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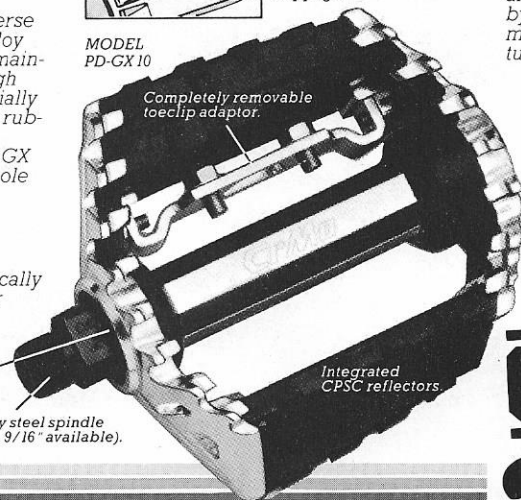
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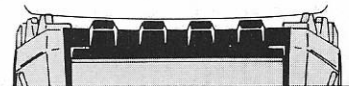


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# Fat Tire Flyer™

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1985 • VOLUME 5, NUMBER 4

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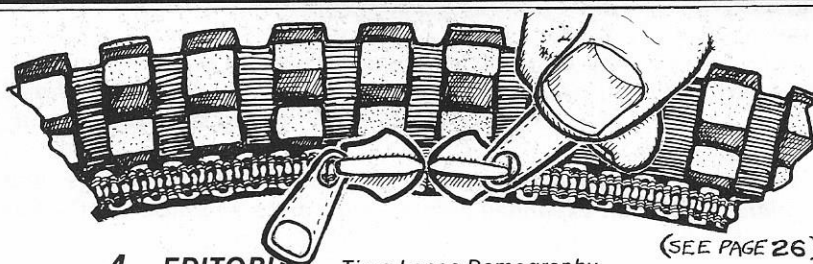
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# Editorial

Regular readers may have noticed a generation gap in issues. This is of course inexcusable, and can only be explained by the fact that we have made a few changes in the FLYER offices. Our new publisher is Don Mertle, and Denise Caramagno has left to make a fortune in another part of the fat tire world. Art Read has signed on in the art and funny stuff department.

With these changes it is inevitable that the FLYER will change, and our plans include an expanded format, with more emphasis on the fun and sometimes downright insanity of mountain biking. There are already enough boring, dull bike mags in the world. Get ready for the New Improved FAT TIRE FLYER!



photo by Charles Kelly

New publisher, Don Mertle, balances responsibilities.

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To any and all Fat-Tired, creative persons! In order to provide a complete, well-rounded and objective publication, we need your help. Photographers, writers or just plain readers/riders, send us your stuff! Unsolicited manuscripts and photographs are always welcome as are letters or comments. Photographs should be in black and white.

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# PRO/AM CONTROVERSY



Photo by Philip Vardara

by Richard Cunningham

A quick look at most publications featuring all-terrain cycling will convey the idea that racing is the glory of the sport. Page after page reveals mud-splattered he-men emblazoned in colored Lycra, laced with commentary describing the duel between men and mountain. Usually, toward the end of the feature, there are a few words about Alice B. Navratilova and some of the other women who raced.

Next in frequency are the articles warning of land closures and other forest fiction stemming from the fear of those with wheels by those who walk.

Less frequent are articles about the real sport, touring, trail riding and trekking, the heart that beats, however faintly, within every all-terrain bicycle and cyclist.

All three of these aspects are of major importance to the health and growth of all-terrain cycling, but because of its dominant role in the media, it is racing that will determine the future of the sport. Presently, the future does not look bright. The reason for this can be traced to a shift in the format of racing from a race/tour event to a Pro/Am spectator event.

The race/tour is usually a fifteen to thirty mile loop or point-to-point course that is both interesting and

challenging. The race/tour attracts the greatest number of participants, and the serious competitor is given a chance to pit skills against almost every type of terrain. The less serious contender can finish out of the money and still be rewarded with scenery and a fun ride. For the sponsor, the race/tour may not look like a good return for the advertising dollar due to the lack of spectators. A closer look shows that the inclusive nature of the event draws in many participants with junker clunkers. Surrounded by the ultimate, these nouvo enthusiasts are prime customers for new equipment. The best feature of the race/tour is that it represents the off-road experience, and in doing so it fosters comraderie between different factions of the sport.

The glamorous pro-am spectator event offers the prospect of winning a grueling, action packed race in front of a capacity crowd with the sponsor's logo pasted on the track, your Lycra, and the check which rewards the winner. You and fifty others of the world's best ATB riders have completed fifteen laps over a two-mile course. During the entire race you vaguely remember the announcer blaring your name over the PA system, in between commercials and brief descriptions of the "dangerous and exciting sport of all-terrain cycling." The pro/am spectator

event provides the sponsor with name recognition, and showcases the sport in a simplistic way to the first time viewer. Everybody comes out ahead, right?

A closer inspection reveals a different story. Five riders have won checks from the promoter and sponsor of the race. The other forty-five are losers. Thirty miles over a two mile bumpy circle is hardly rewarding. And the spectators? Not too many first time viewers are going to watch the spectacle and want to join the fun and buy a mountain bike. The disparity between the pro and the first timer is too extreme to provide understanding of the sport.

Those newcomers who are drawn into the sport via the pro/am race are more likely to cause problems when they take this race mentality into the wilderness without an understanding of the greater sport. Using the pro/am spectator-type event to sell the sport is equivalent to the industry building a bull and asking the conservationist to take it into his wilderness china shop.

Maximum visibility for a product is the prime mover for many forms of racing. The promoter needs the sponsor to provide financial support necessary for a first-rate event. In return the sponsor expects representation for its products. This is an important and positive business relationship. Unfortunately, the often overlooked third party in the relationship is the sport of off-road cycling.

Because the sport is relatively young, it hasn't developed a persona of its own; conventional cycling is antique by comparison. It is here we find the major cause of the off-road racing dilemma.

As the racing focus shifted out of the hands of the original mountain bike enthusiasts into the hands of the major forces in the industry, the already groomed forms of conventional USCF cycling began to dominate the off-road scene. At a time when we were still settling on a name for our sport, major companies started fielding teams that included national class road racers. With them came the sometimes stated, sometimes unstated pressure for events that catered to the professionals. We embraced the arrival of the heavyweights because they lent validity to the races, but little by little the racing scene transformed into the very thing the majority of off-road cyclists joined the sport to avoid!

Continued on next page



Let's not put new wine into old bottles. Off-road cycling is completely different in most respects from its cousin on the pavement. As an emerging force, both in the marketplace and in the wilderness, the sport needs room to develop its own personality, responsive to the cyclists it serves and sensitive to the wilderness that fosters it.

#### Solving the problem

As long as racing is in the forefront of the sport, it is important that racing represents the sport both in content and in spirit. Professional sports need a huge base as well as a popular understanding of the events to support a few professionals at the top. All-terrain cyclists have neither.

#### —De-professionalize the sport

Avoid large cash purses. Don't pay the top five and leave the other high and dry. Pay smaller amounts and go down to fifteenth place. The top riders are paid to ride the most important events, not the races with the biggest prize list. This will provide more winners, and in doing so attract more competitors.

#### —Get rid of the pro/am class

The main argument in favor of the pro/am class is to protect the pros

from the experts who don't know what they are doing. The pro/am class is a thin disguise to allow top ranked USCF riders to enter the sport at the top, creating an elite class which we don't need. There are many experienced off-road riders within the sport in reach of the top, but some of the best are avoiding the races because of the format.

#### —Longer courses

Fifteen to twenty-five mile courses, no more than two laps. Terrain should be as varied as possible with enough technical difficulty to emphasize bike handling skills. This will keep it a race. A race to the death is no fun for anyone involved.

#### —Race/tour events

The event should be a reward on its own. The race/tour is the best medium to introduce new cyclists to the sport. The same number of people who attended the Olympic road race at Mission Viejo RODE the Tecate-Ensenada race/tour event and paid to do so. This is a good lesson we can learn from our road cousins.

#### —Use "timed" or special sections

Timed sections are portions of a race course that have a minimum and/or maximum time limit. A minimum time

limit can be used to open a trail that would be off-limits for all-out racing. A maximum timed section could be used on a great downhill or difficult descent. A time or point penalty is assessed for finishing under the minimum or over the maximum. An observed trials section incorporated within a trail on the course would be great. Special sections emphasize bike handling and the off-road experience within the race format.

#### —Publish the entire results

Knowing who you finished ahead of makes winners out of almost everyone. This fosters a sense of accomplishment and puts less space between the rungs on the ladder at the top.

All of these changes would contribute to the size, quality and positive image of our sport. They provide for a type of racing that is representative of real all-terrain cycling. Since racing will remain the most visible part of our silent sport, a creative and responsible effort by all the forces that influence racing is critical if we are to prove ourselves as worthy wilderness companions.

Editor's note: Richard Cunningham builds MANTIS bicycles in Placentia, California.





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# ROAD APPLE

## FROM THE BODFISH

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FIRST DAY OF HUNTING SEASON...

WE WERE RIDING UP THOSE 15% PITCHES THAT MAKE THE LAST FEW MILES OF THE HUMBUG CLIMB LEGENDARY. WE CRANKED UP TO THREE STOCKY-LOOKING MULE DEER WHO WERE FEASTING AT THE ROAD'S EDGE. THE BUCK'S FAIR-SIZED RACK STILL SHOWED SOME VELVET. ONLY ONE HUNDRED FEET AWAY AND THEY STILL HADN'T DETECTED OUR PRESENCE.

THE WHINE OF A MOTOR VEHICLE A FEW TURNS BELOW CAUGHT EVERYONE'S ATTENTION. THE DEER GLARED DIRECTLY AT US, CURIOUS/CONFUSED, THEY PERKED THEIR EARS BUT HELD THEIR POSITION. I SMILED BACK FOR ONLY A MOMENT, THEN STARTLED EVERYONE BY YELLING, "GET OUT OF HERE! BEAT IT!" WE WERE ONLY 30 PACES FROM THESE BIG-EYED CREATURES WHEN WE STOPPED AND LOBBED FISTRFULS OF GRAVEL AT THE DEER. THEY SHOT THROUGH THE CEANOTHUS BEFORE THE SHRAPNEL HIT IN THEIR TRACKS... "OUT OF HERE YOU IDIOTS!" MY ADVENTURE BUDDY, LISA, SCREAMED WHILE LEANING OVER HER BULLMOOSE BARS.

JUST AS WE WERE THROWING A FEW HEARTY LAUGHS OF RELIEF AT EACH OTHER, WHILE STILL STRADDLING OUR MONTARES, A GREEN PICK-UP ROARED AROUND THE CORNER BELOW US. AT FIRST SIGHT OF US, (WE WERE OUTFITTED IN DAYGLO ORANGE AND PINK), THEY ACCELERATED THEN, SLAMMED ON THE BRAKES AND SKIDDED TO A STOP A COUPLE FEET AWAY. ONE OF THE WARRIORS, WHO HAD BEEN STANDING IN THE BED OF THE TRUCK LOOKING FOR GAME, SPRAWLED FULL-EAGLE OVER THE TOP OF THE

"GET OUT OF HERE!  
BEAT IT!"



DRAWING BY LISA JO SEDLACEK

CAB - HITTING HIS CHIN AND PITCHING HIS BUDWEISER OUT ONTO THE HOOD. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, THE GUYS IN THE CAB STOPPED HOWLING AND THE DUST SETTLED ON OUR SHOES AND PACKS.

"HEY PARTNER!", THE DRIVER YELLED, "YOU SEE ANY DEER UP HERE?"

"YUP." I ANSWERED. "BUT NOT THIS TIME OF YEAR."

"SHIT! WHAT'S A DAMN BICYCLE RIDER GONNA KNOW?" SLURRED THE FAT ONE IN THE MIDDLE. IMMEDIATELY THE TRUCK'S WHEELS WERE SPITTING GRAVEL AND THE CAMO-GUYS IN THE BACK WERE HOLDING BOWS AND BEERS HIGH ABOVE THEIR HEADS AS THEIR LAWN CHAIRS BUCKED WITH THE SUDDEN MOTION.



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PLEASE SEE AD ON PAGE 24 ←



# Fat Feedback

(A report from the Himalayan mountain bike expedition)

## HEY SEEKAY,

Wish I was writing you from Lhasa. Not this time, unfortunately. Border closed on us as we waited for permission in the mountains. Only an hour away from China by foot, police there on the Nepali side detained us as they kept waiting for a reply from Katmandu to let us through. Closed, it was only open for maybe five weeks. A golden opportunity gone. I'll give you all the details when I see you in Crested Butte. Sorry, no great story.

Greg Vann

P.S. A friend of mine used to live in Lhasa. He says, "Tashi delay C.K."

## DEAR CHARLIE:

Enclosed are a couple of copies of DIRT RIDER (motorcycle magazine).

Seems to be lots of interests in mountain bikes among the off-road motor-

cycle bunch! (Check out the "Cross Training" mountain bike story, by John Lehrer, on page 94 of the March issue and the Dirt Writer (editorial) on page 4.)

Everyone on staff here has picked up Puchs (due to a good buddy deal from the former motorcycle-industry distributor), and we're out there skinning our knees and having fun whenever we're not playing with motorcycles.

We've been anxiously awaiting JT's mountain bike pants (JT is highly regarded — the biggest in aftermarket apparel — in the dirt riding industry.) The photo in FTF was the first we'd seen. What a letdown! I'm trying to convince other motorcycle apparel makers to develop some new gear; hopefully with better results than JT's attempt. We'll see...

A bunch of us have signed up for the Bonelli Park Pacific States Series event...beginner's class. See you there!

Charlie Morey

Editor, Dirt Rider Magazine

## EDITOR:

I think you should do a feature on the First Need water filter. These things filter out everything down to 2 microns, which means no Giardia. It weighs no more than an oversized water bottle full. At \$35 it's cheap peace of mind, a must for expedition types. FDA approved, available here.

Gordon

Back Country Bicycles  
Pollock Pines, CA



## FAT TIRE;

I am interested in receiving any materials you might have concerning the prohibition or regulation of the use of mountain bikes on trails, etc. in National Parks, National Forests, and other public lands. As a third year law student at the University of Utah, I am compiling an inventory of various local and regional administrative decisions regarding mountain bike use. Ultimately my hope is to write a law journal article on the topic summarizing the problems mountain bike use has generated if any, administrative responses, and predicting how these responses would fare under judicial


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review. The legal aspects of the issue are of particular interest to me.


In addition, any information on the increasing popularity of the mountain bike sport — sales statistics, increased racing activity, etc. would be helpful. If there are other sources you would suggest I contact, that too would be helpful.

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photo by Maury Cohen

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DOOMED?

# FLUME TRAIL

by Larry Glickfield

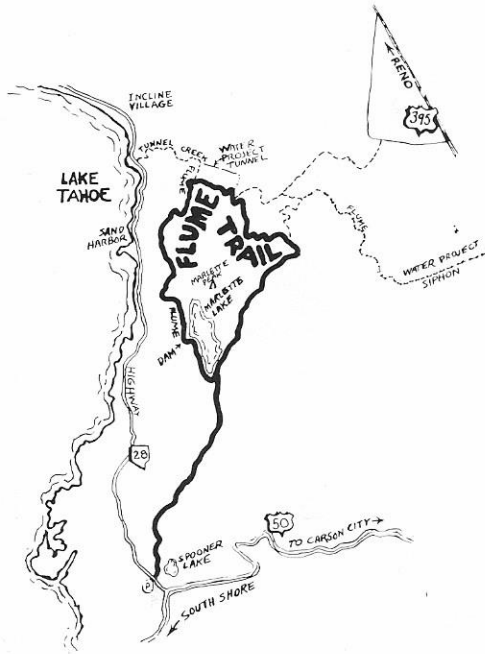
During the silver mining boom of the Comstock Lode in the 1860's and '70's, a remarkable water supply system was built to service the needs of the Virginia City miners. Water was delivered to the Comstock from the Carson Range, east of Lake Tahoe, by means of numerous flumes and a siphon.

Critical to this system was the box flume constructed in 1873, leading north from the dam at Marlett Lake and contouring around the mountain-side, 1400 feet above Tahoe's east shore. Four-and-a-half miles later, the flume entered a 4000-foot-long tunnel which was blasted under the ridge,



photo by Gordon Bainbridge

As a rider follows the ghost of a silver boom water project past a pile of its carcass lumber, Lake Tahoe looms in the misty distance.



emerging into another flume on the east slope high above the Washoe Valley. Finally the water dropped into a cast-iron pipe, descending 2000 feet to Lakeview Summit (the saddle between Washoe Valley and Carson City), enough for it to build up over 800 psi pressure and siphon back up through the Virginia Range on the other side and into the storage reser-

voir above Virginia City.

Today there is little left of the original box flume; occasional scraps of wood are the only signs. However, pipeline which was installed along some of the flume routes some 25 years ago, although partly buried, is a real eyesore on the Tahoe side. No longer in use, this aluminum pipe is for the most part scattered in disarray over the hillside. The trail is easily identified from Tahoe's east shore below by these haphazard pipe sections, which seem to be strewn about like toothpicks.

When the pioneers of the last century blasted and graded the flume routes through the rugged eastern Sierra, little could they have envisioned that over 100 years later their most popular function would be as a route for off-road cyclists. Connecting with numerous jeep roads, these flume trails are easily worked into a number of tours through the Carson Range.

While the flumes on the east side tend to be "freeways," i.e. wide, flat, straight-ahead fast stretches, the flume on the Tahoe (west) side is more of an obstacle course. Large boulders blocking the trail, exposed sections of the

slick aluminum pipeline, and sections of narrow "goat paths," perched on the side of the mountain across avalanche slopes, make this 4-1/2 mile section quite challenging. In its own way, this flat section can be as difficult as any of the surrounding 20 percent climbs in Max Jones' annual "Great Flume Race." But racing or touring, the Tahoe Flume trail is unique. It offers wide-open vistas of what Mark Twain called "the fairest view the whole earth affords" as it contours along the steep granite wall of Tahoe's east shore, often less than half a mile from the lake. Where else can you ride through such rugged mountains on a trail that's absolutely flat?

As with mountain biking in general, the issue of hikers vs. bikers has been brought to light in Lake Tahoe State Park, through which most of the flume runs. According to park ranger Mark Kimbrough, current regulations state that cyclists may ride only where specifically allowed, and that they must maintain reasonable speeds. Presently this means nothing more than common sense, i.e. controlling speeds on downhills, especially when

Continued on next page





photos by Charles Kelly

Continued from preceding page

approaching blind curves, since hikers may be around the corner. Although no road use restrictions are currently in effect, this situation is to be reviewed this winter, and it's possible that the flumes and other back roads in the park could become off-limits to cyclists. The Tahoe Flume especially is being considered for restriction, since it is so narrow in spots.

I see no real problem regarding the hiker-biker issue on the Flume, but there is an imaginary one. On the more than a dozen rides I've taken over its length, all on weekends, I've rarely encountered anyone, hikers or bikers, one reason I find the trail so attractive. Inaccessible as it is, with a 1000 foot climb to reach it from either direction, there is little likelihood of the trail becoming crowded. On the few occasions when I've encountered hikers, there have been no problems. Since it's flat, the rider isn't barreling downhill. While a good cyclist can pick up speed on the wider sections, the trail is open with good visibility, and there is plenty of room to pass. On the narrow sections you're off and walking as often as not. As I said, the problems are imaginary.

Imaginary until we're dealing with the authorities and the hiking interests, that is. Many of these people are still not used to bikes in the back country, and there are those who would like to keep them strictly on the pavement (conversely, motoring interests would

like to keep cyclists in the back country). So once again, off-road bicyclists, many of whom took up the sport to get away from the rules and regulations of the road for the freedom of the hills, are being forced to organize to secure their rights, if not their survival. Once again, this time in Nevada of all places,

it's time to get political and lobby, to let the authorities know that off-road cyclists are organized and numerous, basically decent folks and not a bunch of outlaw bikers.

The Flume Trail is special to me and I'd hate to lose the privilege of being able to ride it, not only because it's convenient to where I live, and not only because of its spectacular panoramic view of the lake, the first place I take out-of-town cycling friends, but because it's like going back in a time machine, so close to civilization yet so far. You can feel the era of the flumes and the Comstock Lode, as you look down on the noise and congestion of today's Lake Tahoe almost directly below.

If you have the opportunity, visit Lake Tahoe and ride the flume...find out what you may soon be missing. Most important, write or call the park ranger (or send a signed copy of this article.) Express your opinion that you would like this historic trail kept open for cyclists as well as hikers. You might find that the ranger is anxious for your input, and even sympathetic to your cause. The address is: Lake Tahoe State Park, Attn: Mark Kimbrough, Park Ranger, P.O. box 3283.



## COOK BROTHERS RACING

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photo by Don Mertle



by Citizen Cain

The event was the first of its kind. Mammoth Mountain ski resort promoted a downhill mountain bike event as part of the three day Plumline High Sierra Mountain Bike Rally that drew over two hundred participants and hundreds of spectators to the famous Sierra ski spa.

Day two of the fat tire competition was billed as the

# MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN FAT TIRE RALLY

The course involved riding and racing down the dirt maintenance road that descends two thousand feet from the gondola at the summit of Mammoth (elevation 11,053'). The winding, steady gradient of the descent, lined with rocks, boulders and trees, created some intensely competitive performances in some of the racers. The crowd observing the race, the majority lined up on the last quarter of the four mile course near the parking lot of Mammoth Mountain Inn, rooted contestants downward to perhaps some of the highest speeds yet witnessed in organized mountain

Continued on next page



bike competition.

A unique feature of this extravaganza was the use of the mountain's lift service, a first in the mountain bike sport. Proprietors opened the gondola to bikes several days previous to the event, giving some contestants an opportunity to rehearse their high-speed descents. This made for some interesting competition between locals of the Mammoth area and the visiting hotshoes, notably the tied winners of the race, Jim Deaton (Pro-Am) and Brad Peatros (Citizen Class) finishing in 8:42 each.

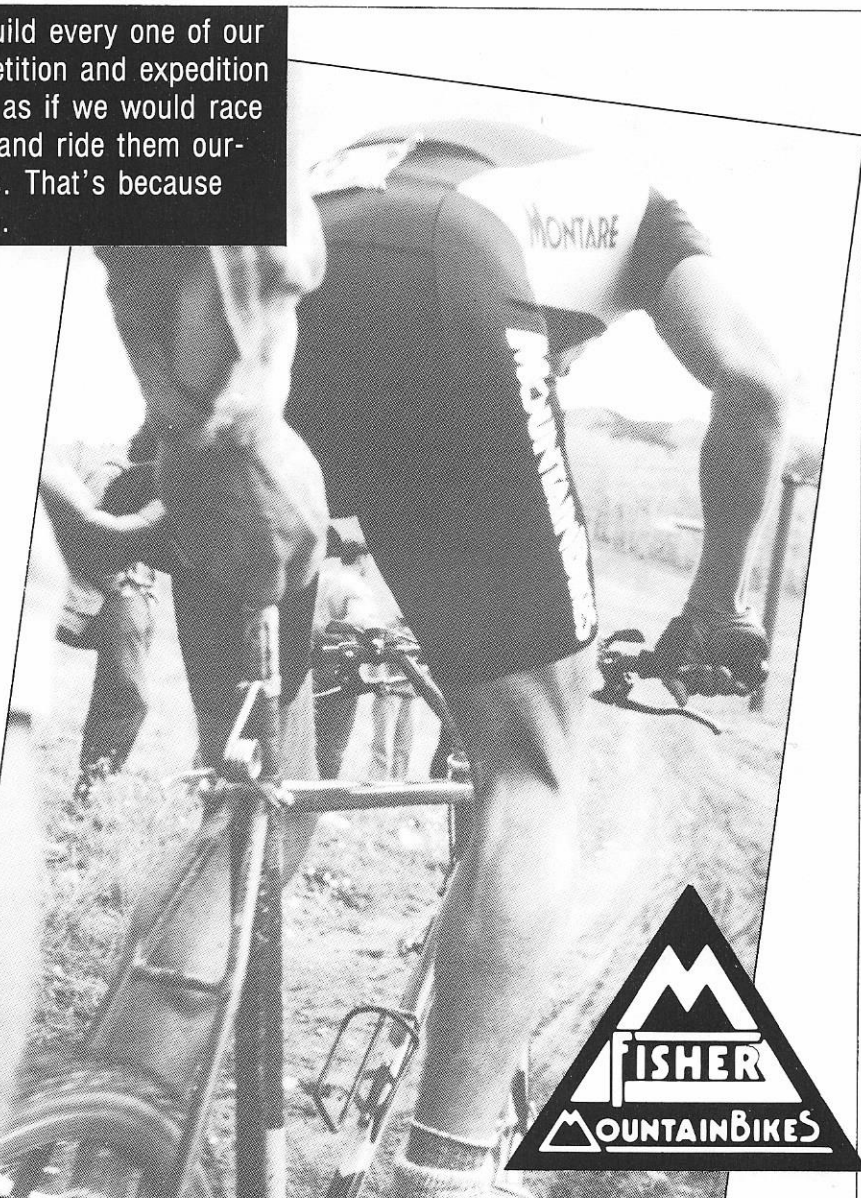
Each gondola took two bikes and riders, and it was more than an hour before all 200 were assembled at the top. Once they gathered, another long wait preceded the beginning as final preparations were made on the course below. Threatening thunderstorms massed on nearby ridges and summits. Occasionally lightning shot out of clouds, which sometimes wisped in a light fog around the patient group of two hundred. Sporadic rain whipped by as a steady breeze chilled exposed skin.

Finally the signal was given to start the competition. Veteran race

timer and official Charlie Kelly worked as the starter. His task was to hold each rider's rear tire in place, and give the go signal at the starting time. Riders started at thirty second intervals, first the sizable crowd of citizen classers, then the smaller group of experts, finally the Pro-Am bunch.

Most riders would probably agree that the most difficult turns in the course were the first three. After this warm-up it straightened out a bit, but continued with the steady descent that was spaced with exciting turns, lined with boulders and trees, and in the road itself, spiced with smallish rocks. Many riders later found their rims accented with side dents.

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The competition called for some remarkable performances by experienc-

ed downhillers. To some the race was the acting out of prior rehearsals, and to others it was sheer improvisation at high-speed route-finding. A few of the more uninhibited found themselves in a frenzy of extreme mountain biking; to the spectators it appeared that they were trying to embody the code of the Kamikaze themselves. Many crashed in spectacular fashion, usually winning the sympathy of the crowd when they landed rubber side up. The nature of the sport places full control and responsibility for the bike on the rider, so everyone racing earned the fate that was theirs to be found along the four miles. Conservative 12 minute plus'ers rode with high speed sub ten minuters in an event everyone will remember. A lot of expensive bikes bit the dust, and several racers crashed badly, notably on the bottom of the course where the dirt road emptied out into a parking lot.

Regardless of the loss of skin and bike equipment, organizers are calling the event a success, and plans are for a similar race next year, as soon as the snows melt.





## OFF-ROAD OUTREACH

Larry Shaw of Hollywood has dropped us a note that warms the little knobs on our tires. The Hollywood YMCA Adventure Trails program allows disadvantaged inner-city young people to get away from it all on mountain bikes. The program is aimed at the 12-17 year old age group and their families, as well as other target groups whose members might not otherwise have a chance to ride in the mountains. The program supplies bikes, bus transportation, leadership and nature guides. Sponsors include the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Olympic Torch Relay Foundation.

Anyone interested in learning more about the program should contact Larry Shaw at 213-467-4161.

## STOP THE PRESSES, TURN OFF THE THUMBSCREWS

One of the hazards of doing research out of your files is that now and then you turn up something that's way out of date and you print it as though it were news. Accodingingly we got a polite note from Bicylce Detours regarding our roundup of tour services in which we were informed (politely) that we had our head up our word processor. In order to set the record straight let us make it clear here that the name has been shortened from Bicycle Tours The Great Southwest to the infinitely more flexible handle, Bicycle Detours. Also, the archeological tours are, well, history. No longer offered. The Amazon Basin tour is on, price is \$1900, including air fare from Miami, bikes and equipment, guides, lodging and hotels and all meals except those eaten in Lima.

See fellas, when we screw up, you get your name in twice.

## ALICE WAILS IN WALES

J.Q. Phelan, also known as Alice B. Tokelips, recently returned from Wales, where she cut a swatch considerably wider than a Fat Tire. Enter-

ing the famous-in-these-pages Llanwrtyd Wells "Horse vs. Human Race" on her trusty national Norbachamp steed, she lost to a horse but waxed the mountain bike element and all other entrants for an uncontested second place. Since the horse was female, the first male, a runner, finished third.

## VVA SELLS OUT, NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!

We can't help noting with a trace of irony that the old curmudgeon, one of the gurus of off-roading, Victor Vincente of none other than America, favorite sun of the son belt, has gone and hired himself a modrin Public (with an "L") Relations firm to tell the world all about him. We just got our first press release...is this just another

case of an ex-Olympian cashing in?


We can see it now. "Sorry Vic, we love ya, but the striped hair has to go; it's not the All-American image Wheaties is looking for, and I don't care if it is red, white and blue." Let us know what it's like working within the system, will you Vic?

Anyone desire the latest PR on old Vic can check with his agent, Linda McCreary at 213-392-8268.

## TEAM TREND

The Arizona Bicycle Sports Association (Abe for short) wants to encourage wider participation in off-road races, so they are offering a team prize at all Arizona events. To qualify, teams must have riders with matching jerseys in four different categories.

Continued on next page



*cycles*

*ibis*

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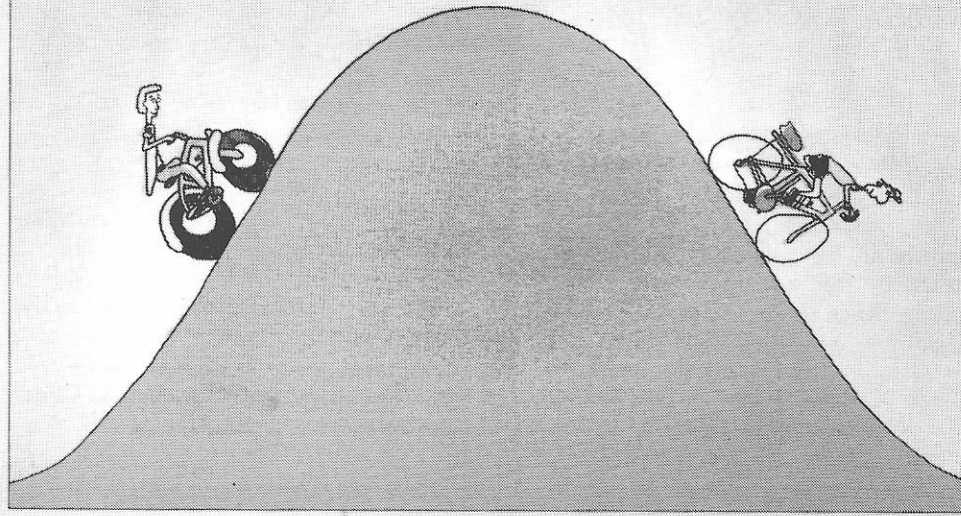
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# HIS FINEST HOUR



David Neuhaus

## HIS FINEST HOUR

While we're here we'd like to throw in a quick plug for a book by one of our contributors. *His Finest Hour* by David Neuhaus is a children's book in words and drawings, the story of the race between Dudley on his Fat Tires and Ralph on his fancy ten-speed. We won't give away the plot, but the price is \$10.95. Published by Viking Kestrel of New York City, New York.

## JERSEY JUMPS FOR FAT TIRES

East Coast riders will be glad to know that there is now a New Jersey ATB newsletter. We think ATB's are something like mountain bikes, so we'll mention it here. The publication will be distributed free through various bike shops. Interested? Write:

NJ ATB Newsletter  
P.O. Box 358

Roosevelt, NJ 08555.

And be sure to tell 'em who sent ya.

And while we're mentioning newsletters, our old friend VVA (see above) has been putting one out darn near as long as we have. \$5 a year gets you the Topanga Rider's Bulletin from:

VVA

P.O. Box 701

Van Nuys, CA 91408.

## SOUTHERN DISCOMFORT

A couple of interesting stories have come out of Georgia lately. Of importance to all eastern and southern fat-

tire bikers is the vacuum created by the closing of John Koenig's Mountain Madness in Helen, Georgia. Mountain Madness was the center of the Georgia mountain bike community, sponsor of most of the mountain bike competition in that state, and a key stop for the Atlantic States Series. Gone along with Mtn Madness is also the touring service in the Chattahoochee National Forest and one of the most enthusiastic retailers of Fat Chance bicycles.

In a related story, we reported in our last issue a remarkable incident from a race sponsored by Mountain Madness, in which a rider started the race, broke his chain, returned to the start, fixed the chain, re-started the race, and eventually finished second. Various protests were filed, and in the absence of any visible precedent, the second place finish was declared valid by NORBA Honcho Glenn Odell on the basis that the competitor had indeed ridden the entire distance without outside help, since all such help took place on the other side of the starting line. Simple? End incident? Not likely.

The Incident has now entered round two. While the original intention of NORBA was to keep rules as simple as possible, nothing can escape Murphy's Law ("Whatever can go wrong will go wrong"). Gary Robertson, who filed the original protest, has continued it in a letter to NORBA written after Odell's decision declaring the ride valid. (This letter, by the way, is also outside the rules, since Odell's decision is supposed to be final.) Here NORBA is faced with a paradox: no decision will satisfy both

sides of the argument, because The Incident is in the dreaded "Gray Area" where rules do not apply. Like attorneys, both sides bolster their arguments by quoting from the NORBA rule book, which ain't that thick. Yet. Local NORBA Rep Tom Meyer agrees with Robertson that the rider should have been DQed, in direct opposition to the official word, and eyewitnesses are split along lines of team affiliation.

The Incident makes it painfully obvious that we have two choices with regard to the NORBA rules. We can attempt to write a rule covering every possible situation, or we can give someone the authority to make decisions on rulings and see if we can live with whatever comes down. The underlying question is one that has puzzled lawmakers and philosophers for millennia: What is fair? There is no doubt that the rider in question put in a magnificent ride to catch most of the field after starting considerably later. And there is also little doubt that the other competitors felt that he had been given an advantage denied them. Any suggestions?



## HUFFY TOSS: RIDE AND FLY

While the western part of the country seems to be the stronghold of the mountain bike racing element, easterners have come up with a new form of competition that leaves the west in the dust: the "Huffy Toss." In this instance, "Huffy" does not always refer to a specific brand of bicycle; although this news will not delight the proprietors of that worthy company, "Huffy" in this case refers to a class of bicycles of a certain mass-produced quality, found in supermarkets and department stores and usually priced at less than \$100 out the door. (Parenthetical remark: the cheapest bicycles in the world are made in the United States.) Here is an excerpt from the flyer for the "Third Annual Huffy Toss" in Green Mountain, Vermont:

### RULES

- Each individual or team must provide their own bicycles.

Continued on next page