

# THE NAME GAME

BY CHARLES KELLY

What's in a name? Confusion in some cases. California sports a few prominent cyclists with similar names. Just to clear up (or possibly add to) the confusion, there are two guys named **Steve Potts**, one each from Northern and Southern California. Both were motorcycle racers, and now they're bicycle designers and entrepreneurs who turn out custom bike parts, which increases the confusion. Steve Potts South is employed by **Giant Bicycles** as a product manager, while Steve Potts North is one of the **Wilderness Trail Bikes** trio of Potts, Slate, and Cunningham. Cunningham? Which one? There are three Cunninghams working on custom bikes in California. **Jim Cunningham** is the principal in the custom bicycle frame painting company, **CycleArt**. **Richard Cunningham** is the builder of **Mantis Bicycles** and designer of the Alien mountain bike from Nishiki. **Charlie Cunningham** builds custom aluminum bike frames and works with Potts North and Slate at WTB. Charlie? That's my name. So when I'm introduced, I'm often asked what it's like being married to Alice B. Toeclips (a.k.a. **Jacque Phelan**). Sorry, wrong Charlie. Is that all clear?

A group of women mountain bikers in England has formed an association along the lines of the Women's Mountain Bike and Tea Society (WOMBATS). The English group is called

**VIXENS**. Since a vixen is a female fox, I expect they're all darn cute, too.

A few minutes after I told a caller that the **Sierra Club** never deals with the issue of mountain bikes in its official publications, I picked up my mail and saw a lengthy article in the May/June issue of the club's magazine, *Sierra*, on the very subject. It was written by one of our contributing editors, **Dennis Coello**, and as such it was a realistic but sympathetic treatment of the issues involved. I wonder if the editors realized that Dennis is one of us.

I had to laugh when I saw a magazine photo of pro basketball player **Ralph Sampson** holding "his" mountain bike over his head. He's 7-foot-4, and the bike,

which he must have borrowed just for the photo, has a 20-inch frame. Actually, Ralph owns a huge, \$3,000 custom mountain bike that he rides to rehabilitate an injured knee.

Another celebrity mountain biker is **Sammy Hagar**, lead singer for **Van Halen**. Sammy owns two bike shops in Marin County and recently introduced a custom line of \$795 bikes sold only in his shops. The "Red Rocker" is actually a limited production run of Fisher MountainBikes with custom red paint, black anodized components, and special Fat-trax tires with black sidewalls. Standard equipment includes red quick-release levers and an accessory that is de rigueur in Marin, a mini-mag flashlight

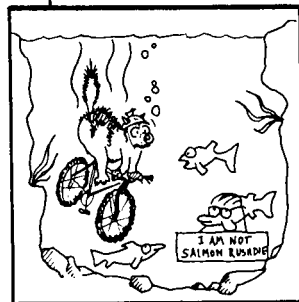
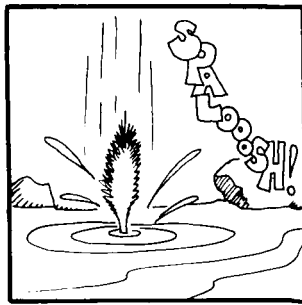
clamped to the handlebar. Sammy had planned to organize an unpublicized benefit for local schools, a celebrity bike race with members of the **Grateful Dead**, **Motley Crue**, **Eddie Money**, **Linda Ronstadt**, **Boz Skaggs** and **Bobby McFerrin**, but when the story leaked to the local papers it was canceled. Can you imagine what would have happened? **CHAOS!**

It was inevitable. According to contributing editor **Gary Sprung**, the first off-road wheelchair has reached the market. Called the **Cobra** and built by **Up and Over Engineering of El Cerrito, California**, it features a chrome-moly frame, four-wheel disk brakes, and knobby tires.

The recent pur-



There are two Charlies in Jacque's life, but she didn't marry the "right" one.



chase of a radar speed gun by the **Marin Municipal Water District** made the papers across the country, including a short article in the *Wall Street Journal* that suggested locals were working on a "stealth" mountain bike. The radar device will be used to clock mountain bikers in the Water District, which includes many of the prime Marin County riding areas. Speed limits for cyclists are 15 mph on fire protection roads and 5 mph while passing others and rounding blind curves. Fines start at \$75 for the first offense and increase with subsequent violations.

One of my friends had an experience that shows irresponsible riding is not confined to teenage boys. As he rounded a curve in a popular and legal riding area, he met a 50-ish male rider who was not only going too fast for the conditions, he was riding on the left side of the road and looking over his shoulder at a flower! The resulting collision launched the offender down an embankment, and he landed on his back some distance below, bruised but breathing. My friend escaped with a few scratches and a story that gets longer every time he tells it.

Hut-to-hut ski touring is a winter tradition in many mountainous areas, and now the concept has been applied to mountain biking. **Joe Ryan** and **Mike Turrin** have mapped a 215-mile mountain bike route from **Telluride, Colorado**, to **Moab, Utah**. Along the route at approximately five-hour riding distances, are shelters stocked with food, cooking equipment and bedding, so travelers can get by with a minimum of equipment. Each of the shelters will accommodate 16 people; the charge is \$12 a night per person. In addition to the mapped route, there are many side trips available for

those with energy left after covering the day's distance. For information, contact Joe or Mike at San Juan Hut Systems, Box 253, Ridgway, CO 81432; 303/728-6935.

An oft-quoted statistic in the mountain bike trade is that "75% (or 80% or 90%) of fat-tire bikes never go off pavement." I'd like someone to back this up. I don't know where these numbers come from, and I'm supposed to know about these things. I suspect it was an estimate off the top of someone's head, and now it's gospel simply because it's been printed a lot. One thing I'm sure of is that this statistic isn't true of **MOUNTAIN BIKE** readers. According to our subscriber study, 60% of you ride at least half your miles off road, and only 4% say you never leave the pavement.

Thirty members of California's **East Bay Bicycle Trails Council** turned out on State Trails Day in April, and along with other volunteers put in five hours of work on a local trail. They dug a trench to install a culvert and built water bars to control erosion.

With 5,000,000 mountain bikes in use, tragic accidents are a statistical certainty. Although most cyclists consider cars the major danger to riders, mountain bikers have other dangers. Two riders have died in Moab in the last year, one from thirst and exposure, the other from a long fall.

Now and then we get things backwards, and the map of the **Iditabike** course in May/June was a classic example. The arrows indicating direction of travel were 180 degrees off the mark. And in the June issue of our sister publication, **BICYCLING**, a photo of winner **Mike Kloser** was printed backwards. Or was he just following our map? ■