



# SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB

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**“Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”**

**– JOHN WOODEN**

## An awesome combo ride

*WRITTEN BY* JAMES WALLER

The most awesome bike ride ever!!!

Well, at least for a Saturday, in May, on the 3rd. This ride had it all: cool rain and hot sun plus we rode in train stations, on roads, crossed Interstates, over dams, on greenways, over rivers, through parks, a flat tire and even a little bit of cyclocross action!

An appearance by the mayor was made. Also there were minor (yours truly) and major accidents (not me)!

It all started Saturday morning at the Mt. Juliet star train parking lot. It was raining a

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little on my drive over there and the roads were wet. I met up with several other people and it looked like the clouds were blowing off, so we decided to take off too.

We took the bike lanes for a ways on Mt Juliet Road and then headed toward Bell Road. We picked up a greenway extension and then across Percy Priest Dam and down onto the main Stones River Greenway.



Photo by JAMES WALLER

The ride hits a bottleneck at the new pedestrian bridge across the Cumberland River at Two Rivers Park. Mayor Karl Dean was dedicating the new bridge.

We took the YMCA fork that comes out at Lebanon Road. We took Lebanon Road toward McGavock Pike and then returned to the greenway there. Below Two Rivers Park, we came upon a huge crowd of people and other biker friends that were waiting to see Mayor Karl Dean dedicate the new pedestrian bridge over the Cumberland River.

After the ceremony we rode across the bridge and down a corkscrew descent to Shelby Bottoms and all around the several trails down there. On the way back, in order not to hit the guy in front of me I had to brake pretty hard (tailgating? -maybe, maybe not).

Of course this was on one of the bridges with wooden planks that are warped but have been worn all smooth. My back tire hit the edge of a board and locked up and swung around! I felt this happening and in my mind (others might have a different opinion) I was riding it out like a cool mountain biker until I slammed onto the bridge and slid a bit.

I felt basically okay until I heard William Anderson yell rider down and I realized that I was about to get run over by a bunch of bikers. I rolled up and looked back, but all was okay. They had plenty of time to stop.

I popped up, checked the bike (okay) and continued the ride. If anyone is keeping track, every time I have ridden my road bike on the greenway I have wrecked. However there has been no such problem on the mountain bike.

Now I actually had hurt my wrist pretty bad and of course this happened at the bottom of the corkscrew which is very steep



Photo by JAMES WALLER

**Veloteers make a detour around a broken bridge on the Stones River Greenway. The bridge has since been repaired.**

and I had to ride up one handed. It started to feel a little better but we had another 20? miles to ride back to the car.

This time we rode the greenway all the way to Ravenwood. On the way there we had to stop by the water treatment plant. There were two rumors we heard. First a biker had wrecked and broken his leg and the other was the greenway was closed because trees and electrical lines had fallen which blocked the path. To me it felt like the Wild West where you received all your information from other travelers as you passed.

We decided to press on. If we had to turn around we would just ride more which is kind of the point of riding a bike. We passed the biker (there were EMTs there) and he was hurt. It was at the bottom of one of the "big" descents and a sharp corner with a big fence at the end. I don't think his injuries were too bad.

Later we came up on the NES crew which was taking a break (go figure). The trees were cut up and out of the way and I didn't see any power lines writhing and snapping on the ground. As we passed they whooped and hollered. I'm not sure why but I just imagined we were at the Tour and our fans were cheering us on.

We risked life and limb crossing Lebanon Road to get back on the greenway.

It was a bit more crowded this time and everything was going fine until someone had a flat tire. Soon we were going again. But then we all hit our brakes because a bridge was out. No problem, we just picked our bikes up and walked 20 feet through rocks and gravel. Luckily the area was not full of water.

By this time the sun was up and the clouds were gone and it was getting hot. We booked it back to the Music City Star station and called it a day.



## **VELO GEARS**

**WRITTEN BY** *TIM COBLE*

### **Um, what he said**

Not being a particularly eloquent person, I learned long ago that it's sometimes best to step back and let someone – anyone – else do the talking. This is one of those times.

When a fellow rider sent me a link to a blog post containing the following bit of wisdom, it quickly became evident that this qualified as required reading for every aspiring cyclist. In the interest of providing full attribution and helping people discover a top-notch biking blog, the complete post can be found at <http://bikesnobnyc.blogspot.com/2008/08/downgrade-to-win-increasing-results-by.html>.

**Warning:** Visiting this website is likely to be detrimental to your productivity for long periods of time!) So, without further ado, I give you a taste of the wisdom of the Bike Snob:

## **Downgrade to Win: Increasing Results by Lowering Expectations**

As cyclists, it can be difficult to resist the urge to upgrade. It's especially hard right now, when so many tremendously exciting products are being announced. If you're like me, you can't visit a cycling-related website without learning about a new product you simply need to own *right now*. Just a few such products are:

***Electronic Dura Ace*** Finally! I don't know anybody who rides Dura Ace and hasn't been saying for years now, "You know what would make this group even better? Finite battery life!"

Of course, while we can all benefit from electronic shifting systems, nobody will benefit more than triathletes. Not because the remote switches will allow them to shift without compromising their aero positions, but simply because they will now be able to shift, thanks to the "TT/Tri" version of the group. The complexities of a 10-speed drivetrain have long baffled most triathletes, who are unable to grasp concepts such as front derailleur trim and avoiding the large/large combination, and who consequently squander any aero benefits their behind-the-saddle water bottle holders may confer upon them by riding in gear combos that create more friction than a naked thigh on a metal playground slide.

Riding behind a triathlete is like getting stuck behind a pepper mill—if that pepper mill were wearing short-shorts and kept trying to run into things. I'm assuming the tri-specific version of electronic Dura Ace will address the poor shifting habits of the triathlete by verbally scolding the user in a voice similar to that of KITT from "Knight Rider."

***Road Tubeless*** Mountain bike tubeless tire systems have long traded convenience and easy tire changes for the ability to run extremely low pressures without risking pinch flats. Fortunately, the introduction of the road tubeless system brings all of this inconvenience to the tarmac, where the need to run extremely low pressures is virtually nonexistent.

Frankly, I'm not sure the world of road riding is ready for tubeless. Not because road riders can't appreciate the benefits, but because a disturbing number of them have not yet mastered the clincher tire. The sight of a \$4,000 carbon fiber bike turned upside-down in the shoulder of the road as three or four people in various national champion jerseys attempt to repair a flat without removing the wheel from the frame is all too common these days, and adding an incredibly tight tire bead and some sealant to the equation does not seem like a good idea.

The people who buy tubeless road systems will not be able to operate them anyway, so if they want to run lower pressures they might as well just use tubular tires. They can repair them in exactly the same way—by grappling vainly with them before pulling their Blackberrys from their CSC jerseys and calling for their wives to come pick them up.

***Carbon Mountain Bike Wheels*** Fortunately, when it comes to road and mountain technology, the exchange is not one-sided, and they're swapping spit evenly when it comes to wheels. The roadies may have taken the tubeless road tire, but they've given the mountain bikers the carbon fiber rim.

For too long, mountain bikers have had to do without the same

level of wheel gimmicky road riders enjoy, due to the fact that things like rugged terrain and disc brakes call for more and evenly-placed spokes. But thanks to those same disc brakes mountain bikers can now enjoy the lighter weight of carbon rims, thus allowing them to take the weight savings and apply it to their already considerable midsections.

There's a lot more bike wisdom and snarky goodness where this came from, so click on over to <http://bikesnobnyc.blogspot.com> and fill up on some good, old-fashioned biking common sense!



## **ON THE ROAD**

**WRITTEN BY** NICK SULLIVAN

## **Bicyclists – bad boys of the greenways**

The Metro Greenway System, in case you haven't noticed, has become a happening place, especially on weekends now that the pedestrian bridge is complete over the Cumberland River.

It's the place to be and be seen, and those cyclists who worked long and hard to lead the movement for the greenway system can give themselves a pat on the back now that it's almost finished.

It's encouraging to see large groups of cyclists out on hot Saturday mornings. Big group rides on that flat stretch in Shelby Bottoms are common. It's not unusual to see at least a couple of groups with 25 or more riders zipping along the flats on a given weekend.

A lot of the riders you see on the greenway are new to the sport, too. That's heartening. Perhaps

