



# SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB



JULY 2008

*“God give me hills to climb,  
And strength for climbing.”  
- Arthur Gutterman*

## Kids riding early and well

**WRITTEN BY** JENNIFER GHOLSON  
Times have changed.

When I was growing up, kids rode their bikes everywhere. In my neighborhood I was a member of a gang of bikers. We roamed the neighborhood and beyond. Initially, we rode low riding banana seat bikes and stayed closer to home. We liked to show off by riding with no hands and, inspired by Evil Kneivel, would build ramps to jump.

Yep, we were a tough gang. We also would have individual time trial races to see who was fastest riding around the block. In that case, it was not about the bike though -- we mainly wanted to play with the stopwatch. It was the kind with a dial and no batteries, which you had to wind-

up for it to work, very low tech by today's standards. As we got

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older, we moved to multi-speed bikes and ventured further with our cycling treks. It meant freedom and fun. Good exercise was just a by-product. Hopefully, you have similar memories. Rarely, do you see kids doing this today! It is unfortunate!

I just returned from Bike Virginia where the average age out of 1,805 riders was 52, a number that has steadily climbed since the ride started 20 years ago. At one meeting, they talked about the importance of encouraging

young people to cycle. We all need to be doing that.



### Submitted Photo

**Logan White, 9, crosses the finish line at the DuRunRun.**

Recently Devon Barlettano and I joined up to do a kids training ride from Gladeville Baptist Church on Wednesdays. It is not on the calendar. We post it on the club message board because our schedules and, especially, the kids' schedules can be erratic.

For safety reasons, we require all kids to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Currently, we have three regulars. Devon brings her son, Dallas, age 10, and I bring my friends' son and daughter, Veronica White, age 11, and Logan White, age 9. All three have participated in one or more triathlons so far this year.

On Wednesdays, we have been doing 15-18 mile loops and everyone is learning, improving, and, most importantly, having fun. I would encourage you to bring a kid, your own or someone else's, and join us. When I ride I do it to find the kid in me. The kids, on the other hand, are trying to be grown up. We all have succeeded.

Most recently, from our Wednesday night group, Devon and Logan took part in a duathlon, the DuRunRun on Father's Day, June 15. That morning, I got up and rode the greenway, across the new pedestrian bridge, to downtown and over to Metro Center to cheer for them and other Veloteers who participated. This was the fourth year for the DuRunRun and the Veloteers have been well-represented over the years. For more information on this duathlon, visit <http://www.musiccitydurunrun.com/>. This year the event conflicted with the Edgar Soto Memorial Criterium Races, so I know we lost a few folks to that. Both are great events. For more information on the Edgar Soto Criterium races, visit <http://www.sotomemorial.org/>.

The DuRunRun is a 2-mile run, 10-mile bike, 2-mile run. There was a lot of excitement in the air. The participants varied in age, gender and levels of seriousness.

It was my first time to be at such an event, so I learned a lot of new things. One being that at these types of events they put a

## Veloteers Picnic set

**The Veloteers Bicycle Club will hold its annual picnic from 5-8 p.m. on Saturday, July 26 at the Providence Swim Club in Mt. Juliet.**

**The picnic is open to all interested in bicycling. Food will include Whitt's barbecue and W.O.W. wings. Bring your kids and swim suits.**

**RSVP by July 14 to [funstuff@veloteers.org](mailto:funstuff@veloteers.org)**

participant's age in big print on their leg for the world to see! The ages ranged from nine to 65.

Both the oldest and youngest do and/or have ridden with the Veloteers. Logan was the youngest and should be so proud of his accomplishment! His Coach (I like to call myself that☺) is certainly proud. Tomas DePaulis was the oldest! Besides those two and Devon, other Veloteer participants that I spotted included Shelley Cloutier and Brad Hollingsworth. Congratulations to all for their success!



## VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

### A funny thing happened

If you're reading this newsletter (and apparently you are), odds are you're familiar with at least some of the work that's been done in recent years by various people and organizations in the Middle Tennessee cycling community.

These efforts have been extremely wide-ranging: license plates, bike lanes, greenways, crit races, bike shops, school outreaches, racing teams, cycling clubs, skills clinics, MTB trail building and beyond. Countless hours and substantial financial investments have been poured into making our neighborhoods more cycling friendly and making it easier for people to discover and enjoy this great sport.

Somewhere along the way, a funny thing happened: all of those efforts began having an effect. Not in a high profile, overnight kind of way – big changes like these seldom happen in ways that can be pinpointed so easily. More often, they're noticed after the fact when you find yourself looking back and thinking, "Hmmm... it didn't used to be like that."

I've had several of those moments during the past few weeks, though it's only been in contemplating them all together that their cumulative significance has registered.

The first hint that something was changing took place a few weeks ago as I was driving home and noticed a cyclist happily spinning away a few hundred feet ahead. There were four or five cars between me and the rider, and part of my brain clicked in to take note of how each driver would respond to this "obstacle" as they passed.

That's when another funny thing happened: absolutely nothing. No panicked slamming on of brakes, no exaggerated swerving into the oncoming lane, no rude comments or gestures. Just a completely non-eventful, respectful and safe sharing of the road.

That happy non-incident stuck in my mind enough that over the next few weeks I found myself paying attention to other cyclist interactions to see if a similar scenario would play itself out.

However, what ended up making a bigger impression was noticing just how commonplace it's become to encounter a cyclist on the road. In fact, it would be safe to say that lately it would be more unusual for me *not* to see at least one person on a bike during my daily commute. And I'm not just talking about the begrudging DUI-compelled rider on a second hand Wal-Mart bike; no, these are honest-to-goodness commuters, fitness enthusiasts, families and pure out-there-because-I-just-love-to-ride cyclists. They're on the roads, having a good time and staying healthy – all with a minimum of conflict and high drama.

What could be cooler than that?

Well, at least one thing: seeing *fewer* cyclists on the road.

As strange as that may sound, it's something that struck me on a recent Saturday morning when I found myself riding not too far from my front door to downtown Nashville and back, all without having to spend more than a few miles looking over my shoulder to monitor traffic. Thanks to the amazing new greenway segments, pedestrian bridges and bike lanes, we cyclists can enjoy safe, relatively car-free access to parts of town where, not so long ago, venturing out on two wheels would have been only marginally less unsafe than running with the bulls.

So although we're still a long way from achieving a complete détente with motorists, we've made amazing inroads (both literally and figuratively) toward

making cycling a safe and accepted way of getting from Point A to Point B around Nashville.

So, how did all of this happen? A great deal of the credit goes to all of those individuals and organizations whose tireless efforts on multiple fronts have won those hard-fought battles of cycling advocacy.

But I think it's also important not to overlook another factor; one that's more likely to be noticed by the everyday driver who doesn't attend bike lane planning meetings or read the state highway code to learn about the three-foot rule.

To those people, the biggest reason to be willing to share the road is the positive interaction that they have with just one cyclist when they're driving to the grocery store.

It's seeing first hand that we're safe, responsible, courteous and respectful, and, over time, developing that comfort level with our being out there among them. There's no substitute for that kind of good will, and the only way to achieve it is on a one-interaction-at-a-time basis.

For that, and all of the other progress that cycling in Middle Tennessee has made, congratulations – and thank you! Together, we're making a huge difference.



## BLEAKER 'Big Hill' Challenge

**WRITTEN BY** JILL MONGENE

One of my spring/summer goals is to work on my biking legs. Therefore, I signed up for [The](#)

[Big Hill Challenge](#) 31-mile ride May 10. I have owned a bike since December of 2003 but have never put any miles on it. I have great (lofty) goals...but for some reason, I never work to attain any of those goals!

Last year, I participated in the Tour de Possum in Kingsport, Tenn., and was pretty much the last person to finish 25 miles! 2008 has been sprinkled with one 4-hour luxury ride in Amsterdam and one 25-mile ride in Belle Meade with the Greater Nashville Athletic Club...of which, I got dropped in the FIRST MILE! So...the Big Hill Challenge was a ride where I planned to work on my "time in the saddle."

On ride morning, I got up at 5 a.m., ate, loaded up and headed for Watertown at 6. I arrived at 7 and was given race number 13. The number got me a lot of comments...but it didn't bother me a bit. After I unloaded my bike, I connected with some great friends. I chatted with the president-elect of [GNAC](#) and a good friend, Tamara. It is always so fun to show up at an event and see old buddies that I've not seen over the winter months!

I also had the chance to meet some new folks. The lady parked beside me was really friendly and we talked about the Chattanooga 3 Mountain 3 State ride...which is a great, challenging ride.

The Big Hill Challenge brought out competitive riders, social riders, solo riders and family riders. From what I could tell, the event had a nice mix for anyone just starting out and anyone looking to enjoy a good hammerfest. The official start was at Main Street and all the bikers headed down there around 7:51. My goal on the ride was to not be last and to work on

my speed. Good news, I did 30 miles in about 2 hours and 5 minutes (average pace 13.5 mph) and on one hill I was at 3.9 mph....but better than last GNAC ride! Yea!! And I'm pretty sure I was not last this time!!

Through the ride I thought about my new blog ([www.correrejill.blogspot.com](http://www.correrejill.blogspot.com)) and about my blogging friends. Most of my friends are great bikers and one friend has named her bike...so I spent the morning getting to know my bike (yes, after a five-year relationship...I had no idea WHO my bike was). I worked on figuring out a name for my bike. Well, around the 13-mile mark, I dropped my chain...errrr!! And, in my head, I said, "bike you are a goober." So, I decided to name my bike BLEAKER after the character in Juno.

Why? Because with this bike I am "*without hope or encouragement; depressing; dreary*" on any future attempt at becoming a triathlete. And to add on the likeness of BLEAKER from Juno, my bike can be a cool friend but it also is so terribly dorkie. I swear if my bike could figure out how to wear sweat bands and tube socks it would.

Stay with me here...my bike is a beginner's Trek. Until last week, it had the reflectors still on it (no serious riders' bikes wear reflectors aka "tube socks"!), it still has the plastic gear protector on it and it likes to make little clicking sounds from the derailleur hitting the chain (like BLEAKER in Juno chewing on Tic Tacs). So, BLEAKER left my legs greasy and miserable. Thanks BLEAK! I still love you though. You get me where I need to be right now but I'm SURE not marrying you. When I get my strong bike legs, you will be sold to a new beginning biker.

The entire Big Hill Challenge ride was scenic and challenging...but not too challenging for someone like me. I enjoyed the fact that the road markers were so clear.

And the Veloteers did a wonderful job of having necessary guidance on the course. In past events, I felt as if I was on my own and continually hoped and prayed that I'd follow the right course. The preparation that went into this organized ride was seen throughout the 30 miles.

For most of the ride, I did not have company and that's pretty much how I like to ride --alone. I am not a group ride enthusiast. However, during the last miles of the ride, I was passed by three guys and I enjoyed seeing them race toward the finish.

Then, within the last 10 miles of the course, I had this dog incident! This little 10-pound (or less) rat dog chased me and I had to completely scream at it to avoid getting bit. What is it with rat dogs and biting...they totally have the "short man" syndrome? But, I survived and didn't have to kick the rat dog to the curb.

At the end of the ride the [Watertown Bed & Breakfast](#) hosted a lunch for all riders. I parked my bike and hobbled up the stairs. The volunteers at the luncheon were so friendly. I, of course, wanted to wash the BLEAKER's grease off my body before enjoying a wonderful lunch of lasagna, green beans, peach tea and brownies. What a wonderful way to end a beautiful ride. I probably told the volunteers THANK YOU about 10 times...it was so great.

This was by far the best bike ride experience to date. I will remember the Big Hill Challenge

for 2009 in hopes of riding a much larger distance! And I've told all my friends that the "Big Hill" really is not that big...it's just right!

*(Jill Mongene is the past owner of Fleet Feet Sports in Brentwood and an avid recreational runner. She has completed 10 marathons and several smaller distance foot races. She also enjoys recreational bike riding. Jill is currently in the year of "rebuild" working on her running, riding and swimming in hopes of qualifying for the Boston Marathon 2009 and eventually completing her first triathlon in 2009.)*



## ON THE ROAD

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

# Wray rides monster trip

Brian Wray is at it again.

Last month, Wray took one of his marathon bicycle trips, riding 502 miles in 10 days in Colorado and New Mexico.

Of those miles, 385 of them were over gravel or fire roads.

Here is a diary of Wray's trip:

**June 18:** Friend gives me ride from Denver to Salida, Colo.

**June 19:** Salida, Colo. to campsite outside Marshall Pass. 40 miles.

**June 20:** Marshall Pass to Luders Campground via Sargents and Doyleville. 60 miles. High desert, very dry.

**June 21:** Luders Campground to Del Norte, Colo. 71 miles. High desert and mountains, blew front shock. Mechanic aired up with compressor in Del Norte.



**Submitted photo  
Brian Wray on the road in the  
Rocky Mountains of Colorado  
and New Mexico.**

**June 22:** Del Norte, Colo. to Stunner Campground. 42 miles. Front flat, lost Bob trailer pin - made new one, three rear flats, got stuck in snowstorm on Indiana Pass (11,910 feet). Got light frostbite.

**June 23:** Stunner Campground to Elk Creek Campground via Platoro, Colo., and Horca. 32 miles. Stunner Pass at 10,000-plus feet. No mechanicals.

**June 24:** Elk Creek Campground to Laguintas Campground, N.M. 34 miles. Crossed La Mangra Pass (10,230 feet), horrible fire road 87, walked a mile up Brazos Ridge, had to route around snowdrifts at top, lots of mosquitoes at Laguintas.

**June 25:** Laguintas to Hopewell Lake Campground. 37 miles. Four rear flats, tire coming apart. Bear got two of my raisin, date and walnut oatmeal last night leaving me with crappy apple and cinnamon. Herded cows.

**June 26:** Hopewell Lake Campground to Abiquiu, N.M. via Plaza Canon, Vallecito and El Rito, N.M. 57 miles. Lots of elevation drop to Abiquiu, very hot day.

**June 27:** Road ride from Abiquiu, N.M. to Chama, N.M. 62 miles.

**June 2:** Road ride from Chama, N.M., to Pagosa Springs, Colo. 55 miles.

**End of Trip.**

“It was hard, it was fun, now I need a nap,” Wray wrote.

### Map your ride

A website can now help you map your ride. MapMyRide.com says it is a community web site for road cyclists and mountain bikers who want to stay healthy, lose weight or train more effectively.

MapMyRide.com provides comprehensive web-based cycling tools to measure distance and count calories from cycling. The site also includes road cycling and mountain biking forums, training logs and tips from cycling experts.

Interactive tools include: An online graphical pedometer and route maker that allows you to draw your routes with a click of the mouse; workout calculators enabling users to calculate key statistics such as total distance, pace, calories burned, BMI, etc.; a training log that lets you keep track of your daily, weekly and monthly progress; collaborate/sharing features that allow you to share your workouts; and co-branding/private labeling tools to enable organizations to offer training features to their members.

Visit the site at: <http://www.mapmyride.com>.



From the Editor ... Do you have content for the Veloteers newsletter? Please continue to submit your stories, photos and items of interest as Word documents or jpg files to [nickbiker1@aol.com](mailto:nickbiker1@aol.com) for future publication.