



SPOKE 'N' WORD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VELOTEERS BICYCLE CLUB

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"We almost never think of the present, and when we do, it is only to see what light it throws on our plans for the future."
- Pascal

Spring breakers coming

VELO GEARS

WRITTEN BY TIM COBLE

So, I'm Heading to Nashville on Spring Break...

Thus began a recent e-mail from a friend from out of town.

A college student from my old Indiana stomping grounds, Austin (yes, that's his real name – he doesn't mind my using it) and some friends had opted to forego the typical Florida-based spring break debauchery in favor of seeking out some epic mountain biking.

Word that there was great riding to be found in and around Middle Tennessee had made its way to

IN THIS ISSUE

VELOGEARS BY COBLE	1
CYCLING BAD FOR BONES?	2
VELOTEERS HIT ROAD	3
BIG HILL CHALLENGE SET	4
WARNER PARKS TOURS	4

him and a plan had begun to take form. The goal would be to hit a new trail each day, take in as many different varieties of terrain and challenges as possible, stay at nearby camping facilities and mix things up now and then with hiking, kayaking or whatever other local flavor presented itself.

"Can you help us out?" he asked. In the three seconds that it took to hit the "reply" button I had

produced a mental list of must-ride trails, planned his itinerary and come up with a roster of people who would gladly host a pack of eager college guys just to have the opportunity to introduce them to some sweet local singletrack.

My excitement was only slightly tempered by the realization that I was a grown-up with a job that would preclude my stealing away for a week to join them. Vicarious involvement would have to suffice. (Note to self: You're not 21 anymore. Your job just saved you from a week of suffering.)

Over the next few days introductions were made and a web of e-mails soon connected

fellow riders from Kentucky to Chattanooga. Land Between the Lakes? Not an option – too much damage from the ice storm. Fall Creek Falls? Great scenery and some nice hiking. Chilhowee and Tanasi? Not to be missed. Adding an extra day to hit Hamilton Creek and Lock 4? Absolutely worth it.

If these guys didn't look back on this spring break 20 years from now as one of the best getaways of their college experience, it wasn't going to be for lack of trying.

In the middle of all this planning Austin tossed off a comment to the effect of, "You guys really have it good down there in Tennessee. All this great riding right out your back door. Who would have thought that so much variety would be available within such a short distance?"

Like most spoiled people, my first reaction to having my blessings pointed out to me was to shrug it off. "Yeah, we've got some fun trails."

But as I began to view the trip through his eyes – those of someone who had spent the last three years in Indiana, where the only elevation change is the occasional highway overpass – it occurred to me that we truly do enjoy an embarrassment of riches when it comes to cycling.

And not just when it comes to mountain biking.

As much as we road riders like to complain about the difficulties of peacefully coexisting, the reality is that most of us can hop on a street or greenway in one direction and be downtown enjoying a cup of coffee in less than an hour. Or we can head in the opposite direction and within minutes be rolling through quiet

farm country with nothing more than an occasional herd of cattle and a tailwind to keep us company for mile after mile.

Fortunately, here I was enjoying a golden opportunity to do the one appropriate thing that anyone can do with such a wealth of riding resources: share them. And I'm guessing that this is an opportunity that many of us are going to have over the next few weeks.

With warmer weather just around the corner and Daylight Savings Time handing us an extra hour of after-work sun, even non-riders are going to be feeling the itch to get outside and shake off the remnants of a long, cold winter.

Why not introduce them to some of the incredible two-wheeled opportunities that lie, literally, just around the corner and down the road from all of us? Somebody once did exactly that for you, and aren't you glad they did?

Whether it's Austin and his buddies driving hundreds of miles for a week of two-wheeled bliss or the guy next door considering a carefree spin through the neighborhood, chances are you know somebody who's open to experiencing Tennessee cycling. Don't miss out on being a part of their discovery!



Cycling "Bad to da Bone"?

WRITTEN BY
GRAY STAHLMAN, MD

There is nothing I like more than a nice long ride with plenty of hills with a group of my buddies.

Grinding ascents. Technical descents. The smooth beauty of a well executed paceline. I also feel less beat up and sore after a long ride when compared to a long run.

You would think that hours in the saddle would be good for your physical health. No doubt there is a superb cardiovascular benefit with cycling. Too, cycling is great at developing core strength and lower body strength.

Unfortunately, as it turns out, cycling may not be so great for bone health.

A little bone physiology lesson is in order. As bones bear weight (such as when walking, running and jumping) they adapt to the stresses presented to them. Bones strengthen in the areas where stress occurs. (This is called Wolfe's law). The bone density in these areas of stress also increases. Areas that are not under load tend to be thinner, and therefore weaker.

Bone density is dependent upon the amount of calcium contained in bones. Bone strength is dependent on the bone density, the thickness of the bone, and their shape.

As bone strength (and bone density) goes up, the risk for breaking the bone goes down. A one percent increase in bone density reduces the risk of fracture by five percent.

Osteopenia is defined as low bone density of a mild to moderate degree. While treatment for osteopenia is not always required, those diagnosed with osteopenia are at twice the risk of a fracture as those with normal bone density.

Osteoporosis occurs when there is a severe loss of bone density.

Risk factors for developing osteopenia and osteoporosis include: a strong family history of osteoporosis, females of Caucasian or Asian descent, people who do not participate in regular weight-bearing exercise, smokers, and those on steroids.

Pam Hinton, associate professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Missouri-Columbia and her co-authors recently published a study which should be of great interest to endurance cyclists. They compared male cyclists and male runners aged 20-59 who engaged in their sport a minimum of six hours per week for at least two years.

After controlling for diet, and past exercise (including strength training), they did bone density scans, body composition assessments, and blood work on both groups of athletes.

Despite having similar ages, weights, body composition, diets, and exercise levels, they found that 63% of the cyclists had osteopenia of the spine or hip, as compared to 19% of the runners. The cyclists were seven times more likely to have osteopenia of the spine than the runners.

While a small study, and only of males, I think the results of Ms. Hinton's study are important to cyclists (Especially women cyclists who are already at an increased risk for developing osteopenia and osteoporosis.).

Many would argue that they are putting force through their lower extremities by pedaling. While true when it comes to your muscles, it is not so true with your bones. Gravity is only acting in a small way on your spine and long bones while you are in the saddle.

When running, each foot strike transmits gravitational forces to your skeleton. This is when the bone adaptation occurs.

The take home message here is not for cyclists to give up their sport, but rather to include regular weight bearing exercise with their cycling. Running, walking, jumping rope, plyometrics, and weight training are important in the maintenance of a healthy skeleton.

Gray Stahlman, MD practices with Tennessee Orthopaedic Alliance in Nashville. He love cycling and triathlon. He also has a keen interest in the injuries that plague endurance athletes. You can email him at stahlmangc@toa.com. www.drstahlmanonline.com www.TOA.com



Veloteers hit the road

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

Looking at the calendar, I see spring is just around the corner. So it says.

Maybe. At least a lot of bicyclists and those who organize things for them are taking it as the gospel and optimistically are planning a lot of events and rides to kick off the season.

Here's a rundown of things on, hopefully, a warmer and drier horizon:

Sunday morning: William and Melly Anderson are ready to kick off the Veloteers' Gladeville Sunday Morning rides. The rides will leave the Wilson Bank & Trust in Gladeville at 9 a.m. (through March). The rides are generally 50 miles with emphasis on endurance (14-17 mph pace).

Fast riders can use this as a recovery ride. The pace and



File photo by JAMES WALLER

Veloteers are gearing up for a new season on the road.

distance will offer moderate riders a challenge. A ride will be cancelled if the temperature is below 40 degrees, or if there is precipitation.

Monday afternoon: Bob Ostrowe is getting his Monday afternoon beginners' rides cranked back up. The rides depart from Gladeville Baptist Church at 6 p.m. (CDT). The pace is 9-13 miles per hour and distances vary. Bob, a certified spin instructor, will teach road riding basics and skills in the church parking lot then take the group for an easy spin. Contact Bob at 308-6608.

Wednesday afternoon: For intermediate and advanced mountain bikers, Brian Wray (333-4636) will conduct the weekly Hamilton Creek Run & Ride on Wednesday afternoons at 4 p.m. The program usually consists of a 4-mile trial run and 3-11 miles on the bike. Helmets are mandatory and bring water. Rain the day before or rain/lightning at the time of ride cancels. Sturdy trail shoes and a durable full suspension bike are recommended.

Saturday morning: The Veloteers weekly Saturday morning rides are set to launch April 4. The rides, hosted by James Waller (598-4451) leave from the Music City Star Depot in Mt. Juliet at 8 a.m. Rides for beginners to fast follow various routes, but depart approximately at the same time. Ride leaders are needed to host different rides a couple of times a month. Contact James if you want to lead rides.

Check the Veloteers calendar on the club website for changes or updates.

So, there are plenty of opportunities available for Veloteers to get in some good early-season training if you so desire, and spring eventually will come. Probably.



Big Hill Challenge set May 9

ON THE ROAD

COMPILED BY NICK SULLIVAN

The annual Big Hill Challenge, sponsored by the Veloteers Bicycle Club and Historic Watertown, has been set for May 9.

The Big Hill Challenge, geared for cyclists of all ages and ability levels, will feature four scenic routes through Wilson, DeKalb, Smith and Cannon Counties.

A 10-mile loop provides an easy, family-friendly ride through Watertown.

A 31-mile route offers a moderate challenge through rolling terrain, while the 62-mile route includes a scenic ride to Center Hill Dam,

giving intermediate riders a chance to enjoy some challenging climbs and fast descents. The truly adventurous cyclist can take on the 100-mile “century” route and prove their mettle on some of the best climbs the area has to offer.

All rides will be fully supported by professional bike mechanics and rolling SAG teams. Numerous rest stops will be positioned along all routes to keep riders fueled and hydrated, and all riders will receive a commemorative T-shirt and “goody bag”.

There will be coffee in the square provided by Lulu’s Coffee House prior to the ride. And if you are not a coffee drinker, the Red Bull Wings Team plans to be there as well.

After the ride, participants are invited to enjoy a hearty pasta dinner while relaxing with fellow cyclists in downtown Watertown.

This annual event is now a favorite among Middle Tennessee cyclists. It offers both a great ride experience and excellent preparation for other early-season “centuries”.

Sign-in begins at 6:30 a.m. at Watertown High School, 515 W. Main St.. All rides begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Town Square. Advance registration through May 2 is \$25; May 3 to day-of registration will be \$30. A portion of all entry fees will benefit the Historic Watertown Society.

Riders can register on-line at www.veloteers.org or print out a registration form. Helmets are mandatory.

Warner Parks to hold tours

The Friends of Warner Parks will hold its annual Parks in the Parks and Parkway Bike Tour on April 18.

Hundreds of bikers from across Middle Tennessee will help raise money for the Friends of Warner on the Earth Day rides. The rides include 25- and 50-mile tours through the back roads of Williamson County, along parts of the Natchez Trace and over to the Loveless Cafe on Highway 100.

Rides start at 9 a.m. at the Warner Park Special Events Field at Old Hickory Boulevard and Vaughn Road. Registration is \$20 before April 1 and \$25 at the site. For additional information and a downloadable registration form, go to friendsofwarnerparks.com, or request information at info@friendsofwarnerparks.com or call 615-370-8053.



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 for future publication.