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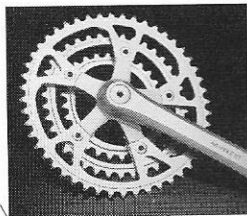
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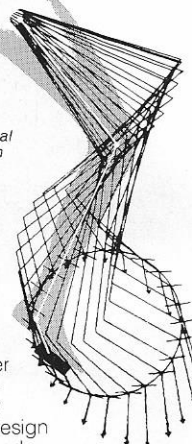
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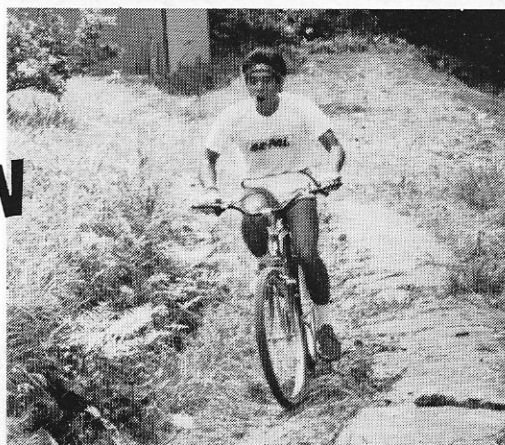
Lake Tahoe State Park, Nevada
Photo by Denise Caramagno



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1984 • VOL. 4, NO. 5

FLYER JETS TO JAPAN

as guests of a Japanese magazine, *Be-Pal*, to cover the story on the first mountain bike race to be held anywhere in Asia.



Charles Kelly

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Editorial

There has been a recent trend toward events that cover many of the different possibilities of mountain bikes with a series of contests that may include a timed downhill, a cross-country race, observed trials and other events which are unique unto themselves. Positive benefits of such a format are that top prizes can be determined for riders who display competence in every aspect of the sport, and at the same time those who are weak at some aspects get a chance to display their strengths in the contests that are suited to their abilities.

We see a loophole in the current rules that specify that competitors must ride the same bike from start to finish in any event, but which don't address the possibility of a rider using several machines for the different types of contests in a series. If prizes depend on a rider's score in several events, we suggest that the rule be extended to say that the rider must use the same bike throughout. The reason for this is that the use by anyone of several bikes would give that rider a significant advantage, and would also put pressure on others to bring several machines each. This would swing all advantage to those who could afford such luxuries. Such a trend flies in the face of the goals of off-road racing, which are in part to develop the best all around machinery rather than a group of machines each built for a different application of off-road racing.

There is no reason for competitors in one or another type of single event not to have bikes set up specifically to deal with conditions.

Bikes are now made or rebuilt especially for downhill races or observed trials, but these machines would likely be ineffective on a long cross-country jaunt. For the sake of the average racer who rides the same bike every day, the rule should be "one prize, one bike."



LAURENCE MALONE leads an unidentified rider past an unusual obstacle at the High Road to China Camp race.

Wende Cragg

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BACK ISSUES

We couldn't possibly take the time to individually answer everyone who has asked about back issues, so we'll do it here. Some issues are out of print and out of stock, never to be seen again except by the fortunate few who subscribed early. We do have available copies of some of our back issues. You will be relieved to know that the price indicated includes postage, which costs us more than the bulk rate we use for your subscription copy. Outside the U.S., add \$1.50 (U.S.) for each copy.

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Fat Feedback

Howdy--

Keep up the great magazine. Excellent article in the May/June issue on the Point Reyes area. To Livingston and Castelli I say, "Amen!" They've got the right attitude. Around here Mt. Biking has finally just "exploded," with too many people on 'em for just the fast ride down. Let's try to prevent motorcycle mentality from tarnishing trail riders' reputation among hikers and non-bikies. Now more than ever we need to present a clean image (and I don't mean "Lycra-mania" that the Ross team displays). Use those sub-20" gears to earn that ride down.

Happy Trails,
Jim King
Rock Creek Lake, CA

Dear FTF,

Just finished reading Tech Tips in May/June '84, and thought some mention should be made of MottsMounts as a way of retrofitting to cantilevers. Mine have given me a year of great service even while crashing down Rocky Mountainsides. And

they were on the bike ridden to NORBA victory by Steve Tilford.

Keep up the good work.

Yours truly,
Mark Hayward
Winnipeg, Canada

Dear Fat Tire Folks;

I would like to find some Fat Tire enthusiasts in central Florida. I have located an old sinkhole (old enough that it's not going to do any more sinking) with several small streams and a multitude of trails winding through the woods. These trails run up and down some fairly steep hills and are a welcome change from Florida's endless flatlands. I would like to find some folks who want to do informal off-road riding. Any interested parties can contact me, Troy Conner, at:

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Thank you,
Troy Conner

To all concerned wilderness cyclists,

The Department of the Interior has informed all National Parks on the status of bicycles on wilderness area trails. The government attorneys have arbitrarily decided to include bicycles as a form of mechanical transport prohibited from using trails within a designated wilderness area. This is an interpretation of a clause in the Wilderness Act of 1964 (section 4(c)) written before mountain bikes existed and obviously directed at motorized vehicles.

Point Reyes National Seashore immediately complied with this D. of I. directive and banned bicycles from wilderness trails without public hearings or fair warning to users and local businesses. They have published a map of bicycle trails remaining in the park that looks good on paper but actually are all short, deadends, rough, windy

and otherwise worthless to any serious cyclist. They have not taken into consideration which trails would be most appropriate for bikes and have outlawed one of the back country's major users and protectors. This directive will affect all wilderness trails within the National Parks system. All concerned cyclists should write their congresspeople and others with influence in the Federal government and demand public hearings and due process before the ban should take effect.

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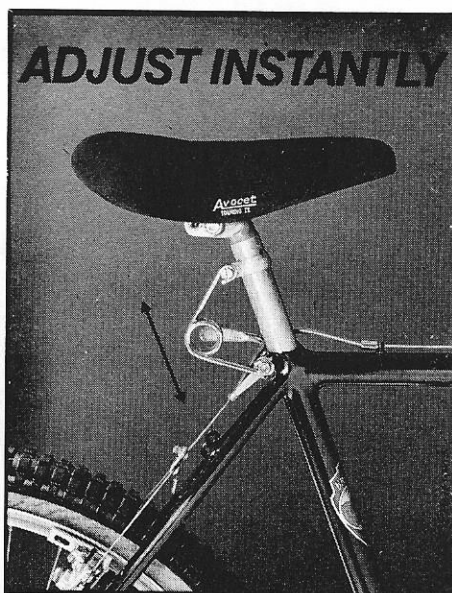


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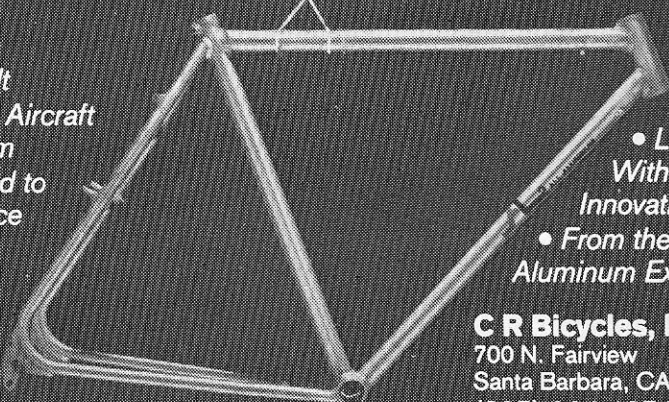
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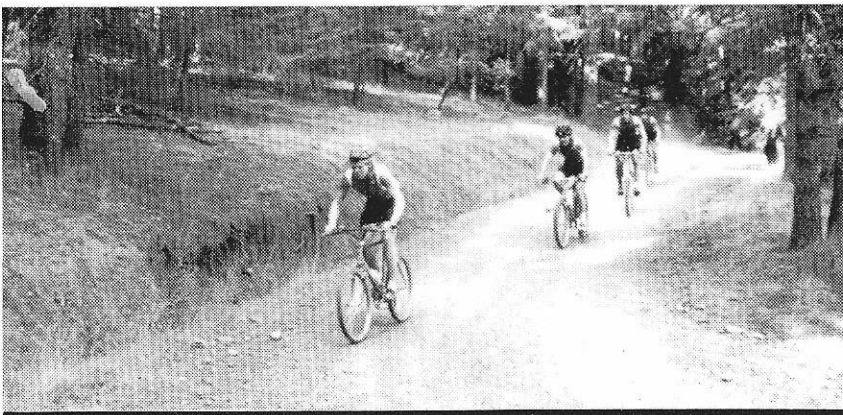
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September 17-23, tour and races; "Fat Tire Bike Week," Crested Butte, CO. Contact: Neil Murdock 303-349-6761

September 22, 23, race; "Canaan Mountain Series," Davis, WV. Contact: Laird Knight 304-259-5606

September 23, race; "Gant Challenge," Chicago, IL. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

September 23, triathlon; "Tri-Cross Off-Road Triathlon," Santa Rosa, CA. Contact: Lynn Woznicki 800-556-6650 or 707-527-2325

September 29, 30, race; "N.O.R.B.A. National Championships" (Site to be announced.) Contact: Glenn Odell 805-688-2325

September 30, race; "Gant Challenge," Los Angeles, CA. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

September 30, race; "Gant Challenge," New York City. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

September 30; "Road Apple Rally," Farmington, NM. Contact: Clifford Clark 505-327-0376

October 6, tour; "Ruff Stuff Rendezvous," Missoula, MT. Contact: Norm Gibat 406-721-0090

October 6, 7, tour; "Buffalo Stampede," Fort Collins, CO. Contact: Dennis Stenson 303-482-3448

October 7, race-tour; "Tour de Bluff," Groton, CT. Contact: Bob Harrington 203-443-8250

October 7, race; "Gant Challenge," Atlanta, GA. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

October 13, race; "Gant Challenge," Miami, FL. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

October 14, race; "Gant Challenge," Tampa, FL. Contact: Joe Sailing 215-967-5171

October 14, race; "Rock Hopper 4-Lungs," Santa Rosa, CA. Contact: Lynn Woznicki 800-556-6650 or 707-527-5864

October 14, race; "Kelly Flats Ain't Flat," Fort Collins, CO. Contact: Thom Parks 303-221-2869

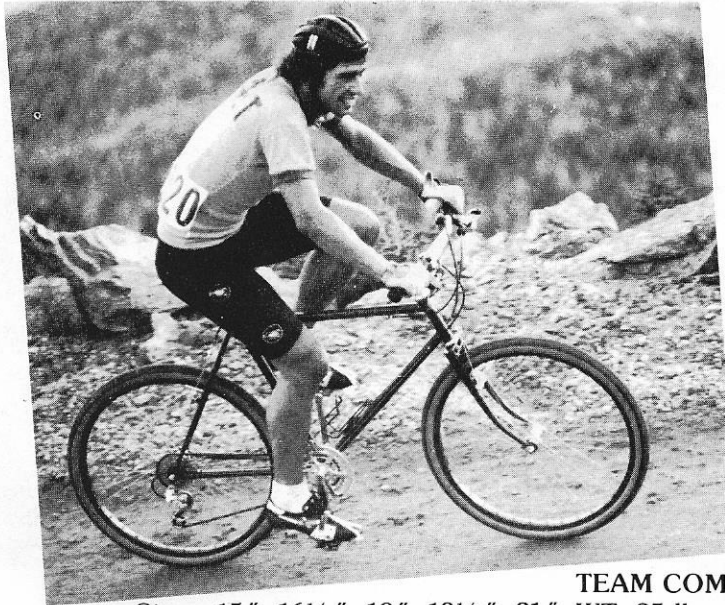
October 21, race; "Mount Lowe," Los Angeles, CA. Contact: Brian Skinner 213-347-0116

October 27, 28, tour and race; "1st Columbus Mountainbike Rendezvous." Sat.-tour, Sun.-race. Contact: Mike at The Bike Shop, Columbus, Georgia 404-324-4567

Observed trials series; "Koenig's Mountain Madness," Helen, GA. Contact: Joe Koenig 404-878-2851

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FLYER JETS TO JAPAN

by SeeKay

During the first week in August your hardworking Flyer staff jammed over to Japan to cover the story on the first mountain bike race to be held anywhere in Asia. The things we do for our readers. In order to properly research the race we had to have a wonderful time, but that was only a side-effect unrelated to our main purpose. Really.

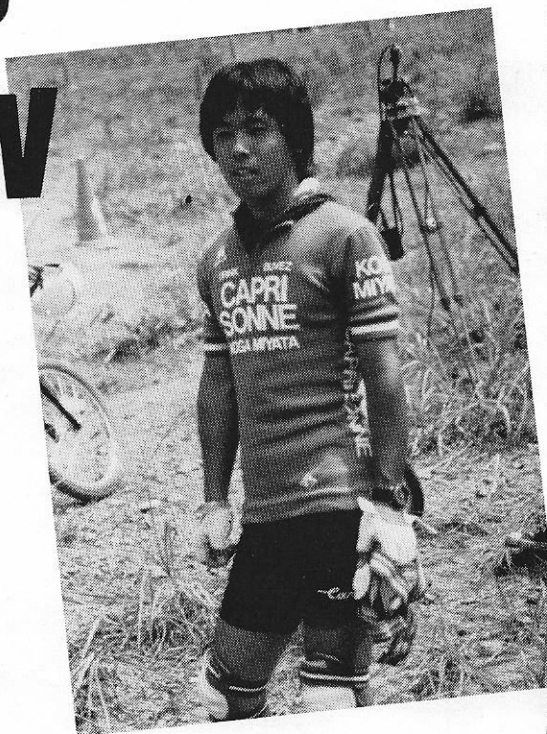
WE (SEEKAY AND DENISE) were guests of a Japanese magazine, *Be-Pal*, as were Tom Ritchey, Dale and Anne Stetina. Our mission, as we understood it, was to help them introduce the concept of mountain bike racing to Japan.

We won't bore you with details of plane flight, met at airport by hosts, Tokyo, nice hotel, tea ceremony, big dinner, interview, hot/humid, subway everywhere, spend three days, finally Bullet Train, 150 miles north, mountains, Minakami. There, that sentence saved you three days.

WE ARRIVED IN MINAKAMI on the afternoon of Friday, August 3. The town is major enough to have the Bullet Train stop there, but it is still a rural area where small farms and truck gardens sprout out of nearly every level or semi-level space. On the steep hillsides there are cleared lanes in the thick forest, where ski lift towers are visible on the steep mountainsides. There is thick, lush grass five feet deep on some slopes, and even though this is a ski area, it is hot and humid. The heat, thick grass, and the gentle singing of one insect in particular that made a chain saw sound like Mozart by comparison, were reminiscent of every jungle movie ever released.

But we digress. We'll skip the accounts of the hot spring baths behind the inn where we stayed or the views from our rooms of the imposing mountains towering over the valley. Our hotel was a mile or so up the hill from town, where the road narrows to one lane and then turns to a path. The inn was a Ryokan, a more traditional kind of lodging than the hotel in Tokyo. Guests parked all their shoes beside the front door, then wore slippers which were stacked near the door, one size fits all (too small).

SATURDAY MORNING GAVE US our first opportunity to really ride our bikes. Dale and I took advantage of our lingering jet-lag which had us all jumping out of bed at five and six in the morning, and took off on the trail leading uphill from the inn. It turned into a stairway to a house and we retraced our path, taking instead the paved road toward Minakami. One



pedal their one-speeds slowly around the towns. No wonder mountain bikers in Japan were ready for a race where the only obstacles were natural.

The last road we explored was a service road for a ski lift line, and we pushed our bikes uphill until the trail petered out. Turning around, we found an excellent trail that had been recently maintained and was perfectly groomed for the quick trip down, evidently a ski trail. At the bottom Dale kept me from becoming a hood ornament by reminding me which side of the road I should be riding on, and sure enough, a car came zooming by seconds after I switched to the proper side. With no shoulder on the road, and lush growth



Photos by Charles Kelly

thing that takes getting used to is the concept of riding on the left side of the road; our instincts are to dodge to the right when we meet vehicles rounding corners. When the driver steers to the same side, it's just like that car ad, "Oh, oh, oh, oh, what a feeling... ([name of Japanese automobile])."

We explored every dirt road we saw leading off the pavement, but each one we tried led to a residence, usually between carefully tended truck gardens where there were women working in the last coolness of the day, which was already beginning to heat up. Riding on the main road we used our off-road capability to dodge a couple of dump trucks where were also on the road early. Although most of the vehicles in Japan, including trucks, are smaller than what we are used to, the roads are also, and we gained a certain amount of respect for the little ladies who

right to the edge of the pavement there isn't much room to dodge.

Breakfast back at the hotel was not the ham'n'eggs American style we had been having in Tokyo. Here it was a traditional meal with fish, rice, a raw egg, pickles, and so on. I'll bet you would rather I talked about bikes.

AFTER BREAKFAST we got together with several engineers and designers from the 3Rensho company, who wanted our opinions on some new and experimental designs they had built. At the same time we were checking out bikes, we were to check out the race course that they were planning to use.

The site was only a half-mile from the inn, on a road Dale and I hadn't tried. When we got there we asked a few questions about how long the race was, and we were more than a little surprised to find that it was a downhill event only, with a dual slalom afterward. Total distance, less than two miles.

WE WERE ASKED by our hosts, "How far do you race?" They were surprised to hear that we raced twenty to thirty miles, having heard mostly of our downhill events. Dale in particular is a distance specialist, having won the Coors Classic recently, and one who considers his mountain bike handling ability a shorter suit for him than strength, was not thrilled by the format, since by this time he was looking for some real exercise, about fifty miles of hard riding.

The bikes we looked at were for the most part not as high-performance as the ones we had brought, three of Tom Ritchey's bikes. Although there were a number of new ideas, some seemed to be elaborate cures for non-existent problems. A couple of good ones: bash-plate under bottom bracket, shield to keep chain from bouncing down between chainstay and tire. A couple of bad ones: strange structural bracings, weird frame designs.

WE TRIED TO BE CIRCUMSPECT about our criticisms. After all, these people were our hosts. We took each bike for a ride before making any comments about the equipment, but we had to confess eventually that we liked our reasonably simple bikes, and as the saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

We tested bikes and checked out the downhill course for an hour or so, then the temperature and humidity reached a point where we felt less and less like testing bikes, so we adjourned for lunch in Minakami. Over noodles and fruit in a small restaurant we decided to spend the afternoon sightseeing in the mountains above the town.

We rode in a van up the hill, on a road that became progressively narrower, winding through lush forests. At an area where a ski tram was running we parked the truck and bought tickets to the top of the mountain, a twenty minute ride in a small car dangling from a cable.

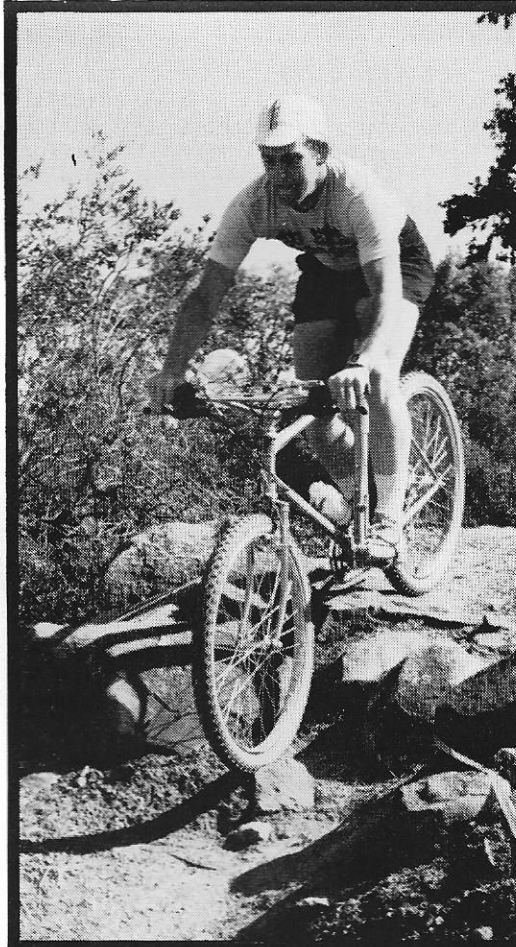
The first thing we saw at the top of the tram was a small group of three mountain bikers riding down a hill to the tram station, and we hailed them when they approached. Through Suzuki, our translator, we introduced ourselves, and at the sound of Tom Ritchey's name their eyes widened. These were some of the riders who would be participating the next day, and they had already seen publicity with our names.

It turned out that the three had found on a topo map what looked to be a passable road from the tramway down to our inn, and they had explored it only to find it washed out and impassable. Now they were folding their bikes up into nylon bags to take back down on the tram.

We abandoned the hilltop when it began to rain, and headed back to the inn for another round of baths before the party that was scheduled for that evening.

At this point I had not yet been issued a bike to use in the races, and late that afternoon Tom and I went to the place a

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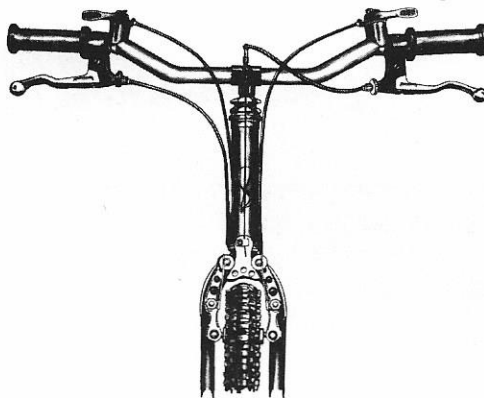
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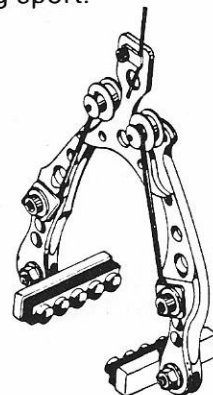


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mile or so from our inn where most of the cyclists were camped. Arriving at another small inn next to the river, we saw a crowd of mountain bikers that would have done justice to any event in the U.S.A., at least a hundred with more arriving. The bike I was to use was on a stand being attended to by no fewer than three mechanics, and as I inspected it, Tom was surrounded by admiring fans.

The mechanics pronounced the bike ready, so I jumped on it for a test spin, and immediately found four or five things that needed adjusting. I returned it with my comments, and once again the mechanics pounced on it. The frame was custom built for Suntour, and the bike was primarily for display purposes. The brakes were the new Suntour/Cunningham power cam, thoroughly adequate to the task, and all the

other equipment was first-rate. I missed my Hite-Rite spring though; in only a few months of using it I had become attached. By now Tom was autographing t-shirts, and I even had to do one (fame by association, no doubt).

ONE THING WE NOTICED at the gathering was the remarkable diversity of bikes; there were more different designs on display than I had ever seen at an off-road event, and it almost looked as though there were no two bikes alike. Although they bore names of manufacturers that were familiar to American riders, many of the bikes were like nothing in the States. Because there are more Japanese riders with short legs they had come up with interesting designs for small bikes; other bikes featured unusual frame bracing or custom treatments.

That night there was a party for all the participants in the MTB Meeting, featuring a Japanese band playing only American hits, and as an extra attraction, the introduction of Five Famous Mountainbikers to the local riders. The band, all wearing cowboy hats and boots, played one last Creedence Clearwater hit, and took a break while we greeted our public. Tom, whose name translates roughly as "To-mu Ritchey-san," was obviously the only name familiar to the crowd, but each of us in turn stepped up and made a brief speech, speaking quickly so that even those in the audience who understood English would not be able to catch the embarrassed mumblings. "Thank-you-very-much, we're very honored, win one for the Gipper, it's not whether you win or lose... it's the thought that counts, do you know me?, this Bud's for you, good night." Wild applause.

The party was still going strong when we left for the short van ride back to the inn and one more dip in the hot spring.

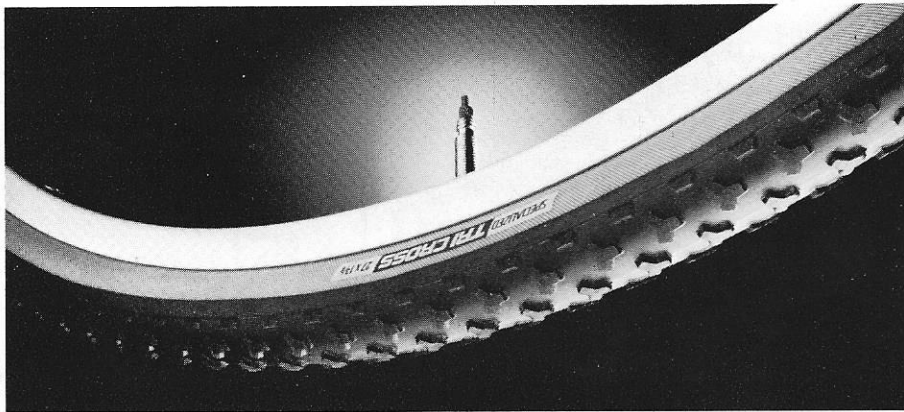
Breakfast was early the next morning because the race began at nine. When we rode up to the race area there were start and finish banners stretched across the road in several places, and more than a hundred riders in a wild variety of fat attire milled about the finish line or trudged up the hill toward the starting line.

A TRAIL HAD BEEN CHOPPED in the thick grass on the steep hillside above the start area, and like ants or perhaps Sherpas struggling up Everest, dozens of people hiked (with and without bikes) toward a flat area several hundred feet above. We didn't know what was up, but everyone seemed to be headed that way, and we joined them, Tom and I carrying our bikes up. The steep climb and the heat and humidity instantly had our shirts wringing wet. When we reached the plateau we found the reason for the gathering: the pre-race speech was given here by one of our hosts, a Mr. Hiraki, then photos were taken, with our small group pushed into the front row for a long series of shots.

After the photo session everyone who had a bike attempted to ride it down to the starting line, with very few successfully negotiating the steep trail. Near the bottom where it was steepest, riders would now and then disappear with a yell into the tall grass, where a rear wheel would surface briefly like the flukes of a sounding whale.

BECAUSE WE WERE EXPECTED to win, we had been told that we would not be awarded any prizes. (The trip was a pretty nice prize anyway.) However, in the event one of us killed himself/herself, they wanted everyone to see it, so we started first. Tom Ritchey drew the first shot, and when he took off down the first steep straightaway the starter almost swallowed his whistle. Dale was supposed to go second, but he was still on his way up the hill, so I lined up for the second start, thirty seconds behind Tom.

The starter was still watching Tom though, and then he looked at his clock



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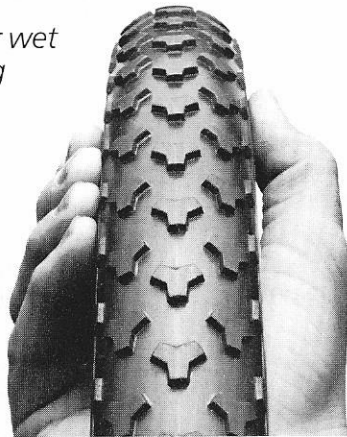
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and said "Go," with no countdown or warning.

"Huh?"

"Five, four, three, ni, ichi...go!"

As I took off I knew I wasn't going to match Tom's derring-do, but with the ability we sometimes have to think about two things at once, I remembered that I wasn't wearing a helmet, gloves, long sleeves or pants, and that I wouldn't get a prize anyway. In spite of not feeling any pressure to perform I managed to spin out on the first sharp turn, which is a slow way to take the turn but looks great in photos. A couple more sharp turns, a few ruts and rocks, a lashing from the plants overhanging the inside lines on the curves, then a stretch of pavement and...wait a minute! Uphill! My mother didn't raise me for this!

The climb was perhaps a quarter of a mile or a little farther. En route to the finish banner I met a truck that filled the little dirt road, then weaved my way between a few hikers before scrambling up the last pitch. At the finish line I collapsed in a sweating, panting heap, and a dozen cameras recorded the results of my poor anerobic conditioning. In a moment someone procured for me a dry t-shirt, and I used my wet one to wipe clean my face and body of the mud of dust mixed with sweat.

Dale needed three attempts to get off the line, as first one thing then another went wrong with his bike. Finally he got a clean run, and his uphill ability made up



Charles Kelly

for any lack of confidence he might have had in this downhill. Denise came in some two minutes ahead of the next woman.

THE DUAL SLALOM started while the downhill was still in progress. Two at a time, riders maneuvered through the cones, and after it became known that one side was faster than the other, one line became twice as long as the other.

An announcer gave the times for the downhill over the P.A. system, and Tom Ritchey was fastest at 4:04. Next was Dale in 4:21, then the first Japanese rider in 4:33. I was sixth, a comfortable half-minute and change back from Tom's mark, and in Slalom I was fifth. By virtue of his convincing time in the downhill and a second in the slalom by only .02 second, Ritchey had the crowd chanting, "Ritchey-san, ichiban" (Mr. Ritchey is number one).

THERE WERE TWO EVENTS at the MTB meeting that probably won't be found at American mountain bike rallies. One was fire-starting using a wooden friction drill or flint and steel, and the other was a contest for maximum time aloft for hand-spun propeller toys. The winners of these were presented to the crowd along with the winners of the races, with appropriate fanfare.

Anne, Denise and I decided that we needed to train more, so that afternoon we boarded the train back to Tokyo. Tom and Dale were falling behind on their weekly minimum mileage, so they decided to ride the 150 mile back over two days. They rolled out of the mountains in the sticky heat of the late afternoon, bound for Honjo, seventy-five miles away.

The next morning at about ten o'clock, Dale and Tom strolled into the hotel at Tokyo. They were forced to take a \$40 taxi ride the last thirty miles because even though they rose early and got on the road by five a.m., the traffic and the heat on the outskirts of the city made it impossible to continue. Suffice to say we didn't see any recreational cyclists in the city during our stay.

TO MAKE A LONG STORY only one paragraph longer, imagine if you will in rapid succession: shuttle bus, customs, airport, plane ride (lousy movie), airport, customs, shuttle bus, jetlag. Home sweet deadline!



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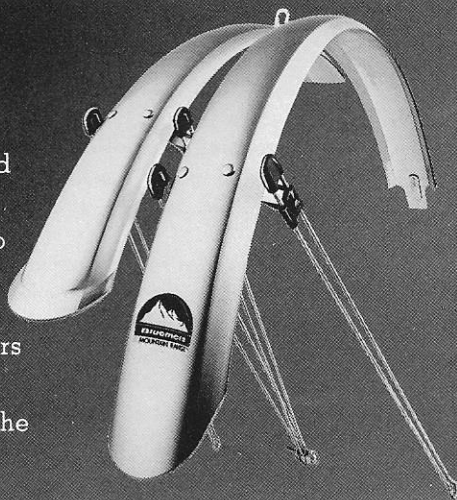
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Editor's note: We like to give our readers the latest results, and this one is pretty late. About a year late. But it's a good story and an example of how first-time promoters can put on a successful event if they plan it adequately. We look forward to learning how to pronounce "Chequomegon," and in exchange for lessons we will teach someone to pronounce our native words, such as "Tamalpais," or "Heineken."

Some things in life are inevitable. So it seemed when the first Chequomegon Fat Tire Festival turned knobby-tired bicycles loose on the logging roads and cross-country ski trails of Wisconsin last September.

I had been bombing around the Chequomegon National Forest for the past ten years on a 50's vintage Peugeot with fat tires. When mountain bikes appeared on the scene it was a new world. With half a dozen local riders tearing around the woods we knew a race had to happen.

In the town of Hayward most important decisions are made in the Moose Cafe. Race Director Dan Hunt called the meeting together there because the cook was Norm Cooper, who had been running cross-country horse races for years. Choosing a tough route between Hayward and Lakewoods Resort in Cable would not be a problem. We wanted to use the American Birkebeiner Trail, one of the world's toughest marathon cross-country ski courses, for part of the route, but to do that we had to get the riders across the Namekagon River. Norm pointed out the locations,

cles. Barricades resembling squat goalposts had been erected at each end to keep the snowmobiles off. On the bridge the rushing river showed through wide gaps where the ties had been pulled out just in case one of the beelers discovered that the barricades were not chainsaw-proof.

And then there was the Troll. At the far end of the bridge we could see a small figure with a cane, leaning across the barricade. Leaving the bikes, we picked our ways across, stepping from tie to tie and balancing on the stringers over the gaps.



CHEQUOMEGON FAT TIRE FESTIVAL

by Phil Van Valkenberg

"There's the old railroad bridge, or you can try the place where we ford the horses." As chief of the course I was assigned to check them out.

Our media expert, Tom Kelly, had lined up a local brewery as a sponsor as well as Specialized and Bikes Ltd. in La Crosse. Other bike shops got behind the event with more prizes. The Hayward Lions volunteered to handle the first food stop, and the members of the Chequama Mamas Bicycle Club who had not yet gotten mountain bikes would take care of the other two. The only bad news was the printing bill for the brochures, \$300, but there was no time left to do anything about it and at least the promotional piece looked great.

We still had to find a way across the river, so Dan and I got on our bikes and headed down the railroad grade. Ahead the rusting iron framework of the bridge grew steadily larger, until we could see a plaque reading "Chicago and Northwestern 1901" along with some rather formidable obsta-

cles. Glancing up now and then we could see that the little man with the grey crewcut was smiling through a couple of missing teeth as he waited for us to get within earshot. "They should have taken this bridge out before they pulled up the track, the damn fools," he started out. Ten minutes later we were stepping back a little faster than before, as his monologue faded in the distance. We decided to take a look at the ford.

The steep run down to the river where Norm ran the horses was overgrown, but it looked wide enough to get through with a good run. The only way to test it was to try it, so I went barreling down the trail into the river. The water was high enough to wet a horse's belly, and after churning the pedals for about ten feet I hit a slippery rock with my front wheel; I found myself fighting the swift current and clinging to a bike that was trying to head downstream. It looked as though we would have to cross on the Hospital Road bridge, riding on a disgustingly smooth stretch of pavement.

The character of the course got a little shot in the arm a little further up the railroad grade; at Mosquito Brook a bike could easily get around the barricades and all the ties were still in place on the trestle. Alongside the bridge there was a path, and the bottom of the shallow stream was smooth enough for a rider to get across. With two good ways to get across we decided to put up arrows pointing both ways and let the riders decide.

On race day as competitors lined up for the start of the Chequomegon 40, the question on everyone's mind was not who would cross the finish line first, but what

kind of bike would he be on. Most of the riders were astride mountain bikes, but a few were on cyclo-cross bikes, including Minneapolis' Gregory Barkley, winner of the 90 mile Tour de Courte Orielles road race that spring. The course and forty miles would answer the question.

A few minutes at a Hayward City Council meeting had secured us permission to close down the main street for the start. The clear morning witnessed a lineup of lean, well-muscled bicyclists from four states at the start in front of Hayward's antique storefronts. Police stopped traffic on the highway, and the pack rolled out escorted by a squad car to the edge of town and the riders' first taste of dirt.

At Mosquito Brook only one rider opted for the water crossing, and as he struggled back onto the grade he found himself next to the same rider he had been with when he headed for the stream. The pack riding and drafting was about to end as the racers swung onto the matted clover and rye grass surface of the Birkenbeiner Trail. Up ahead the Hayward Lions scrambled to get the first food stop ready before the leaders shot out of the woods.

The race had become a shoulder-to-shoulder duel between Barkley and Jeff Peterson, a former motorcycle racer. The drafting and careful metering of energy had given way to a contest with the final sprint to an ever further finish line, an all-out anaerobic struggle with riders trading half-wheel advantages until Barkley found himself on the ground after his first fall of the day.

I was using a Honda ATV three-wheeler as a pace vehicle and this one-man break became a two-man contest again at times as his relentless drive made it tough for me to stay ahead. Peterson was never off his 38-tooth middle chainwheel and only off the bike once on a steep and sandy slope. Toe clips helped his stay-with-the-bike commitment.

After working steadily higher the route left the Birkie trail and funneled down a narrow fire lane, giving the racers their ration of mud followed by long, fast, cobbled downhills with sand washouts at the bottom making for some excited fish-tailing. Up the other side there were more cobbles, this time a rocky maze to be picked through by riders grunting along in low gear. After losing all the altitude that had been gained the course turned back onto the Birkie trail climbing up to the top of the fire tower hill. After a full-blast descent under a canopy of trees the riders turned onto another sandy, cobbled fire road for the last miles to the finish at Lakewoods.



The way Peterson was riding only a calamity could have kept him from taking home the first prize. His astounding 2:54:10 was climaxed by a triumphant wheelie across the finish line. Five minutes later mountain bike-equipped Shannon Reitan crossed the line, followed another seven minutes back by Barkley. Barkley had counted five falls, and announced that he would be back on a fat-tire bike in '84.

The top fifteen riders finished within an hour of Peterson's time. In the closest finish of the day Mark Stuttgen, who had just returned from a 65th place in Paris-Brest-Paris the week before, edged Steve Chase and Dennis Kruse out of seventh place by a two-second margin. His performance was made more dramatic by his method of arrival. Stuttgen had been running and coasting since his chain had broken five miles from the finish. The cheering that began when he came running into sight turned into yelling and screaming when the two other racers wheeled around the corner. Stuttgen's sprint held up and he crossed the line in 3:31:20. Jill Scott, a professional ice skater from Duluth, Minnesota, was the first woman to finish in 4:49:53. Scott Caldwell, who had set out to tour the course and enjoy the ride did just that and picked up the last place finisher award in 6:30:19.

While the last riders trickled in and the beer began to flow, competitors prepared for the Lakewoods Criterium, a six lap, two mile event featuring a jump. The mood of the crowd turned from passive to rowdy when I did a demonstration lap and landed head-first coming off the jump. Chris Rogers, a victim of chain failure who had not finished the 40, made up for his previous showing by taking the race in 11:05. He was followed by Jeff Peterson, 34 seconds behind in a popular performance, and by fourth-place 40 finisher Bill Kraemer, another 20: seconds back. Rogers went home with the first place prize, but wished he had invested a little more money in metallurgy, as six times over the jump had given his bike a new fork rake.

The finale of the Fat Tire Bike Festival took place the next morning with the Rough Stuff Rendezvous, a bicycle orienteering event. Competitors were started at one-minute intervals on a maze of National Forest roads, fire lanes, X-C ski and snowmobile trails, using a map and compass to locate four checkpoints. The event produced some great "blind leading the blind" pack riding and Keystone Kops scenes with riders shooting past each other in different directions. Mike Gerke of Depere, Wisconsin, got it right the first time to win with a time of 52:04, and Georgia Shaw of Seeley, Wisconsin, took the women's division in 2:06:56.

At the awards ceremony we got a chance to get acquainted with some of the competitors and ask then what motivated them to come all the way out here for the Fat Tire Festival. Many responded that at first they hadn't believed it was for real, but the brochure looked so good that they thought the race would be too! The brochures may have been expensive, but it was money well spent.

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Charlie Kilby

JOE MURRAY GOT HIS MOJO working, and he was mo' Joe than anyone could handle at the Suntour Pacific States Series Championship held at Briones Park in the Berkeley Hills. Four laps of a 6.6 mile course, 1600 feet of climbing a lap for the Pro-Ams, going for a share of \$2000 cash, as in spending, money. The course included every kind of technical climbing and descending, and the weather was perfect for racing, a cool overcast as can only happen in the Bay Area in the summer and a relief from the 100 degree heat at some of points races held on previous weekends.

One section of the race course especially separated bikes from riders and reduced the pace to a trudge; the infamous "Wall," where the course climbs some 350 feet in less than half a mile. Downhill sections were fast and steep, varying from narrow trails to wide-open, fast roads.

Joe Murray exhibited patience and poise while he allowed others to push the pace, content to stay with the lead group as it steadily diminished. On the first lap it was Gavin Chilcott, Steve Cook, Roger Marquis, Ned Overend, and Murray in the lead group. On the second lap Marquis fell back on the climb, and on the third lap Overend, then Cook lost contact. Murray and Chilcott rode into the last lap with Chilcott ahead by a few seconds.

Joe Murray describes what happened on the Wall. "We were both pushing our bikes, and Gavin was just ahead of me. We were catching a lapped rider from the Novice race, and Gavin yelled for him to get out of the way; the guy moved over, but when Gavin went by him, he hit his knee on the pedal of the other bike. I don't think it really hurt him, but it kind of shook him up, and that's when I went past."

JOE KEPT ON "GOING PAST," and at the finish he held nearly a two-

minute lead over Chilcott. Another minute and change back was Overend, who re-passed Cook and nipped him at the line by two seconds. Marquis rolled in fifth, four and a half minutes off the winning pace.

Although Murray was the winner of the Championship event, Overend was the winner in points standing for the series, which also included eight preliminary races held the two previous weekends. His eighteen points for third place in the main event, plus thirty-nine earned with three firsts and a second in the preliminaries, gave him 57, two ahead of Gavin Chilcott, who won two preliminaries with a second and a fourth place. Murray won one preliminary, and had appeared to win another but was disqualified for taking a teammate's bike when he had a flat tire.

Joe did all right at the box office though, collecting \$1000 for riding Suntour equipment in the big race, with another \$190 in other prizes. Second place money finisher was Overend with \$800 in earnings, then Chilcott with \$600.

BY MOST ACCOUNTS the Fresno qualifier for the Series was one of the most disorganized events ever, and most of the riders got lost on the course. The race was finally shortened because so many were lost. Others of the qualifying events received high marks from riders, especially the Redding race, organized by Whiskeytowners Gary and Bonnie Larsen.

Suntour Pacific States Series Overall Points Standings

		Points
1. Ned Overend	Unatt.	57
2. Gavin Chilcott	Team Stumpjumper	55
3. Laurence Malone	Team Stumpjumper	47
4. Roger Marquis	Team Ritchey	35
5. Todd DeAngelis	Unatt.	32
6. Joe Murray	Fisher MtnBikes	30
7. Jim Deaton	Unatt.	26
8. Jim Harlow	Ross Indians	26
9. Steve Cook	Suntour	25
10. Kye Sharp	Unatt.	23

Championship Race (28 miles)

1. Joe Murray	Fisher MtnBikes	2:03:31
2. Gavin Chilcott	Team Stmpjump	2:05:33
3. Ned Overend	Unatt.	2:06:46
4. Steve Cook	Suntour	2:06:48
5. Roger Marquis	Team Ritchey	2:08:03
6. Laurence Malone	Team Stmpjump	2:09:43
7. Sean Storm	Ross Indians	2:11:00
8. Kye Sharp	Unatt.	2:11:28
9. Todd DeAngelis	Unatt.	2:12:50
10. Casey Kunselman	Ibis Cycles	2:13:14

Race Reports

This is a pretty dry area of the FLYER race statistics with none of the drama and agony we know went on. If you've read this far without falling asleep, we'll reward you with a quote from David Copperfield. We'd bet you didn't know Dickens was an off-road rider.

"Ride on! Rough-shod if need be smooth-shod if that will do, but ride on! Ride on over all obstacles, and win the race!"

Sunshine's Off-Road Series, Anchorage, AK, June 14, 1984

20 KM

1. Brent Trimble	47:1
2. Scott Oberbreckling	48:2
3. John Anderson	50:0
4. Raymond Clayton	51:5
5. John Pennimont	52:2
10. Debbie Strand	60:0
12. Michael Ridgeway	64:4
13. Jennifer Newell	66:0

10 KM

1. Mike Roebuck	26:2
2. Tom Crenshaw	26:2
3. Time Neale	27:1
4. Brad Ross	27:3
5. Jeff Owens	27:4
6. John Newell	27:5
7. Paul Herbert	29:3
9. Beth Bereman	30:3
10. Julie Siever	30:3

Sun Mountain 25 Mile Race, Winthrop, WA, June 16, 1984

20 RIDERS

1. Rob Collins	2:08:3
2. Don Portman	2:30:3
3. Jay Lucus	2:36:3
4. Neil Whitman	2:38:0
5. Jim Kitchell	2:39:3
6. Pat Sterns	2:40:3
7. Mike Goss	2:50:3
8. Ted Reese	3:03:3
9. Jim Devine	3:15:3
10. Don Schmidt	3:16:3

17 MILES

1. Sara Laney	2:31:3
2. Alicia Simmons	2:37:3

Mountain Madness Tray Hill Race Helen, GA, June 28, 1984

15 MILES

1. Russell Hall	1:16
2. Gary Robertson	1:18
3. Gene Dixon	1:21
4. Michale Fain	1:29
5. Chris Fahey	1:31
6. David Sclater	1:31

Rage in the Sage
Crested Butte, CO, June 14, 1984

2 LAPS

1. Steve Cook	1:38:25
2. Dave Meyer	1:41:15
3. Tracy Smith	1:42:11
4. Tom Bielfeld	1:45:09
5. Wes Williams	1:46:46
6. Scott Brown	1:50:34

1 LAP

1. John Armstrong	56:16
2. Mark O'Neill	58:18
3. Pete Barbagallo	59:46
4. Jeff Pflieger	1:00:33
5. Joe Smith	1:02:12
Jill Barr	1:14:20

Kincaid Challenge
Anchorage, AK, June 28, 1984

18 KM

1. Les Matz	42:43
2. Brent Trimble	44:20
3. Scott Oberbreckling	44:39
4. Tim Kelley	46:01
5. Ray Clayton	46:38
10. Julie Sievert	56:33
11. Debbie Strand	58:40

10 KM

1. Tom Crenshaw	23:30
2. Stace Moon	23:31
3. Tim Neale	24:48
4. Don Sage	26:07
5. Dennis Gallean	26:29
6. Ken Blue	26:30
7. Larry Muehlhausen	26:39
8. Beth Bereman	27:55
9. Kristen Wilson	29:10
10. Marsha Bandy	30:07
11. Barbara Newell	35:06

Whiskeytown Downhill
Redding, CA, June 3, 1984

1. Joe Murray	2:54:56	Pro-Am
(Fisher MtnBikes)		
2. Steve Cook (Suntour)	2:55:55	Pro-Am
3. Gavin Chilcott	3:05:06	Pro-Am
(Team Stumpjumper)		
4. Todd DeAngelis	3:05:58	M Expt
5. Mark Michel	3:08:55	Pro-Am
(Team Stumpjumper)		
6. Dave McLaughlin	3:09:38	Pro-Am
(Team Stumpjumper)		
8. Charlie Cunningham	3:13:41	M Vet
21. Jeff Gilmore	3:24:10	M Nov
54. Jacquie Phelan	3:51:53	W Expt
70. Lea Brooks	4:05:59	W Expt
95. Lynne Cooper	4:31:04	W Nov

Lake Tahoe State Park
Mountain Bicycle Race,
Incline Village, NV, August 11, 1984

24 MILES

1. Joe Murray (Fisher MtnBikes)	2:03:35
2. Rober Marquis (Team Ritchey)	2:06:22
3. John Loomis (Fisher MtnBikes)	2:09:03
4. Max Jones	2:13:51
5. Chris Mahanna	2:12:52
6. George Theobald	2:17:07
7. Don Davis (Ross Indians)	2:18:29
8. Kurt Kabica	2:21:07
9. Rob Nilsen	2:25:30
10. Joe Breeze (Breeze Industries)	2:31:01

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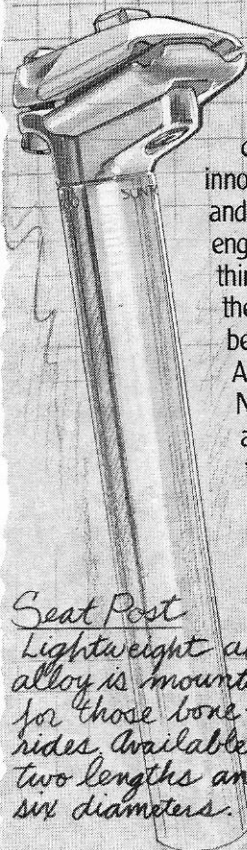
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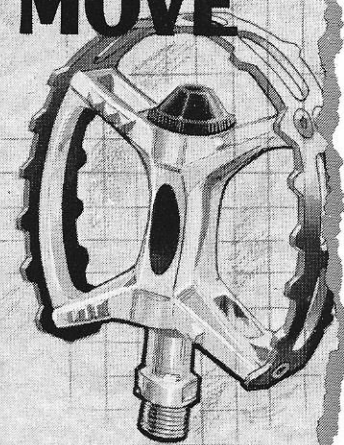
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MUDPUP DOES HIS CIVIC DUTY

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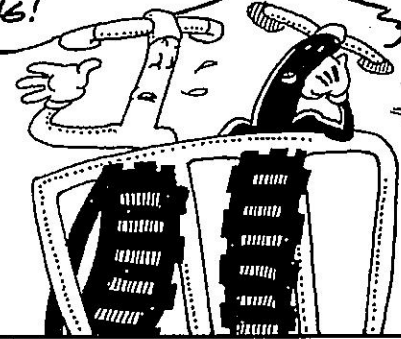
LET'S TIE THE PONIES UP A MINUTE, O'TOOLE - I WANNA CHECK OUT THAT BIKE SHOP ACROSS THE STREET -



LOOKS LIKE FUN!

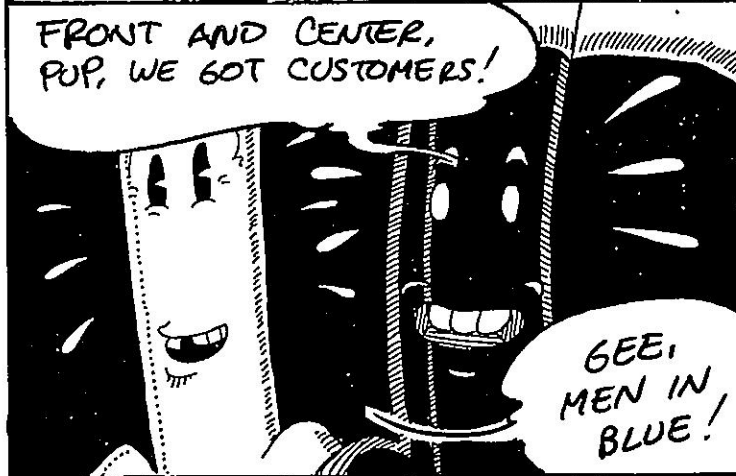
I'M TELLIN' YA, GOAT, IF BIZNESS DOESN'T PICK UP SOON I GOTTA GET ANOTHER 616!

MAINTAIN TIRES OR RENT HERE



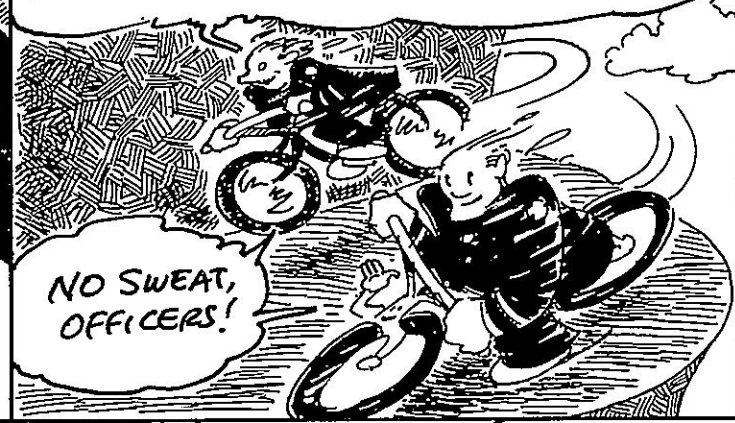
I HEARD THAT!

FRONT AND CENTER, PUP, WE GOT CUSTOMERS!



GEE, MEN IN BLUE!

WHEW! STEADY NOW, BOYS!

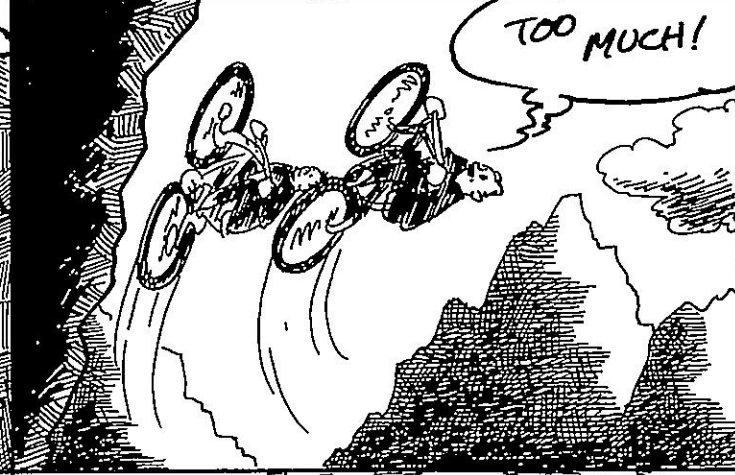


NO SWEAT, OFFICERS!



WHOA!!

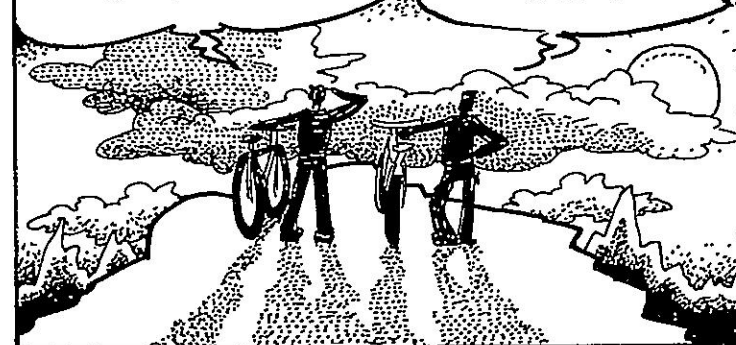
Wow!



TOO MUCH!

Y'KNOW, THE CHIEF WOULDN'T BELIEVE THIS!

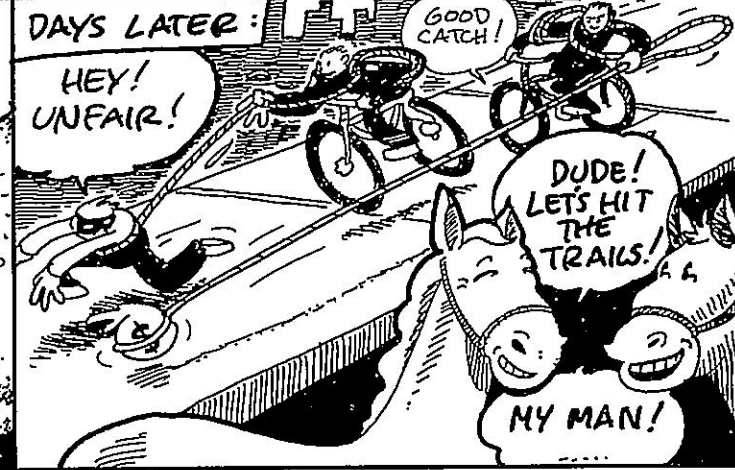
THAT GIVES ME A GREAT IDEA!



DAYS LATER:

HEY! UNFAIR!

GOOD CATCH!



DUDE! LET'S HIT THE TRAILS!

MY MAN!

TO THE TOP DOWN UNDER

Editor's note: Treadley Trev organizes mountain bike adventures in the north (or top bit) of Australia. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 5092, Cairns 4870, Australia.

Someone from the land of hordogs, apple pie and ketchup said that Australia is a lot like America, only the clocks have been turned back thirty years. (Expletive deleted!) We just do things a bit differently Down Under. For a start there are no Fat Tire Flyers. Tire is what happens if you ride too far or too fast, which doesn't happen all that often here. The pace of life is on the slow side. More Fat Tyre Ramblers than Flyers. Most of us leave the racing to the yachtsmen (Our fellas can thrash your fellas any day!). We use the other side of the road here, which is only of academic interest to any dinkum Fat Tyre Rambler.

But you blokes take the cake with your mountain bikes. We don't even have any proper mountains. The biggest pimple on our landscape is only 7000 odd feet high. But we aren't overloaded with freeways either. Most of our highways make skinny tires an endangered species. There are ruts in our roads that make the Grand Canyon look like a gum tree shadow.

And while we're doing the geography lesson: Australia is a fairly big place, about 8.62835 zillion times the area of Marin County. Most Aussies live in the bottom right corner, leaving the rest of the country for the kangaroos, cattle, and Fat Tyre Ramblers. The north (or top bit) has some pretty wild terrain, as eight FTR's recently discovered.

These intrepid adventurers pedaled through 700 miles of tropical rain forests, swamps, and semi-desert to Cape York, Australia's northerly tip.

From Cairns we turned our mountain bikes inland to the abandoned Palmer River gold fields. A century ago 100,000 gold-hungry miners flocked from the four corners of the globe to make their fortunes. Many left their bones instead, victims of fever, cannabalistic aborigines, and rum. The only traces of all their blood, sweat and tears are a few ghost towns, some rusting mine machinery, and our track, hand-hewn from naked granite. What men do for gold! Few have ventured here since the last bullock team struggled through. We saw no one for three days. Where once there was gold in them thar hills, now there are just ghosts.

Up and over the rugged Great Dividing Range to the sandstone gorges of Quinkan Reserve and its ancient aboriginal rock art galleries. Countless generations painted ochre murals of themselves, the animals they hunted, their totemic and spiritual beings. A poignant relic of a decimated culture. Another triumph for western civilization.

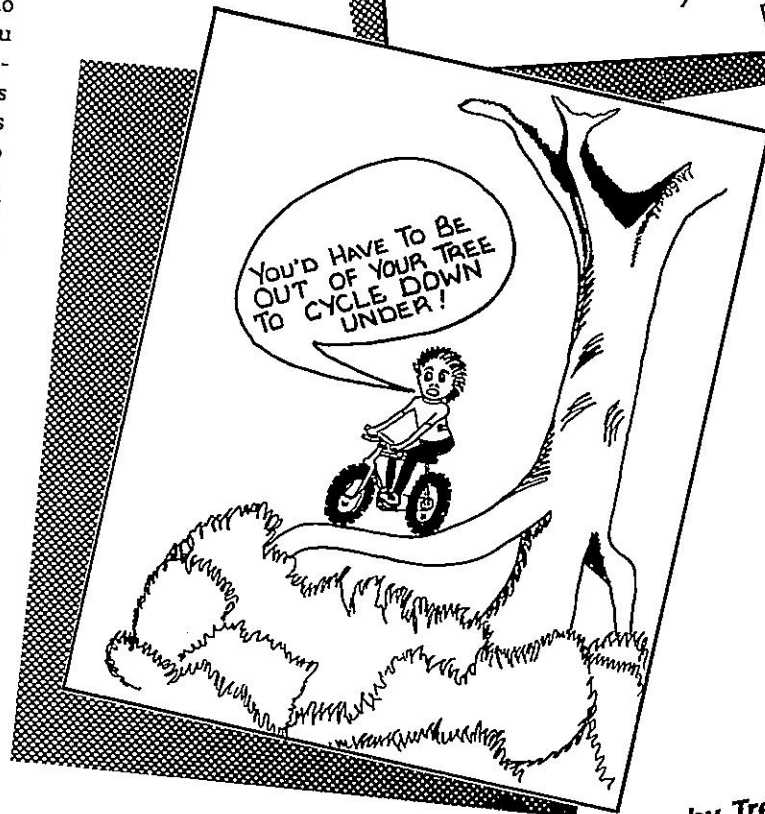
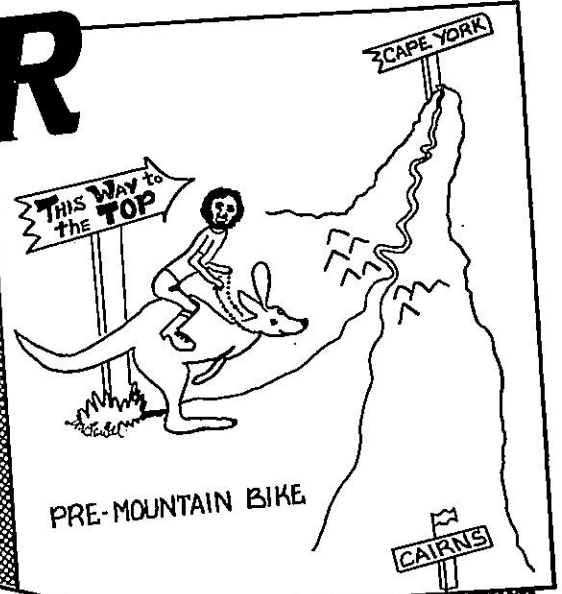
Continuing northward we pedaled into Lakefield National Park, 20,000 square miles of coastal swamp and lagoons teeming with bird life. And crocodiles! Eight dusty cyclists reluctantly postponed their swimming program.

The track led us through anthills and eucalyptus forests, by shady billabongs and crystal-clear creeks, the life-blood of a sun-burnt land. Many times we slung our bikes

over our shoulders to cross fast moving streams before stripping off and diving in. While the pioneers sought to keep their gunpowder dry (cannibals!) we were more concerned with wheel bearings. We need not have worried. While four-wheel-drives fell by the wayside, our mountain bikes rambled on regardless.

An old weather-worn stockman offered to trade his horse. "I reckon these newfangled machines would go all right mustering cattle. No straying at night, either." But what would a FTR do with a hayburner?"

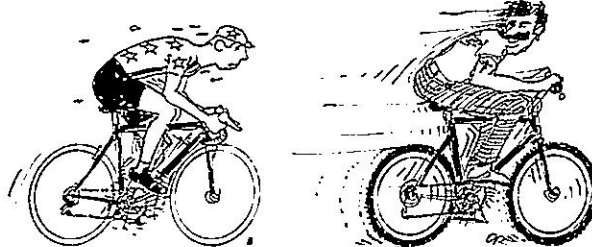
Progress was finally halted by the Torres Strait. We had run out of Australia, we were ON TOP DOWN UNDER.



by Treadley Trev

GET THEE BEHIND ME!

by "Bicycle Jones"



Let's face it, a lot of the riding we do is in our second-favorite environment: civilization, with paved roads, traffic, and worst of all, uppity riders on skinny-tire (or "off-dirt") bikes. Obviously, these riders haven't tried Fat Tires, because if they

had, they wouldn't be riding anything else, ne c'est-pa? Granted, we all want to show them the error of their high-pressure existence, but many road riders are unapproachable on the subject. They don't want to hear any discussions about how much

Editor's note: This was contributed by Trevor Strickland, who says, "Off-road cycling has been an Australian tradition for generations." Here is a poem by Banjo Patterson, the man who gave the world "Waltzing Matilda."

MULGA BILL'S BICYCLE

'Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that caught the cycling craze;
He turned away from the good old horse that served him many days.
He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen;
He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine.
And he wheeled it through the door, with air of lordly pride
The grinning shop assistant said, "Excuse me, can you ride?"

"See here, young man," said Mulga Bill, "from Walgett to the sea,
From Conroy's gap to Castlereagh, there's none can ride like me.
I'm good all round at everything, as everybody knows,
Although I'm not the one to talk--I hate a man that blows.

"But riding is a special gift, my chiefest, sole delight.
Just ask a wild duck can it swim, a wild cat can it fight.
There's nothing clothed in hair or hide, or built of flesh or steel,
There's nothing walks or jumps or runs, on axle hoof or wheel,
But what I'll sit, while hide will hold and girths and straps are tight;
I'll ride this here two-wheeled concern right straight away at sight."

'Twas Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk, that sought his own abode,
That perched above the Dead Man's Creek, beside the mountain road.
He turned the cycle down the hill and mounted for the fray,
But ere he'd gone a dozen yards it bolted clean away.
It left the track, and through the trees, just like a silver streak,
It whistled down the awful slope towards the Dead Man's Creek.

It shaved a stump by half an inch, it dodged a big white-box;
The very wallaroos in fright went scrambling up the rocks,
The wombats hiding in their caves dug deeper underground,
But Mulga Bill, as white as chalk, sat tight to every bound.
It struck a stone and gave a spring that cleared a fallen tree,
It raced beside a precipice as close as close could be;
And then, as Mulga Bill let out one last departing shriek,
It made a leap of twenty feet into the Dead Man's Creek.

'Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that slowly swam ashore;
He said, "I've had some narrer shaves and lively rides before,
I've rode a wild bull round a yard to win a five-pound bet,
But this was sure the derndest ride that I've encountered yet.
I'll give that two-wheeled outlaw best; it's shaken all my nerve
To feel it whistle through the air and plunge and buck and swerve.
It's safe at rest in Dead Man's Creek--we'll leave it lying still;
A horse's back is good enough henceforth for Mulga Bill."

fun fat tires are or about how great any-
one's fat bike handles. What it come down
to is there is no way to convince a stubborn
off-dirt except with heavy artillery: he has
to be blown out of the water in his own
environment, the road, by someone on a
fat tire bike.

Given that road bikes have advantages
on their own natural, uh, artificial turf,
this feat should be impossible. But road
riders have hangups and weaknesses that a
cagy fat-tire rider can exploit in the name
of a noble goal, i.e. getting that turkey
onto something fat. It's just a matter of
getting the road cyclist to play your game.

Here's a typical encounter: a fat tire
rider is on his way somewhere to take a
real ride, using the paved surfaces due to
an absence of alternatives when suddenly
he is joined by a 43-year old junior execu-
tive who makes \$63,000 a year and writes
part of it off on a hand-built, super record,
custom painted Italian bicycle built by a
man who is a Living Legend. The execu-
tive rides his bicycle twice a week to his
aerobics class and claims it as a medical
expense. This rider is wearing a jersey with
a world champion's stripe and the name of
an Italian manufacturer of bug repellent in
seven tasteful neon colors. He is wearing
black cycling shorts which assure the world
that his legs are from Campagnolo.

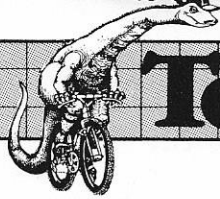
The skinny-tired road rider makes a
remark to the effect that, "Your bike looks
like fun. I'll see you later," and attempts
to accelerate away. But every time he
sneaks a look in the mirror on his helmet,
the pesky, insolent mountain biker is
camped out three feet back, looking relaxed
as he zips along in the slipstream. Now
and then the mountain biker may pull
alongside and even try to take the lead,
but mindful of what his friends might say
if they caught him taking pace, (he can
hear it now, "from one of those mountain
bikes of all things...") the road rider
picks up the pace and pushes out front.

Two or three miles down the road fat-
tire rider pulls up alongside and says casu-
ally, "Say, are those Prugnat lugs? Is that
real leather on the handlebars? You always
wear argyles with cycling shoes?"

The junior exec, whose breath is
whistling through gritted teeth, says,
"This is my turnoff," and executes a quick
right turn into the first driveway he can
find, where he flops on his back behind a
hedge until the other rider is safely out
of sight. Without telling his friends why,
the next week he starts shopping for a fat-
tire bike.

When a road rider tries to shake off a
fat tire-ite, he usually just attempts to
speed up and ride away. This is a perfect

Continued page 20



The Right Tool...

Working on a bike can be made a lot easier if certain precautions are taken during assembly or minor repairs. One irritating problem is a nut or screw that is frozen on, and that strips from the pressure put on it. A threaded part will come apart more easily for future repairs if the threads are greased before it is installed. This applies to derailleur mounting screws, pedal shafts, freewheels, bottom brackets, anywhere there are threads. Bikes that get splashed or immersed regularly are especially subject to frozen or rusted parts.

Although it may seem that the greased threads will allow the part to unscrew, the lubrication actually permits it to be installed more firmly than it could be otherwise. There are some operations that may even be impossible if the threads are not greased: for example, aluminum spoke nipples will stick to the steel spoke before proper tension is achieved unless the spoke threads are greased before assembly.

"The right tool for the job" isn't just a slogan, it's a motto. One reason amateur mechanics have problems with repairs is because they sometimes attempt to install a chainring using a 12" adjustable wrench and a bobby pin. These will not work without the proper adaptors. It doesn't take much money to throw together the basic tool set necessary for home or road repairs, and the right tools make the job much less frustrating. Here are some of the essential ingredients of a home bike-tool box:

1. Metric box/open end wrenches, sizes seven to fifteen mm.
2. Metric allen keys, three to seven mm.
3. Chain tool.
4. 15 mm crank-bolt spanner.
5. Crank removing tool.
6. Assorted screwdrivers.
7. Freewheel removing tool. If you have Phil Wood hubs, also an adaptor that protects the axle when the freewheel is being removed.
8. Spoke key.
9. Cone wrenches, 13/14, 15/16.
10. Huge honking adjustable wrench, for removing freewheel in the absence of a vice.
11. Can of oil.
12. Can of grease.

When removing the freewheel it is easy to strip the dogs out of either the freewheel or the tool if it isn't used properly. Screw the axle nut down tight over the tool or close the quick-release to keep it from rocking even slightly. Grip the tool in either a vise or a huge wrench (see above) and exert every ounce of muscle you have, and the cluster will come off easily. Once it loosens a little, remove the axle nut or QR and back it off carefully with the tool. Some freewheel tools and freewheels are splined, and these are nearly impossible to strip; it's a pity they all aren't that way.

TIRE INFO

Nothing is so irritating as to repair a flat tire, only to have it go flat again five minutes after it's pumped up. One com-

mon reason for this is that people fail to check the tire to see if there is still a foreign object protruding. In order to tell where to look for tire damage, align the valve stem of the tube with the label on the tire. Now if your tire goes flat you can check the tube to see where the leak is, then by checking its position relative to the valve stem you will know where to look on the casing relative to the label.

Fat tire riders usually suffer punctures for one of two reasons, either a sharp foreign object penetrates the casing and the tube, or the sidewall and tube are pinched between the rim and an exterior object. In civilized areas the former is usually the problem, but in unpaved milieus it is more often the latter, since "foreign" objects (nails, broken glass) are absent. The chief reason for pinched tubes is tire pressure that is too low, and aside from the expense of the tires and the problem of patching or replacing them, if the rim bottoms out hard on something it will not only give you a rude jolt, it will cause you to replace the rim because of the flat spot and dent. It pays to remember that in the case of a pinch, there will probably be two, count 'em two holes in the tube, and the effect of patching only one of them is insignificant.

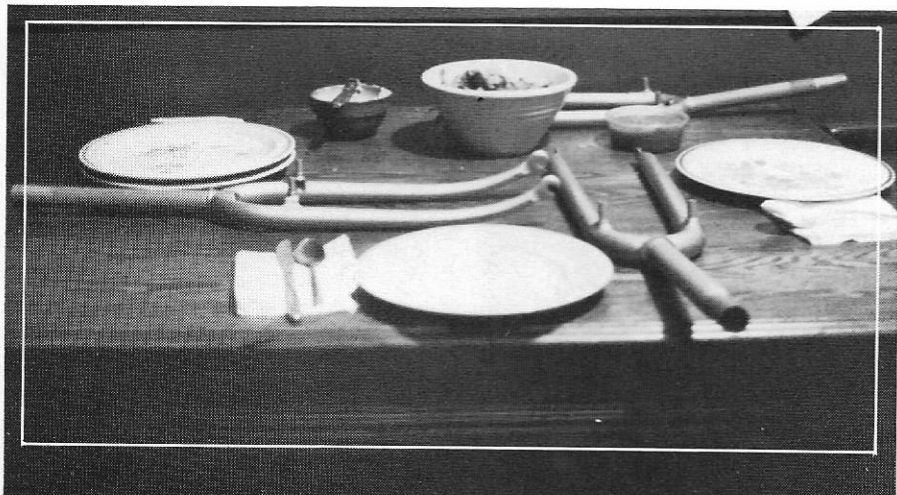
Sometimes proper technique and inflation aren't even enough. In 1983 during Fat Tire Bike Week in Crested Butte, at least six wheels and tires were destroyed by a single obstacle that was conveniently located on the most popular dirt road out of town. Which just goes to show, as they say, that you never can tell.

Dear Fat Tire Flyers:

I'd like to relate an incident that happened to me recently, and I hope to solicit response to determine if it's a common occurrence among A.T.B. cyclists, or if it's just because I'm a Dorfo that these things happen to me.

I bought an off-roader in April, 1983, primarily for fall and winter riding. It's just too hot down here on the Gulf Coast during the summer months to creep through the woods at typical off-road speeds. In addition to the steamy heat, there are an abundance of "yellow flies" who meet you at the woods' door and feast for the duration of your ride. If you haven't ridden with one hand and swatted flies with the other, they you're not a seasoned dirt rider in "these here parts."

Continued on next page



Charles Kelly

Occasionally I renege on not riding in the summer, and since I can't stay off the ATB for an entire season anyway, that brings me to the subject of my incident (or accident, depending on one's point of view).

There aren't any mountains down here in Spanish Fort, Alabama, but there are plenty of hills. Someone has written that we're the highest land mass above sea level on the southern or Eastern Seaboard until one hits the mountain range somewhere in Georgia or South Carolina. Suffice it to say, we have some pretty steep little hills.

My drive train consists of a Sugino AT 26-36-46 chainwheel, 180 mm cranks, a five-speed 13-28 Suntour New Winner freewheel, and a D.I.D. Lanner chain. I've found that even on steep hills, I usually go up in third gear (19 teeth), stand on the pedals, and hump on up. First and second obviously have better mechanical advantage, but traction or wheelies become a problem. Needless to say, the 19 tooth cog gets most of the action.

There's a trail that runs out of the back of my subdivision and snakes through the woods before crossing Interstate 10. From there it goes on for another mile and connects with several clay roads and some other trash pile trails. When the trail leaves I-10 it goes almost straight up for about 20 yards. I was halfway up this sucker when my chain broke. I was standing up on the pedals, pumping with all my might . . . the chain broke. Wow, does that XC-1 smart when it bites into the back of that unprotected leg! Believe me, that hurt worse than the whack in the crotch from the top tube that rushed up to meet me. Guess who now carries a chain tool in his bike bag, next to the orthopedic jock.

On close examination I've discovered that I have also managed to crack and bend three teeth on the 19 tooth cog! A new chain won't ride on it without slipping. Who would have thought that a mere 180 lb. man could possibly bend and break steel with just leg power? I don't think that both components could have been defective, certainly not at the same time, so I can only conclude that my single thrust of power "done 'em in."

Have others had this problem? Why haven't I read about this in one of the innumerable articles about mountain bikes and off-road riding in general, including all my Fat Tire Flyers?

Another problem I've encountered that is unique to this genre of bicycling is removing the freewheel for routine cleaning and lubing. A few turns on an ATB is sufficient to weld this little dude on as tight as you please. I don't care how much grease you put on the threads when you

put it on, it's still gonna take a gorilla with a monkey wrench to get it off! And then he's got to put in a vice and use a two foot extension on the wrench handle for leverage. That sucker is on, Vern, if you know what I mean and I think you do.

The shop mechanic had to trash my 16-tooth cog just to get to the 19-tooth because they were "welded" tight. I had to replace both of them, and that gets a little expensive if you don't need both when you start out. I'm beginning to realize that off-road riding puts a TREMENDOUS strain on components, especially the drive train, and I don't think 10-speed carryovers are strong enough for off-road use.

I sure would like to see you guys publish an article exposing the problem areas of ATB's and maybe throw in some suggestions as to the strongest freewheel/chain combination. Some clue as to when I might expect the demise of my chainwheels would also be helpful since I don't normally keep extras around the toe house.

I suspect if you did such an article you'd likely step on some toes, but what the heck, if that would exhort manufacturers to beef up their products for off-road use, I feel we'd all win in the long run.

By the way, I replaced the D.I.D. with a gold Uniglide 600 and put on two new cogs, so I'm back in business, but the next time I climb up from I-10 you can bet your bippy the chain won't be running on the third cog from the spokes.

Happy trails to you,
Malcolm Nelson
Spanish Fort, AL

SeeKay replies

What was the question? No, that has never happened to me or anyone else I can think of, so that's why there haven't been any articles about the problem of broken chains.

Regarding freewheel removal, see above: get a big honking 24" adjustable wrench. Get to know a gorilla, even if it's only an urban gorilla.

Last point: we expose everything we can, and we depend in part on input from our readers to help with this. Thanks.



Vicky Boyd

GET THEE BEHIND ME!

Continued

strategy for us fat-types, because while a fat-tire bike with high pressure in the tires will roll fast enough to keep up, it won't accelerate as quickly because the wheels are heavier. While it is hard for the fat tire rider to respond to a "jump" or sprint, it's easy to keep up with a gradual acceleration. The higher the speed, the easier it is to draft, so the off-roader just sticks to the rear wheel and lets the roadie do the work. Road riders of the snobbish variety can't stand the thought of drafting an off-roader, so they will try to push the pace and stay in front while allowing the other to cruise along using considerably less effort.

For the real psychological blow, the fat tire rider waits until he can feel the other slowing down, which will happen within a mile or so (usually much less). Drifting back a few yards, the mountain biker lets the roadie think he is finally pulling away. The real reason is so he can wind up his speed and come past while traveling considerably faster. At this time the appropriate comment is, "Thanks for the company, but I gotta pick up my unemployment check." Don't forget to smile when you say that. The devastated and traumatized road rider then has to make an emergency call to his therapist, who isn't in his office because he is out riding his fat-tire bike (medical expense).

Because a lighter road bike climbs a little better on pavement than a mountain bike, you may lose out on the paved up-hills, but if the descent is long enough and twisting enough, you can once again hand out ego damage to the skinsuiters. A mountain bike, with its long wheelbase and fat tires, corners at high speed better than any road bike alive on a tight downhill. If there are long straights, the road bikers can use their acceleration, but tight corners swing the advantage the other way. The most satisfying way to pass an off-dirtier is to spot him on the best line in the corner, then come past on the outside of the corner, preferably on the gravel shoulder, while eating a sandwich.

For this kind of road demonstrations it's a good idea to keep your tires a little hard. Obviously road type tires with a smooth tread roll faster than knobbies, but the hum of the dirt tires as you pull past the road bike is a psychological shock to the other rider.

Try not to display too openly your pity for the poor, beknighted road biker, but let us instead draw a moral, not necessarily worthy of Aesop: It just goes to show that money spent on bicycles can't bring happiness unless you spend some of it on Fat Tires. Or something like that.





Fat Tire Flyer

STUDIES IN CONFUSION

We love off-road races; business would be a lot harder for us without them. But, and this is a big but...they should be run in such a manner that everyone gets a fair chance, and so riders compete against others of similar experience and ability.

Several recent off-road events have been studies in confusion. With many experienced promoters and the examples of so many well-run events over the past year, it seems that there shouldn't be any excuse for deficiencies such as poor or non-existent course marking, a mixture of classes that denies some riders any chance at all, or judging so unfair that embarrassed riders exchange prizes later.

In a recent race one woman rode off with the men's expert group, which started five minutes ahead of the group containing all the other women. Notwithstanding the expert woman's ability, she could have stayed home and had her prize mailed to her. The time is past where women should race unopposed if there are others willing to compete. Scoring at this race was handled so casually that prizes and placings were awarded to riders who finished behind others who weren't recognized. At least one rider gave his prize to the legitimate winner of his class, even though the promoter had ignored the faster rider.

continued

PROMOTION ANYONE?

We have a note here from Gary and Bonnie Larson of the Chain Gang Bike Shop in Redding. The Larsons are the brain trust that brings us the Whiskey-town Downhill, bigger and better every year. For those who would like to put on an event of this scale, here is what it cost the Larsons:

Budget:	Number of Riders:
1st Annual \$1335	65
2nd Annual \$2351	128
3rd Annual \$5066	192
4th Annual \$5200	241

In addition to the money, the Larsons rounded up 67 volunteers to help on the day of the race. Tentative plans for next year's Fifth Annual include four stages over two days, a timed uphill, a timed downhill, observed trials, and the regular race as a finale. This is an upwardly mobile downhill event.

NOT A GENTLEMAN

Our piece on the Point Reyes Bike Shop in Point Reyes, CA brought them one customer they could have lived without. Leaving a fake driver's license for identification, a tall male person (not a gentleman) borrowed a *Ritchey TimberWolf* and a *Cunningham Indian* aluminum bike for a test ride. So far he's been testing for a couple of weeks. Since the bikes in question are so distinctive, we thought we'd alert the more respectable elements of the off-road community (meaning our riders) in the hope that they can be returned. (Rumor has it that these bikes are in Berkeley, CA.)

The Ritchey is a 21½", serial #1B58. It was green when last seen. The Cunningham is made of oversize aluminum tubing with bondo-filled joints. Frame size is 23", serial #21, blue. Both bikes have the numbers stamped on the bottom brackets.

NEW! The Only AUTHORIZED Fat Tire Flyer Magazine T-Shirt



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CROSS-COUNTRY ADVENTURE BY SARACEN MOUNTAIN BIKE: LATEST

To quote Perry Como (*who?*), "Letters, we get letters . . ." but most of them are press releases, which we ignore because they are generally advertising something like a solar-powered automatic gear shifter. We never print them verbatim, in their entirety, but as James Bond says, "Never say never . . ." What would we do without people to quote from? Now, and to quote P.T. Barnum (or someone like him), "Without further ado . . ." we present this bit of press fluff from Saracen Cycles in England.

British students Bruce Simpson (22) and Tania Adams (19), both from Glasgow, Scotland, have now cycled well over 1,000 miles across China from Peking, and are now heading south to Canton. They will have cycled at least 2,000 miles by the time they reach Hong Kong in mid-August, riding English hand-built mountain bikes manufactured by Saracen Cycles Ltd. of Coventry.

On the second of August they telephoned from Changsha (south of the Yangtze River) in Hunan Province, prior to appearing on regional television and being interviewed by the local paper.

While completing his International Law studies at Cambridge University, his proposal for this journey won Bruce a much-coveted Winston Churchill Travel Scholarship, and he was also sponsored by American Express, the local Cambridge Evening News, and Abbott Travel Agency. The purpose of his journey was "to pave the way for future small scale, low-budget expeditions, which have the best chance of communication with the Chinese."

Saracen Cycles was delighted to present him with the mountain bike he needed. Assistance was also provided by London and Glasgow cycle dealers W.F. Evans and Dale's (Cycles). Author Richard Ballantine presented them with a signed copy of "Richard's Bicycle Book," and Bruce spent a day at the Coventry premises of Saracen Cycles learning how to strip down and rebuild a mountain bike.

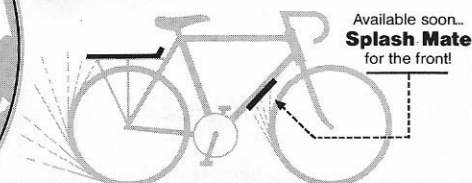
The planned route was discarded on arrival in Peking, and Bruce and Tania chose even wilder terrain, travelling west to cross the Great Wall into Inner Mongolia. They they made for Tibet across the mountains, crossing two major passes (one 14,500 feet high) never before crossed by bicycle. During three weeks in Tibet they visited areas inaccessible to any other form of transport. Often they had to cross up to eight major landslides in a day, and the bikes took a real beating on the dirt tracks. In many places the local people, who always gave them a marvelous reception, had never seen a westerner before.



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The Saracen mountain bikes are performing excellently despite extremely difficult cycling conditions. On one occasion they had to cross a river on wire ropes, and haul the bikes after them.

There had been a minor accident, however, when a rock was caught in the gear mechanism, and once back in China they teleaxed Saracen requesting derailleurs and guide wheels to be sent to Chunking, where they expected to arrive in twelve days. The parts reached Chunking in time enabling Bruce to repair the damage.

They say the Chinese people have been "absolutely marvelous." News travels fast on the grapevine, and as Bruce and Tania arrive in the villages, streets are lined with people clapping and cheering, and fascinated by the mountain bikes, which have generated great interest. They have been given all the food they need. Everywhere they are offered generous hospitality, spending most evenings with local people in their villages, and being treated as "honored guests."

Bruce summed up the telephone conversation by saying that so far the whole adventure has been a tremendous success. Travelling by bicycle has enabled them to see many places they could not have reached in any other way, and the novelty of the mountain bikes has immediately broken the ice among local people who themselves use bicycles as a standard method of transport.

(End of quote)

FAT NOTES *continued*

In another race, which was billed as a major event, so many of the competitors got lost that anyone who found the finish line was likely to be declared the winner. If the object is pathfinding, riders should at least be issued a map; otherwise if turns are not clearly marked, course marshalls should be stationed at junctions. In this event the problem was that the truck being used to mark the course broke down, but even so it appears that this vital piece of organization was left until it was so late that nothing could be done when the truck went belly-up.

Granted, this off-road racing is supposed to be good, dirty fun and we shouldn't take things so seriously that we forget that. But when somebody drives a few hundred miles for an event, he or she has already made a major commitment to the race and expects at the minimum a fair shake. Enough promoters have pulled off their first off-road event with style and organization that inexperience should not be an excuse for sloppy promotion. Imagination and hard work can be just as effective as experience.

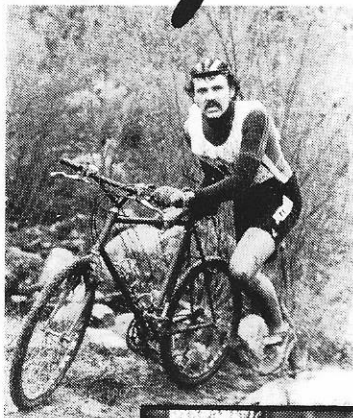


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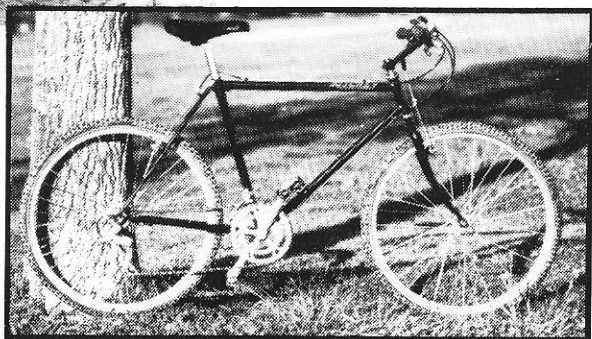
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COLORADO Sabbatini Sports-Aspen, Pedal Pushers-Boulder, Criterium Bike Shop-Colorado Springs, Paradise Bike & Ski-Crested Butte, Life Cycle-Denver, The Spoke-Denver, Pierres Bike & Ski-Dillon, Cycle Transport-Fort Collins, Cristie Sports-Vail

FLORIDA Rainbow Cycles-Tallahassee

GEORGIA Koenigs Mountain Madness-Helen

HAWAII The Bike Shop-Honolulu, Bicycles Kauai-Kapaa

IDAHO Georges Lightweight Cycles-Boise, The Elephants Perch-Ketchum, Spoke & Wheel-Twin Falls, All Bikes-Pocatello

MAINE Portland Bicycle Exchange-Portland

MASSACHUSETTS Nauset Cycle-Orleans

MARYLAND College Park Bike Shop-College Park

MONTANA The Spoke Shop-Billings, Bangtail Bicycles-Bozeman, The Great Divide-Helena, New Era Bicycles-Missoula

MICHIGAN Alfred E. Bikes-Kalamazoo, Motorless Motion-Mt. Pleasant

MINNESOTA Now Sports-Hopkins

NEW JERSEY Montclair Bikery-Montclair

NEVADA Bicycle King-Las Vegas, Stewart Hunt Bicycles-Reno

NEW HAMPSHIRE Greasy Wheels-Plymouth

NEW MEXICO Sport One-Albuquerque, Sport One-Los Alamos, Sport One-Santa Fe

NORTH CAROLINA Liberty Corner Bicycles-Ashville

OREGON Siskiyou Cyclery-Ashland, Peak Sports-Corvallis, Pedal Power-Eugene, Moores Bike Shop-Medford, Cycle World-Milwaukie, The Bike Gallery-Portland, J&L Bike Center-Roseburg, Rouge Outfitters-Rouge River, Life Cycle-Salem

PENNSYLVANIA The Bike Doctor-Philadelphia

TEXAS Bicycle Sport Shop-Austin, Bikes, Etc.-Forth Worth

UTAH Aardvark Cycles-Logan, Taylors Bike Shop-Provo, Guthries Bicycles-Salt Lake City, Bingham Schwinn-Sunset

WASHINGTON Jerrys Bike Center-College Place, Mercer Island Cyclery-Mercer Island, Blue Mountain Cyclery-Pullman, Aurora Cycles-Seattle, Angle Lake Bicycles-Seattle, Elliott Bay Bicycles-Seattle, The Bike Pedaler-Silverdale, Wheelsport-Spokane, Britain Cycle Sport-Spokane, Singletons Cyclery-Tacoma

WISCONSIN Zucchini Bikes-Beloit, The Yellow Jersey-Madison

WEST VIRGINIA Bike Barn-Buckhannon

WYOMING All Family Sports-Casper, Teton Cyclery-Jackson

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BRITISH COLUMBIA Bayshore-Bicycles-Vancouver, Black's Cycle-Comox, Bikes on Broadway-Vancouver, Deep Cove Bike Shop-Deep Cove, Steveston Cycle-Richmond, Summit Cycles-Whistler

QUEBEC Velo Cameleon-Quebec City

ALBERTA Bow Cycle-Calgary, George's Cycle-Edmonton, Ridley's Cycle-Calgary, Park N' Pedal-Banff

MANITOBA Lifesport-Winnipeg

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