have loved to spend another couple of days hiking there.



We continued west, reaching the west coast at Strahan. On one of our rest days we walked through the old town center, enjoying the typical stone block buildings with corrugated metal roofs.

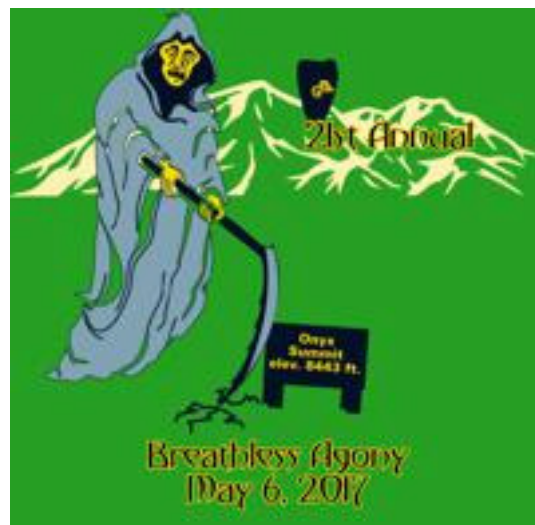
Since the northeast corner of Tasmania is a long out and back from our route, and the southwest quadrant of Tasmania is almost completely undeveloped, after Strahan, the only town we visited on the west coast, the route headed east again. A low point of the trip was the mining town of Queenstown; didn't like seeing a river that runs orange. Much nicer was Mount Field National Park, where we used a rest day to hike to the alpine tarns. Amusing that the alpine area contains another variety of eucalyptus, the snow gum. Then a final day's ride back to Hobart. Happily we were able to ride through most of Hobart on the Hobart Intercity Bikeway. Then three hours disassembling and packing bikes, and setting an early alarm for our flight home.



Would we do anything differently next time? Hard to say, we regret not having more time to explore the national parks, but we were very happy to get home.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Breathless Agony
Saturday, May 6, 2017

Amtrak  Century

Saturday, September 9, 2017



Hot Cross Buns

Ingredients

1/2 cup water
 1/2 cup whole milk
 1/2 cup sugar
 4 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast (2 (1/4 ounce) packages)
 1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted, plus as needed
 1 large egg yolk
 1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
 3 cups all-purpose flour (13 ounces)
 3/4 teaspoon fine salt
 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/2 cup currants, plumped in the microwave and cooled
 1 egg beaten, for brushing

For the icing/glaze:

2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
 2 tablespoons milk
 1/4 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract



Preparation

Combine the water and milk in a medium saucepan and warm over low heat until about 100 degrees F (but no more than 110 degrees). Remove from heat and sprinkle the yeast and a pinch of sugar and flour over the surface of the liquid. Set aside without stirring, until foamy and rising up the sides of the pan, about 30 minutes.

Whisk the butter, egg yolk and vanilla into the yeast mixture.

Whisk the flour, the remaining sugar, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and stir in the yeast mixture with a wooden spoon to make a thick, shaggy, and slightly sticky dough. Stir in currants. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until soft and elastic, about 8 minutes. Shape into a ball.

Brush the inside of a large bowl with butter. Put dough in bowl, turning to coat lightly with butter. Cover with plastic wrap. Let rise at room temperature until doubled in size, about 1 hour 30 minutes. (If you have a marker, trace a circle the size of the dough on the plastic, and note the time to help you keep track.)

To form the rolls: Butter a 9 by 14-inch baking pan. Turn the dough out of the bowl and pat into a rectangle about 16 by 8 inches. Divide the dough into 12 equal portions, about 2 ounces each, with a pizza wheel or bench scraper. (If you don't have a scale, divide the dough in half lengthwise, then in half crosswise. Cut each of those four sections into 3 equal-sized rolls.)

Tuck the edges of the dough under to make round rolls and place them seam-side down in the prepared pan, leaving a little space in between each

Please see page 28

Hot Cross Buns Cont.

roll. Cover the pan with buttered plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place until the rolls rise almost to the rim of the pan and have more than doubled in size, about 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 375 degrees F.

Remove the plastic wrap and brush the tops of the buns with beaten egg. Bake rolls until golden brown and puffy, and an instant read thermometer inserted into the center of the rolls registers 190 degrees F, about 25 minutes.

For the glaze: Stir together confectioners' sugar, milk, lemon zest and vanilla until smooth. Transfer icing to a zip bag or pastry bag, and make a small cut in the corner of the bag. Ice buns in a thick cross shape over the top of the warm buns.



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THIS RiDE IS FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LiKE TO HAVE A BiT OF PERSONALIZED TRAINING, LiKE LEARNING TO BE A BiT MORE COMFORTABLE RiDING ON THE ROAD. OUR LCIS COVER MANY TOPICS, AND YOU CAN ASK ALL THE QUESTIONS YOU WANT.

THE SATURDAY RiDE LiKE A PRO IS A SLOW “NO DROP” RiDE TO SHARPEN YOUR SKILLS. SO COME ON OUT, LEARN TO RiDE SAFER AND HAVE SOME FUN!

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: WWW.OCWHEELMEN.ORG/PAGE/SHOW/419732-RiDE-LiKE-A-PRO-RiDES



WORDS BY ALAN VESTER

Well, on Thursday, March 23, 2017 I had my second real life Mountain Lion encounter. I was riding in Chino Hills State Park on Telegraph Rd heading toward 4 corners. Between Little Canyon trail and Sycamore Trail while scouting the path with my eyes I spotted an adult Mountain Lion walking towards me.

What to do, what to do? I was fortunate enough to spot the cat 50 yards ahead which gave me time to slowly turn around and cautiously ride away from the Mountain Lion. Seven years ago I had another Mountain Lion encounter while riding in the San Jacinto Mountains when the animal crossed right in front of my bike while hunting prey. Fortunately, the lion was chasing birds which were tastier looking than I must have appeared in full mountain bike attire.

There are some do's and don'ts when encountering a Mountain Lion:

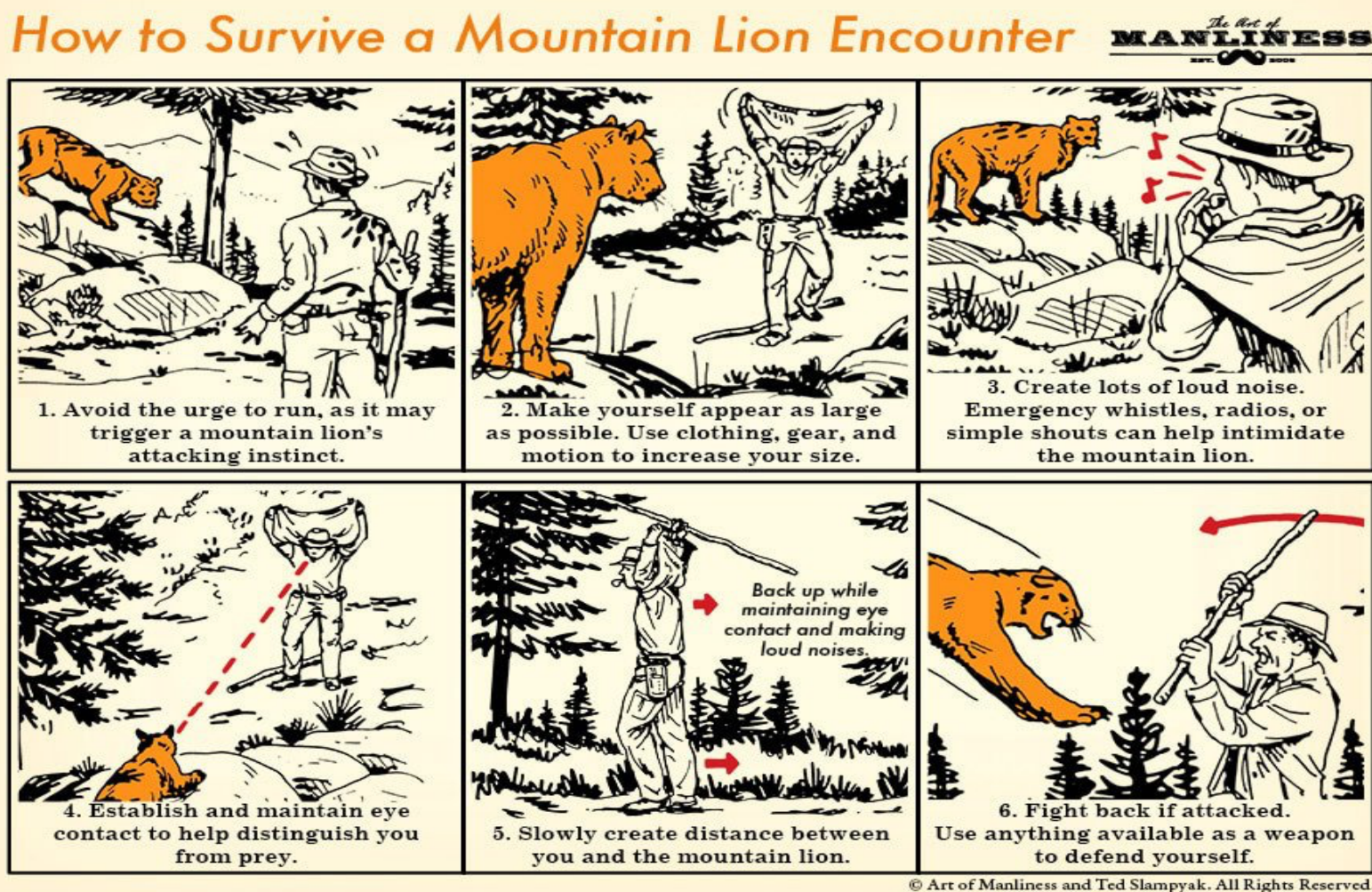
Do not play dead, or you will probably end up that way.

Do not try to outrun a mountain lion, because you will lose that foot race.

Do stay calm and assess the situation.

If you have a mechanical and you are alone, do not crouch down to fix it unless you are in an open area away from bushes, rocks and trees where mountain lions can hide, stalk and attack.

I found this graphic online, although a bit dated, it's still effective:



Mountain biking is a great activity that gets us outdoors and into the wilderness. You always have to be aware of your surroundings and be prepared for animal encounters. So my three basic rules are:

- 1) *Stay Calm*
- 2) *Don't panic*
- 3) *Don't do anything stupid.*

Alan Vester, Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude

Breathless AGONY

The search is on for the Breathless Agony Team. I need to identify many more Team members to assist at all Rest Stops. If you want to help to make this a successful event for Orange County Wheelmen, please contact myself at my email mike.lee@ocwheelmen.org.

If you missed last month's message from me regarding this Club change I have repeated it below:

Some of you already are aware of the major change in the club, but I will enlighten you so my request and information brings you up to date. We are in the process of acquiring the ride Breathless Agony from Robert and Jill Kahler. We will be the main contact in managing the event for 2017 and forward. As such I have retained the position of managing this ride along with recruitment of volunteers that I have been doing for the past 5 years with OCW. We are in the process of adding the Breathless Agony event to the website. Registration for the event opened on January 9 @ 8:00 pm. We already have over 150 riders registered and by the time you read this we will be hovering close to 200. So, my request is to merge the previous volunteers from Kahler Cycling Academy with the OCW team to bring a new level to the ride. What happened to "Ride Around the Bear?" The OCW board with my advice decided to end the 32 years of producing the event. The traffic on highway 330 with my firsthand knowledge of living on the hill and experiencing the increase in traffic starting on Thursday of mountain visitors brings a level of danger that could become a liability to our riders.

Breathless Agony brings a new ride to OCW and with our many years of staging Amtrak, The Bear, and the Metric Century rides we are well poised to bring success to Breathless Agony. We have a great leadership team from the OCW Board of Directors.

If you want to help in any capacity or continue in your previous efforts please contact me at mike.lee@ocwheelmen.org

Mike Lee, OCW Ride Director and Webmaster
949.859.3108

The Road Bike Disk Brake Controversy

By Joe Bernhardt, VP

My Take

World-class sprinter, Marcel Kittel, states that he has decided to no longer ride a road bike that uses disc brakes. He believes the disc rotor is too dangerous and in a crash can cause serious harm such as cutting an artery, shoe, thumb... you get the idea. He came to this decision after crashing in the Abu Dhabi Tour resulting in a cut on his foot which he blames on the spinning rotor.

Other professional riders also claim to have received cuts from sharp rotors, and the peloton, never quick to embrace new technology, has helped to put a cloud over the conversion from conventional rim brakes to disc.

This made me think about my own new bike, a 2017 Specialized Roubaix Expert with Di2, head shock, and DISC BRAKES. Oh oh, had I made a mistake in buying this bike? In the event of a crash, am I at huge risk of severing a limb like a meat cleaver?

I thought about this and realized that I have been riding for years with disc brakes on my mountain bikes, have crashed far too many times to count, and have yet to receive even a scratch from my large, oversized rotors. In fact, disc brakes are the accepted norm for mountain bikes where the advantages of superior braking in all conditions far outweigh the drawbacks of a slightly heavier weight penalty.

On the road I am far more likely to be injured by hitting the pavement, curb, handlebar, having another rider land on me, etc...

My old rim brakes were great: they never failed me, rarely exhibited brake fade, and were very easy to service. On the other hand, they did cause my rims to heat up on long descents increasing tire pressure at a time I didn't want that to happen, over time wore out the rim side walls, and I had to occasionally replace brake cables. My Swiss Stop brake pads were a major upgrade to the OEM pads and I was overall completely happy with my brakes.

I am not Marcel Kittel, I do not ride in the professional peloton, I do not regularly crash my road bike. I like my new Shimano Ultegra Disc Brakes and believe they are safe and a definite upgrade from my old rim brakes. On an existing bike would I replace a good rim brake and go with discs? No, there is not that big of a difference in performance except in wet conditions where the disc is clearly superior. But if choosing between a new bike with or without disc brakes, I will choose disc.

That's my take. Please feel free to share your opinion in Chain Reaction as our club loves diversity and we all need to be open to different views.

WOULD YOU CYCLE TO THE SUN?



WORDS BY DAVE SLAGLE

Cycle to the Sun is an annual bicycle race on the island of Maui, Hawaii. The course is a 36-mile climb from Paia town to the summit of Haleakala Crater, (sea level, to ten thousand feet elevation). It is billed as a race up “the longest, steepest, paved road on earth” and if it sounds like a fun ride to take while vacationing on Maui, it is. But it turns out that not too many people want to ride a bicycle up a steep volcano, even a dormant one. Most of the guided bicycle tours on Haleakala are coasting down, not pedaling up, the road.

As a sport, road cycling offers many challenges, hammering on flats, pace lining, traffic, long stop lights, traffic on PCH, riding against the wind, etc. For me, climbing is always the biggest challenge. But I like challenges, so of course I wanted to enter a race up “the steepest paved road on earth.” A little more than a year ago, February, 2016, Anthony “TNT” Tintelnot, a road cycling friend and MTB pro, agreed to enter the Cycle to the Sun road race with me. We came up with a 16-week training plan that included 4+hour climbing rides every weekend, bi-weekly indoor training,

yoga, and the commitment to enter and finish the race. That last part, the commitment, the will to do it, the desire to enter and finish the race was the most important factor.

Life happened, and we were not able to exactly follow our plan, but we each adapted and put in the training effort. A week prior to Cycle to the Sun, TNT crashed while racing the Pro Enduro at Snow Summit Mountain Bike series. His hip was badly bruised and very sore. He could barely walk, so pedaling a bike up a volcano was out of the question. Anyone else would have dropped out of Cycle to the Sun after that, but not TNT. He made it to Maui and I was happy to see him at the starting line, and even happier to take our picture after crossing the finish line. The race was fun, but grueling. There were many times riding the switchbacks that I wanted to stop pedaling. But I pushed myself and when I finally crossed the finish line, I felt like I had won the whole race. My actual time was just over 4 hours.

The overall winner's time was two hours, fifty eight minutes, (the official race record is two hours, thirty eight minutes). And even with an injury, TNT still managed to beat my time by more than 20 minutes.

I finished the race. Goal = **Accomplished!**

Even with preparation, discipline, and expectations we faced surprises, set-backs, and pain. But perseverance paid off!

During the week leading up to the event, I met a professional cyclist who resides on Maui and rides up Haleakala on a regular basis. He had offered me some race-day advice which I mostly followed:

Plan for the race in three stages:



From the Starting Line through the entrance of Haleakala National Park.

Use your self-discipline to ride the first 14 miles at a moderate pace and don't "blow up" by going as fast as you can to lead out the pack during this relatively easier section of the race course.



The Switchbacks.

Legs and lungs. This section requires more power, stay seated, push more watts, practice rhythmic breathing.



The Final Ascent.

"Glucose, glucose, glucose! And give it EVERYTHING you've got!"

His advice for the final climb was to consume a few gel packets after the final feed zone at 9,000 feet. He said that it would help prevent elevation sickness and fuel the final effort. He laughed before offering his final words of advice; "After you pass the visitor center parking lot, get out of the saddle and grind it out until you cross the finish line at the summit peak. That last kicker is 18% grade, 300 vertical feet of pure pain." I'm glad that I followed his advice. He was correct, that last kicker was the hardest section of the entire race.

Like most adventures, riding up Haleakala can serve as a metaphor for any accomplishment in life. The different stages of adventure become the "Hero's Journey"

- It will be a challenge.

- There will be changes to your plan.
- Mentors will arrive at just the right time.
- Perseverance will pay off.

Would YOU Cycle to the Sun?

While the official race is only held once a year, you can ride the course anytime.
For more information please follow the links below:

<http://www.gocyclingmaui.com>

<http://cycletotheshun.com>

<http://mythologyteacher.com/documents/TheHeroJourney.pdf>



SURVIVING ROAD

RAGE

By Joe Bernhardt, VP

I try and not show it, but I have a temper that has been out of control in the past. Once the rage has passed, I have not always felt good about my behavior, and wished I had reacted differently. As a retired banker (boo,) I learned to maintain my composure, stay professional, don't lose my cool, don't go down to the level of the person confronting me, and calm the situation. I was highly successful in resolving issues by not reacting to high emotions. Inside I may have wanted to take some of my clients into the back alley and show them who was right. But I could not do that and in the end felt good that I was able to calm the situation, reduce tension, and more often than not resolve the issue with the client. Not everybody left happy, but there was nothing in my behavior that would add fuel to the fire.

How does that apply to riding a bike on streets where people see us as a moving barrier? Let's face it, most drivers at best only tolerate us. And we all see increasing stress in our daily lives resulting in seemingly little things causing normally good people to blow their cool and react in an uncivilized way.

There is not much we can do when riding on an 18-pound carbon bike and a driver gets too close to us, cuts us off, makes an obscene gesture or does something to put us at risk. Too often on club rides I have seen stupid drivers put us at risk resulting in club members retaliating by confronting the driver.

Shouting, cussing, standing in front of the car at a stop light to express anger only puts the rider and other members at risk. We don't know how the driver will respond. At best the person will sit quietly and not respond. But in worse-case scenarios, they are driving a 3000-pound battering ram surrounded in a steel cage impervious to our indignation. And they may be packing a side arm. No good will come out of this scenario.

A better solution is for us to recognize that we have had a close call, and if compelled to say something to the driver, keep it calm, point out the risk to the driver, and ask that in the future to give us more space for the safety of everyone involved. In this second scenario, the driver MAY listen and decide to modify their future driving behavior. In the first scenario, they will only drive away mad and more convinced that bikes should not be allowed on the road.

On club rides, we need to keep our cool at all times. It is the responsibility of all club members to respect traffic laws and show the public that bikes are deserving of a place on the road. Let's not do anything that would reflect negatively on OCW.

Please let me know what you think by responding to Michelle Vester at Chain Reaction



A Whale of a Time in BAJA CALIFORNIA

BY JOHN RENOWDEN

It was the end of January and the storms were raging across California. Randy had this crazy plan that we should ride down through Baja to see the whales of Guerrero Negro. A collection of old mountain bikes was assembled in Randy's garage for the purpose. Bikes suitable for donation so we didn't have to bring them back. Plan A was to take it in turns to sag with the van while three others rode the bikes. We delayed our departure until the worst of the storms had passed. As we set off from Orange County things were looking good but once we got through the border into Mexico things were starting to look a bit sketchy. The plan was that we would start riding from Ensenada but the weather took a turn for the worse so plan B was to drive to Ojos Negros and find a hotel. We didn't actually know whether there was a hotel in Ojos Negros. Plan B was definitely the right decision as driving narrow and bendy Route 3 into the hills in the dark and the rain was scary enough but Miguel's excellent driving brought us safely to our destination; something that looked like it might be a hotel. As Miguel went to investigate a lady came up holding a wheel and asking if it belonged to us. A front wheel had been knocked off one of the bikes as the van grounded in one of the many potholes, and luckily just before we stopped. To call the hotel basic would be an overstatement but it was definitely better than plan C, because there was no plan C, unless you call pitching a tent somewhere in the dark, cold, and wet a plan?

The next morning came up sunny and freezing cold but luckily there was a decent place to get breakfast before setting off on the bikes for Calle Pena Blanca at 2,500 ft. Here we were spoiled for choice, as there were two hotels to choose from, and luxury, they had heaters for the rooms. Another sunny but cold day saw us heading off to the junction of Route 5, on our way to San Felipe. But first we had to

clear the ice off the bike saddles and then we encountered a ferocious headwind; the only way to make progress was to draft the van for mile after mile. I was finding this unusually hard but then discovered a broken spoke and practically no air in my fat tires.

When we got to Route 5, heading south along the shore of the Sea of Cortez, everything changed, the headwind turned into a fantastic tailwind. Things got even better, it was warmer now that we were out of the mountains, and we found a good hotel and a decent restaurant that even had Mexican craft beer. We also found a great bike shop to rebuild a damaged wheel. More sun the next day and the tailwind was howling. The great thing was being able to ride a mountain bike at 25 mph without hardly pedaling, I'd have gone even faster if my bike didn't have such a tidily little chainring. The downside was the drifting sand, which filled your ears, got in your eyes and even your teeth; probably because we were grinning so much.

Civilization mostly stops south of San Felipe. There are lots of half-built, half-abandoned resorts, towns with dirt roads and a gas station with gas but no power to pump it. Then Route 5 becomes a rough dirt road full of ruts and potholes. Here we took to the van to try to make it to some sort of town with some sort of hotel before nightfall. It was already dark when Mauricio's Restaurant hove into view, a truck stop with half-decent food and rooms with a cold shower, where you sleep in your sleeping bag on top of the bedding. We now needed to make more progress, so we donated two of the bikes to Mauricio's cooks. This, after having to rebuild another wheel, damaged by grounding out on the dirt road and fixing a slow puncture that proved very hard to find.

Guerrero Negro is a decent town with employment provided by the world's biggest salt works. Our hotel was good and the restaurant excellent but the main attraction is the birthplace of the grey whales, a World Heritage Site. Apparently the high salinity of the lagoon provides extra buoyancy for the whales to give birth to their one-ton calves. They then nurse them before heading out for the long haul to Alaska. It's said there can be 1,000 whales in this small area. The curious youngsters are attracted to the boats, even allowing you to pet them. Of course, where baby goes mom goes too but somehow these monsters manage to avoid tipping up the small boats, at least not ours, thankfully.

The last two bikes were given away. A Mexican lad is walking down the street and this American guy, called Stuart, gives him a bike. He then pedals off home, looking somewhat puzzled. Makes you wonder what his mother said when he arrived with a bike? "An American gave you a bike, what just like that? A likely story! Where did you get it? Take it back! Then it's no dinner for you and off to bed. Wait till your father gets home."

We head north on Route 1, which is mostly a good scenic road, but there's one dip where the road has completely washed out. Never mind, there's an old guy there with a wheelbarrow full of dirt and a shovel in case you get stuck. Then we see flashing lights ahead and a sports car goes tearing past us heading south with the cops glued to its tail, further on the duo pass us heading north, then again heading south. Must have been some nifty U-turns but there is nowhere to go on this long road. I can't imagine it ended well.

One last hotel on the way back, down a dark rough track, with cold rooms, no hot water but a really good rustic restaurant. Then Miguel makes the long drive back to The OC and so ends the tale of the whales.

Credits:

Randy for my bike (can I get a 53x11 next time please), Miguel for all the driving, Stuart for all the heavy camping gear we hauled but didn't use the van for taking a hell of a beating and still getting us home in one piece, and the people of Baja for putting up with us!

Board Meeting

By John Renowden



Have you ever tried “Riding the Boards?” The velodrome, that is. Cycling is a multifaceted sport and one of the most exciting is track racing. Tearing around a 45-degree banked track clipped into a fixed-gear bike with no brakes is an experience not to be missed. We are fortunate to have the 333.3 km Olympic Track just up the freeway, at Carson. I’ve ridden it twice and also the track in Manchester UK. If you have not tried it there are a few things to note: no brakes means the guy in front is not going to slow suddenly, so it’s much safer, the fixed wheel means you can slow down sufficiently by holding back on the pedals. I have only encountered a few problems:

being a low-cadence rider means the bikes are always under-geared for me, my throat gets dry when putting in the effort (I raised this with Nelson Vails and he told me that track riders just suck a lozenge, why didn’t I think of that?), one time riding in Carson I pulled off the front of the group by riding up high on the banking when my back tire exploded, I just managed to control it without taking out the rider below me, phew. The track director said, “Wow, that never happens.”

In a totally different league, we recently had the UCI World Cup event at Carson. Fantastic. There are a number of different events:

Sprint
Team sprint
Keirin
Individual pursuit
Team pursuit
Points Race
Devil take the hindmost
Madison
Omnium

It would take the whole of Chain Reaction to explain all of these in detail but suffice to say that it's pretty evident to get the gist of it when you are there. It basically splits down to two individuals racing against each other or a mass start where either the leader gains points or the last rider gets eliminated. The exception is the Omnium, which is like the decathlon, a combination of a number of events.

Attendance at Carson was like the Three Bears, just right. Enough people to fill the hall but not too many, so we could get seats at the rail. You have to admire the fitness of the riders, the Points Race was 100 laps, and they were hammering. Being at the rail you could experience the thunder and feel the wind of the bikes tearing past at over 30 mph. In the sprint, the riders cross the line at over 50 mph. Watching the precision with which the sprint teams swap the lead is like ballet. The lead rider swings up the banking and then drops precisely down to join the end of the group. Towards the end, the penultimate rider buries his/herself and then swings off to let the final three cross the line. And to cap it all the USA women were the winners.



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