

BACK ISSUES

We couldn't possibly take the time to answer everyone individually 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. Price is **\$2.50** per copy. Outside the U.S., add **\$1.50** (U.S.) for each copy.

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March-April 1982

(Cyclo-Cross, Ricky Cha, MudPup)



May-June 1982

(Resenda-to-the-Sea, Coyote Derby, San Anselmo Race, Ricky Cha, MudPup)



July-August 1982

(Race Reports, Carmel Valley Clunker Tour, Here Come the Kids, Ricky Cha MudPup)



January-February 1983

(The Wheel Thing, Crested Butte Tour, Las Vegas Show, Tech Tips, Fat Tires Explode in America)



March-April 1983

(Gearing, NORBA, Glossary, Balmly the Frog, TechTips, Products)



July-August 1983

(Of Bikes and Men...and One Crazy Lady, Brake Review, TechTips, Frames...Why Custom?, MudPup, Shimano Grand Prix, Poetry Corner)



January-February 1984

(Crested Butte, Race Results, NORBA vs. USCF, Wreck Tips, TechTips, Race Reports, Trail Etiquette, MudPup)



July-August 1984

(Joe Murray Interview, Mudpup, TechTips, Wreck Trips, Whiskeytown Downhill, Tecate to Ensenda, Book Review)



September-October 1984

(Flyer Jets to Japan, Mulga Bill's Bicycle, Chequamegon Fat Tire Festival, Get Thee Behind Me, Mudpup, TechTips, To The Top Down Under)



November-December 1984

(An Elder of the Off-Road Tribe, Mountain Bikes in Mountain State, Uncommon Options, Point Reyes Update, TechTips, NORBA Nationals)



February-March 1985

(Call to Perspective, Poetry Corner, Race Reports, Techtips, Uncommon Options, FatNotes)



April-May 1985

(Fat Tire Touring, Al Farrell, Guest Opinions, Products, Uncommon Options, Punk Bike Enduro, FatNotes)



June-July 1985

(Biking in Brooklyn, Mountain Bike Anecdote, Fatnotes, Fat Fotos, Tech Tips, Products, Minority Opinion)



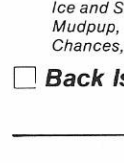
November-December 1985

(Kamikaze, Flume Trail, Bodfish, Moab Slickrock, Teck Tips, Wreck Tips, Sport Racin', USCF/NORBA, Race Warp)



January-February 1986

(Trials Issue: Nicol, Norton, Earley, Teck Tips, Out to Launch, Ice and Snow, Wreck Tips; Bodfish, Mudpup, Mountains in MO, Fastest Chances, Ratios)



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by
Jesse Goodman

*Off-pavement cycling is happening in a big way.
The bikes are well-designed,
Components refined,
Most people can afford one,
And the pleasure is divine.*



Dennis Coello

It's amazing how many miles one can comfortably pedal over terrain previously believed to be impossible for a bicycle to traverse. These rigs are virtually silent, non-polluting, and with the least amount of discretion, much more gentle on a delicate environment than their predecessors, the horses and jackasses.

That rang a bell. Now I remember what this here article is supposed to be about. It's about those jackasses who keep messing everything up for us reasonable folks. There's some real manure for y'all.

Who was it, I forget now, maybe the Lennon Sisters or Mr. Natural who said, "I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together," or was it Bullwinkle or Wally Walrus? Anyway, it was one of those endangered species somewhere out on the lost horizon that said it, I think. Damn straight, we're getting off the track again. Off the road and into the State and National Forest lands and wildlife preserves. You and me and a star-studded cast of alter-egos, all lost in the woods together.

I myself am a real versatile guy. I'm capable of being a very nice person or a total jerk, regardless of my means of locomotion or lack thereof.





One day I might be a self-righteous pseudo-purist foot fascist with a backpack, glaring fire and brimstone at some cautious, courteous off-road bicycle Rambler with the audacity to commit heresy on my trail.

Some other time you might find me careening around a steep, sharp blind curve, challenging the limits of my not-quite-expert bike handling abilities, artfully avoiding a pair of pedestrians by a safe margin of several microns. With bulging endorphetamine eyeballs, I leer over my shoulder to witness slivers of their shattered serenity crashing onto the rocky path with head-splitting silence.


Then again, me and the little lady (she's an inch taller than me and stronger too, so gimme a break just this once, okay?) will be strolling along together, holding hands, walking all alone, oooo oooo eeee oooo (remember the old song "So In Love" by the Tymes?). Along come a couple custom cruisers, braking so they don't create a breeze when they pass. We step aside to give them ample passing room.

*"Yeah, beautiful day to be out and about, especially here at Point Reyes National Seashore."
"Yeah, good day."
"Yeah, you bet."*



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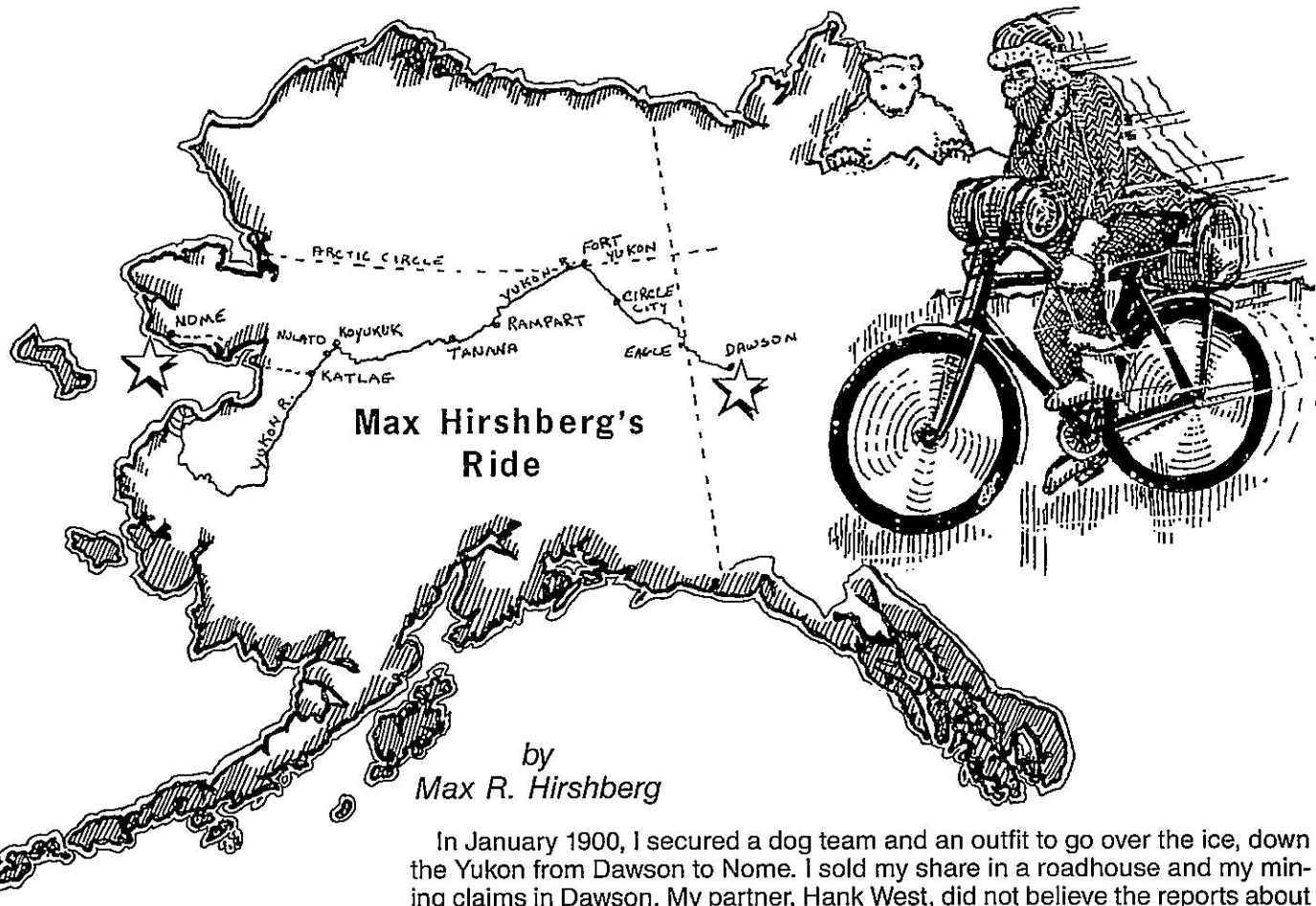
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Touring





**Max Hirshberg's
Ride**

by
Max R. Hirshberg

MY BICYCLE TRIP DOWN THE YUKON

In January 1900, I secured a dog team and an outfit to go over the ice, down the Yukon from Dawson to Nome. I sold my share in a roadhouse and my mining claims in Dawson. My partner, Hank West, did not believe the reports about the gold strike in Nome were authentic. I did, so we parted.

In Dawson I got my outfit and dog team, and I stayed at the Green Tree Hotel. About midnight I was awakened by the smell of smoke; the hotel was on fire. I jumped into my clothes and rushed outside. Hundreds of people had formed a bucket line from the Yukon River to the hotel. I joined the line, and we passed buckets of water to quench the fire and to wet blankets on adjoining buildings. The fire department was helpless because the fire hose froze in the extreme cold. Every available man joined the bucket line, but the building burned to the ground.

Broken boards were scattered over the snow. It was pitch dark and I stumbled on a board that contained a rusty nail. I went to the hospital with blood poisoning. It was March before I was up and around again, too late to get to Nome by dog team. With the spring thaw under way, the Yukon would be unfit for travel on the ice. I knew the news of the gold strike at Nome would bring thousands of people from the States to Nome by boat, so I had to get there quickly. I decided to travel by bicycle. I had been an expert bicycle rider for years, and I figured I could reach Nome before the Yukon became unfit for travel.

Many dog teams, driven in single file, had preceded me down the river, and had made a hard trail about two inches wide where the sled runners cut deep troughs in the snow. I rode this narrow road, stopping at Indian villages or roadhouses.

The day I left Dawson, March 2, 1900, was clear and crisp, thirty degrees below zero. I was dressed in a flannel shirt, heavy fleece-lined overalls, a heavy mackinaw coat, a drill parka, two pairs of heavy woolen socks and felt high-top shoes, a fur cap that I pulled down over my ears, a fur nosepiece, plus fur gauntlet gloves.

On the handlebars of the bicycle I strapped a large fur robe. Fastened to the springs, back of the seat, was a canvas sack containing a heavy shirt, socks, underwear, a diary in waterproof covering, pencils, and several blocks of sulphur matches. In my pockets I carried a penknife and a watch. My poke held gold dust worth \$1500 and my purse contained gold and silver coins. Next to my skin around my waist I carried a belt with \$20 gold pieces that had been stitched into it by my aunt in Youngstown, Ohio, before I had left to go to the Klondike.

A number of friends, including my old partner, Hank West, waved goodbye.

The road out of Dawson was broad and well packed, the air was cold and exhilarating, and the sky was clear and calm. There were numerous dog teams headed for Forty Mile, Circle City, and points farther down the Yukon. Whenever

Editor's note: The following is reprinted with permission from ALASKA Magazine. The author, Max R. Hirshberg, wrote the story down in the late fifties. He died in 1964, and is as far as we know, the only person to have ridden a bicycle down the Yukon River.

I approached a dog team, the driver would accommodatingly pull off the trail and restrain his howling, snapping dogs from nipping me. I passed many dog teams before reaching Forty Mile. At the combination bar, gambling room and roadhouse, I thawed out before a roaring wood fire in an oil-tank stove. Eight or ten whiskered men were sitting and smoking, talking about the rumor of a nearby gold strike.

The Yukon River at Dawson was about 1500 feet wide. When the river froze, huge cakes of ice, some standing on edge, others slanting, formed a barrier to the opposite shore. As the final freeze occurred, cakes of ice from the lowered river caused the trail to resemble a sidehill slope. There were overflows covering the ice in places, some frozen over with newly formed ice which broke when stepped on, exposing a few inches of water over the solid ice beneath.

The trail led along this slanting ice, then along the bank of the river, across frozen tracks winding in and out from the tundra, and back to the sloping ice along the riverbank. Creek overflows were numerous, and by the time I reached Forty Mile, my socks were wet and ice covered my felt shoes. It took me quite a while to orient myself to my two-inch trail and I had many spills on this early part of my journey.

A few miles below Forty Mile I crossed the boundary line between Canada and the United States. A thrill shot through me as I caught sight of Old Glory waving on U.S. soil.

Eagle City was my next stop, about 100 miles from Dawson. Calico Bluff was about ten miles farther and at the mouth of Seventymile River was the mushroom town of Star City. Bold, rugged mountains, conspicuous by their height, were visible for a considerable distance. About 180 miles from Eagle City is Circle City. There were many log cabins, saloons, a hospital and an Episcopal church. Adjoining Circle City was an Indian village.

Here the river widened into the Yukon Flats for about 250 miles down the river. Not even a hill was in sight, just scrubby, stunted spruce along the shore.

Twenty miles or so below Circle City was Charley Creek, where I came to Native village, and a little farther on was a roadhouse. Some ten miles farther was Charley River, where I saw hundreds of caribou.

The most dangerous and difficult parts of the flats were between Circle City and Fort Yukon. Save for a portage land trail of 18 or 20 miles out of Circle City, the trail was on the river, which split into many channels without landmarks. The current was so swift that I encountered stretches of open water and blow holes. Snowstorms completely obliterated the trail.

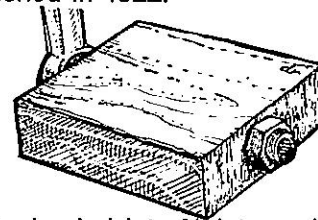
At last I made Fort Yukon, the most northerly point reached by the Yukon River, about a mile north of the Arctic Circle. There were several saloons, Native cabins, a church and stores displaying marten, fox, wolf and bear skins. It is the site of the oldest English-speaking settlement on the Yukon River. The oldest white man's graves in Alaska, with the exception of Nulato, are those in the little Hudson's Bay cemetery near Fort Yukon; the headboards were dated 1850 and 1860. In 1862, the Church of England had a clergyman here, a Mr. McDonald, who married a Native girl and translated the Bible and prayer book into the Native tongue.

Next, I reached Birch Creek, and the end of all mountains for the first time. Down the Yukon some 75 miles, I came to the upper Ramparts, where there was a trading post. Then I came to Rampart City and another Native village. Rampart City consisted of stores, log cabins and saloons; it furnished supplies for the placer gold mines on adjacent creeks. About 40 miles farther on I came to the rapids, where the ice was free of snow, and for twenty miles my bicycle skidded on the slippery ice, causing me numerous falls.

I arrived at the mouth of the Tanana River, where there was a trading post. I saw Mount McKinley far to the south, as the day was clear.

About five miles out of Tanana I skidded on the glare ice. When I picked myself up, I found I had broken a pedal. I returned to Tanana, and with the help of a storekeeper, cut out wooden pedals and drilled a hole through the center of each. I also bought bolts, nuts and washers. The pedals wore out about every 75 miles.

Two hundred and fifty miles farther on, I came to the Koyukuk, and twenty miles beyond that I arrived at Nulato, where a Russian trading post had been established in 1822.

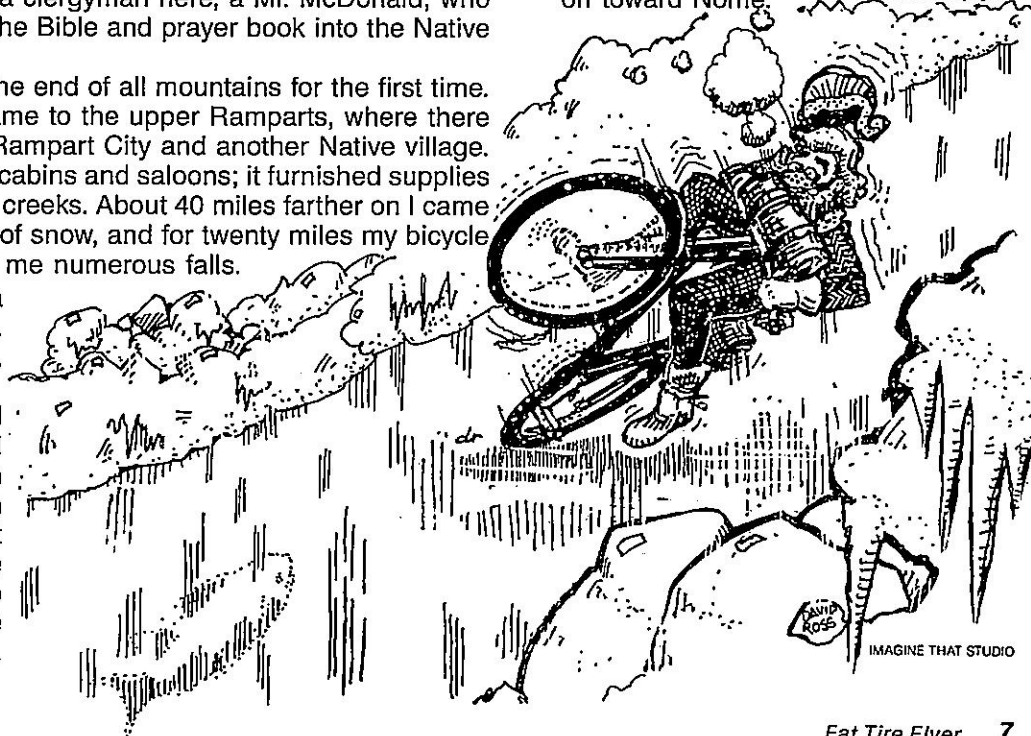


As I wheeled into Nulato, a Jesuit priest met me outside of his home and invited me to stay overnight. The next day he took me to his workshop and fashioned a new pedal for my bicycle out of galvanized sheet metal, fastening it together with copper rivets. Luckily, I had the extra bolts I had bought at Tanana, for he had none. This pedal lasted until I reached Nome.

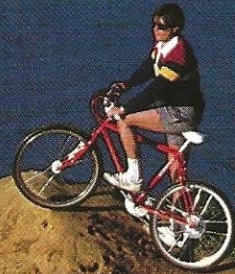
About fifty miles out of Nulato, I reached the Katlag cutoff and headed overland to the Bering Sea, away from the Yukon, which wound its course to St. Michael. The days were warmer and the trail had begun to thaw and at times became indistinct. Water was flowing in the creeks and rivers. As I crossed the Shaktolik River, I broke through the ice. Water was running under the surface ice, although there was still ice on the bottom of the river. I succeeded in breaking the surface ice, and, hanging on to my bicycle, reached the opposite shore.

As I neared the Bering Sea, I saw what appeared to be glare ice off the shore. I headed for this and before I could stop, I found I was in calm, open water. I succeeded in wading back to shore, and although wet, I continued on toward Nome.

continued on page 35



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SUCH A ROAD WOULD BE NO BIG DEAL IF FOUND IN UTAH OR NEVADA, BUT WE ARE ON THE WEST SLOPE OF THE SIERRA NEVADA AND CASCADE RANGES ONLY A COUPLE THOUSAND FEET ABOVE THE NOISY, SMOGGY CENTRAL VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA. PONDEROSA WAY WAS THE MX MISSILE PROJECT OF THE 30'S — A ROAD DESIGNED TO MOVE TROOPS AND ARMAMENTS AROUND THE SAN JOAQUIN AND SACRAMENTO VALLEYS SHOULD THE FLATLANDS BE OCCUPIED BY THE ENEMY.

PONDEROSA WAY DIVES THROUGH THE HEART OF ISHI COUNTRY — A WILDERNESS FLUSHED BY MILL CREEK, WHICH PLUNGES FROM 10,400 FT. LASSEN PEAK TO THE 200' SACRAMENTO VALLEY FLOOR IN LESS THAN 60 MILES.

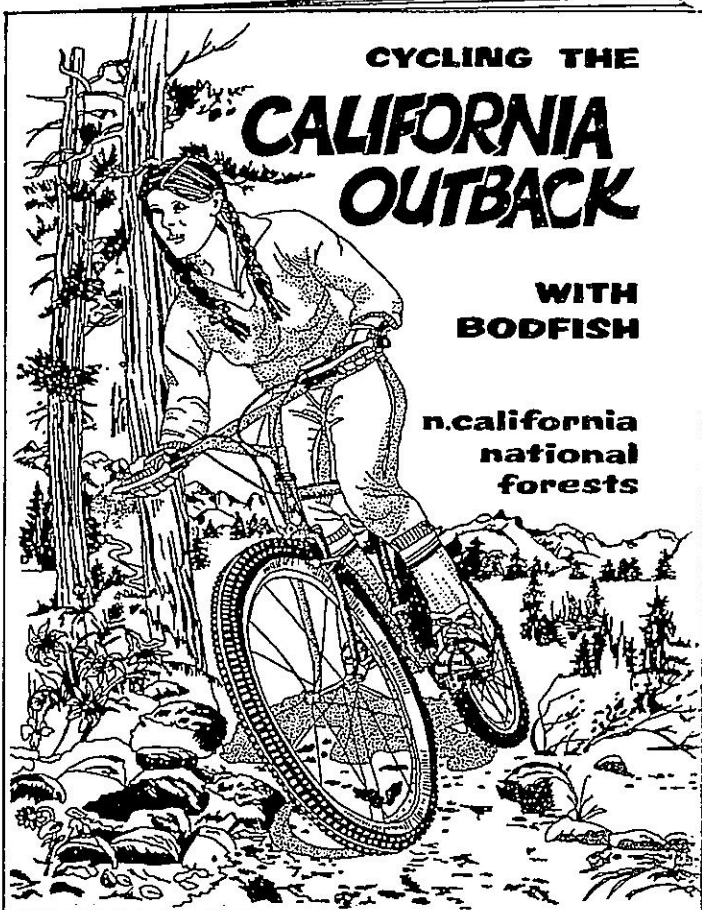
ISHI, THE LAST SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE YAHI TRIBE, WALKED OUT OF THESE SAME HILLS IN 1911 — SURRENDERING TO THE WHITE INVADERS WHO THOUGHT IT GOOD SPORT TO WANDER UP MILL CREEK "TO FLUSH OUT SOME SAVAGES".

SOME YEARS AGO SIX OF US FATTIRE BRATS (THE ROADIES CALLED US SAVAGES) ARRANGED A RENDEZVOUS JUST SOUTH OF RED BLUFF, WHERE HOGSBACK ROAD BEGINS IT'S CLIMB ALONG THE RIDGE NORTH OF ANTELOPE CREEK REACHING 2,000 FT. AT IT'S JCT.

WITH PONDEROSA WAY.

FEELING INVINCIBLE ON OUR 2,125'S WE CHARGED UP HOGSBACK, SPAT ON THE WILDFLOWERS AND SPLASHED LIKE GRIZZLIES IN FRIGID FINLEY LAKE. WE HAD TWO FULL DAYS TO CHOMP OFF 125 MILES OF "4X4 ONLY" ROAD. TEN THOUSAND FEET OF CLIMBING WHILE TOTING A WEEKEND'S WORTH OF CAMP GEAR. WE WERE AS CONFIDENT AS WOLF PUPS IN MID-AIR POUNCING ON OUR FIRST PORCUPINE.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



**CYCLING THE
CALIFORNIA
OUTBACK**

**WITH
BODFISH**

n.california
national
forests

21 MAPS FOR FAT TIRE CYCLING

LISA JO SEDLACEK

WE RODE THE FISHERMAN - WORN SINGLE TRACK THAT LEADS UPCREEK FROM BLACK ROCK, TILL WE FOUND YAHI CAMP - A FLAT GREEN UNDER A GROUP OF BUDDING OAKS. NAKED IN THE CREEK - HOWLING, YELPING, PULLING ON THE WARM CLOTHES THEN FANNING-OUT TO GATHER WOOD, (EVEN THOUGH NONE OF US BROUGHT OR CAUGHT ANYTHING TO COOK). IT'LL BE HOURS BEFORE THE FULL MOON CLEARS THE CANYON WALL.

THE FIRE CRACKLES AND SENDS RIBBONS OF SMOKE TOWARD THE STARS AND THE WAR STORIES, BATTLE YARNS FROM THE DAY'S RIDE, BEGIN. THROATS BURN WITH EXCITED EXAGGERATION AND CORN WHISKEY.

BY THE TIME THE MOON ILLUMINATES OUR CAMP, IT SEES SIX IMMOBILE NYLON COCOONS, LYING ON A MINIATURE FOREST OF POISON OAK SPROUTS, CIRCLING THE FAINT ORANGE COALS OF OUR CAMPFIRE.

MORNING DEW WEIGHTED THE LUPINE AND JOHNNY TUCK FLOWERS IN THE MEADOW JUST ABOVE OUR CAMP. I DECIDED TO HIKE UP MILL CREEK A PIECE SO AS TO STRETCH AND WARM THE LEGS BEFORE TACKLING THE CLIMB TO THE DEER CREEK RIM - A 2000 FT. , 6 MILE, QUAD BURNING ASCENT TO THE KNIFE-EDGE DIVIDE BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR WATERWAYS OF THE YAHY NATION.

OUR RIDING MENTALITY HAD MELLOWED AS THE ELEVATION -GAIN TALLY FOR THE JOURNEY NEARED 7,500'. WE ROLLED DOWN THE LASSEN TRAIL / DEER CREEK RIM AS A TEAM, TRUDGING THROUGH ABIT OF SNOW, ATTEMPTING TO LIMBO UNDER FALLEN TREES AND SPINNING SILENTLY UP TO A FAMILY OF MULE DEER.

DEER CREEK WAS RAGING UNDER THE 50 YEAR OLD W.P.A. BRIDGE. A COUPLE OF US "SWAM" BY HOLDING SMALL TREE TRUNKS AT THE WATER'S EDGE AND LETTING OUR BODIES RIPPLE LIKE FLAGS IN A HURRICANE OUT IN THE ICY RIVER (GO NAKED OR YOU'RE SURE TO LOSE YOUR UNDERWEAR). THE LAST 2,500 FOOT OF CLIMBING IS THROUGH THE LAVA FORMATIONS KNOWN AS THE DEVIL'S KITCHEN - COULD BE MISERABLE IN AUGUST, WHEN TEMPERATURES ABOVE THE 100° MARK ARE NOT UNCOMMON.

THE CAMPBELLVILLE HELICOPTER PAD, TOP OF THE CLIMB OUT OF DEER CREEK, LIES AT 4015' AND OFFERS A GRAND VIEW OF LASSEN PEAK (REFERRED TO AS WAGANUPA "SOURCE OF ALL LIFE" BY NATIVES PRIOR TO THE 20TH CENTURY ... AND AREA CYCLISTS SINCE 1980). HOME AND HUGS NOW LAY ONLY 30 MILES BELOW IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY.

CRAFTY CRUISIN'

Every tour has distinct features, and knowing them the clever tourist will modify his rig and plans to suit the anticipated conditions. One should mull over the available facts. Food, fuel and shelter resources may be available and can be integrated into the plan. A group can pool resources to reduce the amount of extra gear carried. Informed planning will lead to a lightweight and therefore comfortable, mobile and flexible tour.

Starting at the bottom, tires are a most important factor in on-off road touring. The extra weight of sleeping and cooking materials multiplies the importance of such factors as traction and rolling resistance. Street treads and center-ridge or multipurpose tire designs can really speed up the road and gentler dirt and trail sections, but they can also let you down on the harsh exposed single track. I would rather pay the rolling penalty of an aggressive fanged tread than wash out and bail into the bushes. Usually there only a few really difficult spots on any given trail, so a trail and street ride combination can still be done on street skins. The more unknown and predominantly wild tours are best taken on the biggest knobs available.



Don Merkle

Gearing is another variable worth altering to suit the nature of the route. The lowest viable gear with packs tends to be lower than without. Just the thought of pushing the rig with all the junk strapped on it makes spinning in granny gear sound like the easiest way to go. For steep mountains that means 24 tooth front ring and 32-34 tooth rear cog. The middle and outer chainrings could be 34-38 and 46-48 for a dirt ride with lots of climbing. A pavement trek with easier climbs and faster pedaling would be the time to try a 42-44 tooth middle ring and 48-50 tooth outer one. A bigger inner chainring and chain length alterations may be called for here. For general cruisin' the lower gearings are most practical; it is usually worse not to have a low enough ratio to get up a hill than to be outrun on the faster stretches. Touring is not about velocity.

The racks and bags are the foundation of the rolling abode. When your bag system gets launched on the rebound from a ditch, you too can appreciate good touring gear. I haven't yet

continued on page 34

WE LAY SPREAD-EAGLE ON THE WARM CONCRETE SLAB FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE HOURS. FINALLY, LINDSAY MOANS, "WHERE'S THE BEER?"

FODFISH



CANADA The Arctic Cycle



by
Charles R. Kelly

Having read of the adventures of people conquering remote goals such as the Himalayas, Kilimanjaro and Mont Blanc via mountain bike, I have always felt a twinge of jealousy for those who embark on these historic firsts, since the riding in our civilized part of the world seems so tame by comparison. This year however I finally had my chance to put my tire tracks where no bicycle had ever been, when six of us cycled Canada's Canol Road just 200 miles south of the Arctic Circle in the rugged tundra and mountains of the Far North.

First the thanks and credits. CP Air supplied the round trip from San Francisco to Whitehorse, and several suppliers were kind enough to outfit me for the trip: Bruce Gordon and Blackburn racks, Needle Works and Kangaroo panniers, and Plumline clothing. Also, thanks to Tony Carson at Tourism Yukon for abundant services rendered.

The Canol Road was built at enormous expense and hardship during World War II to supply oil from Norman Wells, which was at the time the northernmost producing oilfield, to Whitehorse some 600 miles away. By the time the construction was completed, the strategic elements that caused it to be built had changed, and it was abandoned only a few months after the first barrel of oil arrived in Whitehorse. While the part of the road that lies within the Yukon Territory is maintained, the 200 miles that lie within the wild and rugged Northwest Territories have now been unmaintained for four decades and are impassible to motor traffic. It sounded perfect for mountain bikes.

The last outpost that can be reached by vehicle from Whitehorse is Oldsquaw Lodge, a summer observation post on the tundra for naturalists studying the unique flora and fauna of the region. In August the birds have shed their brilliant mating plumage and the wildflowers have bloomed, so the operators of Oldsquaw, Nancy Eagleson and Sam Miller, decided to experiment with a mountain bike tour

on the Canol. Accordingly three men and three women pushed off on a brilliantly clear day, bikes loaded with gear, for the first ever mountain bike ride in the road's 40 year history. Our crew consisted of Americans Wendy Lippman, Al Farrell and myself, plus Canadians Anne Mullens and Tony Carson, guided by Nancy Eagleson, who was "born in the U.S.A." but is now a resident of Canada.

Only a mile or so from the lodge the road was washed out so badly that no four-wheel vehicle could cross. As we struggled across the gap, our guide Nancy mentioned that no hunters could penetrate past this point in trucks, so game would be plentiful from here on. The evidence of game was everywhere, because the Canol makes a perfect game trail and all the large animals use it. Tracks, and what the locals politely refer to as "sign" of grizzly bear, moose, caribou and wolf were everywhere. To these we added our own distinctive marks, fat tire tracks.

Low willows grow thickly along the sides of the road, a natural habitat for bears. Sam had told us, "These are wild

D.A.



grizzlies, not park bears. They're not used to people, and they aren't nearly as fierce as people think they are. If they hear you coming mostly they'll just run away. But if you come around a corner fast and run into one, or scare a cub, you're in trouble." Accordingly we held our pace to a very reasonable speed, and whistled and sang with enthusiasm to give Mr. or Ms. Bear time to amble off the trail.

Riding down a valley, we came on one of the old work camps left from the time when the road was built. The officers' quarters have been turned into a makeshift stable for the pack trains that use the road, and the walls are marked with many scribbled names and dates. In front is a line of trucks that were once parked in a neat row, but have been moved around by the action of the permafrost and the salvagers who long ago retrieved the tires and wheels. A few dozen barrels are stacked as they have been for forty years, and the unhealed scars of a shallow quarry which supplied the gravel road surface attests to the length of time it takes for the tundra to recover from the insult. On a

cliff high above the camp a pair of golden eagles observed us from their nest.

Descending to the first creek crossing we encountered another form of northern wildlife, one that seems in little danger of extinction. Canada has 130 species of biting insects and the national bird is the mosquito. These creatures hardly qualify as insects.

At this first crossing some of us carefully took off our shoes and socks before wading across, the last time anyone took such precautions. With water blocking our route every mile or so, we got used to striding into the cold, hip-deep water in jeans and boots. Cold and wet feet are a fact of life in this country, and since everyone has them, it's no use complaining.

As we sat eating lunch on the road we heard the unmistakable sound of a tiny engine, truly a surprise. Presently a tiny trail motorbike appeared, a Honda 70 loaded down with an inflatable rubber raft, a rifle, tent and sleeping bag, food, camera gear, and under all that, a rider who was as surprised at seeing us as were to see him. He introduced himself as Archie Knill, and he told us that he had started the previous summer from Norman Wells at the end of the Canol. Caught in August by inclement weather, he had stored his bike at a hunting camp and flown out, returning nearly a year later to retrieve his bike and complete his trip. He told us of a harrowing river crossing the year before, when his raft had capsized and dumped all his gear and motorcycle. After fishing it all out, he had to disassemble and clean his motor on the bank before continuing.

Archie told us about what we would be facing the next day when we followed the Ekwi River. "I had to cross it seven times," he reassured us, "But you can carry your bikes, so you shouldn't have any trouble except the last one, where it's pretty deep." We assured him that he had nothing that difficult ahead of him. Archie also gave us a couple of what we were beginning to realize were in everyone's repertoire here, the 'I've been chased by bears' story. Grizzlies are more numerous than people here, so people living in the area are bound to run across them once in a while or even more often. No one who told such a story had actually been eaten by a bear, and in fact recorded instances of such behavior on the part of bears are extremely rare in the NWT, but everyone had apparently escaped the Canadian version of JAWS by the merest of margins. It seems to be a tradition in the north to regale travellers with bear stories before letting them venture into bear territory. continued on page 36

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Bicycle Trafficking in Bolivia

Editor's note: Bernard Magnouloux has been on an extended bicycle tour of Africa and the Americas, covering (so far) over 40,000 miles in four years.

by
B. Magnouloux

Rarely had borders been so obvious on my journey; here, on the edge of Uyuni's dried salt lake, the Chilean dirt road stops abruptly and nothing but truck tracks continue into Bolivia. It's nine o'clock. I have no problem checking out of Chile; the officer was behind his desk in an overheated office. But on the Bolivian side, the office is empty, dusty and cold. The altitude here is about 12,000 feet; looking for somebody, I find the living quarters in the back. They aren't heated either as well as I can judge when the door finally opens. The official has only his uniform pants on and doesn't look happy that I woke him. I explain that, being a bicyclist I couldn't afford to lose too much time. He is so small that he looks like a kid, but he orders me to wait in his office.

I had to wait for an hour, but the time allowed me to copy by hand the big road map posted behind the desk, in front of Simon Bolivar's portrait. This copy will enable me to cross the country without getting lost, a challenge since most of the time I'll be following the only dirt road or the only railroad. The capital town, Sucre, will be the only capital town in my round the world tour where all the roads leading in and out will be dirt. On my return I'll ride with delight the country's only three miles of freeway entering La Paz.

Now two Bolivian officers arrive to check me in. I have a visa and I'm not smuggling anything. I don't see why the formalities are taking so long. Well they do. First, the bicycle. As in many third-world countries, I'm suspected of bicycle trafficking, and to keep me from selling my bike the officials want to record it on my passport. They need the type, color, year of construction and brand of my steed. Rossinante, my bicycle, is a wild animal; I built it myself and it has no serial number or brand name. But it has, since a meeting with Kenyan devotees, a large HARE KRISHNA sticker on the handlebars. The officers dutifully record in the official register that I am entering Bolivia "... with a Hare Krishna bicycle ..."

(In Sudan, for the same reason, and because the sticker then read NUCLEAIRE ENERGIE SUICIDE [Nuclear is Suicidal Energy the officials stated in my passport that I was entering the country "... with a nuclear bicycle ..."])

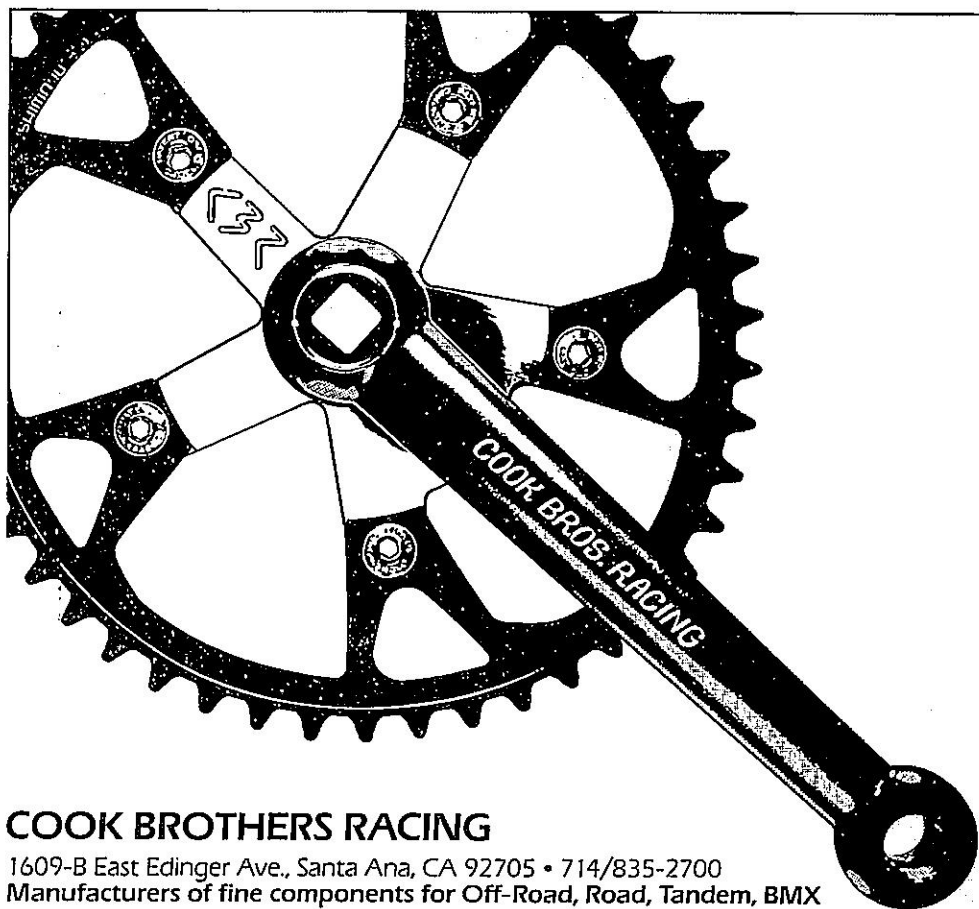
From the border to Uyuni I have to follow the railroad, my only guideline through the whiteness of the salt. Bridges are tricky; I have to keep my bike balanced on one rail while I jump from one tie to the next. This requires a lot of concentration and once, while in the middle of a bridge and deeply absorbed by the task, I am brutally shaken by a blasting horn; approaching against the wind so I didn't hear it, a TRAIN! I panic, the bike falls between the ties and I wonder if I should jump out first and leave the bike on the rails or try to save the bike. But then I notice that the train has stopped. In Bolivia, I shall learn, trains are often one or two days late, and this one can afford the time to stop and let me off the bridge.

In the mining town of Potosi, once a thriving center (Potosi is still synonymous

with riches in Spanish), I observe crowds lining up to get water from a railroad tank car. Thanks to a flourishing black market I get a hotel room and three meals for a dollar. Next door, for ten cents I can see two movies.

In the streets witch doctors are selling llama fetuses as charms, and women in melon hats are selling heaps of coca leaves. Everyone is chewing coca. In the tin mines, I am told, the first hour of "work" is dedicated to the chewing.

One shouldn't chew coca leaves without the little black pills that the women sell also. It works as a catalyst. I try it, and it tastes exactly like it looks, like coal ... coca chewing isn't for me. For me and the other gringos there's something else in store. On a street corner, this man has some for sale. He looks straight at me and with his index finger presses his nostril and sniffs. But I'm not initiated, and I'll wonder for a long time why this man was asking me for a handkerchief ... I'll understand everything when on the black market the dollar suddenly falls, "... right



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Dan Cair

after the big annual cocaine sale . . ." as I am told.

In Sucre the streets are filled with begging peasants who have fled their dried-up farms. Their hats tell which village they come from; these hats are an astonishing sight, handcrafted in leather and shaped exactly like the Conquistadores' helmets. I am reminded of a warning received on the road two days before. A schoolteacher had told me, "Be careful. The people around here are very primitive, but they know everything about UFOs; they have seen E.T and Alien. And because you are not riding our

kind of bike, and because of your red beard and your funny earring (I wear a bicycle spoke nipple, souvenir from an African tribe) they may very well mistake you for a UFO and kill you from fear . . ."

Approaching Cochabamba, I meet more meztizos than pure Indians, and the contact is easier, especially when there's chicha. These people, busy threshing wheat, attract me with an unmistakable sign: they lift a glass. They carefully explain that the chicha, the orange liquid in my glass, is made of yellow corn. Ah, ah, good, a second glass? Yes, please . . . Oh, I see. The corn is chewed and spit out with

saliva, because the saliva makes it ferment . . . interesting! But thank you, no more. I think I've had enough! After three glasses, I'm glad to have Rossicante to help me stand up. When I get back to the road, I'm so wobbly that instead of trying to pedal and no doubt crashing, I walk and mount only when I have left their sight.

From La Paz there is a thrilling bicycle trip I must make, to Chacaltaya, the highest ski-resort in the world. The dirt road winds up to 18,000 feet! There, because of the lack of oxygen and the euphoria it provokes, you are definitely HIGH, in both senses. At the top, it's

continued on page 37

Henry Coe

State Park

by
Ray Hosler

As we rode along Mahoney Meadows Ridge in Henry Coe State Park, we felt a sense of unity with this magnificently wild countryside. On a calm December morning we were warmed by the sun's early rays under a clear blue sky. The four of us had left park headquarters at first light. The long and steep descent to Poverty Flat is a classic brake burner, followed by a walk-and-grunt climb to Mahoney Ridge from Los Cruzeros campground.

We saw only two hikers on the day's 35-mile ride over rugged dirt roads that cut deep into the wilderness southeast of Mount Hamilton. Bill Bartlow, a 50-year old San Jose machinist, showed us the way. Bartlow is the Davy Crockett of mountain biking in this park. He started riding several years ago after giving up his dirt motorbike. "As a volunteer trail builder I came to realize this country was ideal for mountain bikes. I wanted to see more of the park in a single day, so I took up mountain bike riding."

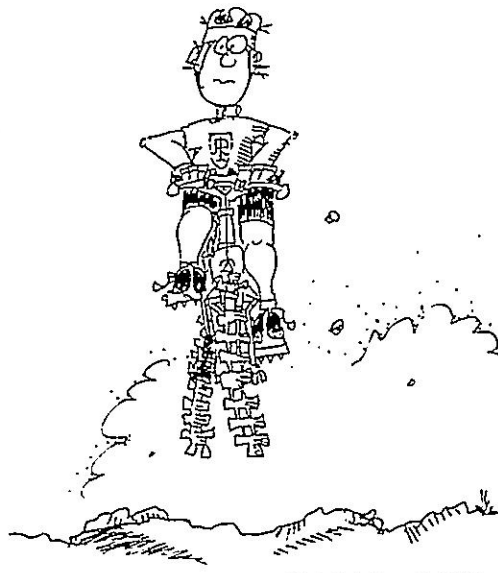
It was a good thing we had Bartlow along for the ride. This park is BIG, so big you can't see everything in a single day. Located twenty miles southeast of San Jose, it is California's second largest state park, covering about 100 square miles of canyons and ridges. The more than 200 miles of dirt roads and trails are open for cycling. Fall and spring are the best times for favorable weather.

Although mountain bikes are banned in many parks, Ranger Barry Breckling said he knows of no plans to ban mountain bikes here. "We haven't had any problems yet," Breckling said, "but we're keeping an eye on things. We caution cyclists to watch for equestrians on the narrow trails."

From Mahoney Meadows we found a long, fast descent to Kelly Lake. About a half-dozen of the park's reservoirs hold trout and bass. We saw a wild boar pacing back and forth near the lake's edge. Boars and rattlesnakes are two forms of

wildlife to steer clear of here, so we gave the lumbering oinker a wide berth as we began a long, gradual climb to our deepest penetration of the park at Mississippi Lake. Looking to the east we saw more of the same: wild, untamed countryside used only by ranchers for grazing.

We had lunch at Mississippi Lake, a pristine blue oasis nestled between two ridges covered with sage and chamise. After a hard morning of riding we had reached the center of the park, but there



were still miles of dirt roads heading off in all directions. Our return route took us to the summit of Bear Mountain, where a series of giant roller coasters greeted us like a fairy tale. In many respects the terrain here is similar to Point Reyes, only drier.

Because it is arid and remote, Henry Coe draws mostly experienced hikers and skilled mountain bikers, and very few at that. Bring food and water. You won't find fountains other than the one at park headquarters. Springs can be found, but the water's potability can't be guaranteed. (I took my chances and drank from two springs without getting sick.) Water purification tablets are advised.

Don't go for a ride without a park map or you could easily get lost. Maps are available at the headquarters for \$1. By the way, the park has only one access point. The park map doesn't show contour lines, but you can be sure that wherever there is a creek, there are steep hills with 1000-foot climbs on both sides.

As you start your ride from headquarters you have two choices. You can head south through Arnold Field on a fire road (or the narrow Spring Trail) or you can head north toward Frog Lake. If you go south there is a fast descent to a road fork, where you can continue south to Manzanita Point Camp or east to Poverty Flat, a campground on the middle fork of Coyote Creek.

The route to Frog Lake includes a tough granny-gear climb and then a tortuous descent. Ponderosa pines cover Middle Ridge. You will pass Sada's Monument during the climb. Sada Coe gave the park's original 13,000 acres to Santa Clara County in 1953. From here the Sierra Nevada are visible on a clear day.

Blue Ridge faces you to the east. You'll see a gnarly fire road dropping like a rock into Coyote Creek. Riders who have lived through the descent tell me it makes Repack a laugher. Along the top of Blue Ridge is a fine fire road that takes a gentle slope down to Miller Field.

To make a loop from Frog Lake I recommend the Middle Ridge Trail to Poverty Flat. This is one long woodsy "ski" track that rates a ten on the Fun Meter. The real animals will be able to ride nearly all the way up to Arnold Field without dismounting. This loop tour should take a couple of hours.

For a serious, all-day ride, Mississippi Lake is worth the effort. Bring your pole if you're into fishing. Take a southerly route from headquarters to Mahoney Meadows, Kelly Lake, Coit Lake, Pacheco Camp (there is a spring here), and then to Mississippi. Go north to Bear Mountain on your return, where there's a locked-brakes descent to East Fork Camp. Ride the creek bed to a walk-climb to Miller Field, follow roller-coasters to Poverty Flat, and then prepare yourself for the long grind up to headquarters.

To reach Henry Coe take Dunne Avenue east off U.S. 101 near Morgan Hill for thirteen miles, part of which is a narrow, winding road from Anderson Reservoir to the park entrance. Limited parking is available at headquarters. For more information call (408) 779-2728. Camping reservations are on a first-come first-served basis.

And on your way out, don't forget to thank the rangers for welcoming bicycles.



MOUNTAIN BIKE GUIDED TOUR SERVICES

In this roundup we have collected the main information on as many touring services as we could find. Since we have obviously not taken all of these tours, we are not attempting to rate them, and we can't vouch for the information other than saying that this is what the literature says, and you should check them out yourselves before spending your touring ducats. Obviously, tours are being added and dropped all the time, and the market is quite fluid.

Arrow to the Sun P.O. Box 115

Taylorville, CA 95983

916-284-6263

Michael Sobrero

Tours of the Sierra Nevada and Coast Range in Northern California, five to six days in length. Baja soon to be added to list although prices are not yet available.

No bicycle rentals.

Fully supported and guided, with all meals.

Accommodations mostly camping (one night in an Inn on one tour), with tents provided. Bring sleeping bag and pad. Cost is around \$300 depending on tour.

Bicycle Detours

P.O. Box 44078

Tucson, AZ 85733

602-326-1624

Frank Lister

Tours of Southwest averaging one week. Longer tours to different destinations in South America. Recent trips have explored Machu Picchu and the Amazon Basin in 10-14 days.

Bike and helmet rental included in tour price.

Fully supported and guided.

Accommodations range from lodges to "safari camps." Bring a sleeping bag.

Costs average \$100 per day on domestic trips, \$1500 to \$2000 including air fare from Miami for South American trips.

BikeCentennial

The Bicycle Travel Association

P.O. Box 8308

Missoula, MT 59807

406-721-1776

"Ruff Stuff" Tours of Montana mountain country averaging one week for several levels of riders. Several tours may be combined for a longer tour.

Bikes not supplied.

Fully supported and guided.

Cost \$350-\$400 per week.



Gordon Bainbridge

TOURING COMPANY ROUNDUP

Bike Virginia

Box 203

Williamsburg, VA 23187

804-253-2985

Weekend trips in Western Virginia through the Blue Ridge mountains and Shenandoah National Park. (Longer trips are in the planning stages.)

Bike rentals available for \$60.

Fully supported and guided, meals included.

Accommodations are double occupancy in first-class lodge.

Cost is \$189, not including bike rental.

China Passage

168 State Street

Teaneck, NJ 07666-3516

201-837-1400

Fredric M. Kaplan

Trips to China with several routes including the Great Wall, Mongolia or Tibet, several weeks in length. Rental bicycles available for \$85.

Fully supported and guided, meals included.

Camping is not available in China, so no sleeping bag is necessary. Accommodations range from rustic dwellings to hotels. Cost, not including air fare to China, ranges from \$1300 to \$3000.

Desert Wind Excursions

102 San Francisco Street, Suite 16

Santa Fe, NM 87501

505-982-5329

Downhill Spokers Bicycle Tours

39 East 30th Street

New York, NY 10016

212-684-7847

Weekend tours of Northern California, Upstate New York and Maine. "Hot Air Balloon Chase" follows balloons across unpredictable hazards.

Bike rental \$15 to \$25.

Fully supported, guides and meals provided.

Accommodations range from "Roughing It" tours (camping) to luxury inns. Bring a sleeping bag for camping tours. Cost from \$125 to \$375 for weekend depending on tour.

Mountain Rambles Backcountry Bicycle Tours

RD#1, Box 308

Hughesville, PA 17737

717-584-2806

John Manifold

An assortment of one to four-day trips through rural areas in Pennsylvania, with several levels of luxury varying from camping trips to "Inn to Inn" trips.

Bicycle rental of \$10 day may be deducted from price if rider brings his or her own bicycle. Helmets provided.

Fully supported and guided, meals included.

Accommodation depends on trip, varies from campouts to luxurious country inn. Bring sleeping bag for camping trips, but

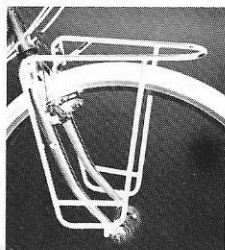
Continued on next page

tents and sleeping pads will be provided. Cost ranges from \$35 for one-day trips to about \$80 per day on Inn to Inn.

Bruce Gordon Chrome-Moly Mountain Bike Rack



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Mountain Bike Tours in Utah's Canyonlands

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94 W. 1st North • Moab, UT 84532
(801) 259-5333

Rim Tours

94 West 1st North
Moab, UT 84532
801-259-5333

Tours of Canyonlands area around Moab, said to be some of the finest mountain biking in the U.S. Half-day to three day rides, with custom rides for groups available.

Bike rentals are included in one-day trips, \$15/day for longer trips.

Guides on all rides, sagwagon support on long day rides and overnights. Meals provided.

Campouts on overnight rides, with all camping equipment available for rental.

Cost starts at \$17 for a half day including bike. Longer trips do not include price of bike rental and start at \$33-\$60/day for one day, up to \$149-\$205 for three days. The more expensive trips also include a jetboat ride.

Rocky Mountain Cycle Tours

Box 895
Banff, Alberta T0L 0C0
403-678-6770

Sierra Bicycle Touring Company

Sierra Bicycle Promotions, Inc.
P.O. Box 5453
Incline Village, NV 89450
702-831-3576
Larry Glickfield

Tours of Baja California, Death Valley and Sierra Nevada from two to seven days.

Bicycle rentals available, \$55 to \$105 depending on tour length.

Fully supported and guided.

Accommodations range from camping to hotels.

Price ranges from \$150 to \$350.

Sequoia Sports

Sequoia Outdoor Center
P.O. Box S, Sequoia
Kernville, CA 93238
619-376-3776
Barry Tessman

Two day tours at 8000 foot elevation in Sierra Nevada.

Fully supported, meals, all equipment and transportation from Outdoor Center provided.

Camping, bring a sleeping bag.

Cost \$150 per person, minimum 4 persons per group. Tours daily in summer.

Timberline Bicycle Tours

3261 S. Oneida Way
Denver, CO 80224
303-759-3804
Dick Gottsegen

One- to four-day tours of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, with base locations in Breckenridge, Aspen, and Steamboat Springs.

Bicycle rentals available, \$60 for four day trip, bike completely equipped with touring racks and bags.

No sagwagon support except for Canyonlands tour, where water is scarce. Riders carry their own camping gear on all other tours.

Accommodations mostly camping, with first night in a hotel.

Cost is \$25 for day tours, including bike and picnic lunch. Four day trips cost \$225, not including bike rental.

Touring Exchange

P.O. Box 265
Port Townsend, WA 98368
206-385-0667
Bonnie Wong

"Rough Stuff" tours of Baja, seven to ten days via back roads and small villages, tours of California desert and Cascade mountains of Washington. Group sizes 7-10.

Bike rentals available.

No sag support, all meals provided.

Accommodations range from camping to hotels.

Cost \$270-\$350.

Tropical Bicycle Odysseys

P.O. Box 5092, Cairns
Queensland 4870
Australia (070) 56 2100
Trevor Strickland

American Handbuilt

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Somerville, MA 02143
617-625-4922

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 - Comfort
- On & Off Road



FAT CHANGE



Dan Cain

Tours of Australia from weekends to 26 days.

Fully supported and guided, meals and bike provided.

Accommodations from camping to hotels. Cost from \$125 to \$1250 (Australian \$)

Ultimate Escapes, Ltd.
2506 W. Colorado Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80904
303-578-8383
Gary Ziegler

Trips from five days to two weeks in Rocky Mountains, Mexico, and South

America.

Bicycles included in price.

Fully supported and guided, all meals provided (with some exceptions).

Cost depending on destination from \$400 to \$1500.

Accommodations from camping to hotels depending on tour.

Wilderness Bicycle Tours,
P.O. Box 692
Topanga, CA 90290
213-455-2544
Casey Patterson

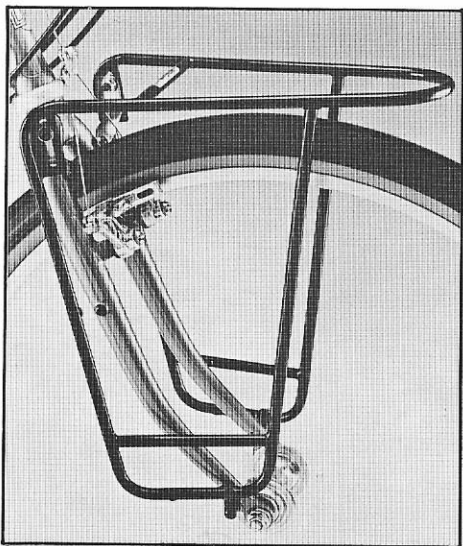
Tours of Catalina Island and other Channel Islands, as well as other parts of Southern California, Northern California and special excursions elsewhere. Trips vary in length from one day to a week or more, average 10-20 miles per day for beginners.

Rental bicycles available.

Fully supported, i.e. all gear is carried and meals cooked for the riders. Accommodations range from camping to motels. Cost including bike ranges from \$35 for one day to \$400 for four days. Deposit required.



Touring PRODUCT



Needle Works Pannier/ Bruce Gordon Rack

Tested by SeeKay

Needle Works and Bruce Gordon Cycles are located a short distance apart, and their products are coordinated to work together. On my trip to Canada's Canol Road I used a Gordon front rack and Needle Works Panniers.

There are several schools of thought on off-road front bags. The low riding front pannier is adopted from road bikes, but for some types of off-road riding these can have drawbacks, because they can interfere with steering on tight trails where brush can catch them. One school of off-road thought is to place the gear on top of the front wheel, in a pre-lowriding mode. Another school dispenses with the front pack entirely; I have found that this creates serious problems with weight distribution, and makes it very difficult to pick the bike up.

The Bruce Gordon rack system is a compromise of sorts; it carries the load in a low-riding mode, but is a little higher than other versions of low racks. Because of this difference, the custom rack braze-ons on my fork didn't line up, and I had to use the clamps supplied with the racks. In spite of this, the racks mounted so firmly that they felt like part of the frame. Gordon racks are made of brazed steel tubing, rather than heli-arc'd aluminum, and the design includes a hoop to join both sides to eliminate shake.

Designed for the Gordon racks, the Needle Works panniers attached perfectly and firmly. Riders have complained that low riding bags get heavy wear from rocks and brush, but the Needle Works system includes a tough, waterproof cover with heavy wear-resistant material on the bottom, separate from the bag. These are obviously less expensive to replace than worn bags. The bag itself is divided up in-

to a number of cute compartments; the dividers are removable if you have something bigger. On the outside is a mesh compartment, where you can presumably dry your socks while riding.

On a few occasions during the Canol ride I caught my front bags on projecting brush on narrow trails. Since our speed was minimal this was not a problem, and in my opinion having the bike balanced was of far greater importance than catching a bush now and then.



Before we leave the subject, I should point out that the rack I used was designed for road riding, although it worked perfectly off-road. Since that time Bruce Gordon has introduced a new model designed specifically for mountain bikes. This new rack carries the load even higher, with clamps mounted near the fork crown. Because it is a little wider, it keeps the load away from cantilever brakes. In addition, there is a platform on top rather than a connecting hoop for more load capacity.

Needleworks Bruce Gordon Cycles
769 Monroe St 1070 West Second Av
Eugene OR 97402 Eugene OR 97402

Blackburn Mtn Rack and Kangaroo Baggs

For my rear setup on the Canol I used the new Blackburn Mtn Rack with Kangaroo Baggs. The first problem I noticed was in attaching the panniers. Kangaroo has gone through several attachment systems beginning with an elastic hookup that just wasn't tough enough to keep the load from bouncing around or off during a tough descent. The current

system is a pair of adjusting straps, each with a steel ring on it, designed to hook onto the two little projections at the bottom of a Blackburn rack. But wait! The new Mtn rack only has one hook on the bottom, so both little rings must be bunched up and hooked onto it. Well, at least it got on there securely, if not the way Kangaroo designed it. Someday somebody has to figure a standard mounting arrangement, then everyone should use it.

One cute feature of the Mtn rack is that it has its own little mud and water deflector that also keeps your sleeping bag from rubbing on the wheel. If the deflector extended a little further, it might keep mud off your back too.

One other problem cropped up, in that I couldn't get the rack level when attaching it to my brazed-on fittings, even by sliding the little slide mounts to the end of travel. I finally bent them a little, but the rack was still not level. A little unsettling to look at, this didn't interfere with performance. I later got a call from Blackburn in which I was asked if I had a problem of this nature, and when I said I had, I was told that they knew about it and were correcting it. A postscript to all this comes from a friend who rides a Cunningham bike, which has very short seatstays. He says that the Blackburn Mtn Rack was the only one he could find that would fit his bike.

After going through all that getting ready to tour, I had no trouble during the tour. The Kangaroo Baggs are roomy (I had the biggest model) and waterproof, and have a couple of outside compartments. It is a bag in the truest sense, not divided into internal compartments, and in order to get at whatever is on the bottom, you have to pull out whatever is on top. To keep the load from bouncing around there are two straps around the outside which can be tightened to hold everything in place. A good safety gesture is the reflector strips incorporated into the design. Since I've had them I haven't been attacked by a single owl.

Kangaroo Baggs Blackburn Design
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Astra Packs

These polyethylene panniers, hard shell seamless saddlebags are the Astra™ touring packs. The hollow shell design is sturdier than cloth bags;