

Extra^ordinary Reflections

The Newsletter of the Bombay Bicycle Club, Inc.

September/October 1999

Madison, Wisconsin

Volume 25 Issue 4

The President's Column

It's August and the summer is flying by too fast for me. Job commitments in June kept me from riding until the day before the start of GRABAAWR and July brought the death of my father and my riding time has been and will be severely curtailed this year. I'm already looking forward to next year's season.

Most of the BBC Board members have been enjoying numerous bike tours this summer: Bob Steinberg, Dean Schroeder, and Dean's daughter Katrina have just returned from a tour in Michigan, Fred Gooding from Wyoming, and Howard Teal from the BFW's "Northwoods to Capitol" ride in Wisconsin. I hope we will be able to report further on these in the newsletter. Fred's always soliciting contributions - so, let the rest of us know about bike tours/vacations you have taken and whether you recommend them or wouldn't be caught dead doing "that one" again.

My thanks to those of you who have contributed money towards the new pump for Paoli, mentioned in the last newsletter. Howard Teal has sent those checks on to Jennifer Woods, the town treasurer. It will be a great day for bicyclists when water is again available at the town park.

Also on the subject of bicyclists' supporting causes, it was gratifying to see the turnout of bicyclists at Madison's Common Council meeting July 20th, protesting the expansion of Old Sauk into a four lane road. This one issue tied up the council for an hour and a half to allow people to express opinions on the slated plans (both for and against). BBC secretary and past president Dean Schroeder eloquently stated his view that our lopsided transportation policies favor cars over pedestrians, bicyclists and other modes of transport. You can read Dean Schroeder's letter on page 3.

Last July brought us Lance Armstrong's Tour de France triumph! How unusual and wonderful it was to find regular updates in the local sports section, as well as front page coverage, of this great bicycle race.

August finds the Bombay club members looking ahead to the Wright Stuff Century. We owe many thanks to John Stockham, Julia Hay and the many volunteers who are giving their time to make this event happen. Which brings us to the subject of volunteers—we need you! Be a board member, lead a ride, contribute an article to the newsletter, help out on the Wright Stuff Century. If you are interested in working with the club in any capacity, please contact me at 263-5992 (day) or (920) 648-8024 (eve). Well, that's all for now. We'll see you at the fall meeting, November 7th. (Don't worry football fans, the Packers game starts at 1 p.m. that day)

—Sarah Grimes

Five Hundred Riders Expected

for Wright Stuff Century

About 500 riders are expected to participate in the BBC's 21st Annual Wright Stuff Century. The event will be held on Sunday, September 5 starting from Tyrol Basin Ski Lodge north of Mount Horeb. Riders should plan to start from Tyrol Basin between 7:30 and 9:30 am. To find the lodge, go to downtown Mount Horeb and look for County Trunk JG. Go north on JG until you get to Bohn Road. Turn right; the lodge is a short distance on the left. The phone at the lodge is (608) 437-4135. Participants may choose from 30, 60 and 100-mile route options. Rest stops and food will be available for all routes. Registration includes an after-ride catered spaghetti meal at Tyrol Basin.

This year's event will generally follow the same route as the past five years, except for several minor changes due to town road and highway construction. Rest stops will be located at Hyde, Tower Hill State Park near Spring Green, and Barneveld.

T-shirts are being designed by Orange and Dean Schroeder of Orange Tree Imports and will be available to pre-registrants. Only a limited number of T-shirts will be available to day-of registrants. In order to guarantee a T-shirt we encourage you to pre-register at least a week before the ride. Last year's T-shirts were a "hot item" and sold-out early.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR

WRIGHT STUFF CENTURY

Last minute volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks at the Wright Stuff Century including sagging, helping with rest stops, and parking vehicles. Volunteering is a great way to be involved in the event—even if you don't intend to ride. We also have some tasks that can be done early on the morning of the ride—so that you can be available to ride all or part of the route later. Call John Stockham or Julia Hay at 233-1827 for more information about volunteering.

Fall BBC Meeting set for November 7th

The fall membership meeting will take place at the Shorewood Community Center, 901 Swarthmore Court, Madison. (Please see page 4 for a map and directions.) Socializing will start at 5:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at about 5:30. The speaker will be Jeanne Hoffman of the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin, and her topic will be a recent tour she took in Venezuela.

Also on the agenda will be... the election of Next Year's Board!

From the Touring Chairman

It's been another hot summer of fun-filled Bombay rides and again I'd like to thank all the ride leaders who have volunteered their time. The special efforts of Dave Peterson and Dean Schroeder have provided us with a successful new Thursday night program as well. On average 20 to 30 riders have been attending the Thursday night rides with many staying afterwards to socialize. I can't think of a better way to get new riders interested in the club and perhaps to whet their appetites for trying longer Sunday rides.

While many Bombay members have had the experience of doing multiple-day tours, many newcomers to the club have not. After completing my sixth week-long tour during the first week of August, my advice to new club members is to give it a try. There's nothing more relaxing to the mind and soul than spending day after day on your bicycle with the only concern being where you're going to get your next 2000 calorie feast. Plus you'll discover far more scenery than you could possibly find traveling by car.

Week-long cycling events are available throughout the country with local tours like GRABAAWR, SAGBRAW, and the Northwoods to Capitol tour. The Wisconsin tours vary in size from 200 to 1,200 people or you can ride with 10,000 other partying cyclists in Iowa on RAGBRAI. Most tours offer luggage trucks to haul your gear and provide accommodations at local schools along the way where you can either pitch your tent on the lawn or sleep on the gym floor. Some tours offer optional food plans and in some cases the food is quite edible considering its mass production.

This year I travelled to Michigan with Dean Schroeder, his daughter Katrina and Levi Wood on the West Shoreline tour which took us

north along the coast of Lake Michigan to enjoy the splendor of sandy beaches and expanses of incredible sand dunes. One of the highlights was riding to the top of the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park where we looked down a 450-foot high sand bluff which went straight down to the lake. It would take 10 minutes to run down to the water and an hour trudging through the sand back to the top (we only watched.)

We passed through many lake side tourist towns like Ludington, Traverse City and Charlevoix, which had an incredible number of specialty shops to visit. The ride director claimed that if your overall daily speed average was over 4 mph then you were not having enough fun along the way. While we laughed at her comments we almost came close one day to topping out at 5.2 mph.

If you don't find a tour by word of mouth that interests you, check out the internet because most tours seem to have a WEB site. Plan on signing up next year for a tour and I promise that you'll have no regrets.

Keep pedaling and enjoy the rest of the summer!

—Bob Steinberg

New BBC Jerseys Still Available

There are still 4 Club Medium, 3 Women's Large, 1 Club Extra Large and 3 Women's XXL jerseys left at \$42. each. You can call Dave Peterson at 271-6931 for details.

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More on Widening Old Sauk Road

The following letter was sent by former BBC President Dean Schroeder to Alderman Ken Golden about the proposed widening of Old Sauk Road, one of the few remaining peaceful bike escape routes from Madison. —Ed.

Dear Ken,

I'm surprised to hear you characterize all bicyclists as "anti-growth." After all, are you "pro-growth" and "pro-development" in every case?

Surely you are aware of the benefits of bicycling, not only to the bicyclists, but to the Madison area. Bicycle commuters reducing congestion and pollution; recreational bicycling opportunities enhancing the attraction of the area to employers; etc. Bicyclists have a personal interest in traffic issues. And we develop a special esteem for the land itself, accounting for our personal interest in development issues.

We believe the automobile is reaching a critical mass in most cities. Must EVERY road become a freeway? Madison deserves better! Rather than "anti-", we are FOR sensibly-paced, human-scale development and traffic. We would only like to slow the RATE at which the development, construction and roadbuilding industries are eroding our sense of place, pace and community.

Surely you agree that Madison and its environs can be little enhanced by more freeways resulting in still more congestion around more malls and mega-stores. Please support our vision with your vote against 4-lane Old Sauk Road.

Sincerely, Dean Schroeder

A bike tour with a Hitch

The Northwoods to Capitol Tour '99.

The first annual Northwoods to Capitol Tour is history. More than 140 riders took part in the week-long inaugural ride through the hills and the small towns between Superior and Madison, Wis. The ride was a benefit for the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and raised over \$10,000. Highlights of the tour were great catered local food, a wonderful reception at Pepin and Somerset High Schools, tubing on the Apple River, the Yadda Band, Stuart Stott's music and storytelling, a train ride on the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railroad, a cruise on the La Crosse Mississippi Queen, the American Players Theatre and the wedding or "hitching" of the co-directors Kathy Thompson and Eric Schramm. Come join the fun next year.

—Eric Schramm


Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

I firmly believe in truthful and complete "news" coverage. I think it would be foolish not to continue reporting on cycling accidents both in the Madison area and elsewhere. Safety issues are inherently a part of the sport. Those who don't favor the "programming" can simply "turn off the television." Just as death is inherently a part of life, we need not collectively close our eyes to the misfortunes of fellow cyclists. Indeed, we may be compelled to extend our sympathy and support.

—Ken Whiteash, Mazomanie

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Account of New Zealand Tour on BBC Web site

You can read a fascinating account of a 5-week tour of New Zealand's south island by BBC member Scott Ellington. His story has lots of photographs (in full color!) His trip started in Invercargill and ended in Picton. Scott reports that he started with a terrific tail wind that was so strong it was sometimes difficult to stop the bike on level ground. Of course the winds changed soon into "Againststerlies," a term coined by a woman from Oregon whom he met. He made the trip in March and April of this year. You can find it by hunting for the following URL on your browser:

<http://danenet.wicip.org/bcp/touring/nz99/>

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You can use this map to find the Shorewood Community Center and the fall BBC meeting. See you there!

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Bombay Bicycle Club Membership Benefits

- Joining the BBC is about the fastest way you can get to meet fellow cycling enthusiasts and participate in a wide variety of group rides, especially rides where a moderate pace and group sociability are values. There's almost always someone going somewhere near your own speed so you never have to ride by yourself. Well—hardly ever.

- Use the Club's hard shell bike travel case. The airlines' baggage gorillas will have to go to a lot of trouble to damage it or your bike. Call Dean at 256-8813 to check on its availability.

- There are rebates available to BBC members who join either the League of American Bicyclists or the Wisconsin Bike Federation.

- There is a rebate on Effective Cycling class tuition.

- Dues include a subscription to ExtraOrdinary Reflections, published every other month from March until November. Through its Letters column, you can sound off about anything you think would be of interest to fellow cyclists.

- Members may place free classified ads. These ads may be approximately 30 words or less, and should be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. (Please see the back page for addresses.) They will run once, but may be renewed.

- Club events for which a fee is charged have discounts for club members who apply early enough.

Bombay Bicycle Club of Madison, Inc. Membership Form

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Address: _____

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Zip: _____ E-mail address: _____

____ New Member ____ Renewing Member

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Please tell us how you heard about the Bombay Bicycle Club:

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STEPS



Where??," I asked my friend Jerry Klotz, wondering if he or anyone else had heard of the place he wanted to go for our next tour. He might as well have suggested Outer Mongolia or Altoona as desirable candidates. Or those 3000 miles of desert in southern Australia where he wants to go right now.

But back in the fall of 1985 his idea was a bicycle/camping trip on the Dempster Highway, some 470 miles of gravel road which runs between Dawson City in Canada's Yukon Territory to the tiny government town of Inuvik in the Northwest Territories, close to the Beaufort Sea, and well north of the Arctic Circle. This was to go in late May 1986, during the brief window between the ice and mosquito seasons. I was terrified at the start because neither I nor Jerry had ever done anything like it. I was worried especially about our navigation capability (I still am. Just last fall, we rode all 28 miles of a 22-mile Wednesday night ride.) So why did he want to run this trip and have me come along? Several reasons, I suppose.

First, we both had managed to forget the pain, discomfort, and arguments of our last trip, thirteen years earlier around Lake Superior in 1972. That tour had four starters and a 50 percent survival rate. One of the non-survivors had to quit after he had broken all his spare spokes. He was last seen standing exactly in the middle of the road, frantically waving his front wheel at an approaching Greyhound bus in southern Ontario.

The other non-survivor back in 1972 traveled on a very light budget, his main source of nourishment being an industrial sized mayonnaise jar filled with brewer's yeast. After losing the pin out of Jerry's chain tool, and later hearing a loud "ping" as most parts of his derailleur flew into the bushes, his game was called on account of financial and bike ruin. Somehow both bikes and riders managed to make it back to Milwaukee.

For the summer of 1986, Jerry had grander plans. This was to be a non-trivial adventure and presented all kinds of logistical problems. First was how to get to the start. The only public transportation to Dawson City was a once-weekly battered bus from Whitehorse, the Yukon Capital. One commercial airline served Inuvik, but no other transport was available between Dawson and Inuvik. Jerry had recruited one other Madisionian, Jake Herro, then manager of the Yellow Jersey's east side store. To get there, Jake decided to buy a used pickup and drive with Jerry and all the bikes from Madison to Whitehorse and meet me at the airport. Their truck trip would take "only" five days and I would fly from Washington, DC, where I was living at the time. Another day's drive from Whitehorse would take us the 300 miles to Dawson City, the community nearest the Dempster's start. (When we finally drove to Dawson, we nearly ran out of gas because one of the two gas stations was closed—it had been repossessed by its creditors. We also saw the battered bus undergoing major repairs at the other station while its forlorn passengers waited. And waited. And waited).

So what is the Dempster Highway, anyway? For one thing, it's the only year-round public highway which crosses the Arctic Circle. It was created at great expense during the 1950s by the Canadian government when a potential for oil was discovered in the part of the Yukon territory known as Eagle

The photo above shows the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers in Dawson City in the Yukon Territory. The Dempster Highway starts here, heads north to Eagle Plains, and was begun by 1958. By 1961, 72 miles had been constructed, but work was shown normal light levels by summer Arctic standards.)

halted because not much oil was found. No further construction was done until ten years later, when oil was discovered in the Beaufort Sea and an all-weather road was required to service exploration there. Although most of the later oil discoveries were made to the west in Alaska, the highway development continued and it was opened to the public in 1979.

Its entire route lies in the zone of permafrost, where the subsoil is frozen all year round. Thus an asphalt or concrete road sitting right on top of the subsoil would tend to sink in the summer and buckle from frost heaves in the winter as the subsoil thawed or refroze. The Dempster was built mostly by just dragging zillions of truckloads of gravel to the site and dumping them. The gravel is relatively dry so doesn't always turn to mud in the spring, and is dumped down thick enough (six feet or more) so that during the summer the gravel insulates the frozen subsoil underneath. The gravel tends to stay dry since there is very little precipitation; the climate might remind you of a desert with a defective temperature regulator. If you're driving it in the spring or summer, you must stay away from the edges, where the "insulation" isn't as thick. We saw some people waiting for their cars to be towed out of the mud, and they may well still be there.

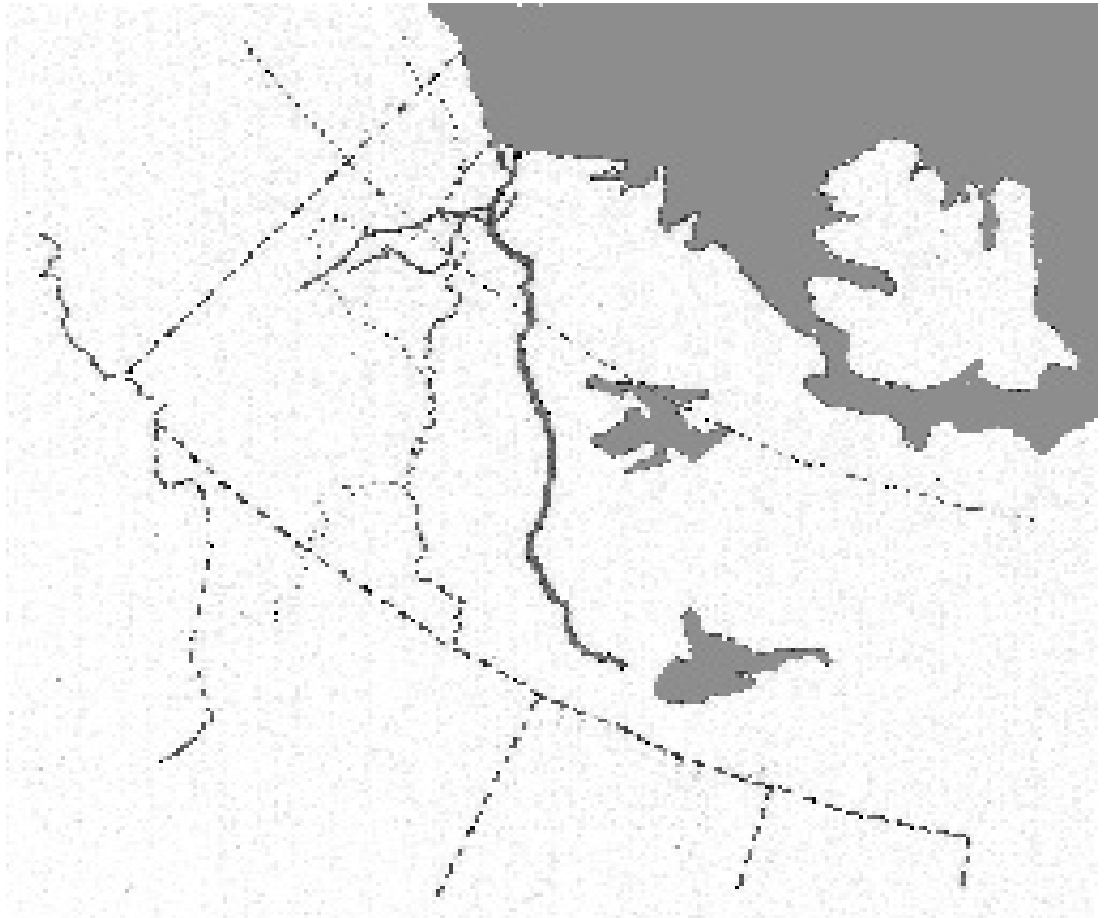
Our plan was to camp at the few government campgrounds available or else flop down beside the road. We would carry enough food for about a week—plenty enough to get to the store we thought was half way up the road. The food we carried usually fell into either the freeze-dried-flatulence or instant-mashed-potatoes category, with a dash of peanut butter for variety. The route divided itself into three more or less distinct parts.

The Ogilvie Mountains

The southernmost of these, starting in Dawson and running north for about 150 miles, might remind you of some of the more arid parts of Colorado or New Mexico - gray peaks, some snow-capped in the far distance. This was the Ogilvie Mountain range, and usually the road followed the valley of the North Klondike River, so there was plenty of water (unfiltered in 1986!). We'd brought one of those clog-up-after-one

pint water filters just coming into fashion, but none of the locals thought we would need it. And all three of us are still alive and giardialess, too. So it remained excess baggage, but would not be so if we were to do this trip again.

For our last civilized night, we moteled in Dawson, site of the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers. There still were (and



are?) mountains of fist-sized rocks next to the Klondike, relics of the "placer" mining methods of the Klondike gold rush. Potential ore is dug up and subjected to extremely high water pressure from hoses, which separates the dirt from the rocks. Then the dirt/mud runs through progressively finer screens and all the gold dust, if any, is filtered out into the miners' hats. The rocks remain—forever. After dinner Jake and I drove up some ridiculously steep road to a view of the confluence and of Dawson. The lead picture here was taken at about 10:30 at night—lots of light by Arctic summer standards.

The next day was Friday, May 30, and we drove back east about 25 miles to "Klondike Corner," the start of the Dempster, a motel/gas station/truck-staging-area complex where we bullied the owners into letting us park the truck for a couple of weeks. After much backing and filling, we were off to Inuvik.

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I don't remember much about that Friday. Or else have chosen to forget it. We had set as our goal Tombstone Mountain campground, about 50 miles up (that wasn't much, was it?). For me, the previous years of indolence and sloth took their revenge all at once and I eventually found myself walking on absolutely flat terrain dragging along this 400 pound bike with heaven knows how much (many?) instant mashed potatoes. Would that bloody

campground ever show up? At about five that afternoon I remember Jerry rhapsodizing about how the streets in Madison would be so clogged with cars right now and wasn't it wonderful that there weren't any here? I also remember right then a distinct yearning for a big Madison traffic jam.

The campground did eventually show at about eight after nine hours cycling. Just before we got there we passed a house trailer which contained a couple of zoologists whose summer work was counting ptarmigans. We must have seemed quite insane to them, but they certainly didn't let on, and even offered us some coffee. The site was fine, but oh, did it get cold around 4:00 a.m.

Saturday was a fairly short day to another government campground at Engineer Creek. There we met a silver miner on vacation who terrified us with stories of how people behave during the long dark Yukon winters. Alcoholism, spousal abuse, and pull-out-all-the-stops boredom are the least of their worries. He told us that at -60°F. water tossed in the air becomes freezing mist before it hits the ground.



The sign said to watch out for aircraft landing on the highway in about 2 km, where the road widened out. We couldn't find any mention of other campgrounds in shooting distance for Sunday, so after about 40 or 45 miles, we agreed to continue until 3:00 or the first big uphill, whichever came first, and they arrived simultaneously. So it was flop along the roadside, but not too bad—we were still right next to a river. I don't remember seeing any other moving vehicles during those first three days.

Eagle Plains

The middle section of the Dempster was quite extraordinary to this flatlander. It's called "Eagle Plains," about as brazen abuse of the language as I've ever heard. There is absolutely nothing "planar" about the region. It is about 120 miles of high rolling—like "roller coaster"—tundra between the Ogilvie and Richardson mountain ranges, covered with bushes and a few small trees and no ground water. In several places those scrubby trees lean drunkenly in all directions, caused by frost heaves in the permafrost tundra. The area reminded me a little of western Dane County, but with about a third of the vegetation, ridiculously magnified in length, width, and

height. And none of those quaint village taverns. That's to say

that all the hills were much longer and steeper and relentless. On Monday, we left the Ogilvie River valley, filled up a 2½-gallon water jug, which we lugged painfully up the first of three Continental Divide crossings. ("Fred, for Pete's sake, let us carry that jug—we've got to get there sometime!") Just after starting that long climb, a huge southbound truck came along and stopped.



In the Ogilvie Mountains

The driver told us that it was "only ten miles to the top," that he had seen four bears in the last fifty miles, and "Do any of you guys have a gun?" He urged us not to allow ourselves to be converted into bear scat.

In fact, we did see our one and only bear the next day—black, not grizzly, thank goodness. Jake came upon it a little off the road, shuffling around in the nearby bushes. It was downwind from us and while we stopped in the road waiting for a while, it looked at us in a rather bored way and then shambled off into deeper bushes. Eagle Plains did have one redeeming feature—a gigantic service station/motel/restaurant/campground/alleged-grocery-store complex in the middle of ultimate nowhere and we made it there



that night. And stayed the next night, too, at \$100 Canadian each and worth every penny of it, even back when Canadian dollars were worth something. The grocery store, however, turned out to be more alleged than not (it was totally out of bread), but there was enough peanut butter to keep us going for another week or so. Sitting high up in the tundra 24 miles south of the Arctic Circle, the motel had to truck in its water from a river about 20 miles away.

The day we left the hotel was our longest, at least by the clock. It took 11 hours to get to the Richardson Mountain “campground,” about two miles short of the NWT border, which would be our second crossing of the Divide. We’d met a couple of helicopter pilots at the hotel. “What are you doing here?,” we asked. “We’re here on a fishing trip,” they answered. Shortly after we’d left the motel, they buzzed us at an altitude of about 20 feet.

It was good to get to somewhat flatter terrain, after walking most of the mountains in Eagle “Plains,” and careening dizzily down them. But we met our worst headwinds of the trip—the area was



This battered sign has been replaced by a modern concrete abstract—completely open with no cover at all—and we thought about trying to do supper in the middle of the road but I knew I’d never be able to get up after that. We finally made it, helped each other bolt down the tents with big rocks and listened to the wind roar until about 4:00 a.m. Trying to operate a stove inside a tent that’s ready for liftoff always makes for a little excitement.

The next day saw our second crossing of the Divide into the Northwest Territories as well as lots of those I-was-there firing squad pictures at the Arctic Circle, one reproduced here.

The Peel and Mackenzie Lowlands

The northernmost section was another hundred or so miles through muskeg, the Canadians’ name for impenetrable swamp. The road was the usual 10 to 12 feet of dumped gravel and for the most part ran straight as an arrow. We could tell that a car was approaching by noticing at the end of the visible roadway a tiny spot of dust which grew and grew into a cloud, then passed us by as it covered everything with dust. It was in places like this that we would have been eaten alive until dead by the mosquitos had we arrived a little later in the season. We each carried a bee-keeper’s face net and could cover ourselves pretty well, but we’d heard all kinds of horror stories of herds of caribou going mad from the mosquitos and black flies.

Two major rivers, the Peel and Mackenzie, cross the Dempster. In winter, vehicles cross these rivers on the ice, in the summer by ferry. While the ice is forming or breaking up, nothing moves. We reached the Peel river ferry a day before it was to start running, but the operator agreed to take us across anyway. We camped a

few miles later at the Nutuilie campground, which hadn’t opened for the summer yet. That wasn’t a problem in itself, but there wasn’t any water there either, so we had to send an expedition 8 miles further to the dismal settlement of Fort McPherson, population about 700. There was no running water there either—I still have no idea how those outhouses work in the winter—but there was a building full of barrels of yellowish doubtful looking water which was supposed to be OK, so we filled up the jug and are still alive. The one and only grocery store there was pretty long and strong on potatoes, basic canned goods and rental movies. No beer, wine or booze though because of the severe alcoholism problems throughout the area. We’d been told that we could bootleg a bottle of whiskey for \$150 or more, but had enough trouble carrying our own gear.

At the campground we were visited by an Inuit woman of Fort McPherson and her children, who were selling a caribou dinner for \$5: caribou barbeque, caribou soup and cabbage. Her husband had shot the animal. All delicious, and one serving was enough for all three of us. I enjoyed a rest day while the others made another water run to Fort McPherson.

When on the following day we reached the much wider Mackenzie River, there were a number of trucks and cars waiting and no one knew when the ferry, which was belching smoke and making important sounding noises on the other side of the river, would start running. There wasn’t much to do except think about camping in a gravel pit that night. There was a tiny community called Arctic Red River at the ferry landing and we managed to talk a resident into taking us and our bikes across for \$20 on his dubious flat-bottomed scow. He laid all three bikes across the gunwales,



threw in us and all ten tons of gear and proceeded across the river with about two inches of freeboard—we were quite happy that the river was calm right then! And especially pleased that we would have the highway all to ourselves for the next several days.

So about an hour and a half later there was a little white spot in the middle of the road behind us, then a little dust cloud, then a

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dim rumble, then a huge dust cloud getting bigger and bigger and then all those cars and trucks. Well, they were soon gone and we didn't see any more that day.

On our last day we made it into Inuvik, and on that day met the only other cyclists we saw. One was a middle aged man traveling by himself and rather lightly equipped, we thought. He was a little taken aback at our stories about drinking water—or the lack of it. Later we met Captain and Ms. Bicycle, a

young couple who were going to travel all the way across Canada from the really tiny roadless town of Tuktoyatuk, well north of Inuvik, to Labrador or Newfoundland or some equally absurd destination. In April, they had ridden the ice from Tuktoyatuk south to Inuvik, carrying a shotgun in case of polar bear trouble and had coped with -40°F. temperatures. They'd spent May back home in Toronto, and were just off on the main part of their trip. They were sponsored, had manufacturers' logos all over their clothes and equipment, and looked nauseously fit. Where they are now and whether or not they finished knows God.

Inuvik featured two motels, the only traffic light in more than 500 miles, and a Hudson's Bay department store. All fairly expensive, but we were certainly ready for a few creature comforts. Inuvik also had a large number of "utilidors," above-ground insulated wooden

Getting back to Madison was not simple for Jerry and Jake, who kindly took my bike and gear and then waited around for two or three days until they could argue a truck driver into driving them back to Dawson. They spent another bouncy five days driving back to Madison while I flew home from Inuvik.

In the years since 1986, the roles of the Dempster Highway and Inuvik in Canada's economy have lessened, though the town is still there. If I were to do this again, it might be better to have a support van as a safety factor. I'd pick about the same time of year—maybe just a little later—but would want to learn when the ferries might start operating. For sure, this was and would be a very expensive vacation, but for me it was an adventure like nothing I've seen before or since.



Waiting for the ferry to cross the Peel River
tunnels which contained all the water supply and drains. These were heated in the winter and Inuvik was the only community we'd seen that had running water.

We heard that on that night, the sun never did set—it reached its lowest point in the sky at about 2:00 a.m. and then started rising again. None of us can swear to that because none of us was awake at 2:00 a.m.



Scenes like this are what I remember most vividly from our Dempster tour.

From the Editor's Uneasy Chair

Some of you may question the wisdom of running a lengthy article about a bike tour which took place thirteen years ago, but printing it must be one of the editor's prerogatives. If you do object then you should do two things: write a complaint letter, and then write an article about your favorite tour. Both of these will be welcomed.

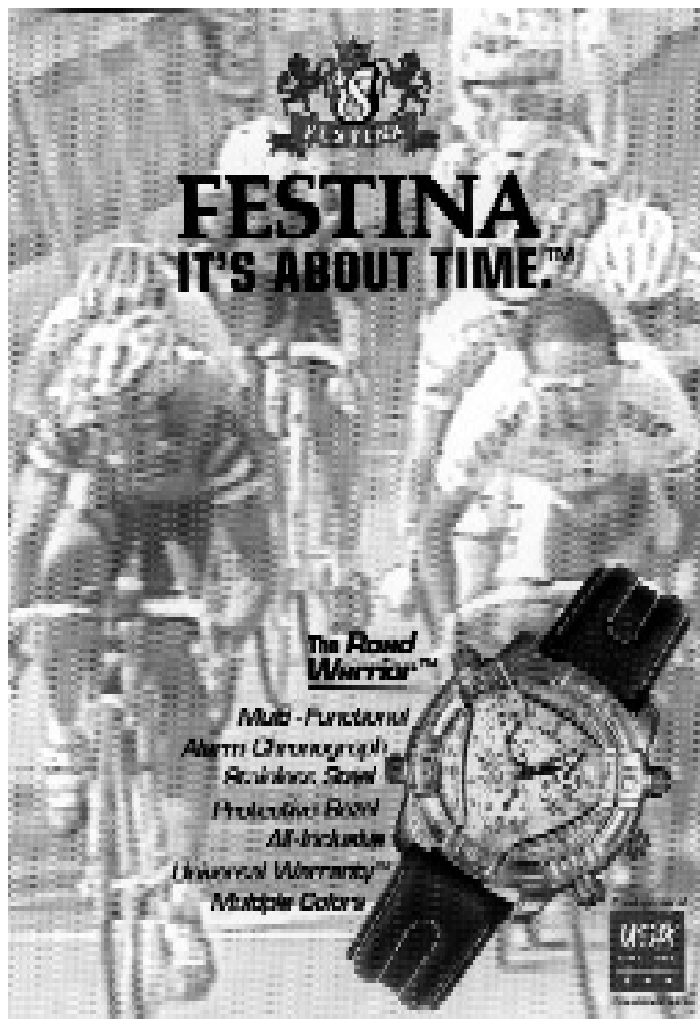
I'd especially like to hear from members who have recently completed their first long tour, whether it was a private trip with friends or the kind of relatively Spartan tour organized by groups like the Sierra Club or Adventure Cycling. How was the leadership? Does the lack of leader screening admit unqualified or disagreeable participants?

And what about those expensive, fully supported gourmet-food-all-the-way 25 mile-per-day trips where you stay in fancy hotels or inns? In France?

If you decide to share your experiences with other BBCers, please call or e-mail me for suggestions. Photographs are especially welcome, even more so if you are willing to part with your original negatives or slides. They will be scanned and returned promptly and undamaged.

If you see more typographical, layout, and stylistic atrocities in this issue than usual, you'll have to blame it on the out-of-town status of Alice Honeywell. She has graciously and tediously proofread all the previous issues, using her skills as professional publications editor. The errors that remain are all mine.

—Fred Gooding



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Membership Renewals:

Please check the expiration date on your mailing label. Your timely renewal is the only sure way to continue receiving ExtraOrdinary reflections and the various other membership benefits. Please see the renewal coupon on page 5 for renewal instructions.

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