

OO Lah Lah... Tours de France



Dieter & Carol Hohnke,
and Sharon & Phil Howrey

UP AND DOWN IN SCENIC PROVENCE,

September 8-27, 2005

by Sharon Howrey

Our starting point was the Novotel Arenas Hotel, within walking distance of the Nice airport. We had 15 glorious days of riding through spectacular Provencal countryside, with an option of five additional days. There were 25 of us, including Donna Graham, our expert Tour Director, and Gilbert Jean, a seasoned van driver and local French authority. All of us, with few exceptions, had been on a BAC tour before. Everyone was aware that Provence was *not* flat where we were headed, but most of us agreed by the end of the trip that the countryside was even more inclined than we had anticipated. We all agreed that the scenery was the most spectacular for this area of France; between the gorges and mountaintops. We mostly rode on awesome, scenic country roads. The food was a tantalizing display of French culinary efforts, with four-course dinners a nightly norm. Our hotels boasted two or three stars, and the hotel staffs were eager to please. All of our meals, except for mid-day lunches, were included.

The first day, Friday, September 9, we left Nice, and some of us stopped by Vence and St. Paul de Vence, and finished at Thorenc. Those of us who did the three lengthy climbs had gained 1,750 meters by the time we arrived at Auberge Les Merisiers, and though the light rain did not deter us, it seriously hampered the rider who had four flats-! We were served an exquisite dinner by our host,

WINE HARVEST AND THE WILDER SIDE OF BURGUNDY

September 17-30, 2005

By Phyllis Otto

(Lynda asked me to write an article about the Bicycle Adventure Club trip that three of us took to the Burgundy region of France. Since BAC trips always feature one of the riders doing a write-up for their newsletter, I thought I'd let Phyllis do the talking for us! Phyllis is a BAC member from Hockessin, DE).

- Vickie Smith)



AABTS members Vickie Smith Dorothy Stock And Nancy Reid
with their companions in France

The wild side of Burgundy greeted the cyclists on the very first riding day with a strong tail wind which pushed the riders through the lush vineyards from Gevrey-Chambertin to Beaune. The harvest was in full production with pickers dotting the rows of grapes and loading the wagons to be taken to the crushers. As we rode through the small towns with the stone houses draped with geraniums, the scent of newly crushed grapes permeated the air with the hint of vintages to come. Most riders arrived in Beaune with time to tour the Hotel-Dieu that housed the Hospices of Beuane with its colorful tile roof and rooms displaying the hospital areas.

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Sharon Howrey tackles another alp in Provence.

Edouard Maurel, who managed to seat all of us at one long table. The next day the weather cleared for us, and we went past beautiful scenery, including a military camp reserve. The terrain included gentle climbs and rolling downhills. The glimpse of the mountains from one of the swells excited our anticipation of future climbs. This day was the first of luncheon *crepes* for some in our group-! We spent Saturday night at the historic 1737 Grand Hotel Bain, where French history was very much alive and well!

Since the next morning was foggy, some of us attended church where we were treated to some incredible singing by the village youth. By 10 am, the fog was lifting, and we headed out to the Gorge du Verdon, an exquisite masterpiece of stone, greenery and water, a wondrous work of nature. The height of this gorge is so great, (in some places 900 meters) that bungee jumping was being offered at the Pont de l'Artuby bridge. None of us took the time to take advantage of this opportunity—the scenery from the bikes was too spectacular to miss! Our hotel was located on beautiful Lake de St. Croix, and the views from our windows were magnificent.

The next day was a 70 km ride into Greoux. The scenery continued to be glorious, and we had excellent riding weather. Some of us took a dip at the end of the day in the pool at Le Grand Jardin, but we couldn't stay in long, since it was ice cold-! The seafood bouillabaisse at dinner that night was the best we tasted, and the cheeses offered were fresh and delicious. The next day was a rest day for some, a riding day for others, and about half of us took a bus to tour Aix-en-Provence. There we saw open markets, and parts of the old town. On Wednesday, September 14, the weather dawned gorgeous, sunny and warm, and our route took us through the towns of Oraison and Forcalquier. We were able to smell the lavender fields, although we didn't see very much lavender, since most of the fields had already been harvested.

When we arrived at Hotel Lavandin, we all showered about the same time, and hot water became an issue. The hotel staff worked quickly to fire up their extra water heater. At dinner that night, we received an apology about the water and were treated to drinks on the house. Needless to say, we were all pumped for Mount Ventoux. We encouraged one another as we approached Ventoux from the town of Sault. This is the first town where we saw teams of professional riders, enjoying their lunches before attacking the climb. Ventoux is an experience none of us will soon forget. After 20 km of gentle uphill, the last six km proved to be a challenging, unrelenting climb, through the barren limestone crest, to the 1,909 meter peak. How victorious it felt to be at a Tour de France summit! A number of us rewarded ourselves with a new Mt. Ventoux jersey, and some of us just ate cookies and candy at the top.



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From Beaune, the first stop was Chateau Sauvigny which housed an amazing collection of 250 motorbikes manufactured between 1902 and 1960, 30 prototypes of racing cars, 80 fighter planes, as well as wine tractors and tools used in the making of wine. The visit was complete with a wine-tasting room, followed by lunch at a nearby town. Two-thirds of the ride remained after that morning, finished off with a big hill up to the castle at Chateauneuf where we were housed and dined like royalty.

On the ride to Semur en Auxois, the landscape changed from vineyard to the famous white Charolais cattle county. Hedgerows framed each farmer's field. The next day's ride to Avallon began with a visit to another chateau which featured a dovecote for 3000 pigeons, a sign of great wealth, and then a picnic supply stop at the local cheese shop which featured the famous Epoisse cheeses. Fortunately, our driver Malik arrived just in time to carry the purchases of extra cheese and wine to our next hotel in Avallon.

This was our first two-day stop, so laundry festooned the windows and patios of our lovely hotel situated along a river. Four-course dinners completed the magnificent setting. Most of the group visited Vezeley, a well-preserved medieval town atop a huge hill, on the layover day. A huge basilica there housed a relic of St. Mary Magdalene. Climbing from Avallon to Saulieu provided stunning pastoral views and a picnic at Lake Agnan. On the layover day in Saulieu, some of the group cycled out to a museum about the French Resistance in World War II. Others of the group enjoyed the yearly fair that featured all types of food, clothes, jewelry, and crafts.

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The next day's ride to Autun was our first real "flat" ride, downhill most of the way into the town through the Roman arch and then up to the former convent where we stayed in very un-nun-like luxury. Again the four-course dinner matched the surroundings in a private dining room with colorful "stars" in the ceiling. Cyclists to Chagny had a choice of a bike route the whole way, or leaving the bike path at Givry and heading up into the vineyards for magnificent views and climbs before arriving at the chateau where we stayed. Again, a bike path beckoned some the next day to Buxy, where we were treated with a picnic that evening.

The final day's riding took us into Cluny. Some enjoyed the bike path all the way, while others ventured up the hills to Brancion, a 10th -12th century chateau and church, complete with harpist! The 5 km downhill from the chateau was the reward for the big climb, and the Velo Museum was the next stop. There were all types of old and modern bicycles (including the one banned by the Tour because it lacked a triangular frame) tricycles, and Tour de France memorabilia, but not one picture of Lance! Our final stay was in Cluny, right in the midst of the ruins of the medieval city and cathedral. While some rode the next day, most took advantage of the day to box the bicycles and tour the immense abbey and its buildings. That night was a special farewell dinner with presents and thanks to Jane Holahan, our wonderful leader.

Our group was very congenial and often displayed the "wilder side of Burgundy" with lots of laughter and camaraderie. Especially over dinner and our daily happy hours. AABTS participants were Dorothy Stock, Vickie Smith, and Nancy Reid.



Dorothy Stock &
Nancy Reid
in front of one of the many
chateaux they visited
in France.

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The next day was a rest day, most of us staying off of our bikes and exploring the towns of Carpentras or Avignon. From Carpentras, we rode through more glorious scenery, including the Dentelles de Montmirail, to Rasteau. On the way, we stopped in an old village overlooking a valley, called Vaison-la-Romaine. This is where I was able to find some wonderful and inexpensive French perfume. Two members of our group stayed behind in Vaison-la-Romaine, and they got caught in the rain while the rest of us experienced a magnificent rainbow! Our next day was the longest day—100 km, with gently rolling terrain, from Rasteau to Sisteron, the "key to Provence". There we celebrated a birthday and 46th wedding anniversary!

Our next stop was a 2005 Tour de France stage 12 town—Digne-les-Bains. Our hotel was a three star extravaganza, with plush furnishings and a wait staff that waited on us hand and foot. Some of us took a rest day, while others took advantage of the incredible countryside by riding. The following morning we did a category 2 Tour de France climb, complete with the cyclists' names still painted on the road, up over the Col de Corobin. The scenery was breath-taking (literally!), as we traveled along Napoleon's route, gorgeous views with gentle ups and downs completing 63 km to Castellane. Many of us took advantage of our fourth rest day by climbing the rock edifice to the small church, Notre Dame-du-Rock, at the top. What a view! I could see the river, the town, my laundry drying on our hotel balcony, and several mountain ranges! This was the most panoramic view since leaving the top of Ventoux.

Riding the next day to Valberg included 1,685 meters of climb and 72 km in length. From there, we went on to La Bollene, climbing two cols, and getting caught in an afternoon shower. Most of our group took "the low road", and got in before the rain. The gorge we rode through was incredible—tunnels carved from the mountainsides and the earth's geology changing to a vivid red color. Our last day of significant distance was 60 km, through impressive awe-inspiring peaks and valleys to *Castagniers*. The weather warmed up to a pleasant 70-degree sunny afternoon. The riding can only be explained as unforgettable!

All of us had a most pleasant and rewarding experience. No one experienced major mechanical breakdown that wasn't fixable, and we were all grateful to Gilbert for "being there" when we needed him the most. Kudos go to Donna, for enabling us to have a richly rewarding and satisfying tour through the most scenic roads in Provence!

Structural Problems of Huron River Drive

W. Huron River Drive needs more work than simple repairs. The road has a relatively poor substructure with substandard drainage layers, which explain the present condition of the road. At this time, I am not certain when the road jurisdiction was transferred to the City.

Currently we are in the process of preparing a list of streets in the City for resurfacing in summer of 2006. However I am afraid that resurfacing alone may not be adequate for W. Huron River Drive. Very likely the road will need a new road base, subsurface drainage and perhaps new paved shoulders for the bicyclists.

In the next few months, we plan to collect soil samples from the site and begin the preliminary road design. The actual construction may begin as early as 2006 or in 2007, depending on the difficulty of the project.

Hope we have answered your questions.

Best regards,
CITY OF ANN ARBOR
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Deadline
for Next
Newsletter
Sat. Dec. 17



Vickie Smith & Dorothy Stock have luncheon in the grass.

John Pierce Back On His Bike

By Steu White

A car struck AABTS member John Pierce September 12th while he was riding to the Monday morning ride. John was riding west on old US 12 just by the entrance to Chelsea Hospital. The motorist was driving eastbound and was attempting a left turn into the hospital entrance when he struck John broadside, throwing him up onto the hood and windshield of his car.

The driver was cited.

John suffered six broken ribs and two broken fingers; and as of this writing has just gotten back on his bike. He says he has some discomfort but can ride.

John's helmet was destroyed but he suffered no head injuries.

WANT ADS

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1995 Passport by Cobra 21' Class C RV on Chevrolet Van chassis. Stored indoors. A rare rear bedroom model, which has been converted to a Bike & Inflatable Kayak "Toy" Room. Remember that 22' is the longest vehicle length permitted on the "Going to the Sun Highway" and in many Nat'l Forest Campgrounds. 34,800 miles. \$22,900. Call Jim Datsko (231) 264-0041

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YOOPER TOUR REVIEW: THE CIVILIZED AND UNCIVILIZED RIDES

By: Jim Datsko

We're blessed in Michigan to have the Upper Peninsula, a place that sometimes seems to have more in common with the Yukon Territory or Alaska, than with the rest of Michigan. Not surprisingly, there are some very scenic invitational bicycle tours hosted by the U.P. clubs. Since very few of my fellow trolls, who live under The Bridge, have been able to provide any reports on those invitationals, I recently decided to experience them first-hand.

The first was the **Delta County Century** hosted by their Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, and other volunteer groups, on Sunday, September 18th. It was obvious this was going to be both a large ride as the Gladstone High School parking lot was filled, and a tasty ride as plenty of snacks were provided at the registration. It was hard to comprehend how a remote area could attract so many riders, approximately 450 of them. And this was only the fourth year for this tour which is still growing.

For a location so close to the wilderness and bear country just outside of Escanaba, it was amazing just how civilized this ride was. One unique feature of this tour was their "team competition." Families, corporate groups, and any organized group could register as a team, to see which team would register the highest number of cumulative miles. Winning teams received golden crank sets & chains mounted on a wooden plaque. This resulted in friends and family members begging even the most casual of bikers into joining their group to proudly wear their team jersey and accumulate a few more miles. Some families had all three generations and in-laws riding as their team.

Once out on the course of quiet country roads, the route was marked with large "Dan Henry Arrows" painted two to three times in advance of each turn. If you were too busy admiring the scenery, they even planted signposts marking crucial turns. A color map with cue sheet on the reverse side was also provided describing each of the four different loops ranging from 13 km to 100 km (62 miles).

Yah, but it's the food and rest stops that we all bike for, eh? This is where the DCC really shines. The first one featured local *Hot Breakfast Pasties*, fresh sliced fruits, bagels with assorted cream cheeses, and the usual other assortment of donuts, snacks and hot and cold beverages. The second rest stop featured *Cajun Jambalaya over dirty rice*, cookies, sports drinks, and the usual fruits, etc. The third one was back to the Pastie stop, but by now they were serving traditional *Hot Dinner pasties*, with all the other fruits and snacks. And at the finish of the tour, you had earned and received a *Root Beer float*.

A couple of impressions noticed while riding their metric century:

- It seemed that about half the riders were on mountain bikes. Fortunately they were probably doing some of the shorter loops.
- Unlike many tours and bike clubs catering to the same graying generation of riders, this tour was well stocked with youthful riders. Of the five major weeklong tours I enjoyed this summer I would say the average age was close to 60. The average age of these Yoopers was in the early 30's, with more in their 20's than those of their parent's ages.
- This route was fairly flat, except for the climb to the top of their ski hill where we had a breathtaking view of the Little Bay de Noc.
- Since the big loop was only 62 miles, it was the most well attended of the choices.

As the following weekend offered another Yooper tour, I had planned to spend the week in the U.P. enjoying some day rides before heading up to the spectacular and rugged Lake Superior scenery of the Keweenaw Peninsula. There on Saturday, September 24th, a somewhat uncivilized but singularly beautiful tour was available for the taking: the **Copper Country Color Tour**. This tour offered more challenging distances of 50 km, 100 km, and the ultimate scenery package of 200 km which I naturally gravitated towards.

This was the 32nd annual running of the CCCT, which is quite an accomplishment since it's hosted by the ever-transient students of the Michigan Tech University Bicycle Club. With a student-type of budget to work with, expect no real amenities - this is a minimalist tourist's delight. Rider's gathered at the uncivilized hour of 0730 for the early dawn departure at 0800 sharp just as the sun began to break. Since the hardy nature and remoteness of this tour limit it's numbers, you are able to enjoy a good old-fashioned mass start of all 85 or so riders.

Registration in the Student Union Building consisted of one student handing you a nice long-sleeved Tee-shirt (remember it's always cool up here), while another used the highlighter to mark the route on the Xerox map before handing it to you. Simple, but effective.

The mass start was complete with police escort to the Houghton city limits, being the drawbridge across the ship canal. I haven't experienced a mass start since the early years of TOSRV and Hilly Hundred, so it felt good to join in that sense of camaraderie right from the first pedal-stroke.

The 50K and 100K riders may have proceeded in a more leisurely manner, but those of us doing the full 200 km knew we had a day's tempo-work ahead of us to beat the rain forecast for 4pm, if not the September early sunset. So we settled into a steady but fast pace-line with about a dozen in our A-group once we were heading out of town along Dollar Bay. Another dozen or so following in the B-group. Our loop involved riding

up the east-coast side of the Keweenaw Peninsula to Copper Harbor, and then returning by the west-coast side. In the early morning fog and sun-in-your eyes dawn I somehow missed the first rest-stop because none in our group were interested in breaking cadence so soon.

As we approached the second rest-stop at the scenic Burnette Park (often called Brunette Park) setting along the shores of Lake Superior, I remembered why I consider this route to be in the top three most scenic tours in the state, and probably number one. This east-coast of the Keweenaw scenery was strongly reminiscent of the Atlantic Maritime provinces with their strong wind-driven waves rolling over the shelf-like layers of rock jutting out into the ocean, with the low sun shining through the waves. Keeping with the minimalist nature of this tour, the rest stop featured trusty old PB&J sandwiches, bananas, and some tasty cookies, and water - no hot meals here like on the DCC. Come to think of it, not too many "Dan Henry" arrows either.

After this rest-stop our group settled into a sociable double pace-line as we chatted our way up the rest of the coast. It was like a rotating square dance, where you mingled with all the other riders as your drafting-partner for awhile. By the end of this long flat stretch we had learned a short life-history of everyone else in our little group, and it turned out most of them were recent grads from MTU, back here for the homecoming weekend, and some special cycling. They came from as far as Seattle.

Then we left the shoreline and began the major climb out of Lac La Belle up to the ridge running the length of this peninsula as it's spine. Some riders simply lacked gears low enough, and were forced to slowly slalom their way up to the top. Once up top, we were now down to a four-man A-team, which as we know is perfect for pace-line work. The thickly wooded ridge road is the Yooper version of our "Tunnel of trees," and was every bit as scenic with only scattered rays of sunlight able to filter through the canopy. Though officially it's called US Highway 41, this far north the traffic is pretty much nil as we followed it to it's northern terminus at Copper Harbor, where another carload of student-volunteers offered us hot pasties, from Tony's in Laurium, widely considered to be the best pastie in the U.P.

After lunch some opted to climb the 671 foot Pyrenees-type of ultra-steep grade to the top of Brockway Mountain, which makes Dalmac's "Wall" seem like a rumble strip. However most of us settled for the basic return route along the west coast of the peninsula. This coast with it's sandy beaches interspersed with large surf-splashing rock formations is similar to the Pacific coast scenery. I consider this stretch to make for an excellent "poor man's vacation to the Oregon seacoast." It's so accessible for midwesterner's, that I'm surprised more cyclists don't take the opportunity to ride it. Special treats are the sandy beaches at Eagle Harbor, the tasty muffins and homemade jams available at the St. John's monastery, and the quaint "seaside" town of Eagle River.

A couple of impressions noticed while riding the CCCT:

- These Yooper riders are so much younger than on the other tours I've been doing where I'm usually among the youngest, while here I'm possibly the oldest.
- They sure are a friendly batch of people, not like those from the big cities downstate where people act like others are "a dime a dozen."
- These Michigan Tech grads really like to return to Houghton for homecoming, and to combine it with their love of the U.P. wilderness outdoors. The MTU hobo band and parade were a hoot.
- Leaf-Color was only about 15%, but moving the tour up from it's original date a couple of weeks later eliminates the possibility of snow as occurred in earlier years.

Remember, this is a minimalist tour, so there's no shower or snacks or anything awaiting you at the finish. There is however the warm glow of having accomplished 200 km (122 miles) of some of the most scenic riding this country has to offer. That was plenty of reward for me, so thanks "Toots" for hosting the CCCT for us. I understand when the locals heard that a University for engineers was going to be built, they naturally assumed it was for train engineers, hence the locals nickname "Toots."

If you make the trip way up north, why not spend a week and enjoy some U.P. riding between the weekends of these two worthwhile tours? Here's a few suggestions:

- The Garden Peninsula - this includes the historic restored 1800's iron smelter company town of Fayette which is now a lakeside state park. You can park along Highway 41 and enjoy the 40 mile round-trip by bike, or add a few miles to go to the very end of the peninsula.
- The Stonington Peninsula - this is just across the Bay from Escanaba, and has some nice views across the bay. The Monarch butterflies during the late summer and fall mass migration use Peninsula Point as a place to rest and a shortcut across Lake Michigan.
- The Lake Michigan shoreline Highway 35 west of Escanaba to the Bark River, follow the county roads north into Bark River, then into Schaeffer and return to Escanaba. Or for a shorter loop follow the Ford River north.
- No article would be complete without a restaurant recommendation. In Escanaba it's the *Swedish Pantry*. Their Swedish Sampler includes tasty meatballs, potato sausage, and potato dumplings, served with lingonberries, rutabagas, homemade bread, soup, salad, and dessert for only \$10.99. With the Mora clocks playing, the décor, and ethnic food, you almost think you're in Scandinavia. They must be doing something right with over 25 years in business.

For information about the DCC see www.deltami.org; and for information about the CCCT see www.sos.mtu.edu/cycling.

A Crazy, Wonderful Bicycle Ride in Eastern Oregon

Aug 14-20/05

By Jan Shubitowski

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A pick-up truck pulled onto the shoulder of the two-lane road and stopped behind a colorfully clad bicyclist sitting on the rocky ground, peeling off his Lycra tights.

“Can I bother ya a minute,” the pick-up driver asked.

“Yeah, bother,” responded the cyclist.

“What in heck is goin’ on?”

“It’s a crazy bicycle ride,” said the cyclist, as he pulled his tights free.

That overhead exchange summed up the seven days in mid-August we had just spent cycling through the high desert country of Eastern Oregon on the 19th Annual Oregon Bicycle Ride. It really had been a crazy bicycle ride, all 440 miles of it, with over 26,000 feet cumulative climb. AABTS club members on the ride were Dan Harrison, Jim Datsko and me.

On this final day, we were back to the relatively flat yellow and brown plains in which we had started our circle tour, this time enjoying an invigorating 3,200-foot drop in about 40 miles. After six days of long climbs and headwinds, and a short, spirited climb through a construction zone this morning, this effortless glide was most welcome.

During this amazing week, we biked through deserts and woodlands, enjoyed ample sunshine and appreciated the occasionally cloudy skies. Many mornings we warmed up by biking up out of a valley headed toward the next summit and beyond. One three-summit day ended with a flat 10-mile stretch into a fierce wind. That was the day I was ready to heave my bike into the weeds and walk home – until we caught a glimpse of a deer in a thicket drinking from a river near the side of the road. That magical moment brought back to me one of the reasons I so enjoy biking.



Strong Support Was Key

With 250 riders and a strong web of support staff, we often were larger than the small settlements and ghost towns through which we rode. Our impact on the environment was kept in check with the portable potties, shower truck and catering service that was part of our entourage. The potties were cleaned daily, and often the wastewater from the shower trucks was trucked out. When we camped in a desolate field miles from nowhere, water for showers, cooking, drinking – everything – was trucked in. To be sure we had a taste of the local communities, a different community group provided breakfast each morning.

The tone for our adventure was set up front in the acceptance letter. Talking about support vehicles, it told us: “...they are driven by caring people who will insist on helping you. Make their life easier – let them. This trip is for fun. Please let us help keep it that way for you. If a lift to the top (or bottom) of the next hill would help you finish the day with a smile on your face, grab a short ride with them.” The ride is organized by a group of cyclists from Oregon, led by Sandy Green, who put on two rides a year: the older Oregon Bicycle Ride, and Bicycle Idaho. (www.oregonbicycleride.org) Dan and I rode Bicycle Idaho in 2003, and were so impressed with the organization, we knew we wanted to do Oregon with this group.

Pendleton Underground

Dan and I had arrived in Pendleton, the start point of the ride, a day early. This enabled us to take the Pendleton Underground Tour, walking beneath the shops and hearing about the seedier side of the old west and seeing artifacts from that era. We learned about the Sundown Law for the Chinese (brought here to build the railroads), saw illegal gambling sites and clubs and visited an upstairs bordello. We also took in the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute and gained a greater appreciation for the rights of the Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla and Nez Pierce Indian Tribes, who were relegated to ever-shrinking reservations. The institute is located behind a gambling casino. The best gas prices we saw during the whole trip were on the reservation where they’re exempt from charging government taxes. By the way, it is illegal to pump your own gas in Oregon, except on the reservation.

The days ranged from about 50 to 78 miles. The staff provided one to two rest stops each day, depending on the distance, terrain, and availability of local services. The rest stops are the best you will ever see on a ride! Along with the customary offerings of bananas, apples, oranges and peanut butter, these amazing spreads included fresh pineapple, jalapenos, homemade cookies and granola bars, an ever-changing array of crackers, salsa and chips, candies, Gatorade and even Spam. When’s the last time you had a Spam stick with mustard? One of the rest stop workers noted that at the beginning of the week, sweets are popular. There is a gradual shift until by the end of the week, anything with salt disappears immediately.

Besides food, each rest stop was equipped with two port-a-johns on a trailer, complete with a mini-sink, soap and paper towels. This was pure luxury.





And, speaking of luxury, a caterer travels with the group serving up the most delectable meals we've encountered on a camping bike trip. Ribs, tri-tip roast and salmon are memorable. Most surprising are the delicious vegetarian options each evening – nutritious and inventive. Each food line starts with a huge bowl of mixed greens with assorted add-ons and dressings. Dessert traditionally is served 30 minutes or more after the main meal.

Off We Go!

The first day of riding, the scorched fields of the morning gave way to heavy timber by afternoon. As we were nearing the top of a big hill and scouting for the second rest stop of the day, we came across a rider on the side of the road in distress. The rider insisted he was fine although he didn't feel good and he looked worse. We were more than a mile high at this point, and had scaled several big hills, which the locals refer to as mountains. We coaxed the rider into the shade and insisted he eat and drink. You could see him become more coherent as he cooled down and his body took on fuel. Knowing he would be okay, we crested the hill and began a winding descent to the rest stop. We let them the staff there was a rider that might like a SAG ride just the other side of the hill. We were relieved several minutes later when we saw that same rider coast in under his own power.

At dinner that evening, we heard from a former forest ranger on the ride that the haze in the air was from forest fires, the biggest of which was to the north near Pomeroy, Washington. That one already had burned 48,000 acres of forest.

Day two we followed our usual morning routine and discovered this was an eager group. Breakfast in the community room was less than adequate by the time we arrived. Obviously, not used to serving bicyclists, they ran out of brown sugar, juice, bananas and oatmeal. We made-do with some sort of egg casserole along with banana and pumpkin breads. When we rode out of camp at 7:30 a.m., we were almost the last on the road. It was slow going as we climbed 900 feet in the first nine miles. By the time we hit the rest stop at 27 miles out, we were told we weren't last; there were about 10 people behind us.

Smoke on the Horizon

By now, we could see the Wallowa Mountains, known as America's Alps, on our right. We stopped at a ranger station and heard the latest on the forest fires. About 45 miles into the ride, we rode into Enterprise, a real town. We found an Irish restaurant a couple blocks off the main street. Former Michiganders, who obviously loved the area and people, ran the place and took time to chat with everyone.

As we neared Joseph, our destination for the day, helicopters zoomed overhead. We passed the Rodeo Grounds, a staging area for fighting the nearby forest fires. Joseph is an artists' community. Bronze statues and art galleries are everywhere. We stopped to browse and enjoyed an ice cream. We knew the high school, our overnight camping location, was uphill; however, we've never seen switchbacks to a school before.

Our longest day ended up being Day 3. It was extremely hot as we scaled three summits, took a side trip out to Hells Canyon, and battled more than 10 miles of fierce headwinds into our overnight campground. Bees were the most popular critters of the day, especially at rest stops. On the best downhill of the day, one rider unfortunately was found in a roadside ditch after striking a rock. (She ended up being flown to a second hospital for surgery on a broken vertebra in her neck.) The lack of cell phone service in this rugged area showed how we take such conveniences for granted.

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Halfway.com

We were mighty glad to drag into the town of Halfway and find several riders stopping at the one store or one of the two eating establishments in town for an energy boost before going on to camp. The town recently had changed its name to Half.com becoming the first “dot-com” city in the country. At this point, we were nearly halfway in our mileage for the week.

The uphill start on day three was surpassed by our climb out of Halfway – 1,000 feet in six miles. What started as a windy day became blustery when a cold front tried to blow through that afternoon. We cycled past round and square bales of hay amidst the mostly grass-and-brush terrain. At mile 47, we climbed a 12 percent grade to the Oregon Trail Visitors’ Center and learned more about the trials and tribulations of the early travelers. Our rest stop canopy on top of this hill was anchored against the fierce winds by watermelons in buckets.

Since Baker City was our largest overnight town on the trip, we figured we would have no trouble finding laundry facilities here. Yet, no one seemed to know where to find a laundry. We walked three miles in a roundabout way to get to one, and then took a cab back in time for dinner.

From Baker City to Crane Flat, we crossed a lot of landscape rearranged by gold dredging. Since we only had 53 miles this day, we played tourist and made all the stops. We visited a gold dredge, and tried to find gold-flaked stones along the roadside. Oh, think what we could do if we did find a huge gold nugget! The sky was very blue, a great day for biking.

We stopped in the town of Granite and had lunch including a wonderful chocolate milk shake. We walked around this ghost town (population: 29) and saw 8-foot to 10’ foot rock walls left by the Chinese as they dug for gold.

Cold Camping

Our campsite was “Crane Flat.” It’s not a town, just a field in the middle of nowhere. We were told that this was a “frost pocket,” an area lower than the road and so cold that even trees wouldn’t grow here. The next morning, when we awoke to 22-degrees, frozen water bottles and frost-covered everything, we understood what effect that can have. No one sat down for breakfast; instead, we huddle in the few patches of sun, drinking hot water flavored with Gatorade after the coffee and tea ran out. Knowing the day started with a descent, no one was eager to get on the road.

But, every down is followed by a bigger up, so it wasn’t long before we were warm and shedding layers. The highlight of the day was a climb up to Lehman Hot Springs. In its heyday, this had been a great spa. Today, it is adequate and more commercial than luxurious. The four large pools let you soak in hot springs water, each at a different temperature. As we came out of the spa, one of the riders stepped on a bee. We provided him with Benadryl cream from our first-aid kit. Once he was feeling better, he remarked: “That’s twice this week you’ve saved me.” This was the same guy we had urged into the shade on the first day.

On the way down the road, I was stung as well. I began to wonder if the bee is Oregon’s state insect.

Glorious Day for Riding

It was another glorious day of riding. We were feeling great but tired when we reached Ukiah, our stop for the night. How disappointing it was to bump down a dirt road to a desolate field. We carefully positioned our tent among the animal droppings, glad we would be moving on the next morning.

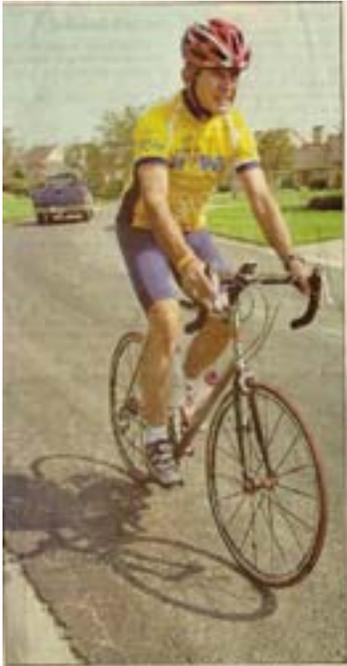
The highlight of Ukiah was breakfast at the brand new senior center, up a hill, of course. We saw one person who might qualify as a senior. Her job was guarding the juice. The rest of the servers were gracious and outgoing, serving up large portions of whatever you wanted. Being another chilly morning, we tried to dawdle over breakfast, but needed to move on to make room for other riders. By the time we reached the first summit, having climbed 1,000 feet in nine miles, the sun was shining and we were warming. And invigorating though the riding was, in the back of your mind was the sad thought that this was the final day.

We said our “fairwell’s” and “see you on another trip’s” to our new-found friends throughout the day. By 11 a.m., the ride was over and we were packing our bikes for the trip home. It had been a crazy bicycle ride we will long remember.



PEDALING FOR A CURE

Reprinted from the Northville Record



Northville Township resident Bud Preston will be flying to San Diego to ride with seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong to raise awareness and money for Armstrong's Tour of Hope cancer research foundation.

Bud Preston will never forget his wife Betty who lost her life prematurely to lung cancer this past July.

Preston, along with 19 other honorary members, was nominated by San Diego-based Scripps Health to ride the first 10-mile stretch Sept. 29 in the 2005 Bristol-Myers Squibb Tour of Hope, with renowned cyclist Lance Armstrong.

Armstrong, who survived testicular cancer, recently won the Tour de France for the seventh consecutive year.

As part of the fight in finding a cure for cancer, cyclists in the tour will be riding 3,300-miles from San Diego to Washington D.C. in nine days.

Nominated by Scripps Health employee and family member Glen Mueller, Preston said he always anticipated riding with Armstrong, but never dreamed his wife wouldn't be there to watch.

"Glen, knowing of my wife Betty's life being taken by cancer and my love of cycling, surprised me with this announcement," said the 69-year-old Northville resident. "This ride is a way for me to memorialize the life of my wife."

Averaging about 7,000-miles a year, Preston is part of the Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society.

"We ride just about any day we can," he said. "I've done a number of tours. I've biked across the US, Germany, parts of Italy, New Zealand and Nova Scotia."

Preston has been cycling since he was 61. He'd heard of the Tour of Hope. Now he is preparing for the tour in San Diego Sept. 27.

"I hadn't dreamed I'd be part of it one day," Preston said. "I will be attending a Padres' baseball game on Sept. 28, where Lance will throw out an honorary opening pitch."

Preston will start the tour Sept. 29, then head home the next day.

"I've been a donor to cancer funds for years, and now all I want to do is make people more aware of it."

The Tour of Hope is a nine-day journey across America by a team of 24 people who have also been touched by cancer.

Armstrong will ride the first 10-miles and meet the team in Washington D.C. at the finish line.

The 2005 team will carry the momentum set by their predecessors of past Tour of Hope journeys and continue to inform the public about the importance of cancer research.

The riders consist of survivors, caregivers, advocates, healers and researchers who all share the same mission, and Preston said he was proud to be among so many people that care. "Losing Betty was the hardest thing in my life," Preston said. "We've known each other since kindergarten. She went home to her mom one day and said 'I'm going to marry Buddy Preston.'"

Now, Preston rides in Betty's honor, and he said he would never forget it.

"I will be celebrating Betty's life on this ride," said Preston. "She'll be riding on my shoulder."

Reporter Tracy Mishler can be reached at (248) 349-1700, ext. 107, or at tmishler@gannett.com

It's Time to Renew!

New Year's Eve marks the end of our current membership year. If your AABTS membership card carries a 2005 expiration date, avoid the end of the year rush and renew now for 2006. Membership cochairs Beth Caldwell and Chris Free will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Renewing is easy. Go to www.aabts.org, click on 'downloads,' and print the '2006 Membership Form (PDF)'. Fill in all requested information. Please note: the Club publishes names and contact information on an annual membership list that is mailed to members each summer. If you do not wish to have your name and contact information on the list, check "Do not publish my contact information."

Be sure that ALL family members 18 and over sign the **Assumption of Risk Agreement and Liability Release**. Mail the application plus your check (payable to AABTS) to Beth Caldwell, whose address appears at the top of the form. Beth will send you a 2006 membership card, and Chris will update your record in the database so that you'll be eligible for bike shop discounts and ride-mileage credit next year.

If you want a paper copy of the application form mailed to you, call Ann Hunt 761-1147 or Beth Caldwell 663-5060, and they'll be happy to oblige.



AABTS won the club challenge for most miles the second year in a row!

So, the club challenge ended up as follows:

The winner for highest percentage of club participation is Metro Detroit Cycling Club with 78% of their membership in attendance!

The winner for highest mileage was Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society with 2854.6 miles ridden!

Other results

| Club | Percentage | Miles Ridden |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Wolverines | 12.6% | 2661 |
| AABTS | 8.3% | 2854.6 |
| Slow Spokes | 15% | 1200.5 |
| Cycling Saddlemen | 9% | 710 |
| Metro Detroit Cycling Club | 78% | 352.55 |
| Downriver Cycling Club | 28% | 1512.5 |
| Clinton River Riders | ? | 176 |

BERNIE WINGS WILL BE MISSED

By Vickie Smith



Bernie Wings passed away on Friday, September 9, 2005, at his home in St. George, Ontario. Bernie had long been one of AABTS's Canadian members. He came over every year from Canada for OHR. That was pretty much his only AABTS mileage, besides the Horsey 100, our Stratford weekend, and other occasional invitational. However, he was extremely proud of the years he earned a mileage patch, and was looking forward to his first milestone patch. Bernie was the kind of person who never joined an organization without giving back to it in some way, so he always volunteered to work on OHR. You may have seen him working the 6:00-8:00 shift handing out registration packets.

Bernie was a thoughtful, gracious, and generous man, with a wonderful sense of humor. He was interested in meeting people and loved cycling. In recent years, he did not allow his failing health to curtail his pleasure in bicycling. Just this last season he installed a small motor on his bicycle so he could continue to ride without taxing his heart. He was also devoted to his farm in St. George, on which he and Bob, his life long companion, raised horses and German Shorthair Pointers, and where he and Bob kept a charming, antique-filled farmhouse. He was also always first in line at any ice cream social!

Bernie will be missed by a multitude of friends. I wish more AABTSers had had a Chance to know him

GHOST BIKES OF SEATTLE

By: Jim Datsko

Being struck by a car while riding your bike is a common fear of most bicycle tourists. In the early years of the AABTS it was virtually unheard of. Maybe it happened once during the first five years of the club, and maybe once again during the next five years. Then as road congestion gradually became much worse, the driver's road courtesy, and knowledge of bicyclist's rights began to deteriorate, we more frequently found ourselves being struck by motor vehicles.

During the past few years, the frequency of local car-bike collisions has spiked upwards at an alarming rate. This trend seems to be on a dangerously relentless climb. Now it seems every couple of months someone in our club is being hit and after 30 years we recently suffered our first fatality.

A club that traditionally has been on the cutting edge of bicycle advocacy, safety, and bicyclist's rights is the Cascade Bicycle Club of Seattle. They pioneered police mountain bike patrols, rails to trails for cross-city travel, bike expo, and special lane signage for bicycle lanes on selected city streets. During this past summer, while in Seattle I saw where that city also achieved another first in bicycle safety awareness: Ghost Bikes.

Much as grieving family members will place a small cross, or floral arrangement alongside the road where someone died in an automobile accident, in Seattle a loose-knit group of bicycle safety advocates will place a "ghost bike." The ghost bike will be a horribly twisted and wrecked old bicycle that has been spray painted a ghastly whitish gray color. It will be placed at the location where a bicyclist was struck and injured by a car, and it will be chained to a nearby signpost or tree to secure it in that location. Also chained to this exhibit will be a sign stating something like "On [date] a bicyclist was struck by a car here." See the blurry photo taken of an actual ghost bike in the University of Washington District of Seattle, I noticed another ghost bike just a few miles away near Union Lake along the Burke-Gilman trail.

A driver seeing the ghost bike will realize that everything in this lovely town really isn't operating as harmoniously as the normal scenery would indicate. He will instead realize that a biker was struck and injured or worse on this spot. When the driver sees a second ghost bike, and a third ghost bike on his drive around town, he may realize the seriousness of the problem. In fact, he may alter his driving to be more aware of bicyclists, and pass them with a safer margin in a more courteous manner.

If nothing else, the ghost bikes definitely enhance the public's awareness of the bike safety problem. This is a positive first step to eventually minimize the problem. Perhaps it's worth considering whether Ann Arbor is ripe for a similar form of bicycle safety advocacy.

**Club Hotline:
(734) 913-9851
WWW.AABTS.ORG**

The Hotline has information about current rides, corrections to the Ride Calendar, dates of potlucks and the like. If you have questions about rides, the Hotline is a good place to look for answers.



A ghost bike in Seattle

By Ann Hunt

In the fall of 2003 a new era began with the establishment of a permanent endowment fund to promote the interests of community bicycling. The AABTS-initiated *Lucian W. Chaney Bicycling Safety and Advocacy Fund* was successfully launched, and in less than two years it has grown to over \$25,000. Many have contributed to this success, and we are deeply grateful to them.

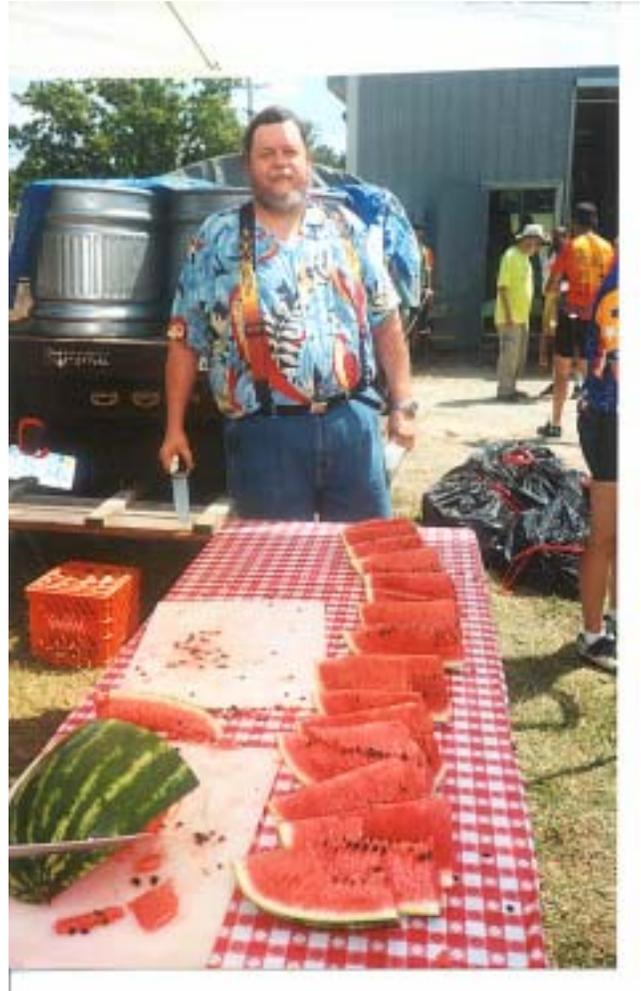
The ongoing success of the Chaney Fund will be greatly enhanced by charitable bequests and planned gifts. A charitable bequest is a simple way that even people of modest financial means can use to support causes they care about. By putting the *Lucian W. Chaney Bicycling Safety and Advocacy Fund* in your will, insurance, or in a living trust, you can make a tremendous difference. Just think, if everyone left only a small sum, or a small percentage of their estates, to the Chaney Fund, what a direct, positive and lasting impact that would have on bicycling in our area.

Please consider the Chaney Fund in your estate plans, and if you've already done so, please let us know. We would like to recognize you and inspire others to join you. The *Lucian W. Chaney Bicycling Safety and Advocacy Fund* is a designated fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF), 201 South Main Street, Suite 501, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2213. Your donation is made directly to AAACF, designated for the Chaney Fund, and is tax deductible. Contact AAACF (734) 663-0401, info@aaacf.org and visit www.aaacf.org to find out more about the Foundation and planned giving. Contact Ann Hunt (734) 761-1147, ahunt@comcast.net or Tom Powell (734) 994-6340, tpowell@umich.edu with questions about AABTS and the Fund.

Linda Racine and Buster



Ken Bawcom at OHR is our watermelon man



Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition

Meets on the first Thursday of every month, 7:00 p.m., Ecology Center, 117 North Division (just north of Huron) in Ann Arbor. Visit the WBWC web page at www.wbwc.org for news and updates about this organization dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of bicycling and walking opportunities in Washtenaw County through advocacy and education.

AABTS gathered for the Charlotte Marcotte memorial ride



Charlotte's favorite, Zou Zou's



The Charlotte Marcotte Memorial Bike Ride

By Lynda Collins

The Charlotte Marcotte Memorial bike ride took place on September 24th on a brisk autumn morning. President Mark Erzen addressed the group assembled at Wheeler Park. Besides Charlotte he reminded them of another death, Todd Schoenheide , which occurred earlier in the year and the accidents of Steve Leper and John Pierce. He then cautioned the group to ride safely by staying to the side of the road, riding single file, and signaling turns. Additionally, he reminded them to be careful drivers to prevent future accidents. Gary Francis sang "Rock of Ages" acapella, and Mark distributed black armbands for the riders to wear to honor Charlotte and Todd .

At Zou Zou's riders were able to sample free coffee and pastries provided by the restaurant. News articles about Charlotte and a memorial tribute from Charlotte's German bicycling friends were displayed. Charlotte's son Steve Marcotte, her brother Jim Zupan and his wife Carolas well as numerous non-biking friends were present and talked to the riders. They were pleased with the tribute on her behalf.

A bench at Zou Zou's to honor Charlotte and "Share the Road" signs near Chelsea have been mentioned as possible lasting memorials to her. On the day of the ride, donations were collected for the Juvenile Diabetes Association, Charlotte's favorite charity.

DORIS WEST RECOVERS AND STARS IN MOVIE

By Steu White

Long time AABTS member and all-round amazing person Doris West, is recovering from some cracked ribs, which she suffered in a non-bicycle related fall.

Doris also tells a story about her pulmonary therapy class. It seems that a film is being made about people in her class learning to play harmonica as good pulmonary exercise. The producers want to feature Doris using her tricycle for transportation as another shining example of good pulmonary exercise.

(But Doris, we have known you are a shining example all along.)

Doris hoped to be back riding by the third week in October.

P.O. Box 1585
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
<http://www.aabts.org>



Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society

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