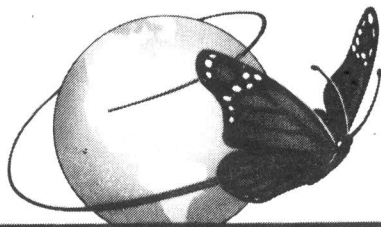


VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1 June/July 1985

the knobby news





Ultimate Escapes, Ltd.
TM

Explore the World with Mountain Bikes

**COLORADO'S OWN ACTIVE VACATION SPECIALISTS
OFFER EXCITING NEW BICYCLE ADVENTURES!**

PERU — The ultimate detour to Machu Picchu, 12 days, all inclusive price — bikes, air, hotels, meals and more **\$1485**

MEXICO'S Copper Canyon, remote, beautiful and exotic, 8 days, all inclusive **\$495**

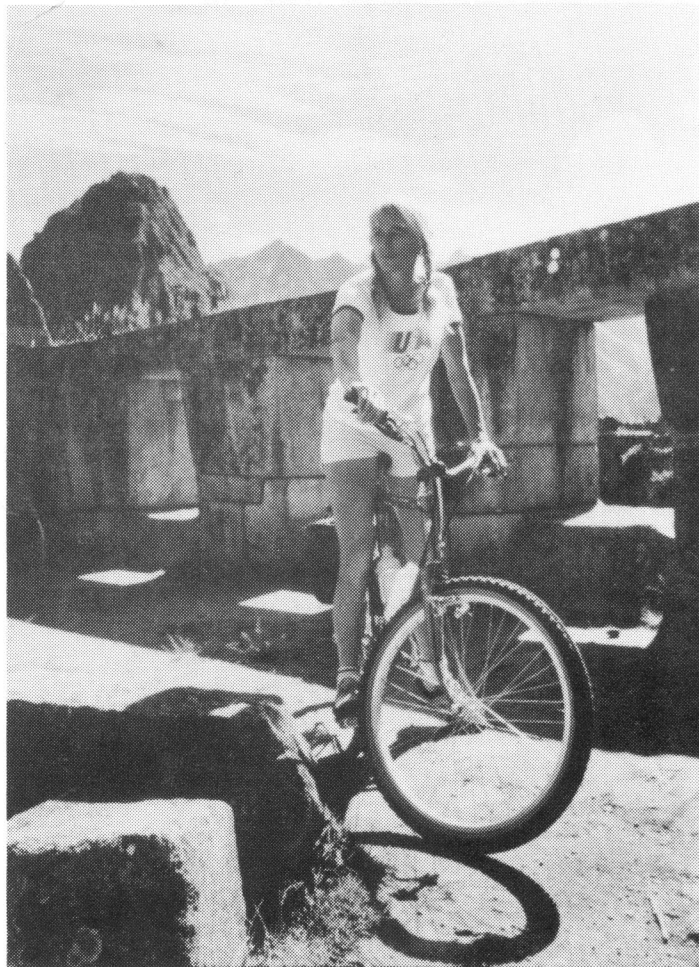
NORWAY — The Fjords by Mt. Bike, train, and ferry, 1st class accommodations, 15 days **\$1285**

COLORADO — Explore the spectacular Sangre de Cristo Range, 5 days **\$349**

CALL US TOLL FREE

800-992-4343

303-578-8383



ULTIMATE ESCAPES LTD.

115B South 25th Street

Colorado Springs, CO

80904

the knobby news

Editor

Thom Parks

Contributing Editor

Steve Chapman

Art Director

Ann Blackstone

Testing Director

Jon Lebsack

Contributing Editors

Neil Murdoch, Glenn Odell,
Sparkey Thompson, Bill Ophir

Publisher

Earl Martin

Associate Publisher

Marian Francis

Subscriptions to the **Knobby News** are \$9.95 a year (six issues) within the USA, \$12.95 a year in Canada and Europe.

All contents copyright 1985 by **Knobby News**. All rights reserved. No part of the **Knobby News** may be reprinted without written permission.

Editorial office;

Knobby News
Box 285
Ft. Collins, CO 80522

Advertisers please contact us at the above address for rate card.

Cover

Famed photographer Tim O'Hara captures the moment of a casual ride in the Rockies.

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

June/July 1985

A Fat Tire Tool Kit 4

Tools for the trail

Toe Wear or Not Toe Wear 7

Clips and straps on the dirt
by Steve Chapman

Trail Trends 8

What works, what doesn't.

Crested Butte 12

Fat Tire Heaven by Neil Murdoch

Joe's Bike 14

What Joe Murray rides to victory.

Comparison Test 17

The times, they are a changin'
by Bill Ophir

NORBA 20

Glenn Odell and the National Off-Road
Bicycle Association

1995 23

Slightly off-road . . .
by Sparkey Thompson

A Fat Tire

Mountain bike riders are a funny lot. They ride when it snows. They enjoy rough roads. And they are known to smile out of context. I know this; I'm one of them.

Some off-roadies carry more tools than Sears. Others carry nothing more than a hope and an prayer, thinking that their mountain bikes are as reliable as a pet dog. Though mountain bikes are about as dependable as mechanized transportation gets, when you ride up a mountain trail or wooded path for more than a mile or two, anything can happen, and often does. It is one thing to be unable to fix a puncture in the city where you can hitch a ride home. It's another thing to ride up Storm Mountain, fifteen miles from the nearest road, and be without a pump. I flatted there once, pumless, helpless. Just once.

Nowadays I carry too many tools, but then again, nowadays I make it home in time for dinner. Self-sufficiency out on the trail not only feels good, it weighs only a pound or two.

A good pump is a necessity. Zefal makes two that work fine. Their Mt. Zefal is cheap and light, and since it has a bigger barrel than the others it fills those large volume fat tires with fewer strokes than any other frame pump. It currently only comes with an old-fashioned pump hose for a connection, but will soon be available with a thumb-lock. The Zefal H.P. is more rugged and works predictably, if slowly, on schrader valves (like your car has) or presta (skinny-style) valves. The Mt. Zefal will only fill tubes fitted with schrader valves. The new Bluemels Mountain Range pump is the easiest filling pump I've used on fat tires, but it is so new I cannot say how well it holds up. Time will tell.

My own tool kit weighs a little over a pound and a half and fits nicely in a small wedge pack under my seat, just barely clearing one of those Hite-Rite seat locators. (You know, those things that allow you to adjust your seat height instantly on mountain bikes.) These are the tools I like to carry for rides of a half day or more; —

a.) A flat-head screwdriver for derailleur adjustment. Get the style that is reversible to a Phillips head if your bike uses any screws of this style.

b.) Two open-end wrenches, an 8mm by 10mm and a 9mm by 11mm. These are for brake adjustment at the cable carrier, that triangular piece that connects the brake cable with the "cross-over cable" on cantilever brakes. These tools are also occasionally used on the derailleurs and are even acceptable when you forget your yoghurt spoon.

c.) 4mm, 5mm, and 6mm allen wrenches. A 1/4" allen wrench is necessary if you ride on Phil Wood hubs, since these use 1/4" allen-headed cap screws, as do Cook Brothers and Bullseye hubs. The 6mm allen tightens the ubiquitous SR Laprade seat posts, the "Part Most Likely to Ruin Your Bike Ride," if it loosens up as it likes to. The 4mm and 5mm wrenches are for brakes, derailleurs, and rack mounting bolts.

d.) A Park spoke wrench, of wonderful quality, is a handy tool if a wheel gets knocked out of true. Park color codes these wrenches, black for DT brand spokes, red for the spokes found on Stumpjumpers and most other Japan-

ese and Taiwanese mountain bikes. If you buy a T-style spoke wrench, make sure it fits the spoke nipples on your particular bike.

e.) A couple of spare spokes taped to a frame tube or rack strut, usually 270mm in length. These are rarely used outside of a repair after a crash.

f.) A freewheel tool and a pocket vice (a two ounce device that allows freewheel removal without a large wrench). These allow you to remove the freewheel to replace a broken spoke in the rear wheel.

g.) A spare brake cable and a spare derailleur cable.

h.) Twenty feet of nylon cord, to strap up a splint for an injury, to tow a trashed bike, to tie a piece of pretty wood to a rack, etc.



Tool Kit

i.) A Rema patch kit with fresh glue. In this handy kit there is room for extra nuts and bolts for rack mounts (Wise riders use nylock nuts all over their bikes to avoid losing parts.). Also toss in a couple of dimes for a phone call, a five dollar bill for emergencies, some safety pins, and a needle and thread. You will want to wrap your tube of glue with a protective layer of duct tape to keep it from getting punctured. A few hefty rubber bands keep the patch kit closed.

j.) About ten feet of fix-all duct tape. This is great for "booting" (reinforcing) a cut tire, or fixing a broken rack or pack.

k.) A spare tube, or occasionally two for extended journeys.

l.) Six inch Channellocks®, also known as slip-joint pliers. Headset locknuts tend to loosen up periodically,

and even Channellocks® only six inches long do an okay job of tightening them.

m.) A two-ounce tube of Tri-Flow chain lube, or your favorite substitute.

n.) A Cyclo chain tool and about three links of chain. Sometimes a rear derailleur snags on a rock or a log and becomes so mangled it must be surgically removed. With a chain tool one can shorten the chain to a length just long enough to fit over a chain ring on the crank set and around a sprocket on the freewheel. Be sure to choose a compromising gear ratio to get **up** and **down** the hills on the way home. Riding the rest of the day with only one gear is fatiguing, but easier than pushing your bike home.

o.) A shop rag or a cloth diaper (clean) to wipe hands after one of the above operations.

p.) Five feet of picture-hanging or other flexible wire. It will make you feel omnipotent when fortune breaks your pannier or rack and you can fix it in front of the disbelieving eyes of your friends.

q.) Some matches in a waterproof case. Safety first!

r.) I'm really not into Swiss Army knives. How can you trust an army that never fought a war? They have all the prestige of high price, without the stigma of quality! A small knife is handy, though, and I carry a Swiss Army knife just to show support for a non-violent army.

s.) A crank bolt wrench, either 14mm or 15mm (rarely 16mm), also known as a peanut butter wrench. I don't carry one as I check these bolts for tightness regularly at home between rides, and I don't eat peanut butter.

t.) A wrench to loosen axle nuts, unless your bike uses quick-release hubs or Phil Wood style allen bolts. If your bike uses 15mm axle nuts, as most mountain bikes do nowadays, make sure your cranks use 15mm fixing bolts, thereby allowing you to use your crank bolt wrench for two purposes.

u.) Tiny, six inch vice grips. These are overkill, perhaps.

v.) Oh yeah, a first aid kit and the knowledge of how to use it. I carry a Bailer kit as it is so small and light, but better yet get a physician friend to piece one together for you.

The above is arbitrary, and perhaps only a starting point. Some folks carry an edited version of the above for short rides or a more complete kit for rides known later as epics. I carry the above kit for anything except mountain bike races and short street rides.

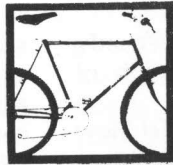
Most of these tools can be purchased from your favorite bicycle shop, others from Sears. Quality tools are a joy to use and will last just about forever, so look for ones with names you can depend on, avoiding the cheap imitations. Happy trails.

Thom Parks



RITCHEY

U-S-A



THE MOUNTAIN BIKE

This is the machine that gave the movement its name. Every off-road bicycle on the market uses elements introduced by Ritchey.



THE DESIGNER

Ritchey designs are based on a sound background of racing, touring, building, and engineering experience, along with a respect for the history of bicycles. The Ritchey designs of the eighties fulfill the needs of modern cyclists without ignoring the lessons of one hundred years of bicycle construction.



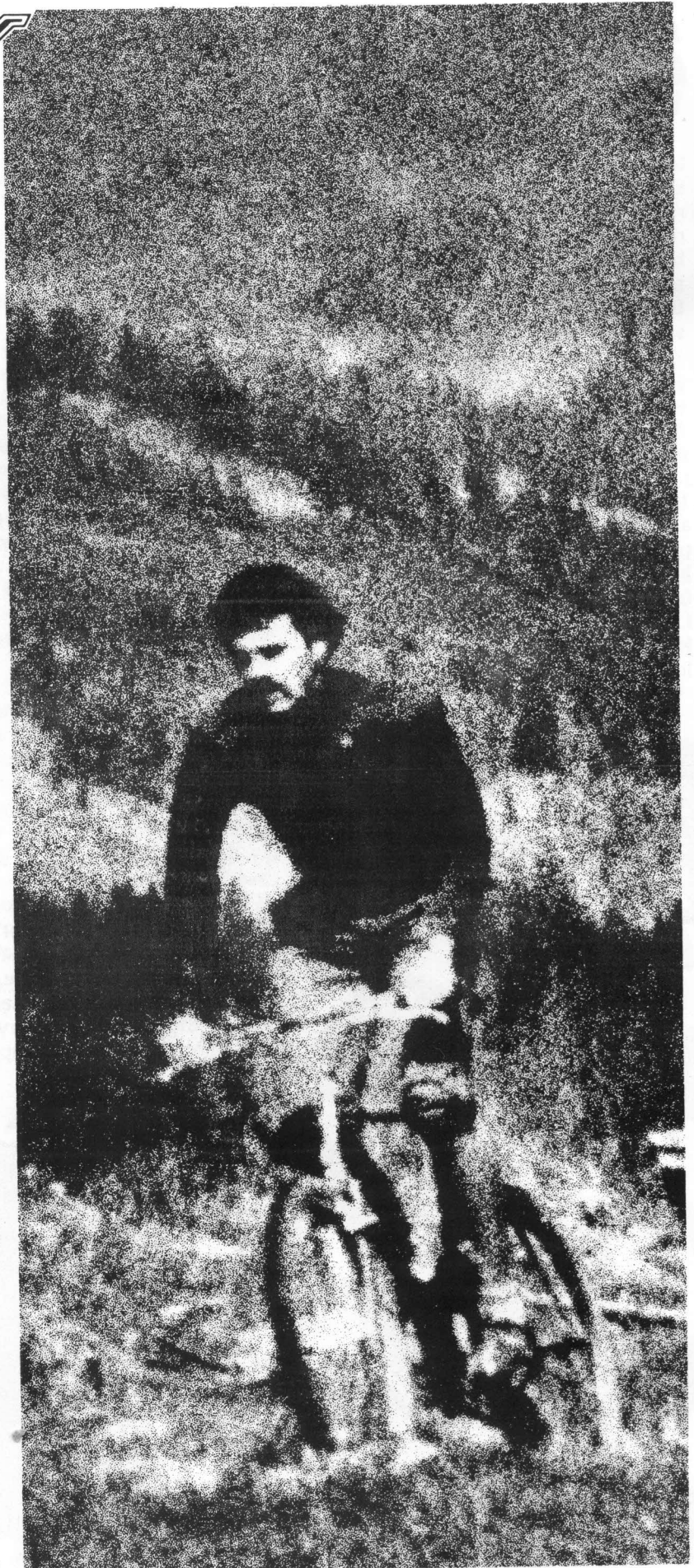
THE BUILDER

Acknowledged as one of America's finest builders, Ritchey is responsible for pioneering, developing and popularizing the technique of lugless fillet-brazing. Ritchey has built frames, handlebars and stems for thousands of racing, touring, tandem and mountain bikes in more than a decade of framebuilding, including the most balloon-tire bicycles made by any domestic custom builder.



THE STATE OF THE ART

A fine bicycle is more than a collection of components, it is the ride that is the sum of its elements. When you are ready to experience the state of the art, ride a Ritchey. There is nothing like it.



Ritchey U.S.A., Box 409, LaHonda, CA 94020

TOE·WEAR OR NOT TOE·WEAR

So you've been a road rider all your life and have just now discovered the excitement of off-road riding. It seems that all the mountain bikers are flying around in the dirt without the use of toe clips and straps that you have sworn by on your road bike. The use of toe clips and straps is becoming more popular in the off-road racing circuit but clips do have their disadvantages as well as some advantages for the mountain biker.

Some of the advantages of using clips and straps on your road bike are also valid for off-road use. They provide a more efficient and powerful stroke by allowing you to push and pull throughout the entire pedal stroke. This comes in handy, especially when you can ill afford to waste any energy on those never-ending climbs. They keep your feet in proper alignment on the pedals which also contributes to better efficiency and riding form. However, the biggest advantage with clips and straps is that they keep your feet on the pedals in the rough stuff. Nothing is more aggravating than to be descending a rocky trail and having your feet bounce off the pedals and getting entangled in the thumb-shifters.

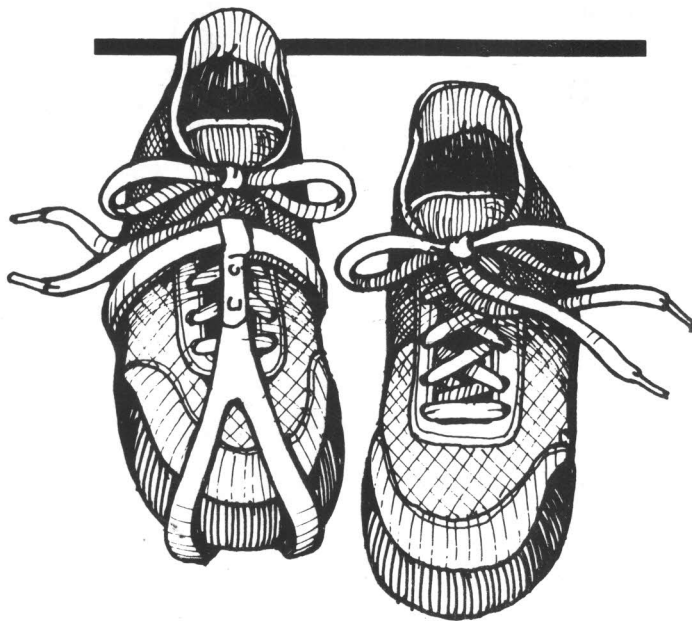
As to the other side of the story, clips and straps have their disadvantages as well. Keeping your feet on the pedals is nice most of the time except when you have to put your foot down quickly or get away from the

bike in a crash. Toe clips and straps can be unyielding at times and instead of getting your foot on the ground you may end up on your side with the bike on top of you. The same goes for an out of control descent where the bike is going to hit a tree and you'd rather not join it. However, you can alleviate these problems to a degree by keeping the straps loose or even removing them from the clips.

Another aggravating problem can occur when you are trying to get started on a steep hill. You might not be able to get your other foot into the clip quickly enough and have to leave the clip hanging. With the clip in this position it can get caught on rocks and get bent or, even worse, stop your precious forward momentum. This disadvantage of clips is especially apparent when riding the steepest, rockiest trails where dismounts are frequent.

So there you have both sides of the story in the quest for more efficiency. Now a compromise can be found in the new strapless half-clips that do help keep your feet on the pedals but are less effective at allowing you to lengthen your power stroke. Depending on your cycling ability (and agility) and the type of riding you'll be doing you may find the benefits of toe wear greater than the disadvantages or vice versa. Whatever you decide, have fun.

Steve Chapman

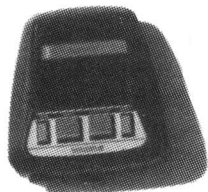


Trail Trends

Computers on the trails — We are seeing a lot more computers on mountain bikes now than ever before, even on the high Colorado mountain passes. Push, Velotech, Cateye, and even Pacer 2000 H computers are being used on ATB's. An informal survey seems to point to the Cateye models, the Mate (current speed, elapsed time, trip distance, maximum speed, and total distance) and the Solar (above plus cadence, clock, and average speed), as the most rugged and therefore the best suited for off-road use. Warranty work on the Push and Pacer computers is the quickest and most hassle-free, though there seem to be more places stocking replacement parts for Cateye should one goof and crash out a bracket or a pickup unit.

There is no question that a computer is a lot of fun on a mountain bike. Knowing things such as the distance traveled, maximum speed reached on a descent, average speed,

and cadence can be entertaining, as well as have a positive effect on fitness training. You might be surprised to learn how few miles you put in off-road compared to what you previously imagined. Computers are a constant reminder of reality.



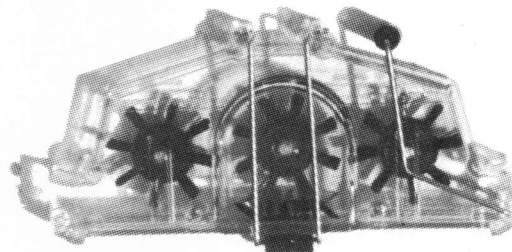
Weatherproofing a computer is important, though the Cateye seems to be drownproof. In fact, the Velotech instructions recommend not teaching the computer to swim. Carrying a heavy-gauge baggy and a rubberband for rainstorm use, or simply removing the computer unit and putting it in a rainproof pack is advised.

You will probably find that the sensor which mounts on the forkblade is especially susceptible to bumps and

rocks, but that with a screwdriver the unit can be usually made to function again, with any luck at all. Wiring tends to snag on brush and briar if not well-secured to the bicycle frame, so take note.

Aesthetically, computers in the wilderness ruin the experience for some off-road riders and most Amish, so figure out where you fit in the dichotomy of the era of information and Mother Nature. And if you do buy a computer for your FTB, write to us with the reliability results, okay?

Vetta Chain Cleaners — Personally, I am not into the hassle of preparing a beeswax and graphite mixture in

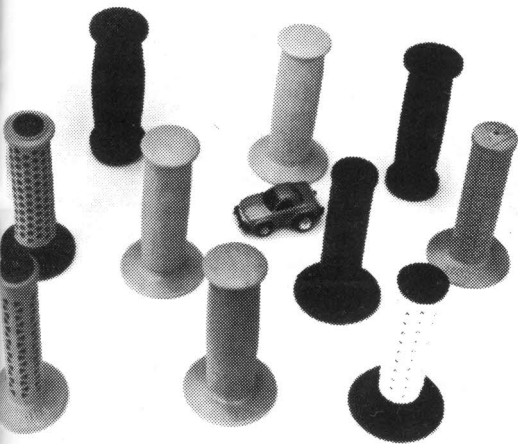


which to boil a bicycle chain, no matter how clean the proponents of such concoctions claim their chains stay. Now, for about \$15, Vetta has come out with a chain cleaning device that is the easiest way to keep your bike's dirtiest component cleaner. This plastic cleaner uses a combination of solvent and brushes that effectively gets the majority of the crud off your chain in a couple of minutes. It is not perfect, and on some derailleurs it can be awkward to use, but there is no denying that the Vetta Chain Cleaner is a big help in regular bicycle maintenance.

Shimano has decided to eliminate the "Centeron Mechanism" on its Deore XT and Superplate rear derailleurs. This built-in "play" that makes these derailleurs seem less precise than others has long been a sore spot with some riders. The new Shimanos are already coming into some shops without Centeron. There is no question that the new XT derailleurs seem snappier without Centeron.

Tire Weight Chart — Ray Cole, editor-in-retirement of the old Knobby News, is into weights of components in a big way. This tire weight chart is his doing, and the weights herein represent the average of two tires on an electronic scale accurate to one zillionth of a gram. One pound is equal to 454 grams, natch.

TIRE	SIZE	AVERAGE WEIGHT
Univega Street	1.5	500 gm.
Old-style Tri-Cross	1.75	510 gm.
Streetstomper	1.75	520 gm.
Crossroads	1.5	625 gm.
Current Tri-Cross	1.5	625 gm.
IRC Racer knobby	1.75	665 gm.
Mitsuboshi Comp III	1.75	665 gm.
Mitsuboshi Cruiser Mit	1.75	680 gm.
Ritchey Quad X-C 1.9	1.9	705 gm.
Old-style Tri-Cross	2.125	735 gm.
IRC Racer knobby	2.125	790 gm.
Snakebelly	2.125	795 gm.
Crossroads	2.125	845 gm.
Current Tri-Cross	2.125	850 gm.
Grippa	2.125	885 gm.
Panaracer Ibex	2.0	900 gm.
Stumpjumper	2.125	915 gm.
Mitsuboshi Comp III	2.125	935 gm.
Panaracer Block Tread MTB	2.125	950 gm.
LHR Semi-knobby	2.125	960 gm.



The world of BMX has invaded that of mountain bikes once again, this time in the area of grips. The electric and pastel colors that have become quite popular with BMX-ers are finding their way onto ATB's sporting Ame', Oakley, and Mushroom grips in pink, lime, lavender, and other colors not found in nature. I wonder how lavender grips would look, say, on a camouflage Mountain Goat? And now that Snakebelly tires are available again in yellow and red, one could have quite the colorful bike.

Ritchey Quad X-C 1.9 — I've been riding on this tire for the last 6 weeks in every situation from snow to pavement. The 1.9 is a great compromise between the 1.75 and the 2.125, and weighs just 705 grams. The X-shaped knobs are aligned so they omit provide a center ridge that gives a very comfortable and quiet ride on the pavement. Performance in the dirt has proven quite good. The tire climbs in the dirt and over rocks quite well without too much loss of traction even in very steep ascents. On the downhill side they do okay except in sharp cornering where they have a slightly greater tendency to wash out than, say, a 2.125 IRC knobby. This is probably due to the fact that the tread does not wrap around the tire as some other knobbies do. (We're still waiting for the tire that does everything.) The tires, however, did well in the mud without getting excessively clogged up. All in all I bet you see this tire showing up at a lot of races this summer.

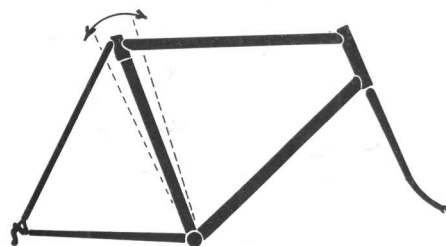
There are a fair number of folks that are running 26x1-3/8 inner tubes in their 26x1.75 or 26x1.25 tires with no more punctures than with running 1.75 or 2.125 tubes. This cuts off a quarter pound of weight per pair of tubes. In fact, the 26x1-3/8 tubes weigh the same as the Specialized Ultralight tubes, yet cost not much more than half as much. Too bad the 26x1-3/8 tubes come only in schrader valve construction.

Seat tube angles — Ever wonder what effect the angle of the seat tube (the nearly vertical frame tube into which the seat post is inserted) has on your bike? All things being equal, a steeper seat tube angle brings the saddle farther forward, closer to the vertical line that would run through the center of the bottom bracket. Roughly speaking, for every degree the seat tube steepens, the saddle position moves forward one-half inch.

To illustrate this, let's say you have a 1984 Schwinn High Sierra. The seat tube is at an angle of 70 degrees, and you want to put the saddle in the most efficient riding position. Due to the relatively laid back seat angle you cannot slide the seat far enough forward to center your knee over the pedal spindle with the crank arm out horizontal.

You are becoming a more aggressive

rider, though, and find that your most efficient riding position is with your knees about one-half inch behind the vertical through the pedal, so you lack about one inch of bringing the seat far enough forward. The Amphiuma L28 you have been eyeing at your local shop has a 73 degree seat tube and you wonder if the three degree difference will allow you your long sought-after riding position. Here is a chart, again courtesy of Ray Cole and a Hewlett Packard computer, which shows to the nearest one hundredth of an inch what effect a change in seat angle would make for a given leg length. You can more simply use the formula that a one degree seat angle change moves the saddle one half inch, and then find that our hypothetical would find enough saddle adjustment to happily fit the Amphiuma, model L28.



Use your leg length (inseam) as the arc height, and 70 degrees as the standard angle. Your saddle, for example, would move forward 1.70 inches if you went from a 1984 Stumpjumper (with a seat tube angle of 70 degrees) to a Ritchey Team Comp (with a seat angle of 73 degrees) if your inseam was 32.5 inches.

ARC HEIGHT	.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5
28	0.24	0.49	0.73	0.98	1.22	1.47	1.71
28.5	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.99	1.24	1.49	1.74
29	0.25	0.51	0.76	1.01	1.27	1.52	1.77
29.5	0.26	0.51	0.77	1.03	1.29	1.54	1.80
30	0.26	0.52	0.79	1.05	1.31	1.57	1.83
30.5	0.27	0.53	0.80	1.06	1.33	1.60	1.86
31	0.27	0.54	0.81	1.08	1.35	1.62	1.89
31.5	0.27	0.55	0.82	1.10	1.37	1.65	1.92
32	0.28	0.56	0.84	1.12	1.40	1.68	1.95
32.5	0.28	0.57	0.85	1.13	1.42	1.70	1.99
33	0.29	0.58	0.86	1.15	1.44	1.73	2.02
33.5	0.29	0.58	0.88	1.17	1.46	1.75	2.05

Trail Trends

Suntour's new chain, alternately called the Cyclone (in silver and black) or the Superbe (in gold and black) is increasingly becoming the sport chain of the off-road set. The old Ultra-Six chain that Suntour mistakenly marketed was made by HKK, and when it wasn't falling between chainrings it was being cursed for poor shifting. The new Cyclone/Superbe series is made by D.I.D. in a narrow width to fit ultra or normal spacing (not to be confused with the D.I.D. Lanner chain which will **not** work with ultra spacing.) Due to links which are flared, or "cambered," this new chain shifts quite well under load, yet doesn't tend to stretch as quickly as other cambered designs as the load is carried in a straight line.

The new Shimano chain features a "Dai-Hard" treatment to the chain pins, said to decrease stretch and increase life. Dai-Hard, eh? As in Die Hard? Reminds me of the bicycle tires from Korea that were called Dai-Yung. They changed the name when they realized their mistake. Now there are some rather ordinary copies of Blackburn racks made in Korea called Bor Yueh. Do cheap copies of good products bore you?



We have been using Shimano Biopace chainrings for a year or so and are starting to form some opinions on them that seem to concur with those shared by other riders of these changing radius chainrings. In all journalistic objectivity, we really like the



way these misshapen gears seem to ease the way up the nastiest climbs, and allow a slightly higher gear to be used on the way up. They seem to be designed for a slightly slower cadence than that used by a serious racer, though John Ute of Shimano claims that they were engineered for a cadence of 60 to 90, which would be a range that would suit most any rider on typical mountain bike climbs. For spinning on the flats there have been some riders who prefer round rings, but for many of us the part of the ride that needs help is on the uphill, and the flats will take care of themselves. The Cook brothers, Steve and Don, of Crested Butte are racing with the Biopace rings now, and they are certainly among the fastest five or six riders in the country.

Easily the nicest thing about biopace rings, though, are the way they treat your knees. As some of us reach the ripe old age of 30 (or 40 or 60), we have to consider the accumulated fatigue that our knees have endured, and how to preserve them for the next 20 (or 40) years of aggressive off-road riding. You youths of just 25 think that the physiology is eternal, but heh, your knees have only just begun. There is a marked lessening of knee fatigue with Biopace rings, so much so that some folks who had previously given up riding with knee or leg problems have been able to again ride with the Biopace rings. Sort of like the poor man's arthroscopic knee surgery.

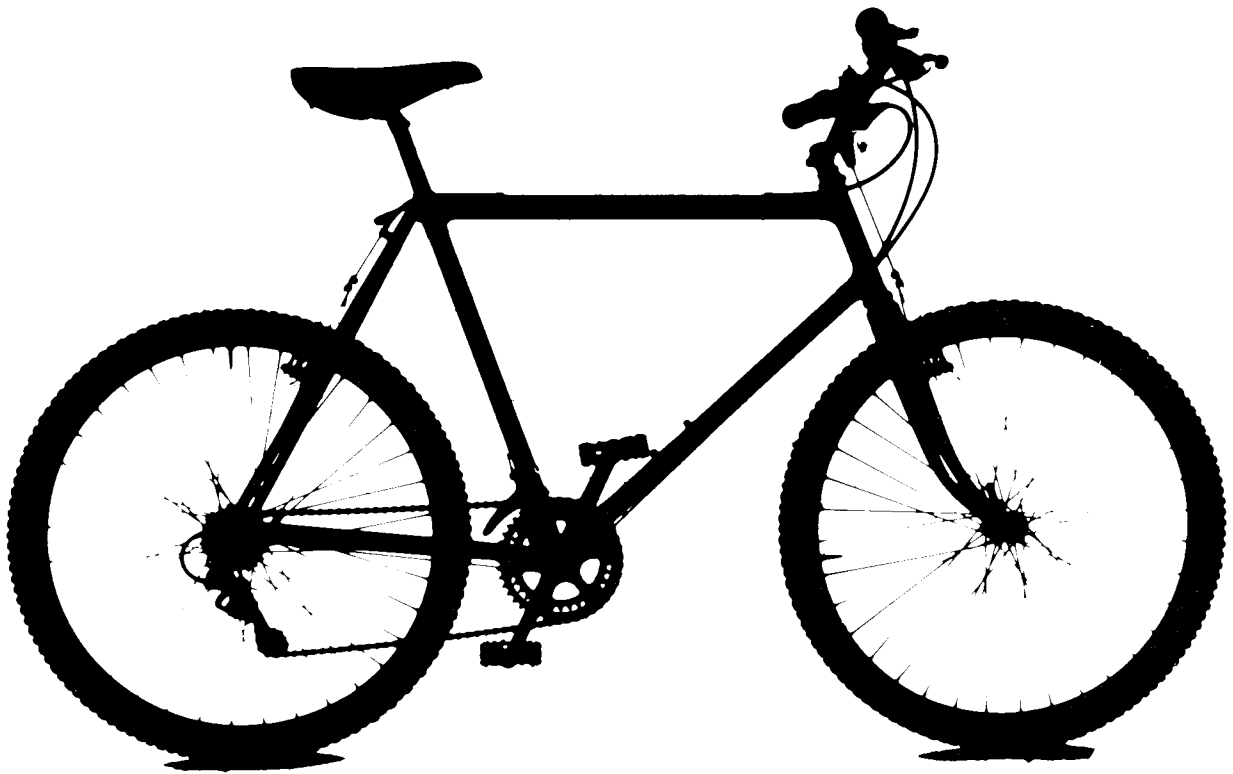
The first time you ride on Biopace rings you will think you have a bent pedal spindle for the first bit, but after

about a quarter mile or so your physiology will adapt to where the "out of roundness" will feel normal. Shimano engineers claim that there is no physiological "getting used to" with Biopace, so that a first time user would be able to use these changing radius chainrings with maximum efficiency the first time out.

Most Biopace-equipped riders find that the 28 tooth ring (the smallest that can be built to fit the common Sugino AT/Specialized/Shimano 600/SR CRC-300 bolt circle) climbs as well as or better than a round 24 tooth ring. So far, the only selection of rings around (so to speak) are 28, 38, 44, 48, and 50 teeth for mountain bikes. The Biopace rings for road bikes have a different design for a slightly faster cadence and fit only Shimano 600 and Dura Ace cranks. At about \$50 for a set of three rings, and considering your chainrings are probably worn out somewhat anyway, Biopace are a good gift for your knees.

Coming next issue in the Knobby News will be a complete test of the new Suntour XC components, a brake lever comparison, an article on rims, and information on other items which are the latest for off-road bikes. We will test a new off-road bike with rear suspension, the Shuler Victor, and test the latest Ritchey Team Comp. Also in the next issue of the Knobby News will be all you ever wanted to know about touring backcountry Peru. Great photos, amazing exploits!

THE ORIGINALS!



The people who invented the MountainBike,
the most experienced designers and mechanics
and the fastest off-road racers bring you the
most satisfaction and the best value.

FISHER MOUNTAINBIKES

1501 SAN ANSELMO AVENUE
SAN ANSELMO, CA 94960
415/459/2247



Available at better bike shops.

• FAT TIRE BIKE W

In the beginning...

by Neil Murdoch

Throughout the 70's the fat tire bike, in the form of resurrected one speed clunkers, enjoyed wide use on the unpaved streets of Crested Butte.

In 1976 a dozen of the local boys decided to do a little bar-hopping on their newspaperboy bikes. The bar they wanted to hop to was in Aspen, twenty miles by crow, forty-two miles by clunker. The route they chose to get there went over 12,700 foot Pearl Pass, an old ore hauling route, barely negotiable by mule.

With appropriate fanfare they set out from the Grubstake Saloon, the original sponsor, followed by a four wheel drive truck carrying food, beer, and Steve Baker, the official mechanic, with his leg in a cast. Steve and Albert Maunz, another original participant, had one of the first backyard bike shops in town. In the spirit of hard partying this bold group of pioneers rode and dragged their Schwinns up to camp at Cumberland Basin where mass quantities were consumed in preparation for the push over the top.

From the top of Pearl Pass the crew smoked down to Aspen. Most of the smoking was done by their coaster brakes which overheated on the descent, causing many stops for sizzling cool offs in nearby streams.

Having accomplished the task Pearl Pass was forgotten until the spring of 1978. At that time Duane Reading, who managed the Grubstake, saw an article in the "Co-Evolution Quarterly" about fat tire bike riders in California. Duane located these enthusiasts in Marin, called them up and invited them to ride Pearl Pass with the Crested Butte locals. With that one phone call Duane unwittingly nudged a tradition on the road to this year's Tenth Annual Tour.

So, one bright September day the heavyweights of the Marin Fat Tire

• SEPTEMBER 1985 •

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



Movement, including Joe Breeze, Gary Fisher, and Charlie Kelly, arrived in Crested Butte to ride the Third Annual Pearl Pass Tour. You'll notice there was no second annual. The Californians' technology was more advanced than the locals'. They had derailleurs on their Schwinns and a few of the first Joe Breeze nickel plated

"Breezers." The Crested Butte riders matched the technology with acclimation and guts as the cry "onespeed to die" resounded from a local kamakazi group.

Duane organized the rides through the fourth annual when he moved to Grand Junction, Colorado to open a new restaurant. This left the fifth and

WEEK.

subsequent events in the hands of Murdoch, who had started one of the first exclusively fat tire bike shops in the country — Bicycles, Etc. in Crested Butte.

Every year the more enthusiastic riders bolted away from the group and raced up to camp. In the summer of 1981 a few local riders decided to have a race the day before the tour to provide an outlet for the competitive urge, and the Fat Tire Bike Week Stage Race was born. The original race route went near Paradise Divide, north of Crested Butte, and for several years the race was called the Paradise Divide Fat Tire Stage Race. The first year's also had a criterium stage on the unpaved streets of town. With the onset of progress and paving that stage has been dropped.

Every year more activities have been added to round out Fat Tire Bike Week. Citizens' races, bicycle rodeos, expositions, symposiums have all been included for what has become an international event for the fat tire world. ●



• CRESTED BUTTE •

Where to stay What to do Where to eat

This year Fat Tire Bike Week runs from September 16th thru the 22nd. Daily tours will leave the town during the week for riding in the mountains around the area, and a stage race for riders of all abilities will be held on the 19th and 20th. The tenth annual tour will be September 21st and 22nd, an overnight tour on which all camping gear will be sagged, and dinner, beer, and breakfast provided for what most think is a nominal fee. A collectors t-shirt is included, of course. This is definitely a week worthy of calling in "well" for. At least make the weekend tour for the time of your life.

Where does one stay in Crested Butte, Colorado? We normally call Red Lady Rentals and reserve a condominium as September is off-season, so condo's are affordable, about \$30 to \$50 a night. By stuffing a lot of friends into one condo, you can stay quite cheaply while enjoying the comforts of home — full kitchen, washer and dryer, etc. The Elk Mountain Lodge, at about \$25 a night, is always a good value, too, and bunks are available at the Four Seasons Spa and Lodge for \$20.

A less expensive alternative is to camp in the hills near town. I have spent many a night camped near Peanut Lake, a half-mile northwest of Crested Butte. Wonderful misty mornings to wake up to there, and very quiet and peaceful.

Crested Butte probably has more good places to eat per capita than any other place on earth. From wonderful Mexican food (and great Margarita's!) at Donita's Cantina on Elk Avenue, to great pasta at The Gourmet Noodle on 3rd Street. Angello's Pizza is a favorite hangout, but go there for excellent sandwiches too, not just pizza. The Bakery Cafe is the best bakery in the

world — outstanding snacks or full meals, incredibly friendly personnel, and great outdoor tables at which to eat croissants and watch the interesting street scene go by.

Charlie Kelly calls Crested Butte "Mecca," and coming from a resident of Marin County, California, that is some compliment. If you want to combine a relaxing vacation with moderate (or extreme) off-road riding, meet the folks that have shaped the sport of mountain biking, and just plain have fun, Fat Tire Bike Week is an occasion that can't be missed.

If you want more information about the Tenth Annual Fat Tire Bike Week, contact Neil Murdock at FTBW, Box 793, Crested Butte, Colorado, 81224, (303) 349-6761. If you would like to assist in this years production, he would be **especially** glad to hear from you.

by Thom Parks



A scene from the trial events at Fat Tire Bike Week.

JOE'S BIKE



How does Joe Murray do it? Joe managed to not only win the NORBA (National Off-Road Bicycle Association) Nationals, he also won fourteen other significant mountain bike races in 1984. He obviously is training properly, has the right mental attitude, and enjoys good support from his sponsor/boss/friend, Gary Fisher. These are the things that have made him a winner in 1984, and promise continued success for him in 1985. But training, attitude, and sponsorship are things we cannot buy. "Maybe if the rest of us mildly mediocre riders had a lighter weight pair of wheels we could keep up," we think, "at least on the short climbs." "Maybe if we had a Fisher Comp mountain bike we could descend like Joe." Probably not, but certainly most of us would like to know what magic is built into Joe Murray's bike with the hopes of finding out **some** secret.

Here it is. The low down skinny on the winningest ride in 1984. These are the parts that make up the bike guaranteed to make you look fast, if not go fast.

Joe's frame and fork are a TIG welded Fisher Competition, a mixture of Columbus SL and SP tubing in the main triangle, and Tange (pronounced Tahn-gay) stays and fork blades. For 1985 he will ride the new Fisher Excaliber, a Japanese TIG welded bike to retail for only \$1095. (But we're not supposed to talk about that bike yet as it won't be out until sometime in June.) Gary Fisher of Fisher Mountain Bikes, Joe's sponsor, lets each rider in the team select the geometry they feel will be the best to race on. Gary feels this is the best way for his company to analyze different configurations to allow a continuously evolving growth towards the perfect frame geometry. Joe races and trains on a fairly traditional geometry, very close to what has been referred to as "Marin geometry." The head tube is a fairly

slack 69 degrees, an angle that many bicycling publications have tried to tell us is imprecise in steering and gives poor control. Actually, a 69 or even a 68 degree headtube angle can be very precise when part of a well balanced, well designed frameset, while a bike with a 70 or a 71 degree head angle can feel like a dog if the rest of the frame is designed crudely, or if the frame tubes are of heavy, dead tubing. A fairly short amount of fork offset, also known as rake, add to steering crispness. Most off-road bikes have about 2 to 2.5 inches of offset, while Joe's bike has only 1.75 inches.

Sporting a 73 degree seat tube and 17 3/8 inch chain stays for efficient climbing, Joe's bike personifies the new trend toward steeper seat tubes and shorter chain stays. Steeper seat tubes put the legs in a more effective position over the pedals to climb hills, so the old standard of a 70 seat is dying by the roadside. Shorter chainstays allow a rider to do some of his/her climbing while standing, where longer stays (as on a Trek, for example) decrease traction on steep, loose climbs unless the rider stays in the saddle.

Like Gary Fisher, Joe likes a fairly long wheelbase, in this case one almost 44 and a half inches long. This obviously increases stability on the long, fast descents that characterize the western United States. Also adding to stability is a lowish bottom bracket height, very much in vogue on sport FTB's, of 11.5 inches with 2.125 tires.

Most of the more successful off-road racers use toe-clips to add efficiency on those long climbs often found in western mountain bike events. Joe, nevertheless, won most of his events last season without using toe-clips, finding clips too restrictive for rapid mounts and dismounts as well as too restrictive for changing foot position over the pedals. Just before the NORBA Nationals, however, he

switched to riding with clips on a pair of lightweight Suntour MP 1000 (Superbe BMX) pedals. This just goes to show you that when you are fast, you are fast, regardless of your equipment.

Specialized makes a new cycling shoe called the Velo, designed for street riding. Several off-road riders are finding that they work fine for sport off-road riding as well, as they are stiff and light and seem to give acceptable traction on the nasty climbs where one is forced to dismount and portage the bike. Joe uses his for racing and for training. More foot protection and better traction when walking is offered with the new Specialized Discovery mountain bike shoes, though, and the Discoveries stay on the pedal better if one is not using toe-clips.

Suntour markets a new chain called a Cyclone (aka Superbe), actually made by D.I.D., that Joe uses exclusively. The chain is the same weight and width as the Sedisport (and therefore, will work on standard and ultra spacing freewheels), but shifts better over the wide ratios used off-road than will the French chains. The Cyclone does not stretch as quickly as the Shimano Uniglide yet is light in weight, though the Uniglide is still the shifting champion in normal off-road use. The Cyclone is totally different from the less-than-mediocre Ultra-six chain (made by HKK) that Suntour used to sell, so don't confuse the two.

The most radical components on Joe's bike are the wheels. The rims start out as Super Champion Type 58 road bike rims with 40 spoke holes. They are cut down to 26 inches in diameter by a frame builder in Santa Cruz, ending up with 36 spoke holes and a weight of only 460 grams, as compared to 610 grams for the ubiquitous Araya 7x rim. DT stainless butted spokes (15-16-15 front, 14-15-14 rear) are threaded to alloy

nipples, and are laced to Shimano Dura-Ace cassette hubs with a 12 to 28 tooth, six speed cassette. Lighter than light, trickier than trick, but these rims don't last forever, even for Joe's 145 pounds. Joe will probably try the new double-walled Araya RM-20's (at 485 grams) now that they are available.

Running only two chainrings of 34 and 48 teeth on his Shimano New 600 crankset (with 175 arms) allows Joe to use the quick-shifting Dura-Ace road derailleurs, which are just maxed out on these ratios. Suntour XC levers control the shifting action just fine. He doesn't run the Shimano Biopace chainrings but notes that the hot-rod Cook brothers of Crested Butte, Steve and Don, have been very successful racing with Biopace.

Ever wonder what kind of brakes it takes to race down a rocky jeep road at over forty miles an hour? Joe uses the Suntour Roller Cam brake on the rear with a Shimano Deore XT cantilever on the front, with stock brake pads and 19 strand heavy duty cables. Suntour's new adjustable reach brake levers operate the stoppers and give a good degree of modulation. (Modulation is a great word, eh?)

Avocet's Racing II saddle is good enough for Greg Lemond and for Joe Murray, too. It has just the right shape to allow one to move around while riding and for mounting and dismounting rapidly, too. Comfort is great, too, and the saddle rails can take all that off-road racing can dish out. An XC seatpost at only 255 grams is almost universally used by serious riders due to the fact that it won't let you down (so to speak).

"It's not the machine, it's the motor." So they say. But if you just don't have time to train properly, yet want to look fast without the stigma of thighs like Eric Heiden, maybe a shiny new Fisher Comp will help.



Mountain Bike Specialists present the Lester Wright story

When one is only twelve, one just doesn't have the funds to go out and buy exotic parts for an invention, especially for an invention that the family frowns upon. So when Lester Wright, a.k.a. Les, needed parts for his very first mountain bike (the world's very first, for that matter), he couldn't afford to just go out and buy an Elgin or a Rollfast or a Roadmaster from his brothers' shop and start modifying.

So Les took a broomhandle from the closet, an old pogo stick he had retired from active duty two years previous, the seat from a rocking horse owned by his younger brother Lloyd Frank, two spoons for brake levers, etc. A rear wheel was scavenged from a wrecked Harley-Davidson motorcycle,

the front from a street vendor's cart. This way, Les imagined, the smaller wheel on the front would tilt the bicycle so it was always going downhill allowing it to coast along without pedaling even on the flats. (Les lacked the formal education in engineering that favored the work of his older brothers Wilbur and Orville.)

Today some people still build mountain bikes from an assortment of parts available from a local hardware store. But hey, make life easy for yourself and your bike. Give us a call for the latest in off-road tech, from the leaders in fast, friendly, knowledgeable service for fat tire bikes and parts—Mountain Bike Specialists.

• Specialized Rockhopper

We just did a three day tour of the Canyonlands, with 45 pounds of water, food, gear, and more water on this new bike by Specialized. It was fantastic! Shimano brakes, Mountech derailleurs, Specialized sealed hubs, Specialized headset and crankset, all chromoly frame and Unicrown fork. Dozens in stock for immediate delivery.

• Specialized Stumpjumper Sport

Unicorn fork, all double-butted chromoly, Shimano Deore XT drivetrain and brakeset, Specialized crankset and hubs, 70 head and 72 seat, straight chain stays, all sealed. 16.5" to 22.5"

• Specialized Stumpjumper Team

Incredible pink and only 25 pounds! Roller-cam rear brake, upright geometry, fast, fast, fast. 17.5" to 22.5".

• Fisher Montare

MBS sponsored a month-long expedition in Peru this April, and three of the four riders rode Montares, at elevations ranging from 6000 to over 19000 feet. Result? The bikes performed faultlessly! Roller-cam rear brake, Deore XT derailleur group, Biopace chainrings. Expedition quality and Japanese value.

• Fisher Excaliber

Outstanding Sportbike!

• Fisher Mt. Tam

Hand brazed in northern California, the Mt. Tam is designed to last a lifetime. Mild to wild colors.

• Ritchey Timberwolf

Renowned craftsmanship and performance for under a thousand dollars.

• Ritchey Commando

Camouflage paint and handlebars, black Shimano Deore XT components. Functional art.

• Ritchey Annapurna

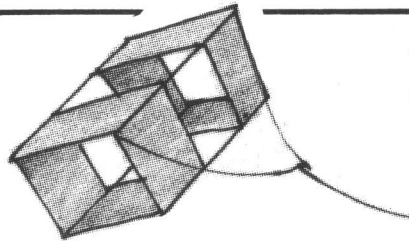
The most beautiful mountain bike made, the Annapurna is a perfect blend of performance and ride comfort, strength and lightness.

• Fat Chance Kicker Comp

Very lightweight performance mountain bike built in the USA at an import price. Unicrown fork, butted chromoly, Suntour XC components, Roller-Cam rear brake.

• TIRES

Specialized Crossroads, TriCross, Stumpjumper, Streetstomper, and Nimbus. IRC X-1 Knobbies in stock! Ritchey Quad 1.9 XC in stock! Snakebellies in black and YELLOW! Specialized and generic tubes at great prices.



- Vetta chain cleaners now in!
- Suntour XC components and Shimano XT components in stock.
- RM-20 and RM-25 rims are now in!
- Full line of Nike/Specialized shoes, including the new off-road shoe, the Discovery.
- Hite Rite seat locator - instant and easy seat height adjustment. Prevents seat theft, too!
- Yakima Roof Racks - the best, starting at \$141 with two standard bike kits, \$173 for rack with two Loadwarrior ATB bike kits.

- Bushwacker hand guards \$18.95/pair. Save your knuckles!
- Also pumps, fenders, Blackburn racks, Eclipse MaxRacks, computers, pedals, brake levers (five styles), tool kits, chains, sealed bottom brackets and cupsets, freewheels, Mr. Tuffy's, Specialized components, and more.



**Write or call
for free
catalog.**

Orders and catalog request:
800-255-8377
or **800-538-9500** (CO)

1960 Promenade
Fort Collins, Colorado 80526

Information -
303-484-0682

**FREE FREIGHT ON
ALL BIKES.**



COMPARISON TEST

1981
StumpJumper®

VS.

1985
StumpJumper®
SPORT

Remember the 1981 Stumpjumper? TA cranksets, mediocre Suntour AR derailleurs, Mafac cantilevers, and Surefoot pedals? What has changed in the last four years? Is the 1985 line of Specialized bikes really better?

Yes! Unequivocally better. Let's look at the changes from the old Stumpjumper, which sold for \$725, to the 1985 Stumpjumper Sport, which sells for \$499, starting with the frame.

First a little history lesson to establish perspective. In 1980 the off-road rider looking for a new "cruiser," as they were often called, had but two choices. One choice was to buy a mountain bike from one of the few established builders in California, such as Joe Breeze, Tom Ritchey, the Koski's, or Victor Vincente ("building fine off-road bikes since the 1990's!!!!"). This would set you back about \$1200 to \$1500, and make you one happy kind of guy or gal. TA cranks, Araya 7x rims, Huret Duro-par rear derailleur ("good until the next rock"), a pricey Shimano SLJA 523 front derailleur (or the cheaper SJA 103), maybe even Campagnolo BMX pedals, shortlived though they were. Phil Wood probably made the hubs and bottom bracket, and the tires were normally quick-wearing Comp III's. Magura brake levers transmitted lots of power to the often squeaky Mafac cantilever arches. Your Silca pump sported an inefficient Primus schrader pump head as presta ATB tubes and Bluemels pumps were as yet not made. It was a great ride, but one limited in comparison to today's off-road equipment. I went this route on the advice of mountain bike visionary Dennis Stenson, and bought one of Tom Ritchey's first ten production bikes.

The other choice in off-road cycling back then was a converted 26 inch wheel BMX (a.k.a. cruiser class BMX) bike. This was the route sure to develop infinite patience. Folks would take a Prodyne, Cook Brothers, Laguna, or other such single speed and start by brazing on cantilever brake bosses (though some poor souls suffered through the unreliable-for-off-road Bendix or Sturmey internal expanding brakes, or went for broke and set up Phil Wood disc brakes). The rear frame dropouts were bent from the original 110 mm spacing for a single speed hub to 125 or 130 mm spacing to set up a hub with freewheel. The geometry of these rigs varied from okay to unsafe, and the average life expectancy of the fork was about that of the housefly. All sorts of components were used on these bikes, from steel Astabula cranks to bar end shifters, and things were always breaking down as people were just learning what kinds of parts would take the rigors of off-road riding. I still remember my red, chromoly Laguna, set up with Mafac cantilevers, 14x34 tooth freewheel, and a single, steel chainwheel. And I still remember the pain of climbing steep trails on this 40 pound bike. But I was pumped on fat tires.

There is one serious problem with the 1985 Stumpjumper Sport. They are going to be hard to get this season. One may have to wait weeks to get one in a given size and color. When you look at the years of fun you will get out of an ATB, the wait is worth it, especially a bike as well designed as the Specialized Sport.

In 1981 things changed almost suddenly.

Mike Sinyard, owner and president of Specialized Bicycle Imports, had also been one of the early owner's of Tom Ritchey's craftsmanship. Sinyard, being composed of equal parts of off-road enthusiasm and business acumen, took a Ritchey to Japan to see what it would cost to replicate a Ritchey with a "Made in Japan" sticker. Voila!!! The Stumpjumper was born.

This is not to say that the original Stumpjumper was as fine as a Ritchey, or worked as well, for that matter. In fact, one writer of the era, Charlie Kelly, wrote that riding a Stumpjumper was like riding a Ritchey through mud. At the time, though, Charlie was in partnership with Tom Ritchey, so his objectivity was perhaps tainted. Nonetheless, despite its sluggish steering, the Stumpjumper was a success. It was quite reliable, it handled predictably, and was moderately light. And, it didn't cost \$1200 to \$1500 or need hours of expert fiddling to make it work well off-road.

So how does the 1981 Stumpjumper stack up to the 1985 Stumpjumper Sport? In 1981 angles were quite a bit more slack than what is in vogue in 1985. The headtube on Specialized's 1982 bike was a 67.5, quite laid back, while today all the non-racing Specialized mountain bikes use a 70 degree head. Why the change? A steeper headtube angle, all things being equal, allows for quicker steering, though at the expense of lesser stability. At slower speeds or on the pavement (where excess stability isn't needed), quicker steering is beneficial. On fast, rough descents the

COMPARISON TEST

need for steering quickness is secondary to the need for stability. The old Stumpjumper had gobs of stability, but at the expense of sluggish, "floppy" steering.

Is the geometry on the new Specialized bikes unstable? Not at all. By using enough fork offset (rake) and a longish wheelbase (43" on a 21.5" frame), the 1985 bikes can be ridden on rough descents with security by most any rider. Neophytes might find that a bit more caution (read "less speed") is required until familiar with the quickness of the 1985's on the fastest of downhills, but will soon find the bike easy to fling about. And the precise way in which this bike will pick its way up a slow, rocky climb makes even a novice rider feel like a pro.

Back in 1981 Specialized didn't see fit to put on more than one water bottle braze-on. The Sport is now festooned with brazed-on bits; two bottle bosses, rear rack mounts, fender bosses, chain hanger, and eyelets on the front and rear drop-outs. We can't wait to see bosses on the handlebars for a Sony Walkman.

The new Unicrown fork used by all four Specialized bikes for 1985 gives a more comfortable ride, more responsive steering due to less torsional flex, and weighs over a half pound less than conventional "crowned" forks. Charlie Cunningham built the first Unicrown-style fork in 1978 yet it wasn't until 1983 that builders such as Tom Ritchey and Gary Fisher began using them on true production bikes. 1985 marks the first year of Unicrown forks on mass-produced bikes such as Specialized, Schwinn, and Peugeot,

1981 <i>Stumpjumper</i> [®]	
VS.	
1985 <i>Stumpjumper</i> [®] SPORT	
<p>Specifications, 1981 Stumpjumper Suggested retail — \$725 Sizes — 19.5, 21.5, 23 center-to-center Frame — Oversize, double-buttet chromoly Geometry — 67.5 head, 70 seat, 43.75 wheelbase, 18.75 chainstays (21.5 size), 11.875 bottom bracket Stem and bars — BMX-style four-bolt stem with chromoly bars Brakeset — Tommaselli forged levers, motorcycle cables, Mafac brake arches Crankset — TA Cyclotourist triple, 26-36-46 Bottom bracket — TA, (non-sealed) Pedals — KKT Surefoot Derailleurs — Suntour AR Rims — Araya 7x Tires — Stumpjumper knobbies, 26x2.125 Hubs — Suzue sealed</p>	<p>1985 Sport \$499 17.5, 19.5, 20.5, 21.5, 22.6 Oversize, double-buttet chromoly 70 head, 72 seat, 43 wheelbase, 18 inch chainstays (21.5 size), 11.875 bb Aluminum Slingshot Junior stem, chromoly bars Shimano XT, with 19 strand heavy-duty cables Specialized ST-2 Specialized contact sealed Shimano PD-MX 15 forged Shimano Deore XT Saturae X28 Specialized Crossroads, 26x1.5 Specialized sealed</p>

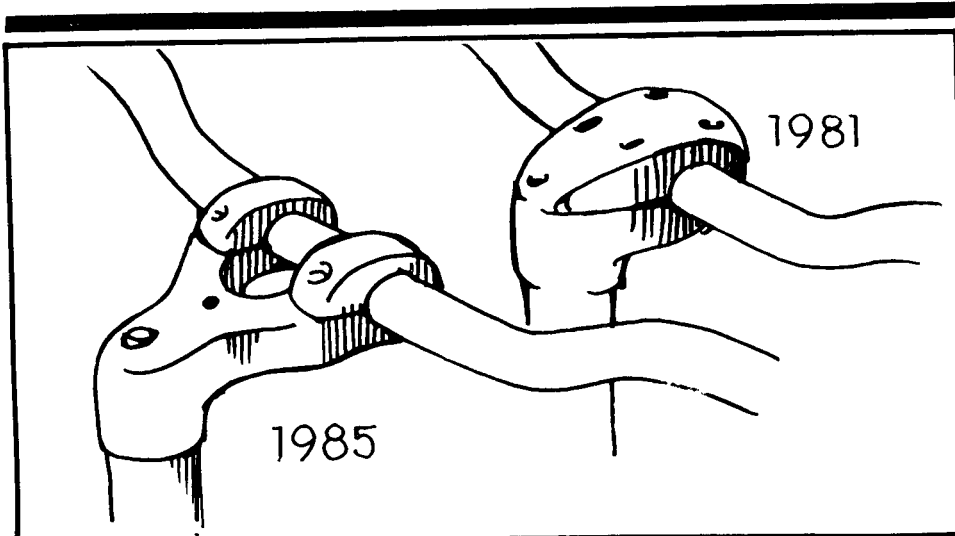
and we predict that virtually all mountain bikes over \$250 will be using crown-less forks by 1986.

Components have changed even more than frames since 1981. The Suntour AR derailleurs of the original Stumpjumper have given way to Shimano Deore XT gear changers —

smooth, you bet! The Deores are better in every way — shifting under load, strength, and moisture resistance. The old, original Suntour thumbshifters that came on the 1981 Stumpjumper have been replaced by the ergonomically-correct Shimano XT shifters, nicer on the thumbs and more likely to facilitate a shift under difficult conditions.

The new melt-forged Specialized crankset on the 1985 Sport is the stiffest and best looking in its class. We have no facilities to check the hardness of the chainrings, though, and it remains to be seen if they wear as well as the chainrings found on the Sugino AT cranks used last year on this bike. The oldest Stumpjumper used the TA triple cranks that set the standard for so much of the seventies. By today's technology, the TA cranks look like antiques, with less stiffness and more rapidly wearing chainrings than most any of the current Japanese forged cranks.

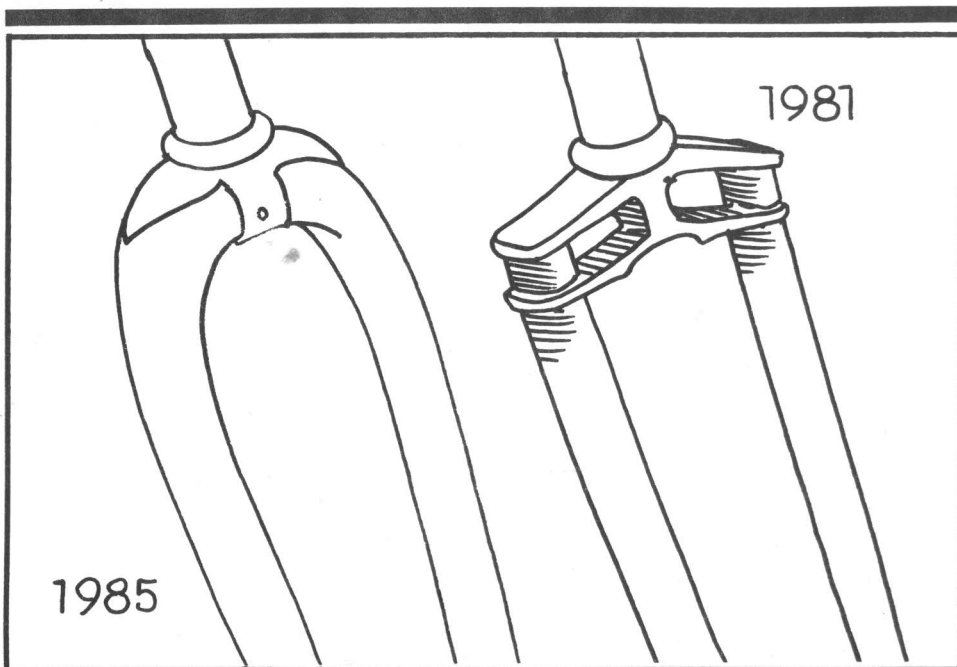
There is no doubting the strength of



the Saturae X28 rims that come on the new Stumpjumper Sport. Unfortunately, there is no doubting the rather high weight of these rims, either. At 620 grams each (not the 590 grams advertised), these rims are about as heavy as aluminum rims get, though they are about as strong as rims get, also. I would have preferred the Araya RM-25 rims at 540 grams or even the Saturae X22 rims at 520 grams, although these latter two rims would be too light for some riders, especially for folks who like to ride on less-protective, narrow cross-section tires. In 1981 the original Stumpjumper came with the quintessential mountain bike rim, the Araya 7x, weighing 610 grams.

The 26x1.5 Crossroads tires that come on the new Sport are the same tires that were designated 26x1.75 tires last year. Something about a lesser tariff on the 1.5 size. Ah, progress. They still weigh just 625 grams each, far less than the 915 grams Stumpjumper knobbies that all the earlier Specialized ATB's once came with. A serious 2.125 knobby obviously has a profound advantage in off-road traction, but a noticeable handicap for rolling resistance on the pavement. Most of our testing was done with the new Grippa 2.125 knobby (885 grams) and the new Ritchey Quad X-C 1.9 (705 grams). We can't get too excited about radical descents using a 1.5 Crossroads tire, but if you deflate to about 25 to 35 pounds and manage not to pinch a tube on a rocky trail, they are acceptable. The 1.5 Crossroads tires cut over a pound and a quarter off the spinning weight of your bike, so for campus cruising and occasional, non-aggressive dirt use, they are a good compromise.

Remember riding off-road with Sun-tour Perfect freewheels? On almost every all day group ride someone's Imperfect freewheel would blow up (actually just disassemble itself) and force a long walk home. The Perfect is more reliable now, but does not compare with the Shimano 600 freewheel used by today's Stumpjumper Sport. The 600 is quiet, smooth, and fairly well sealed. And as reliable as a pet dog. Specialized is into five speed clusters, always has been, due to being able to build a stronger, "dishless" rear wheel with a five speed freewheel on 126 mm spacing. They



also feel that five speed clusters permit better shifting.

So, since we feel that the closer spacing of gear ratios available with a six speed cluster is a greater advantage for the enthusiast than the very slight strength and shifting disadvantages, we added a two millimeter spacer behind the rear axle locknut on the freewheel side, and threaded on a 13x32 six speed 600 freewheel. We had to then dish the rear wheel slightly, but the amount of strength this dishing sacrifices is negligible, and the shifting action seems to be just as positive as before.

Everyone liked the new Lambda saddle by Specialized on the 1985 Sport. Initially it felt a bit firm, but after an hour or two or eight in the saddle, the Lambda was still doing its

job of isolating bumps from the rump, and supporting the soft parts of the anatomy. The sleek, "bumpless" shape of the Lambda is easily the best-looking anatomic saddle going.

We got a kick out of the 1981 Stumpjumper, but by today's standards it is an anachronism. We liked the 1985 Sport far more, even though it retails today for \$499, over two hundred dollars less than the price of the Stumpjumper back in 1981. From the stainless steel WheelSmith spokes to the Specialized crankset, the Sport offers significant improvement over virtually any bike built in 1984 or earlier under eight hundred dollars. For the bulk of the riders in the 500 dollar price range, there is no better value.

Thom Parks

Introducing

Rack Mate



PROTECTS YOUR GEAR AND YOUR REAR FROM MUD AND WATER SPRAY!

GREAT for mountain bikes, touring, and commuting.
SNAPS ON Blackburn, Vetta, and similar racks.
STRAPS ON Pletscher and others with enclosed straps.
SLOTS for panniers and topbags.
LIGHTWEIGHT, only 110 grams.
MADE IN U.S.A. of quality, U.V. protected Hopolymer.

Available Now

Splash Mate
for the front!



\$4.95
Suggested Retail

AT QUALITY
CYCLE SHOPS
NATIONALLY.

Rack Mate

412 N. Maclay Avenue San Fernando, California 91340 (818) 361-3002

What is NORBA?

Glenn O'Dell is the only guy around who knows a word that rhymes with NORBA, and he is not telling. He is also the only guy around who is seeking to further the growth of off-road cycling in an organized, national fashion. Being a full-time fire-fighter in Compton, California is only a slight handicap for Glenn as he seems to be a veritable workaholic when it comes to mountain bike organization. His wife, Chris, is responsible for an increasingly large part of the duties in an association that is more than doubling in size every year.

Herewith is a quote from Glenn about his organization:

"NORBA was formed in January, 1983 to help direct the growth of this new facet of bicycling in a responsible and organized manner. We are now joined with dealers and industry members across the nation to educate the new off-road cycling enthusiast concerning their rights and responsibilities as they venture into the exciting realm of all-terrain bicycle travel. This information is made available through the monthly newsletter **NORBA NEWS**, which also contains a nationwide race and tour calendar and a dealer directory.

"The NORBA functions as the national advocate on behalf of off-road cycling enthusiasts nationwide, to public land managers and recreation use planners. One of the major concerns of NORBA is the continued access and enjoyment of public lands by all outdoor enthusiasts. NORBA is aware of the environmental aspects of

off-road cycling and encourages responsible use of public resources by bicyclists. We encourage the maintenance of, and access to, trails appropriate for the use of bicycles. Your membership in NORBA will help establish a credible user group that public land managers and legislators will respond to.

"NORBA is the national sanctioning organization of off-road bicycle racing, providing liability coverage with a one million dollar policy for races and tours held by dealers, clubs or individual members. By supporting competition, the Association will help improve technical aspects of off-road bicycles to the benefit of all bicyclists.

"The NORBA also provides individual members with \$10,000 of insurance coverage effective 24 hours a day — anytime bicycling."

Glenn then goes on to give a rather standard sales pitch to get you to join what we feel to be a rather keen association for what seems quite cheap — \$18.00 for a 12 month membership. The insurance alone more than justifies the expense, though it covers you only if wearing a helmet.

O'Dell lists the benefits of membership as:

1. Monthly association newsletter — a comprehensive information resource featuring current issues of interest, a nationwide event calendar and a dealer directory.

2. 24 hour — anytime bicycling — accident coverage (secondary insurance) \$5000 — \$100 deductible. (This policy covers you even when riding that once-popular anachronism, the skinny-tired ten-speed. ed.)

3. Accidental death and dismemberment coverage (AD&D) \$5000.

4. Active representation to government land managers and legislators on behalf of all off-road bicycling enthusiasts.

5. Copy of event rules and guidelines.

6. Membership card. (Impress your friends!)

7. NORBA logo decals for your bicycle and window.

Mr. O'Dell finishes with, "We encourage you to join us in shaping the future of this exciting new sport . . ."

It seems to this slightly biased journalist that the monthly newsletter is worth a buck-and-a-half a month alone. And with the risks involved in riding the old fat bike down to the local doughnut hole for caffeine and sugar, the insurance is at the level of Almost Free. These benefits are yours for the price of a Vetta Chain Cleaner and a spare tube. Or, for the price of half a pair of lycra shorts, you can have your own NORBA window decals and \$100 worth of insurance. We here at **The Knobby** are supposed to be rank with objectivity, but NORBA is a cause we appreciate, and therefor include a rather handy membership application below (maybe Glenn will buy us a beer at Fat Tire Bike Week for this . . .):





NATIONAL OFF-ROAD BICYCLE ASSOCIATION INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- Check one: Individual 12 Month Membership Enclose \$18.00
 Individual Membership Outside USA (**newsletter only**) Enclose \$18.00

Send to: **NORBA** • 2175 Holly Lane • Solvang, CA 93463 • Telephone (805) 688-2325

Please print legibly . . .

Member Name: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Phone #: () _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Age: _____ Birthdate: _____ Gender: _____

*** OPTIONAL ***

Check one:

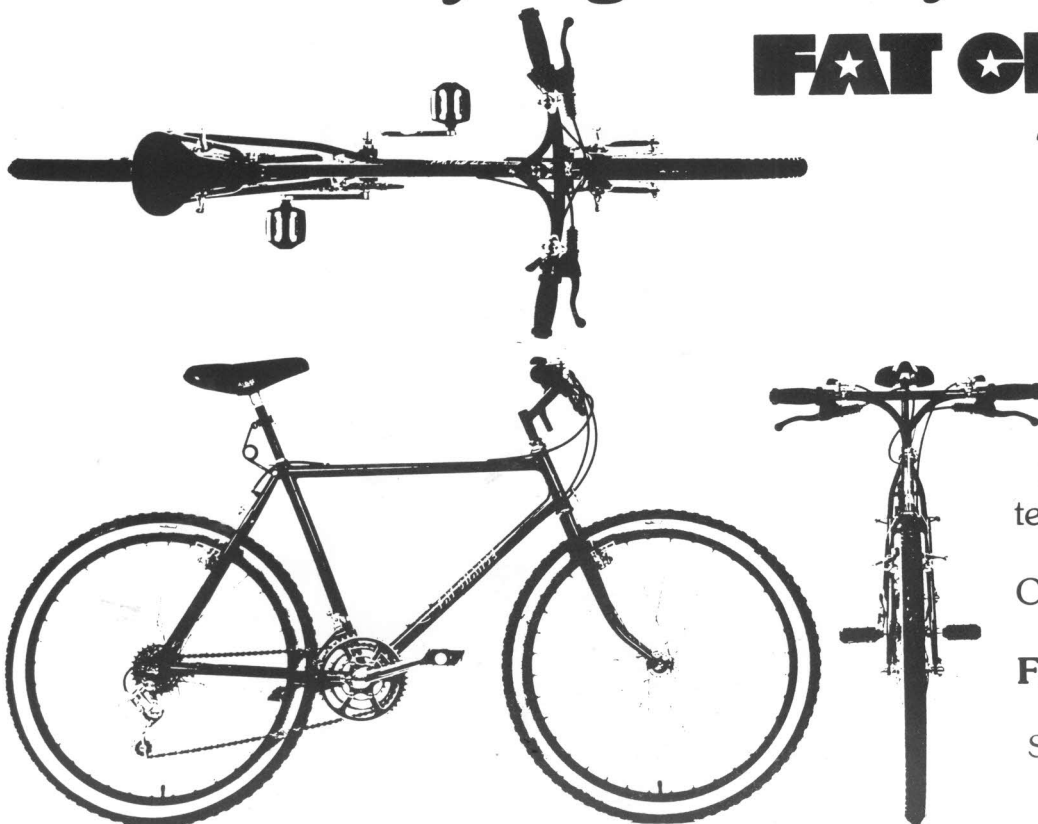
Race Category: Novice Expert Pro/Am Veteran (35 +)

Trial Category: Junior Novice Intermediate Expert Advanced

Here's what you get when you take a —

FAT CHANCE

The ultimately adaptable on & off road fat bike



25-28 lbs. of overfat technology. Handbuilt in America. Take a CHANCE! GET FAT.

FAT CITY CYCLES

331 Somerville Ave.
Somerville, Mass. 02143
617-625-4922

the knobby news

Editorial contributions and photography

The Knobby News welcomes articles on the sport and equipment of mountain bikes, as well as interesting photography of every area of ATB's. The pay is moderate, the exposure unique! Submission of materials is the contributor's warranty that the material is available for publication without infringing on the rights of others. Our lawyer made us write that.



Dave Livingston testing the new Ross powerboat. Photo by Steve Chapman.



**BREEZE & ANGELL
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**

is proud to announce the...



as Standard Equipment for

1985
on



&



**JAMIS.
DAKAR**



**STEVE POTTS
BICYCLES/
SWIFT ENGINEERING**

and more!

ADJUST INSTANTLY



SEAT LOCATING SPRING

- Adjust seat instantly and easily while riding.
 - Push down for control on rugged terrain.
 - Springs up to your most efficient height for cruising.
- Seat always remains centered with frame.
- Mounts quickly.
- Prevents seat theft.
- Fits 90% of quality mountain bikes made.



**BREEZE & ANGELL
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**
P.O. Box 5401
Mill Valley, CA 94942 USA

I'm not as convinced as some that the book, **Mountain Bikes and Me**, (by Jimmy Carter) had as much to do with the fat tire explosion of the late 1980's as most people say. Certainly, the times were ripe. Even the government got into the act in 1986 with paratroop corps equipped with folding ATB's. Indeed, the back-to-nature movement and the need to replace cars with a logical, rugged, commuter vehicle had a bigger role than Mr. Carter's book. But he still seems to get an awful lot of the credit.

Looking back to 1985 and the rather rudimentary state of off-road bikes, I almost have to laugh. Back then, we would look at the all-too-slow evolution of the skinny tire ten speed and presume that the mountain bike would change just as slowly. Boy, were we wrong. They say that the mechanical engineers of the period were primed to put their thoughts and energies into something practical and fun, and it almost became a competition between the U.S. and Japan (and Europe, for that matter) to see who could improve the fat tire bike the most. I guess we all won that competition.

I still enjoy riding my chromoly Ritchey. It is awfully heavy and slow, by today's standards, yet my new Dupont Chem-Dirt 1000 just doesn't have that same "feel." I would never ride my Ritchey on a really long or spirited ride in which I had to keep up with someone on one of these new epoxy-resin hot-rods, though. There is no reason to pedal a steel 27 pound antique up a 12% grade when 15 pounds of plastics and heat-treated titanium can do the job far better. But the old Ritchey is just the ticket for showing off at one of these casual rallies that are becoming so popular nowadays.

It was no easy decision between the Dupont 1000 and the Nissan Shimatour. They both cost about \$2500. The Dupont had the latest Quad crank with a micro inner chainring, but the Nissan had their fabulous shaft drive connected to their infinitely variable gear system. They both featured the Honda Adjustable Length Cranks and had bottom brackets adjustable for height. With the Dupont, though, the dealer was offering one of those new SCP's (Sweatless Cranial Protectors). I sweat like a dog on the long climbs that characterize Colorado riding, and

1995

ATB's in the future

by Sparkey Thompson

an air-conditioned helmet was just the ticket now that they sport those tiny, silent compressors.

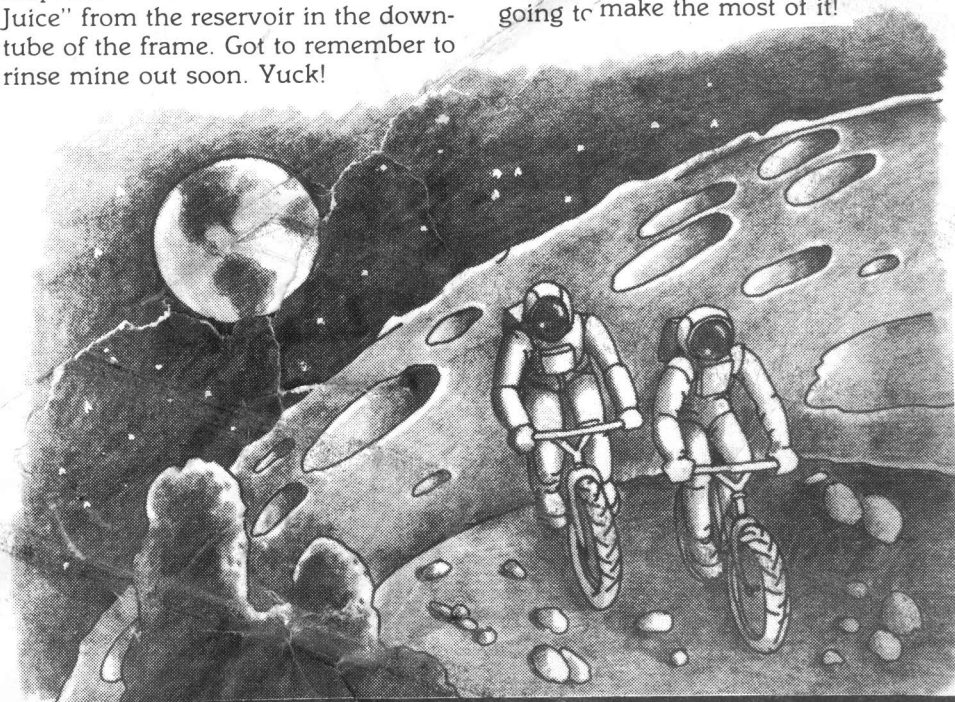
I suppose that I went for the Dupont partially for the way it looked, and partially for the fact that it tested out 3% more efficient on the Cycling World magazine Energy Tester. Three percent may not sound like a lot, but when you are over thirty and the guys you race against average twenty, you go for the faster equipment without much thinking about it.

It takes a couple of weeks to really get the hang of all the controls on the latest off-road bikes. Let's see, twist left grip to operate the hydraulic front disc brake, twist the right grip for the rear brake. Thumb shifters are still like the old days, but much more responsive and now operate at least thirty different gears. The extra thumb shifter on the left operates the Breeze/Angel Easy-Hite, and the twin thumb shifters on the right work the tire pressures. (It used to be easy to ride these things.) The straw coming out of the stem is — surprise! — a straw that draws "Carbo-Juice" from the reservoir in the downtube of the frame. Got to remember to rinse mine out soon. Yuck!

Hewlett-Packard still makes the best cyclo-computers, but frankly, they provide so much information that mine stays unplugged half the time. (Don't tell Olympic coach Joe Murray.) Grade on a hill, pulse, body temperature (I'd never get the model that does rectal temperature, no matter how much more accurate it is!), suggested cadence and gear ratio, current horsepower, etc. Sometimes I don't even want to know how fast I am going.

Obviously, some of the above sophistication has led people to the peace, love, and beansprout approach of the Wooden Woods Bike. Such craftsmanship. Absolutely not a part on it made by machine or chemistry. So beautiful, yet so delicate, and expensive! A lot of the high tech folks say, for fear of breaking it, they Wooden want to ride it. Heh, heh. There is something about wood and steel and real rubber. The Woodens are even more organic than my fourteen year old Ritchey. But most folks can't see putting \$4000 into a mountain bike that weighs over twenty pounds when \$1000 buys a rideable 18 pound Shimizu.

It is time to head out to my quadriceps class, and then to my physiologist to schedule my next performance pulse class. Coach Murray wants us to do a hard ride off-road this afternoon, probably about 150 kilometers, so I better get going. This is bound to be my last competitive season and I'm going to make the most of it!



the knobby news

Box 285
Ft. Collins, CO 80522



DAMAGED IN HANDLING
IN THE POSTAL SERVICE
PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APOLOGY.

Fat Tire Flyer
P.O. Box 757
Fairfax, CA 94930