

Extra^ordinary Reflections

The Newsletter of the Bombay Bicycle Club, Inc.

March/April 2000

Madison, Wisconsin

Volume 26 Issue 1

Spring BBC Meeting

Where: Shorewood Community Center
901 Swarthmore Court, Madison

When: Sunday, April 2, 5:00 p.m.—7:15 p.m.

•Please see the map on page 10 for directions.

Agenda:

4:30 - BBC Board arrives to set up.

5:00 - Socializing. Soda will be available compliments of the BBC, but bring your own beer. Delinquents will have an opportunity to pay up their dues.

5:30 - Food from Pasqual's—Free to BBC Members!

6:00 - BBC Business Meeting.

6:30 - "Northwoods to Capitol Tour" of June 2000. The presentation will be by its organizers, Kathy and

Eric Schramm (photo below). Please see the article and photos on page 2 for more details on their talk.

7:00 - Door prizes

7:15 - Clean up



These are the speakers for the spring meeting—Kathy and Eric Schramm—before or during or after their "hitch," which took place on last year's trip. You can see them front side to at the spring meeting.

The President's Millennial Message

It's hard to believe that the biking season is upon us again. At least this late winter warm spell has me as well as many others gearing up for the season. I've taken the skis out of the car and set them aside for now, although they'll reside in the trunk again if the weather changes back to a more typical pattern.

Nancy Crabb has done a wonderful job putting together this year's ride schedule, and we owe many thanks to Yellow Jersey and Williamson Street Bicycle shops for underwriting the cost of its printing every year. On behalf of the club, please let me express our appreciation to all of you willing to volunteer your time as ride leaders.

Fred Gooding, our editor, is begging and pleading as usual to get the BBC board members to submit articles for this newsletter; and he's getting very good at it. We're always looking for submissions with information on different rides/tours our members have enjoyed or panned; and every rider seems to have a different opinion. I remember my experience on a RAW (Ride Around Wyoming) tour as being very wet and cold, with only the last day being beautiful, warm and sunny. I'll never forget riding along the Interstate in a frigid rain, being submerged by the spray of passing cars and trucks, for 13 long miles, or waking up to the sound of pouring rain the next morning (which turned to sleet and then to snow). It was odd that the evenings overnight in towns were always beautiful. My companion, obviously swayed by these, has warm and wonderful memories of the ride. The only thing we agree upon is that we won't take the "meal package" again (another long story). So...let us hear about your ride experiences, or your suggestions for changes/improvements for the Bombay Bike Club ride schedule. Fred will be delighted to include your stories.

The spring meeting is set. Come and enjoy the food, socialize, and enjoy the slide presentation on the Northwoods to Capitol Tour. We may also have a brief presentation on the Dane County Bicycle Transportation Plan, Wheels for Winners program, and the status of this year's Gear-Up, as well as the usual business announcements.

—Please turn to page 3.

We also have the opportunity to sponsor a League of American Bicyclists' Rally in Madison in either 2001 or 2002, a joint effort with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and the University of

From the Touring Chair

The ride schedule is printed and members should have received it by the time they read this article. Thanks to all of you who volunteered to lead a ride or two or three!! Thanks also to Williamson Bicycle Works and Yellow Jersey Ltd. for underwriting the printing costs of the ride schedule.

—Nancy Crabb

A Bike Tour with a "Hitch"

•A Review Of The Northwoods to Capitol Tour 1999

•What's New For 2000

The inaugural ride of the Northwoods to Capitol Tour may be over, but it certainly won't soon be forgotten. More than 140 riders took part in the weeklong tour that wove through the small towns of western Wisconsin. With the help of Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW) members, volunteers, family members, friends and sponsors the tour raised almost \$10,000 for the BFW.



The tour began in Superior on July 17th along the beautiful shores of Lake Superior. Participants bicycled down

along the Mississippi River valley and up and over the many ridges of the Driftless Area. Overnights were spent at schools in Webster, Somerset, Pepin, La Crosse, Viroqua, and Spring Green before returning to Madison. The cyclists had a full itinerary with entertainment available almost every night.

A few of the highlights riders experienced were: delicious catered breakfasts and dinners; a wonderful reception from schools in Somerset and Pepin; tubing on the Apple River; a scenic train ride on the old Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railroad; the kindness of the Pepin high school principal who opened up the school's washer and dryer after riders cycled through many hours of rain; the local Pepin music favorite-The Yata Band; a country Amish bakery rest stop; a sunset La Crosse Queen Mississippi River Cruise; Stuart Stott's music and storytelling; the old Akey one-room schoolhouse rest stop, the American Players Theater, and a wonderful celebration dinner back in Madison.

Hot temperatures and humidity crept up on the riders as they neared the tour's end. But all took care to drink plenty of water,



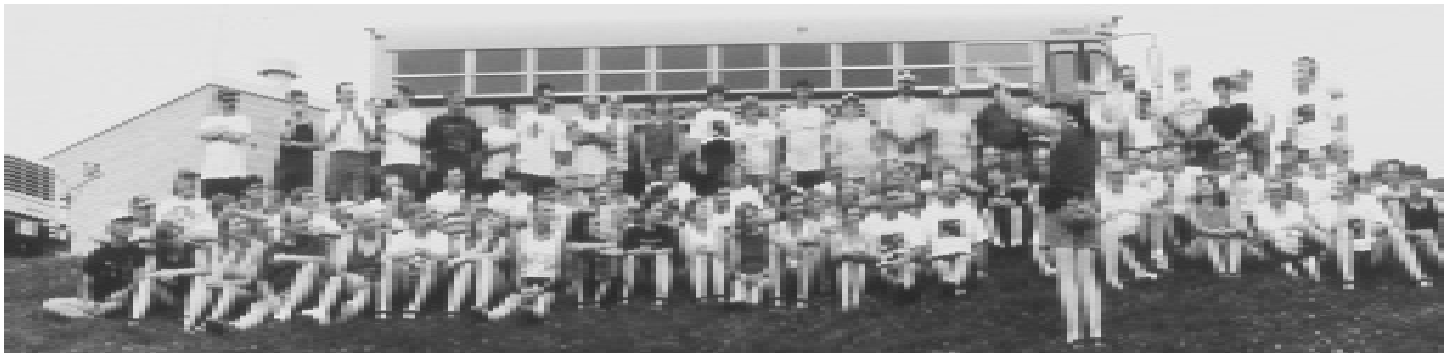
and everyone stayed well hydrated. The celebration dinner took place in pleasantly air-conditioned La Follette High School along with our wedding. After the wedding ceremony Nancy Shook presented us with our official "just married," reflective fanny bumpers, which we donned on our fannies for the remainder of the evening.

Our goal as event directors was to give 140 cyclists the best ride they've ever had. Margaret and John Thatcher from Brainerd, Minn., would concur; they called the tour "incredibly organized." Mike Sommers' article in the September 1999 issue of the Cream City Cycle Club newsletter also critiqued the tour, "being a new tour, expectations for planning and organization we not high. As it turned out, the tour was very well planned and, with a few exceptions, extremely organized. It will be interesting to see how they follow that up next year."

Well, for Northwoods to Capitol Tour 2000, we think we've found a unique and scenic route up through the glacial hills and forests of central and northern Wisconsin. With catered gourmet food prepared on site by our tour chef and highlights such as Dells of Eau Claire, Timm's Hill (the highest point in Wisconsin) and the Bayfield/Chequamegon Bay area, this year promises to be better than ever! Included in the registration fee for all cyclists is an end-of-tour fish boil on the Big Top Chautauqua grounds. Cyclists will also have the opportunity to bicycle in the Apostle Islands by choosing the Grand Boat Tour option. Registration is limited to 300 riders. So sign up now and come join the fun!

Check out our website at: www.bikenorthwoods.com Email us at: bicycle@execpc.com Phone: 608-244-6598 Our address: Northwoods to Capitol Tour, PO Box 3142, Madison, WI 53704-0142

—Kathy and Eric Schramm



The President's Message, continued from the front page Wisconsin. It has been about 10 years since our last one and LAB is eager to have another one here in this center for bicycling. Our contact, Maureen Becker, will be in Madison on April 7 and 8 and desires to meet with people who would be interested in chairing and/or volunteering for this event. Please contact me or Maureen Becker (202-822-1333, ext 220, email maureen@bikeleague.org) if you have any interest in working on this project.

Watch for an upcoming issue of the nationally distributed "Outside" magazine which will have an article featuring bicycle riding in Madison and Dane County. The Bombay Bicycle Club will be mentioned and may be featured in some photographs as well.

Last, but not least, save Sunday, September 3 for this year's Wright Stuff Century; the committee is hard at work already. For those of you who want to contribute to making this event a success, we have plenty of volunteer openings - some of which are completed before the ride starts, freeing you for the ride itself. Contact Bob Steinberg, Johanna Bierwirth, or me if you are willing to help out. This is a great club, made so by all its wonderful and dedicated volunteers. See you at the spring meeting and on the rides!

—Sarah Grimes

First(!) Official(?) Ride of the Millennium

Jake Herro (showing off), Jerry Klotz, Andy Muzi, and an unidentified visitor from the UW-Zero managed to get out of town on New Year's day for the annual pilgrimage to some bar in Verona. This year's special event was Herro's struggle with his bike lock, which finally yielded to a nail file. Photo by Andy M.



National and Foreign Tours for 2000

April 15-20, Y2K Florida Bicycle Safari. fee. 407-788-BIKE, email FFWCLUB@aol.com. www.FloridaFreewheelers.com

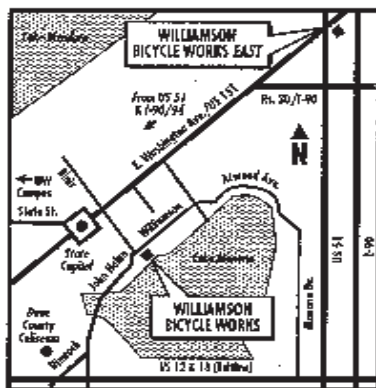
April 30, 2000 34th Annual Minnesota Ironman Bike Ride, Recreational ride in Lakeville, Minnesota. 20, 68, and 100 mile routes. Fee: \$25. registration deadline is April 1. Approximately 5,300 riders. HI-AYH Ironman Ride, 125 SE Main St., Suite 135, Mpls, MN 55414, 612-378-3773, www.mtn.org/mnhostel/

May 5-7, La Crosse, WI, Seminar to Certify Effective Bicycling Instructors sponsored by the Bicycling Federation of Wisconsin. Prerequisite is Road Course 1 and pre-test work required by the League of American Bicyclists. Call 608-251-4456 for more information or e-mail Ellen Pillsbury at BFW@nablist.com

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- Trek

News from the LAB Scenic Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Washing- ton State Will Lure Cyclists to League's Rallies Next Summer

Flip your calendar to the next millennium and start dreaming of Rallies 2000! Reserve the dates now for another fun-filled summer of League Rallies, and stay tuned for further details.

Covered Bridge Rally, Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, Penn-
sylvania—June 2-5, 2000

Join the League in covered bridge country! Madison County has nothing on Columbia County, Pennsylvania. Columbia County, located just north of Harrisburg in Central Pennsylvania, is home to 22—that's right, 22—covered bridges, including the nation's only twin span. And as if that's not enough, neighboring Montour County has another two, for a total of 24 covered bridges, many of which are within biking distance. Come to the Covered Bridge Rally in Bloomsburg and find out for yourself. And who knows? You might find yourself sharing a bridge with an Amish horse and buggy.

Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Rally, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota—June 30-July 3, 2000

The Twin Cities Bicycling Club invites you to St. Paul for a fabulous Fourth of July Holiday Weekend! Experience an outstanding combination of city and country riding, bicycling along roads or paved trails, or leaving the beaten path entirely. See 25 lakes on a 35-mile ride and bike for miles along the Mississippi's green river bluffs and valleys. Visit historic sites such as Fort Snelling, and marvel at such modern delights as the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, the Walker Art Center. And lest we forget what is most near and dear to the cyclist's heart —each year on the July Fourth weekend, St. Paul plays host to the Taste of Minnesota—a food lover's dream come true!

Cascades to the Coast Rally, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington—August 18-21, 2000

The Mount Baker Bicycle Club and the Skagit Bicycle Club invite you to their Pacific Northwest paradise. The charming town of Bellingham, known as the Gateway to the San Juan Islands, awaits discovery. Ride roads, paved trails, and mountain bike trails under the watchful eye of snow-capped Mount Baker. Swim in sparkling lakes that are easy rides from town. A weekend isn't long enough to become immersed in this breath-taking scenery, so make it a real vacation and stay for the Cascade Bicycle Club's Ride Around Washington, immediately following the Rally.

Brochures will be available in January 2000. For more information, contact the League of American Bicyclists at 1612 K Street NW, Suite 401, Washington DC 20006. 202-822-1333. bikeleague@bikeleague.org. www.bikeleague.org.



Group Riding

by David Peterson

Along with 2000 other well-strung-out riders, I was riding east on U.S. Highway 50 in Colorado, nearing the end of a long, hot, and dry climb to Cerro Summit, the third day of Ride the Rockies. I was looking forward to the rest stop at the summit, even though the prospect of shade was nil. Although the grades in Colorado are miles long, they usually aren't as steep as some of our shorter western Wisconsin hills. I maintained a steady 8 mph, and was able to pass numerous riders who were toiling up the grade singly and in small groups. One young man ahead was riding well out into the traffic lane on this 2-lane highway, and not wanting to cross the center line, I passed him on the right on the 8-foot shoulder, leaving him plenty of room. After I arrived at the rest area at the summit and got something to drink, this young man arrived, spotted me, and proceeded to berate me in a loud voice about what a dangerous thing I had done by passing him on the right. I wanted to reply, in an equally loud voice, by asking why he wanted to announce to all within hearing distance that a man old enough to be his father, and a resident of low-elevation Wisconsin at that, had passed him on the grade. I held my tongue, however, and let the incident pass. But I have thought about it often, and considered whether his complaint had any validity. Certainly I erred in not announcing my approach and indicating my intention of passing on the right. And if this situation had occurred on the back side of the pass, where downhill speeds that exceed 45 mph are the norm, I would never have passed on the right. But I still believe, given the slow speeds and wide shoulder, that I did not put either of us in danger.

I need to remember, however, that others may not have experienced the BBC Sunday morning rides, as I have, where unorganized group riding, sometimes at fast speeds, is usual and customary. I expect that the riders ahead of me will not stop suddenly and will hold their line, and that riders overtaking will give me adequate clearance. Of course, we all know that this doesn't always happen. In about 15 years of BBC rides, I have never witnessed a bike-car collision, but I have seen several bike-bike collisions, almost always in unorganized group riding situations. Usually, these could have been avoided if all members of the group had observed the customary group riding etiquette. So let's review a few of the basics.

Keeping a steady pace is a no-brainer. Especially for large groups, a sudden slowing by the leaders will cause an accordion effect, and some unfortunate rider behind will likely overlap wheels and go down, often bringing others behind him/her down too. Road hazards such as potholes and objects on the pavement are especially dangerous for a group, as the non-leaders usually don't see them in time to maneuver smoothly around them. As a result, the rider either hits the obstruction or makes a sudden swerve to avoid it, either maneuver endangering him/herself and others nearby. It is the responsibility of the leaders to point out such hazards with a hand and/or voice signal. All riders in the group are responsible for scanning behind them, ensuring that there is adequate clearance, and signalling whenever they want to move left or right from their line.

—Please turn to page 10

National and Foreign Rides, continued from page 3
seminar is \$350

Cycling International's Biking tours in the Czech Republic. Various tours scheduled, each approximately two weeks, starting from May 14. Last tour starts September 17. Cost: \$1,300 to \$1,450. For more information, call (719) 687-7249; Cycling International, 490 Dani Pl., Divide, CO 80814; e-mail: CyclingInternational@prodigy.net

June 10-17, BAK, Bike Across Kansas, 500 miles \$130, 316-684-8184

June 17-24, GOBA, The Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure, starts Ashland, Ohio. Fee. 614-447-0971. www.goba.com

June 18-24, Cycle Across Missouri, approximately 440 miles, \$210, 314-644-4660

June 25-30, POWWOW Fox Valley Tour, 371 miles, Starts in Wauertown. Basic ride package \$357. For more information, 414-671-4560, e-mail, dennard@execpc.com, Web, www.wisconsinbicycletour.com

July 1-8, GRABAAWR XV. Great Annual Bicycle Adventure Along the Wisconsin River. Limit 1,100, approximately 500 miles, \$140, \$165 with bus ride to Eagle River. Information: 1-888-575-3640 or 608-935-7433. email: wisbike@mhtc.net. Website: www.bikewisconsin.org

July 14-21, Lighthouse 2000. This year's Lighthouse tour explores Nova Scotia. Starts in Portland with a ferry ride to the seaport of

Yarmouth. Daily mileage 50 to 75 miles. Adult \$350, 14/under \$175. Limited to 200. For more information, CAM-AM Wheelers, 140 Emerson Rd. Norway, ME 04268. Phone: 207-743-9018; e-mail: moosa@megalink.net; Web: www.megalink.net/-moosa

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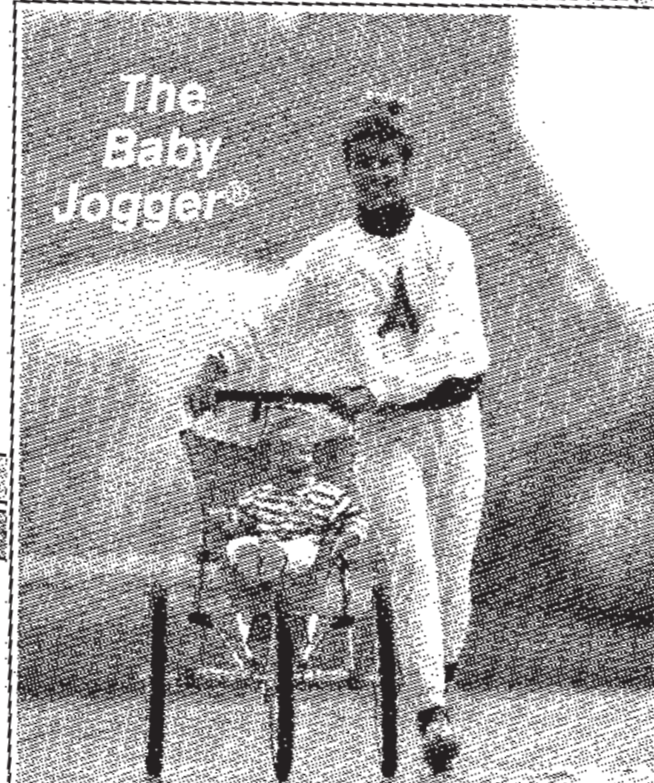
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A Finger Lakes Tour



by Peggy Mangan-Cross

Editor's note: This story is an account of a 1999 Sierra Club National Bike Outing, which brought together some 22 cyclists and staff in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. Peggy was one of the participants and graciously agreed to write about it. The photograph above shows part of the "Grand Canyon of the East," the valley of the Genesee River.

Biking has always been a passion of mine. In the past ten years, however, I've done very little because my bike was uncomfortable. In 1992 I found out why: I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis—spinal arthritis. Regular exercise is critical for those with this disease, especially exercise incorporating the upper body. When a friend told me about a Sierra Club biking tour she took through Manassas, Virginia, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, I longed for such a trip but wondered if I could manage it.

In January 1999, the same friend, Linda Gelpke, said she was considering a Sierra Club bicycle tour of the Finger Lakes in upstate New York, scheduled for August 1999. I was intrigued and it sounded like lots of fun; so why not "just do it." I registered, got myself a hybrid bike (which sits upright), and planned an eight-week training schedule with Linda in eastern Massachusetts. The training schedule incorporated terrain similar to the Finger Lakes region (or so we thought) with long extended rides and lots of

stretching (upper and lower body) before and after. I also made a point of getting off my bike regularly to walk around. Stretching and moving the upper body was a priority for me if I was to enjoy the training and survive the bike trip.

When August arrived I was more fit than I have ever been, and Linda and I were ready—two weeks to go and counting. At that time, we received a call from a woman who lives an hour drive away from us. She had just been accepted on the tour and wondered if we would include her in our carpool to New York. Early on a Saturday morning the three of us, Linda, Ellen, and I, were on our way.



Lunch stop in Naples

We arrived in Keuka Lake State Park late that afternoon, the day before the tour was scheduled to begin. The campground was on a hill above the lake. It turned out to be like the other New York state parks in which we camped—clean, well-maintained, and with a clear, cool lake to swim in. Keuka Lake is a Y-shaped glacial lake approximately 25 miles long. As with all the Finger Lakes, Keuka runs north and south and sits in a valley.

We met several more members of our group when we arrived at the campsite and had dinner together at a nearby restaurant. This was our first opportunity to taste the local wine. Vineyards are abundant in this region of New York, and we learned that white wine is the best choice because the climate is more conducive to growing white grapes.

At 9:00 on Sunday morning after our first group meeting, we set off on our long-anticipated adventure. There were 22 riders including our leader and assistant leader. Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington D.C., New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, Ohio, and Illinois were represented. The weather was beautiful, sunny, around 75 degrees, with a light breeze. We had a nice, but short, downhill start and, as luck would have it, an unforgettable hill soon after. I first spied Italy Hill Road as we left Keuka Campground, 2-1/2 miles away, and when I began climbing it, I was glad I'd trained for the trip. With my speedometer reading 6 mph, I chugged up the hill. Italy Hill Road was approximately 4 miles long and had a vineyard just off its shoulder. If I hadn't been so intent on getting to the top I might have stopped to view beautiful Keuka Lake below. These first miles were a good introduction to our tour and a taste of what the remainder of the week had in store for us.

That first day we biked through a region similar to parts of the Midwest. We rode through many towns like Naples, where we ate lunch. It is a small, neat community with numerous businesses in downtown, and lovely tree-lined streets. Public and private properties are immaculately groomed and maintained. A group of three or four riders challenged themselves to a "power ride" after lunch while the rest of us focused on the well-beaten path to Stony Brook State Park.

The terrain toward Stony Brook continued to be rolling as we went through the small towns of Wayland and Dansville. Seeing classic Victorian architecture with occasional gingerbread detailing was a treat because my background is in design. At times I had trouble keeping my eyes on the road. In Dansville we encountered considerable road construction and a couple of detours, which confused us. Unlike one rider in our group who had the misfortune of blowing a tire, though, my "off-road" style tires came in handy on the gravel surface. Nonetheless, this was one of the few incidents we had with less favorable road conditions. In general, the roads were well-marked, well-traveled, wide, well-maintained, and had a generous, smooth shoulder. To my knowledge no one on our trip met rude or dangerously close car traffic. The "natives" were courteous and friendly. In fact, I remember waving and smiling to a farmer who appeared to be taking great pleasure in plowing his field.

Just as we were leaving downtown Danville, Ellen and I passed a free outdoor concert. We couldn't resist the temptation to stop and plop ourselves down for an afternoon siesta under some cool oak trees. I remember this to be a highlight. Oh, those lazy, hazy days of summer!

Stony Brook State Park was our first day's destination, and the ride ended similarly to the way it had started. The last hill of the day proved to be another challenge. Although I don't remember seeing members of our group pass Ellen and me after we left the outdoor concert, we encountered many of them on the last hill. As I visualize that last hill I recall the scene in the book "Into Thin Air" when climbers on Mount Everest anxiously awaited others struggling through the Hillary Step. For experienced cyclists this would be "a piece of cake." For everyone else, this last hill was a challenge they won't forget. —Please turn to page 8

Stony Brook State Park is a nicely wooded campground with secluded sites. Although we were told there was swimming at this state park, we opted for hanging close to camp. Mealtime was organized and managed by a crew, scheduled and coordinated by our leader. Everyone had an opportunity to cook and clean



The leader's trademark was his bathrobe; required firing squad picture by the falls of the Genesee in Letchworth State Park

up at least once. If I had the choice, I would opt for eating out at least 50 percent of the time and bring my own supplements for on the road.

At Stony Brook I led several members of our group in a yoga-style stretching session. This stretching class became a regular activity each day for the remainder of the week. It was just what we needed to stay loose and flexible for a week of biking.

On day two, after our morning meeting, we were on our way to Letchworth State Park. The weather was sunny, 75 degrees, and beautiful. Lucky for us, the weather proved to be like this almost all week. We biked along roads that were rolling and newly surfaced with wide shoulders. Dairy farms are abundant in this region of New York where they grow corn, alfalfa, wheat and potatoes. Periodically, I'd moo at some cows to get their attention. This was my way of entertaining the locals and myself. In the town of Dalton I remember hearing chimes from a church steeple playing lovely tunes. The music filled the air and lifted my spirit. Simple pleasures.

We arrived at Letchworth State Park just before lunch. The Portageville entrance came after a long, slow climb. Once in the southern end of the park, the narrow road wound down to a clearing situated just above steep waterfalls of the Genesee River. Letchworth comprises over 14,000 acres of scenery along the Genesee River. This state park is referred to as the Grand Canyon of the East and it offers many leisure time activities such as camping (cabins are also available), swimming, fishing, picnicking, and hiking. Winter activities include cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

The afternoon ride took us up a very steep grade for about a mile. We had ten miles to ride to the Highbanks camping area. We meandered along the canyon, stopping several times to view the river below. Highbanks Campground was the first campground that had a store, a welcome amenity for those of us who needed a special treat and some bottled water. I enjoyed the conversation that evening. It was a time to get to know fellow cyclists from the Midwest. Ellen recalls the camaraderie of the group to be the most memorable part of the trip.

One of the highlights of Letchworth State Park, in my opinion, was the aquatic center, which we had a chance to enjoy on our layover day. This center has an Olympic-size pool as well as a div-

ing well. It was a pleasure for me to get into the pool and conduct a quasi-aquatic exercise class and stretch out sore muscles. (When I'm not riding my bike, I instruct water exercise at several clubs outside Boston.) A number of us enjoyed this delightful break from our daily bike riding.

The next day we were on our way to Canandaigua by way of Lima. This ride took us through the college town of Geneseo and the countryside of Livingston County. I recall the roads along this part of our trip as being relatively straight and somewhat flat. Cornfields were plentiful. I'm certain I saw more cornfields in one week than I have in a lifetime. This was the day Ellen drove the SAG wagon. So we made her a grocery list and told her we'd see her at lunch on the town common in Lima. The menu consisted of fresh sliced cold cuts, vine ripened tomatoes, wheat bread, and MacIntosh apples. This was voted "Best Lunch of the Week." Once we had a taste of real food we decided to top it off with an ice cream cone. Two hours later we found the perfect little place. The Peanut Line Country Store is in the vicinity of West Bloomfield and makes the best lemon coolers this side of the Mississippi. Just weeks earlier the Peanut Line hosted a group of 300 cyclists. This



In the "Grand Canyon of the East" charming shop was inundated with weary and thirsty cyclists. No doubt, cyclists put it on the map. Be sure to stop by and treat yourself to a lemon cooler if you're ever in this area. It's worth the trip.

The last day of our ride took us from Canandaigua back to Keuka Lake State Park. About five of us shortened the extended route outside Canandaigua and opted for a fresh cup of coffee at a shop in town. Our leader suggested we meet at Sonnenberg Gardens for lunch. Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens, located in the town of Canandaigua, is a fifty-acre Victorian estate overlooking Canandaigua Lake. A spectacular Queen Anne-style mansion was built in 1887 as the summer home of Frederick Ferris Thompson. Thompson was founder and director of one of the most successful banks in the nineteenth century, now known as Citibank. I thoroughly enjoyed viewing this mansion and strolling through the formal gardens. This was another highlight well worth seeing. After lunch we left Sonnenberg Gardens to ride along the northern edge of Canandaigua Lake. This appears to be a popular summer resort area with lots of boats on the lake as well as a marina situated on the south end of town. That was the afternoon when it rained for at least an hour. Jill, Ellen, and I got drenched and found



The Sonnebend Mansion and Gardens in Canandaigua

ourselves a little giddy and unable to follow our map or written directions. We frequently stopped to chat, check the map, and compare notes. That afternoon seemed unusually long. I recall riding along the crest of hills that overlooked many, many acres of rolling, checkerboard-patterned farms. There was a small store where we stopped hoping to buy bottled water. This store, run by an Amish family, sold fabric, clothing, and home goods. We were told they didn't sell bottled water, yet a young girl was kind enough to bring out a tray with glasses of ice water. Hospitality such as this made our trip memorable.

Keuka Lake Campground is located about one mile above the lake. We had one more long hill to climb before we could collapse. That evening I took a short hike through the woods down to the lake.



Keuka has numerous walking trails, a beach for swimming, and a boat launch. The lake looked inviting for a swim, but we passed up the opportunity.

On Day 6 we could visit wineries, bike around Keuka Lake, or explore Watkins Glen. Linda and I decided to drive to Watkins Glen and explore the gorge. A fellow cyclist, Jerry, joined us for the adventure. I remember hearing about Watkins Glen sometime after the Woodstock Festival when I was a teenager. I recall Watkins Glen being the location for a similar rock festival. Over the years I've learned that Watkins

Glen attracts racecar drivers to its race track, but it wasn't until this bicycle trip that I learned Watkins Glen also attracts visitors to its rocky gorge. We visited the gorge and unfortunately, the three of us were caught unprepared in a tremendous downpour. To remain dry, we decided to hang out in a shallow cave until the rain let up, but to our disappointment the rain didn't let up. We were forced



to dash back to the car and miss 75 percent of the hike through the gorge.

The next day was our final day in the Finger Lakes. Linda, Ellen, and I chose to do a relatively short ride along Skyline Drive just above the campground. We biked a gradual uphill until we reached a plateau overlooking the lake on

both sides. This is the peninsula created by Y-shaped Keuka Lake. A vineyard stretched out for many acres on the bluff overlooking the lake, and we could see for miles in every direction. I'd say this was one of the most picturesque spots on our trip. The day was beautiful, too. Coming down from this bluff we visited an old stone chapel built in the late 1800s. The caretaker was preparing

it for an afternoon wedding.



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The vineyards were magnificent throughout the area.

Group Riding, continued from page 4

Have you noticed that on a climb, when you rise out of your seat to stand on the pedals, your bike momentarily slows or almost stops? If you are following closely on a hill, be aware of this effect when the rider ahead stands, or you may overlap wheels and go down.

Of course, we all know that the trailing rider should call "car back" when an approaching car is intending to overtake the group. Riders who are out too far into the lane (i.e., more than two abreast) should heed this warning and smoothly work themselves back into the group so the car can pass safely. From my observations, this is often ignored. The motorist is either annoyed at inconsiderate bicyclists and/or passes anyway, endangering riders in the group. On a hilly road, it is extremely dangerous for the group to be exposed well out in the traffic lane just after they have crested a hill. Cars approaching from behind may not be aware that bicyclists are on the road ahead.

One place where our group etiquette could be improved considerably is when crossing an intersection where there is a stop sign and cross traffic. On numerous occasions I have observed riders streaming through the intersection behind the leaders pretending that they are just the back of the bus, ignoring the usual courtesies of motorists to take turns crossing the intersection. I understand that no one wants to get separated from the group because it is so hard to get back on. So, how about everyone agreeing that, in situations like this, the riders who cross first will slow the pace to allow those behind to catch up after waiting their turn to cross?

Group riding is one of the reasons I enjoy bicycling so much. For

me, bicycling together with friends is much more fun than riding alone. But if the group is not riding safely, I'd rather drop off and ride by myself. There are also organized groups, such as the various types of pace lines. These are lots of fun for experienced riders, and perhaps the subject of another article.

How to Find the Spring Meeting—April 2



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-
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The Willie & Joe Show

Bicycling magazine's Joe Kurmaskie and Willie Weir from *Adventure Cycling* will "perform" stories from their adventures across America, India, South Africa and the Balkans. Willie and Joe will be on hand for a book signing, performance and give away an Ortlieb ZIP courier bag to one lucky person. After witnessing these two, you'll know the answer to their motto, "Are we still having fun?"

The Faithful and their Cross Training



You can find lots of BBCers here getting ready for the millennial season near the Bear Paw Inn in Langlade. Lots of snow on Valentine's Day.
—Photo by Margaret Peterson

Bombay Bicycle Club of Madison, Inc. Membership Form

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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 11 for renewal instructions.

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A Finger Lakes Tour



by Peggy Mangan-Cross

Editor's note: This story is an account of a 1999 Sierra Club National Bike Outing, which brought together some 22 cyclists and staff in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. Peggy was one of the participants and graciously agreed to write about it. The photograph above shows part of the "Grand Canyon of the East," the valley of the Genesee River.

stretching (upper and lower body) before and after. I also made a point of getting off my bike regularly to walk around. Stretching and moving the upper body was a priority for me if I was to enjoy the training and survive the bike trip.

When August arrived I was more fit than I have ever been, and Linda and I were ready—two weeks to go and counting. At that time, we received a call from a woman who lives an hour drive away from us. She had just been accepted on the tour and wondered if we would include her in our carpool to

Biking has always been a passion of mine. In the past ten years, however, I've done very little because my bike was uncomfortable. In 1992 I found out why: I was diagnosed with Ankylosing Spondylitis—spinal arthritis. Regular exercise is critical for those with this disease, especially exercise incorporating the upper body. When a friend told me about a Sierra Club biking tour she took through Manassas, Virginia, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, I longed for such a trip but wondered if I could manage it.

In January 1999, the same friend, Linda Gelpke, said she was considering a Sierra Club bicycle tour of the Finger Lakes in upstate New York, scheduled for August 1999. I was intrigued and it sounded like lots of fun; so why not "just do it." I registered, got myself a hybrid bike (which sits upright), and planned an eight-week training schedule with Linda in eastern Massachusetts. The training schedule incorporated terrain similar to the Finger Lakes region (or so we thought) with long extended rides and lots of



Lunch stop in Naples

New York. Early on a Saturday morning the three of us, Linda, Ellen, and I, were on our way.

We arrived in Keuka Lake State Park late that afternoon, the day before the tour was scheduled to begin. The campground was on a hill above the lake. It turned out to be like the other New York state parks in which we camped—clean, well-maintained, and with a clear, cool lake to swim in. Keuka Lake is a Y-shaped glacial lake approximately 25 miles long. As with all the Finger Lakes, Keuka runs north and south and sits in a valley.

We met several more members of our group when we arrived at the campsite and had dinner together at a nearby restaurant. This was our first opportunity to taste the local wine. Vineyards are abundant in this region of New York, and we learned that white wine is the best choice because the climate is more conducive to growing white grapes.

At 9:00 on Sunday morning after our first group meeting, we set off on our long-anticipated adventure. There were 22 riders including our leader and assistant leader. Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington D.C., New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, Ohio, and Illinois were represented. The weather was beautiful, sunny, around 75 degrees, with a light breeze. We had a nice, but short, downhill start and, as luck would have it, an unforgettable hill soon after. I first spied Italy Hill Road as we left Keuka Campground, 2-1/2 miles away, and when I began climbing it, I was glad I'd trained for the trip. With my speedometer reading 6 mph, I chugged up the hill. Italy Hill Road was approximately 4 miles long and had a vineyard just off its shoulder. If I hadn't been so intent on getting to the top I might have stopped to view beautiful Keuka Lake below. These first miles were a good introduction to our tour and a taste of what the remainder of the week had in store for us.

That first day we biked through a region similar to parts of the Midwest. We rode through many towns like Naples, where we ate lunch. It is a small, neat community with numerous businesses in downtown, and lovely tree-lined streets. Public and private properties are immaculately groomed and maintained. A group of three or four riders challenged themselves to a "power ride"

after lunch while the rest of us focused on the well-beaten path to Stony Brook State Park.

The terrain toward Stony Brook continued to be rolling as we went through the small towns of Wayland and Dansville. Seeing classic Victorian architecture with occasional gingerbread detailing was a treat because my background is in design. At times I had trouble keeping my eyes on the road. In Dansville we encountered considerable road construction and a couple of detours, which confused us. Unlike one rider in our group who had the misfortune of blowing a tire, though, my "off-road" style tires came in handy on the gravel surface. Nonetheless, this was one of the few incidents we had with less favorable road conditions. In general, the roads were well-marked, well-traveled, wide, well-maintained, and had a generous, smooth shoulder. To my knowledge no one on our trip met rude or dangerously close car traffic. The "natives" were courteous and friendly. In fact, I remember waving and smiling to a farmer who appeared to be taking great pleasure in plowing his field.

Just as we were leaving downtown Danville, Ellen and I passed a free outdoor concert. We couldn't resist the temptation to stop and plop ourselves down for an afternoon siesta under some cool oak trees. I remember this to be a highlight. Oh, those lazy, hazy days of summer!

Stony Brook State Park was our first day's destination, and the ride ended similarly to the way it had started. The last hill of the day proved to be another challenge. Although I don't remember seeing members of our group pass Ellen and me after we left the outdoor concert, we encountered many of them on the last hill. As I visualize that last hill I recall the scene in the book "Into Thin Air" when climbers on Mount Everest anxiously awaited others struggling through the Hillary Step. For experienced cyclists this would be "a piece of cake." For everyone else, this last hill was a challenge they won't forget.

—Please

turn to page 8



The leader's trademark was his bathrobe; required firing squad picture by the falls of the Genesee in Letchworth State Park

Stony Brook State Park is a nicely wooded campground with secluded sites. Although we were told there was swimming at this state park, we opted for hanging close to camp. Mealtime was organized and managed by a crew, scheduled and coordinated by our leader. Everyone had an opportunity to cook and clean up at least once. If I had the choice, I would opt for eating out at least 50 percent of the time and bring my own supplements for on the road.

At Stony Brook I led several members of our group in a yoga-style stretching session. This stretching class became a regular activity each day for the remainder of the week. It was just what we needed to stay loose and flexible for a week of biking.

On day two, after our morning meeting, we were on our way to Letchworth State Park. The weather was sunny, 75 degrees, and beautiful. Lucky for us, the weather proved to be like this almost all week. We biked along roads that were rolling and newly surfaced with wide shoulders. Dairy farms are abundant in this region of New York where they grow corn, alfalfa, wheat and potatoes. Periodically, I'd moo at some cows to get their attention. This was my way of entertaining the locals and myself. In the town of Dalton I remember hearing chimes from a church steeply climbing the steeple.

We arrived at Letchworth State Park just before lunch. The Portageville entrance came after a long, slow climb. Once in the southern end of the park, the narrow road wound down to a clearing situated just above steep waterfalls of the Genesee River. Letchworth comprises over 14,000 acres of scenery along the Genesee River. This state park is referred to as the Grand Canyon of the East and it offers many leisure time activities such as camping (cabins are also available), swimming, fishing, picnicking, and hiking. Winter activities include cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

The afternoon ride took us up a very steep grade for about a mile. We had ten miles to ride to the Highbanks camping area. We meandered along the canyon, stopping several times to view the river below. Highbanks Campground was the first campground that had a store, a welcome amenity for those of us who needed a special treat and some bottled water. I enjoyed the conversation that evening. It was a time to get to know fellow cyclists from the Midwest. Ellen recalls the camaraderie of the group to be

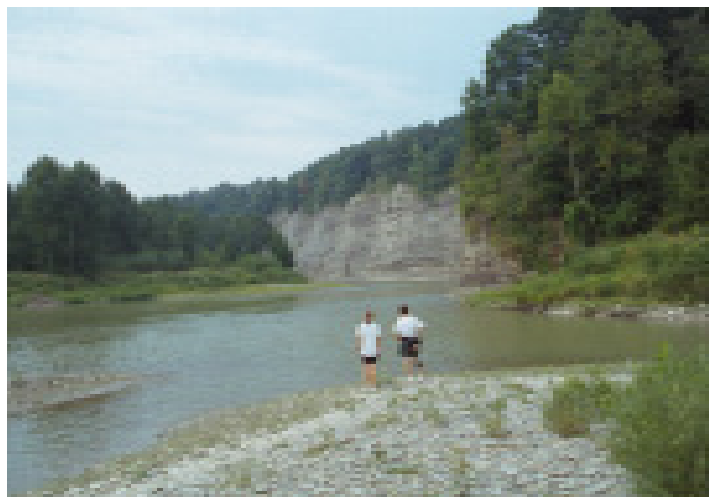


The Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens in Canandaigua

the most memorable part of the trip.

One of the highlights of Letchworth State Park, in my opinion, was the aquatic center, which we had a chance to enjoy on our layover day. This center has an Olympic-size pool as well as a diving well. It was a pleasure for me to get into the pool and conduct a quasi-aquatic exercise class and stretch out sore muscles. (When I'm not riding my bike, I instruct water exercise at several clubs outside Boston.) A number of us enjoyed this delightful break from our daily bike riding.

The next day we were on our way to Canandaigua by way of Lima. This ride took us through the college town of Geneseo and the countryside of Livingston County. I recall the roads along this part of our trip as being relatively straight and somewhat flat. Cornfields were plentiful. I'm certain I saw more cornfields in one week than I have in a lifetime. This was the day Ellen drove the SAG wagon. So we made her a grocery list and told her we'd see her at lunch on the town common in Lima. The menu consisted of fresh sliced cold cuts, vine ripened tomatoes, wheat bread, and MacIntosh apples. This was voted "Best Lunch of the Week." Once we had a taste of real food we decided to top it off with an

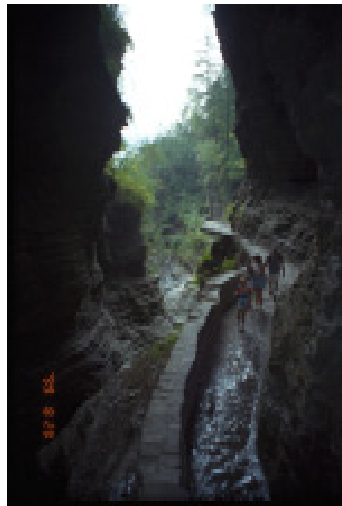


In the "Grand Canyon of the East" ice cream cone. Two hours later we found the perfect little place. The Peanut Line Country Store is in the vicinity of West Bloomfield and makes the best lemon coolers this side of the Mississippi. Just weeks earlier the Peanut Line hosted a group of 300 cyclists. This charming shop was inundated with weary and thirsty cyclists. No doubt, cyclists put it on the map. Be sure to stop by and treat yourself to a lemon cooler if you're ever in this area. It's worth the trip.

The last day of our ride took us from Canandaigua back to Keuka Lake State Park. About five of us shortened the extended route outside Canandaigua and opted for a fresh cup of coffee at a shop in town. Our leader suggested we meet at Sonnenberg Gardens for lunch. Sonnenberg Mansion and Gardens, located in the town of Canandaigua, is a fifty-acre Victorian estate overlooking Canandaigua Lake. A spectacular Queen Anne-style mansion was built in 1887 as the sum

mer home of Frederick Ferris Thompson. Thompson was founder and director of one of the most successful banks in the nineteenth century, now known as Citibank. I thoroughly enjoyed viewing this mansion and strolling through the formal gardens. This was another highlight well worth seeing.

After lunch we left Sonnenberg Gardens to ride along the northern edge of Canandaigua Lake. This appears to be a popular summer resort area with lots of boats on the lake as well as a marina situated on the south end of town. That was the afternoon when it rained for a least an hour. Jill, Ellen, and I got drenched and found ourselves a little giddy and unable to follow our map or written directions. We frequently stopped to chat, check the map, and compare notes. That afternoon seemed unusually long. I recall riding along the crest of hills that overlooked many, many acres of rolling, checkerboard-patterned farms. There was a small store where we stopped hoping to buy bottled water. This store, run by an Amish family, sold fabric, clothing, and home goods. We were told they didn't sell bottled water, yet a young girl was kind enough to bring out a tray with glasses of ice water. Hospitality such as this made our trip memorable.



Keuka Lake Campground is located about one mile above the lake. We had one more long hill to climb before we could collapse. That evening I took a short hike through the woods down to the lake. Keuka has numerous walking trails, a beach for swimming, and a boat launch. The lake looked inviting for a swim, but we passed up the opportunity.

On Day 6 we could visit wineries, bike around Keuka Lake, or explore Watkins Glen. Linda and I decided to drive to Watkins Glen and explore the gorge. A fellow cyclist, Jerry, joined us for the adventure. I remember hearing about Watkins Glen sometime after the Woodstock Festival when I was a teenager. I recall Watkins Glen being the location for a similar rock festival. Over the years I've learned that Watkins Glen attracts racecar drivers to its race track, but it wasn't until this bicycle trip that I learned Watkins Glen also attracts visitors to its rocky gorge. We visited the gorge and unfortunately, the three of us were caught unprepared in a tremendous downpour. To remain dry, we decided to hang out in a shallow cave until the rain let up, but to our disappointment the rain didn't let up. We were forced to dash back to the car and miss 75 percent of the



hike through the gorge. The next day was our final day in the Finger Lakes. Linda, Ellen, and I chose to do a relatively short ride along Skyline Drive just above the campground. We biked a gradual uphill until we reached a plateau overlooking the lake on both sides. This is the peninsula created by Y-shaped Keuka Lake. A vineyard stretched out for many acres on the bluff overlooking the lake, and we could see for miles in every direction. I'd say this was one of the most picturesque spots on our trip. The day was beautiful, too. Coming down from this bluff we visited an old stone chapel built in the late 1800s. The caretaker was preparing it for an afternoon wedding.

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