

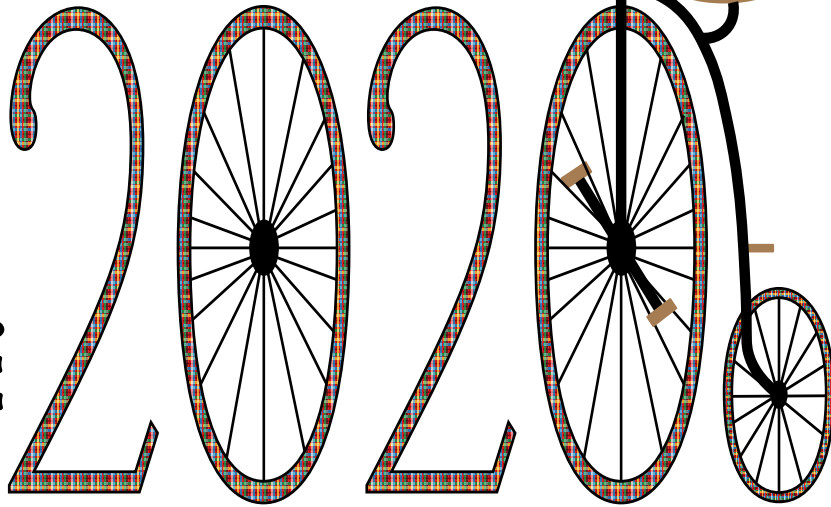
WINTER 2019-2020



CHAIN REACTiON

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORANGE COUNTY WHEELMEN

Happy New Year



HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME 2020

OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

CALENDAR: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar

OFFICERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419328-officers

DIRECTORS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419332-directors

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-supporting-memberships

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Held the first Sunday of each month starting 11am at Carl's Jr., Newport Beach. Take the 405 Freeway to the MacArthur exit. Go south 0.8 miles and turn left on Campus. Go 0.3 miles and turn right into Carl's Jr. (at Von Karman). All Officers and Directors are expected to attend to conduct business. Other interested members may also attend.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Held typically the first Thursday every other month at Irvine Ranch Water District, Sand Canyon Ave. in the city of Irvine. Light dinner starting at 6:30pm with meeting starting at 7pm. Different speaker each meeting.

REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

All Registration for OCW events require the registrant to be logged in. Be sure to always check for discount codes. You will only see the discount code if you are a current member of OCW. The discount code if applicable will be located on a separate page in the specific event area. To confirm if you are current, check the membership data base. If you do not see the link for the membership data base, your membership has expired by at least a month or more.

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. The website functions are different and I have learned new ways within this site logic, to apply new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. I am continually upgrading the website when there are better ways to protect your personal information, but have it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW.

events@ocwheelmen.org

Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

Happy New Year!

I can't believe 2019 is over. It seems the older I get the faster the years fly by!

What new year's resolutions have you made? I think I gave those up a long time ago. Instead, I just try to eat healthy and make sure I'm either riding my mountain bike, or hiking.

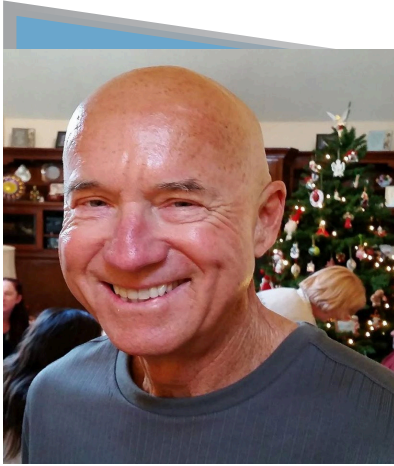
With the recent rains the trails have been closed to all trail users making it hard for Alan to schedule Goat Hill rides. We recently spoke with the [OC Parks](#) rangers regarding trail closures, and the importance that everyone stay off the trails during those closures. Check out Hiking Corner on page 15 to see [OC Parks](#) rules, and anytime there is rain always check their website to see which trails are open, or closed before using them.

I hope your 2020 gets off to a great start with lots of great bike rides.

Enjoy the ride!

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Joe Bernhardt

The President

As I look back on 2019, I want to gratefully thank all of our wonderful OCW members who have volunteered in working at our numerous club events and activities. As you know, since losing Amtrak, we have been on a major austerity kick to limit expenses. Yes, we no longer have Amtrak. But with nearly 500 riders, the inaugural Pacific Coast 100 was successful beyond our expectations. We decided at the start of 2019 we could not afford a club-supported yearend Holiday Party. The good news is that we do have sufficient funds to host a 2020 Awards and Installation Banquet in February. Bruce Campbell is working on the details and they will be published in the near future.

Going forward, club members will continue to enjoy our popular Spring and Fall Metric rides, General Meetings every other month, and bi-monthly Bicycle Social Parties. We currently have club-sponsored rides six out of seven days per week, and once summer returns, will expand back to seven.

I encourage everyone to reach out to non member cyclists to talk up OCW and encourage them to try us out on a club ride. The best way to grow the club is through word of mouth. It's amazing how new riders can change the tenor of our rides so speak up and invite a friend.

I am really happy that Alan Vester has once again taken charge of Goat Hill, our mountain bike group, and is scheduling rides each month. Mountain Biking is a great way to see some

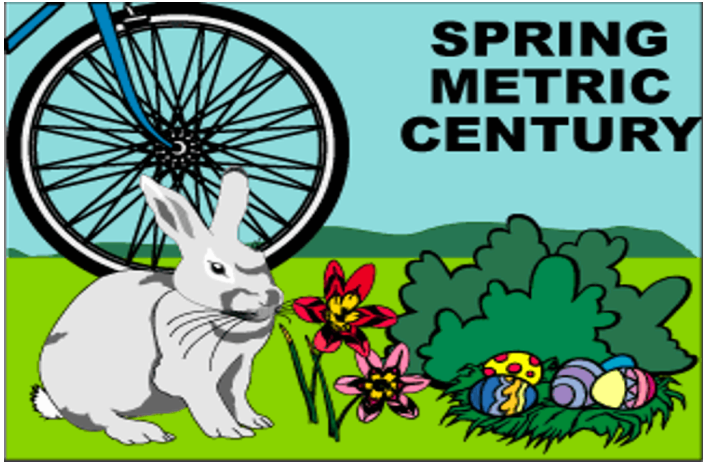
beautiful back country scenery, sharpen bike handling skills, and gain core strength. It's also generally safer as we do not have to contend with cars. Watch for his rides on the club calendar, and come join us for a fun experience. For more information, see our home page for details.

Breathless Agony will be held on June 6th, 2020. This is one month later than the historical date and a change was needed due to major conflicts with other events on the same weekend. There are only so many riders who can tackle this beast and the club decided a date change was needed to increase ridership. As a result, Breathless will no longer be part of the King of the Mountain series. Last year only 30 riders who completed Breathless were part of the KOM series. While we are saddened that we could no longer remain part of the KOM series, we felt we needed to do something different to increase attendance. There are no other major events on or around that weekend so we anticipate an increase in attendance. For the second year in a row, I have agreed to act as ride director. To all of our volunteers, please keep the weekend of June 6th free as we will once again need your assistance.

Finally, my wife and I hope to be able to move to the Reno, Nevada area sometime in 2020. We have two of our three daughters living in Northern Nevada and my wife is currently flying to Reno each month to be near our grandchildren. As a result, I have decided not to run for a second term as President. Replacing

me is Steve Loughran who will make an outstanding President. He is full of great ideas, and I know he will energize the club with a new direction. Please be sure to offer your support to Steve as you have done with me.

Replacing Steve as Secretary is Cheryl Burd. At a recent board meeting, Cheryl covered for Steve and did such a great job in taking the minutes I asked her to become the new Secretary.



Breathless Agony



A Different Way To Patch a Tube

Typically, when we get a flat on the road, we replace the tube with a spare one that we carried. Then we carry the punctured tube back home and patch it when we get around to it or discard it. New tubes are about \$6.00 each, so a good option is patching it. For that, we need a patch kit, typically about \$3.00 with maybe six usable patches. Then the process is locating the puncture, scraping the tube, applying the cement and letting it dry, then peel off the coverings of the patch, applying the patch, and hope for the best. Sometimes for me, the patch really doesn't stick so well because my cement coverage wasn't quite right, or other problems.

Here is a much simpler and very cheap method that I have been using lately. Get some Shoe Goo (figure 1) and after scraping the tube, apply it thickly over the affected area (figure 2). The tube can be partly inflated, so you can immediately see the sealing effect. Then let it dry overnight. I have ridden many miles with that kind of repair with no problems. The Shoe Goo is only \$6.00 for a tube that lasts about two years and is good for many other kinds of repairs. So for a tube repair that saves time, proven reliable so far, and costs almost nothing, consider this different way to patch a tube.





the *VICE* President's Message

By Bruce Campbell, Vice President

It's the "most wonderful time of the year" or at least it was.

By the time you read this article, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's have all passed. It is my hope that you all enjoyed the holiday season with family and friends.

My wife Jan and I did our annual Las Vegas visit just prior to Thanksgiving. We like to visit Sin City at this time of year, (Sun-Wed) just prior to Thanksgiving Thursday, just prior to the overly crowded 4-day holiday weekend starts. You can walk right into top restaurants on the strip or "Downtown" on Fremont Street without reservations and casino floors are pretty empty.

Monday evening we saw David Copperfield and then on Tuesday the epic Aerosmith concert at the MGM Park Theater. This 5,000-seat theater was opened in 2016 and is a really nice venue with comfortable seats with good views from all locations of the theater.

Aerosmith put on quite the performance and the highlight was their encore where they opened with Dream On and ended with Walk This Way. Steven Tyler was off the charts with his energy as a 71 year old grandfather and the whole evening was very exciting.



I also got in my annual ride with local Clark County paramedic Chris Grinder who kindly plans out a ride to match one of my open mornings. Chris is a Canadian who moved his family to Las Vegas over 20 years ago. He was a finalist for the Canadian Olympic Ski team as a youngster and is just an excellent cyclist. He stands 6'4" and has about 80 lbs on me.

He selected a ride in Red Rock Canyon which many of you have either driven or ridden before. This was my first time riding Red Rock and I real-

ly enjoyed the 12-mile one way traffic route and the gorgeous scenery thru the park.



Looking forward, it's already 2020 and we have great news about the annual banquet to be held Saturday 2/29/20 - a leap year party! The venue will be the Woodbridge Village Association community center at 31 Creek Road between Alton and Barranca. The best part will be the guest speaker, Amber Neben, who has compiled quite a list of professional accomplishments including:

- UCI world time trial championship in 2016 and 2008
- U.S. national road race championship in 2003 and 2017

- 2008 U.S. Olympic team and came 33rd in the road race event in Beijing
- 2012 U.S. Olympic team and came in 7th in the time trial event in London

We will also present club cycling awards, install new OCW Board officers and announce the OCW Member of the Year award!

Another date to keeping mind is Wednesday, January 15th, which will be our first OCW General Meeting of 2020. Club members Cathy and Lee Painter will present their Cycling Columbia adventure from July of 2019 which after speaking with the Painters I have titled:

“Cycling Columbia - 270 miles of jungles, coffee plantations, dirt roads and more...”

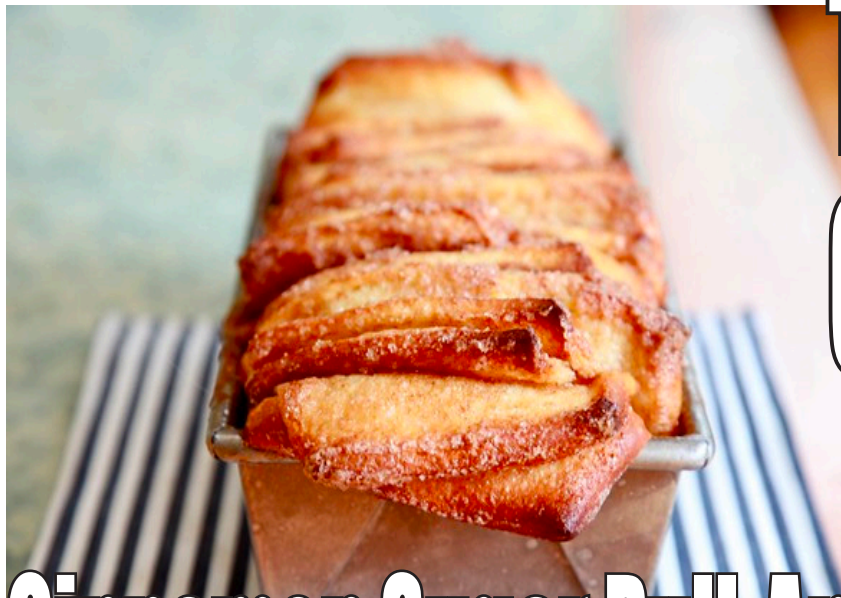
Cathy and Lee summarize their trip as:

“This month’s talk is about a bicycle tour in Colombia, Mas Alla del Horizonte (Beyond the Horizon), led by Carlos Carvajal of Pedalando Alma (Pedalling Soul). Ten days featuring friendly people, good food, great mountain views, remote roads, tiny villages.

The trip was a 270-mile loop starting in Medellin, the city of perpetual spring. The route was 60 percent paved and 40 percent what Google translated as “uncovered” (dirt) roads. We went through jungles, coffee plantations, cattle ranches, and strawberry fields. And since this is Colombia there were hills and hills and hills. Best of all, prices were very, very reasonable.”



The Hungry Eyelist



Cinnamon Sugar Pull-Apart Bread

Makes: one 9x5x3-inch loaf

Recipe provided by joythebaker.com

For the Dough:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 1/4 teaspoons (1 envelope) active dry yeast
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 ounces unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

To activate yeast: whisk yeast into 3 tablespoons of warm water. The water should be between 105 and 115 degrees F. Add a pinch of granulated sugar and allow the mixture to sit for about 5 minutes, until the mixture is foamy and frothy. Your yeast is ready to go! If the mixture does not foam and froth, toss the yeast and try again with another package of yeast. Add the activated yeast when you combine the wet and dry ingredients.

For the Filling:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground nutmeg
- 2 ounces unsalted butter, melted until browned

In a large mixing bowl (I used just the bowl of my stand mixer) whisk together 2 cups flour, sugar, yeast, and salt. Set aside.

Whisk together eggs and set aside.

In a small saucepan, melt together milk and butter until butter has just melted. Remove from the heat and add water and vanilla extract. Let mixture stand for a minute or two, or until the mixture registers 115 to 125 degrees F.

Pour the milk mixture into the dry ingredients and mix with a spatula. Add the eggs and stir the mixture until the eggs are incorporated into the batter. The eggs will feel soupy and it'll seem like the dough and the eggs are never going to come together. Keep stirring. Add the remaining 3/4 cup of flour and stir with the spatula for about 2 minutes. The mixture will be sticky. That's just right.

Place the dough in a large, greased bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and a clean kitchen towel. Place in a warm space and allow to rest until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

While the dough rises, whisk together the sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg for the filling. Set aside. Melt 2 ounces of butter until browned. Set aside. Grease and flour a 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Set that aside too.

Deflate the risen dough and knead about 2 tablespoons of flour into the dough. Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let rest for 5 minutes. On a lightly floured work surface, use a rolling pin to roll the dough out. The dough should be 12 inches tall and about 20 inches long. If you can't get the dough to 20 inches long... that's okay. Just roll it as large as the dough will go. Use a pastry brush to spread melted butter across all of the dough. Sprinkle with all of the sugar and cinnamon mixture. It might seem like a lot of sugar. Seriously? Just go for it.

Slice the dough vertically, into six equal-sized strips. Stack the strips on top of one another and slice the stack into six equal slices once again. You'll have six stacks of six squares. Layer the dough squares in the loaf pan like a flip-book. Place a kitchen towel over the loaf pan and allow to rest in a warm place for 30 to 45 minutes or until almost doubled in size.

Place a rack in the center of the oven and pre-heat to 350 degrees F. Place loaf in the oven and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until the top is very golden brown. The top may be lightly browned, but the center may still be raw. A nice, dark, golden brown will ensure that the center is cooked as well.

Remove from the oven and allow to rest for 20 to 30 minutes. Run a butter knife around the edges of the pan to loosen the bread and invert onto a clean board. Place a cake stand or cake plate on top of the upside-down loaf and carefully invert so it's right side up. Serve warm.

NOTE: When time doesn't allow making dough and you want to whip this thing up fast use ready-made pizza dough such as Trader Joe's plain pizza dough. The dough won't be sweet, but with all the sugar and butter in the recipe, the finished product will still be sweet enough!

CLASSIFIEDS

1. Cannondale Compact (50/34) Hollow Si Crankset: 175mm crank arms, press fit 30. Less than 200 miles, \$125
2. Easton EA90 SL "700" Wheelset with SRAM 11-32 cassette, non-disc: \$175

Contact:
Doug McIntyre
text: 310-245-6592
email: trenchard.mcintyre@gmail.com





By Kevin Ansel

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Many of you may know Joe Polance and his wife Margaret from the Saturday morning OCW rides. Joe has been a cyclist for over 40 years. But what you may not know about Joe is that he is also a baseball player. On Sundays you will find him playing center field for the Escondido Padres in a 55-plus Men's Senior Baseball League (MSBL). Joe affectionately refers to it as "Old Man Baseball." Joe played college baseball for the University of California Riverside. For a short time after college he headed north to play in the Alaskan Baseball League. Joe bats and throws left handed but can switch hit and bat from the right side as well. This makes him a tough opponent when at the plate.

The Men's Senior Baseball League is made up of some ex-major leaguers, ex-minor leaguers, ex-college players, and guys who just love playing baseball. Joe has mentioned that there is a lot of drama in the league. Many of the players take the game very seriously.

This season Joe was one of the league leaders in batting with an average of .514. In October his team traveled to Arizona to play the MSBL World Series. The series was comprised of teams from all around the country. The age groups varied from 25 plus to 70 plus. His team played in the 60 plus division. It was an 8-game series that included a couple of double headers. The pitching in the series is very good with high speeds and accuracy. Most teams recruit the best pitchers to play in the tournament. The series is played in various ball parks around the Phoenix area. This included the Hohokam Stadium where the Oakland A's play their spring training games. Joe played well for the series.

One of his teammates described Joe as "Roaming the outfield and making catches like Mike Trout of the Angel's." Joe also had several stolen bases, 12 hits, 8 RBIs, and batted .480. His team ended up in the consolation finals

but lost a close game to a rival. Because of his performance he has been actively recruited by other teams.



Joe and Margaret recently came back from a vacation in Japan where they attended 5 Japanese Baseball games. He told me it was fascinating to see how the Japanese fans cheer and applaud for their teams. It's much different than fans in the United States. They have special cheering sections. If you don't live up to fans' cheering expectations you may be asked to leave the section.

If you see Joe out on an OCW bike ride you should ask him about baseball. Besides playing the game he is a walking, or riding in this case, baseball historian. His knowledge of the game is outstanding. Joe is looking forward to the upcoming season and will surely be roaming center field again. Not bad for an "Old Man." For more information about Men's Senior Baseball League check out www.msblnational.com.





How to Solve Your Cycling-Related Neck Pain

By: Laguna Orthopedic Rehabilitation

Do you experience any neck pain when riding your bike?

Unfortunately, it's all too common among the cyclists we see here at Laguna Orthopedic Rehabilitation. And it's not unexpected when you consider the potential for spending large amounts of time in poor positions on the bike. With this in mind, it's easy to feel neck pain is normal. But it isn't, or at least it shouldn't be. So, let's cover the basics of why your neck may hurt when cycling and what you can do about it.

Neck Pain When Riding

Cycling is unique in that it offers wonderful physiological benefits, but also forces us to adopt relatively unnatural positions - like sitting and leaning forward, for long periods of time. And this can be tricky for the neck as it extends to allow us to look straight ahead. The degree of extension decreases on a mountain bike and increases on a road bike based on the amount of forward lean involved.

This extended neck position can create pressure on the joints and soft tissues at the back of the neck, opening us up to stiffness and irritation over time.

Common Neck-Related Symptoms

Pain and stiffness aren't the only neck-related symptoms you may experience during those long hours on the bike. The following are other common symptoms associated with neck dysfunction:

- Headaches
- Pins, needles & tingling into hands
- Cold or burning sensation into hands
- Grip weakness
- Achy arm or hand
- Tennis Elbow/Golfer's Elbow
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed

Neck Pain is Not Normal

Before we discuss why your neck might be sore and what you can do about it, let's set some standards.

Despite what many think and feel, neck pain is not normal. Common, yes, but certainly not normal. It's not something you deserve to have with age or activity. Now, it can certainly feel like it's unavoidable sometimes, but this often hides a deeper cause. So much so that any neck pain from cycling is highly likely to be a consequence of something else entirely. You just need to know what to look for and where to find it.



The Root Cause of Neck Pain When Riding

This may sound strange, but your day-to-day neck postures and shapes have the biggest say in how your neck will feel on the bike. Not very sexy is it?

To get a sense of what we mean by this, ask yourself two questions:

- a) How many hours a week do you ride?
- b) How many hours do you spend sitting and/or looking down throughout the week?

If we consider the average ride to be an hour, it's easy to accumulate four, five and even six hours a week on the bike. And that sounds like a lot of time spent in an awkward neck position. That is until you measure it up against the time you may spend sitting and looking down outside of this.

The average American spends approximately three hours a day using a smartphone alone. That's about 21 hours a week. It doesn't include time spent looking down at work, reading or reclining watching TV - things that likely dwarf smartphone use. In short, these moments count if for no other reason than we spend so much time doing them each day. Even if you don't spend hours a day in one particular shape, things quickly compound if these moments stack up.

Constantly looking down is tricky for a few reasons:

1. It creates a distinct hinge in our neck which it's forced to cope with over time.
2. It's hard for us to be aware of these poor shapes as our attention is elsewhere.
3. We accumulate so much time in these shapes.

This mix of features leads to stiffer, tighter and more overloaded neck tissue. If this continues unabated, we creep closer to our tissue's threshold for pain and dysfunction. And this is where cycling becomes relevant. Cycling is

unlikely to create this dysfunction on its own (unless it's your dominant neck shape), but its unique positional demands may expose something you've taken into cycling.

What You Should Do

With the above in mind, what can you do to try and improve your neck pain when cycling? Well, thankfully things aren't too complicated. We need to focus on improving the health of your neck tissue and work on putting it in a better shape throughout the day.

Try these four tips and let us know how you go.

1. Free up your neck. Take a tennis ball or lacrosse ball and gently let it press into your neck. Go looking for tightness and stiffness just as much as any pain or tenderness. Look side-side, up and down before and after to gauge progress.

2. Mobilize your upper back. We sometimes forget the neck literally connects to the upper back and it can often be just as stiff, if not more, than the neck. Extending your neck to look forward on the bike requires a mobile upper back. Stiffness here can increase the load on your neck, setting you up for pain. Take the same tennis or lacrosse ball and let it gently press into your upper back as well. Again, test and re-test your movements to see progress.

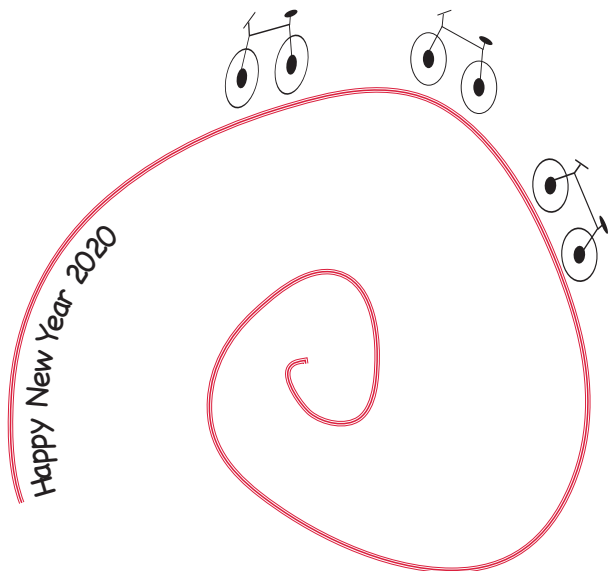
3. Make better daily neck positions a priority. Be mindful of holding your phone up higher and not letting it rest on your lap. Lift up your computer screen or reconfigure your comfortable spot on the couch to keep you from looking down as much. This will help increase your awareness of the shapes your neck is in and decrease unnecessary poor loading, having you better prepared to tolerate time on the bike.

4. Consider a professional bike fit. This won't be news to many, but double-check you're optimizing what you have to work with while on the bike. If the balance between your seat and handlebars (height/distance) is a little off, it may result in unnecessary extra load going through your neck.

So, combine a number of these tips and you'll hopefully appreciate why neck pain when cycling is not only abnormal but often completely unnecessary. It just takes a little shift in perspective.

If you'd like help with cycling-related neck pain, consider giving us a call here at Laguna Orthopedic Rehabilitation on (949) 443-5442. Alternatively, come in for a professional bike fitting to optimize your experience on the bike or visit us at www.lorpt.com.

Good luck!



Join or Renew Your Membership



↑
Just
Click

HIKING CORNER

ocparks



Wet Weather Brings Trail Closures

During and after rain, check the Alerts page for information about current trail closures, which may last up to three days following significant rain.

Rainy weather this winter is bringing some much-needed drought relief to Southern California, but it does have another effect – trail closures at County regional and wilderness parks.

Is my favorite park open?

Check trail status before you make plans to visit. Here's how.

[OC Parks.com Alerts Page](#)

The most up-to-date information about trail conditions is available on our Alerts page, which rangers update as they close and open trails.

Call the Park

Park staff record a closure message when trails are closed.

OC Parks [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

These are updated from website alerts based on staff availability.

For information including County road closures, rainfall data, hazards and warnings, visit the [OC Public Works Storm Center](#).

Why do the trails close?

All this wet weather brings a welcome change that helps plants and wildlife thrive, but it can also pose a challenge for trails. OC Parks carefully evaluates potential storm damage in an effort to keep trails fun and sustainable, but we also need your help.

Any use too soon on wet trails can cause long-lasting damage to trails, which is why closures may last up to three days after significant rain. These closures help keep trails and visitors safe.

During cool and wet winter months, the trails take more time to dry out, and the closures may extend past the actual rainfall for up to three days following the storm. Once trails reopen, visitors can further help avoid damage by steering clear of remaining muddy spots.

After each rain, park rangers assess trail conditions. Trails are always reopened as soon as possible, and the website is updated to reflect the status.

Please help OCParks and the trails by respecting all closures.





MountainBike Dude

By Alan Vester

**Mountain Biking
Geared Toward
the 50+ Rider**

Random Thoughts

Happy New Year MTB and Gravel bike riders. A quick recap of what's new for 2020. I've taken back the OCW Goat Hill rides for the club. It is now known as "Goat Hill MTB and Gravel." I'll be hosting mountain bike rides in 2020 on the weekends, normally on Sundays. Check out the [Goat Hill FAQ](#) to get answers to most questions about Goat Hill rides.

Mountain biking and gravel riding are taking off at a phenomenal pace. It's not just an American sport, it is international as well. So many trails and places to ride, we live in great times. We purchased a new Samsung 4K TV this year with a SONOS sound bar that sits underneath the TV. It is a "Smart TV" so it is connected to the internet which allows us to watch YouTube videos at night. I can never get enough mountain biking in my life, so when I can't ride, I watch videos on YouTube or DVD's on my Blu-ray player. You can also watch YouTube on your computer or phone.

There is a great group of "YouTubers" that produce some outstanding mountain bike-related content on YouTube. The names below are the ones we watch all the time. They are both entertaining and educational and are a great source of information about bikes, products and places to ride.

Mountain Bike YouTubers we watch:

BKXC: which stands for Brian Kennedy Cross Country. He is out of Vallejo, California. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3DFdy_qc-cqgKCyQTHLGzA

MTB/Alan: a local here in Southern California, he likes riding Snow Summit, Sky Park, and Santa's Village in Lake Arrowhead. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzEIGP-fkfaQmQlUgs8ITVA>

The Outsider: another local guy from the Fullerton area, he tends to cover local trails here in Southern California. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOLThwN4Bma5K-uIaRsOXeeg>

Additional YouTube channels that we watch:

Paul the Punter
Syd and Macky
Skills with Phil
Daily Mountain Bike Rider
The Crashing Dad
McTrail Rider
The Singletrack Sampler
The Loam Ranger
Biking with Bobo

I don't want to list all of them because this would end up being a 45-page article, and you don't want that. So things have really changed with the filming of the videos. GoPro released the Hero 7 Black a couple of years ago and this was a game changer.



Historically, mountain bike videos were always shaky, substandard quality, and overall hard to watch. The GoPro Hero 7 Black has image stabilization, which greatly improves the quality of the video.



Most YouTubers are using the GoPro Hero 7 Black or the brand-new Hero 8 which makes the videos very watchable, with unbelievable quality from such a small relatively inexpensive camera. These cameras are also able to film in 4K, which is 4 times the resolution of 1080P.

I'm amazed when I watch the YouTube mountain bike videos and see how good the riders are.

Well, it's a brand-new year so get out there and ride. Even better make sure you ride every day!

See you on the trails.

Alan (Goat Hill and Mountain Bike Dude)
alanvester7@gmail.com





La Ruta de los Conquistadores

By Stephen and Randy Johnstone

La Ruta de los Conquistadores, for the last 27 years has been purported to be “The most difficult mountain bike race on the planet”.... We tend to agree... just ask Lance Armstrong who almost DNF'd last year on day one.

This race takes place in Costa Rica, the first weekend in November, starting in the Pacific Coast town of Jaco and ends three days later 120 miles away and 29,000 feet of cumulative climb in the town of Limon on the Caribbean coast.

As a family, we have been doing this event since 2012.... Only missing last year (2018) due to disastrous results the year before (2017)... we all thought that we had done it so many times that training was sort of taken for granted.... What a terrible mistake!! We were so ashamed we skipped it.

La Ruta Day 1

After a year of training, it was time for La Ruta de los Conquistadores.

Our group included Randy (the “old” man and photographer), Steve (son), nephews/cousins Erick and Christian, friends Victor, John and Colm.

Randy flew in from California, Steve and Victor from Georgia, John from Vancouver, Canada and Colm from Limerick, Ireland. Erick and Christian reside in Costa Rica.

The journey started at 5 am with butterflies and anxiousness before the race, but then turned to excitement and confidence once we started rolling towards the jungle.

We stayed together, pacing up the first several climbs that included a 27% grade! Yikes! After thorough sweating, made it to the first aid station with confidence and strength. Then headed down into the depths of the Carara jungle. It welcomed us with mud so thick, it would clog up everything on the bike and prevent the tires from rolling. Imagine running a Spartan race in the sketchy mud with 8 lbs of clay on your bike!

It felt like a hike-a-bike Crossfit workout. After sliding uncontrollably down many paths that are supposed to be trails and crossing a bunch of rivers, we started to climb again on these gravel roads that were brutally steep and unbearably hot. Although it was non-stop climbing of hills. Good hydration on CamelBaks made the difference... no cramping issues despite the massive sweating going on.

While chugging along in the 100 degree heat and about 110% humidity, we stumbled upon a lady who let us use her garden hose to cool off our heads. We were resurrected enough to climb up some more 25% grades and up a gorgeous ridge where you can see massive valleys on both sides. Then lightning struck less than 100 yards away. It scared the living dickens out of us.



Steve yells, “Victor, we’re gonna die!!” It was pouring rain but we kept on pedaling to see waterfalls, more rivers, rocky descents, and more climbing.

After 9 hours of suffering, we knew we were close to the finish. On the final climb, Victor unfortunately broke his chain so we had to walk the remainder of the climb until we got to the top, then coasted the downhill section. Steve

pushed Victor when we reached the flat section and we realized that the finish line was just around the corner. A huge nudge and push for Victor to the final stretch for the photo opp across the finish line.

That was the craziest bike ride ever! And it was only Day 1.

La Ruta Day 2

Surprisingly, we are alive to ride again! Must have been the Costa Rican recovery cuisine of Gallo Pinto, scrambled eggs, and sweet plantains. YUM!



Today, we started from a local Eastern suburb of San Jose, the capital city, at 5 am and headed up a paved climb that reminded our extremities that today was “leg day again”. Looks like we were heading for Jack and the Beanstalk’s house because we came up to the clouds, then poked past them, and kept on going. The temps dropped by 25 degrees and the wind started blowing mist. The clouds burned off and displayed the most beautiful cow countryside you’d ever seen. You wished that you could stop, sit and watch the clouds float by below you. It was so picturesque. People were lined up



The worst is yet to come”... followed by a chuckle.... They were right! The section called “Zacate Velcro” was weird. It means “velcro grass”. Imagine soft black volcanic ash with crabgrass growing on it. Our tires don’t roll at all! It was worse than riding in sand. Nevertheless, we continue onward until we reached the ridge that separates the Irazu and Turrialba Volcanoes. That’s when we know that a short quick downhill is around the corner. We were on a fast-rocky descent that hurts the wrists from all the vibration and braking. Then we hear Victor say, “I have no more rear brakes!!” ... the volcanic ash eats the pads.... We are thinking, “don’t crash, don’t crash.” When it flattened out, Victor comes flying out like a surfer that just escaped an epic tube curl. Who needs brakes anyways? The front works, right?

A little more climbing on pavement brought us to the burned side of the Turrialba Volcano. Then, the real downhill began. Fast, slightly pitched down waves of wide dirt roads. It made you “YAHOO!!” as you bunny hop every rise, and plant the bike hard in the turns like a BMX’er. Then it turned to pavement. The bike was eating asphalt at over 41mph between switchbacks.

on the route cheering everyone on, like we were pros.

We then grind up the section called “Cabeza de Vaca” or Cow Head, because it goes straight up like the forehead of a cow. Although the surface changed from asphalt to gravel to horse trail, it never stopped going up and up. At this point we realize we’re at 9000 ft above sea level headed up the side of the Irazu Volcano which peaks at 10,350 feet. It was hard to maintain power when there is hardly any oxygen to breathe. Many of the sections were rideable, but pushing the bike was just as fast and it allowed us to eat and drink while walking.

We ran into our friends who have an online cycling show, PuraBici TV, the Costa Rican version of Global Cycling Network (GCN).

In a very Costa Rican, tongue-in-cheek expression they said: “Cheer up the bad part is over....





Walmart on Black Friday, everybody with crazy eyes and rushing to get to their target. We kept an 8/10ths pace so we could stay with the majority of riders.

Of course, La Ruta is never without surprises. The gravel trail leads into a sugar cane field packed tight with banana trees, and it was a muddy mess. The double-track trail

We had no concern for safety as we tried to ride faster on each turn. Then, we remembered we had a family back home, and Victor behind us with no rear brakes. LOL!

We followed the downhill through the town of Turrialba, weaving through tiny streets, with onlookers cheering and shouting, “Si se puede!” (Yes you can). We finally made it to the Catie Agricultural Center where the finish line was located, but there was a pair of guys from Norway behind us. We certainly couldn’t allow them to beat us, so we sprinted the final kilometer to the finish line to secure the glorious victory in our minds. Day 2 has been conquered, and we beat the Vikings too.

After a little celebration, we head to our hotel, which happens to be a coffee plantation.

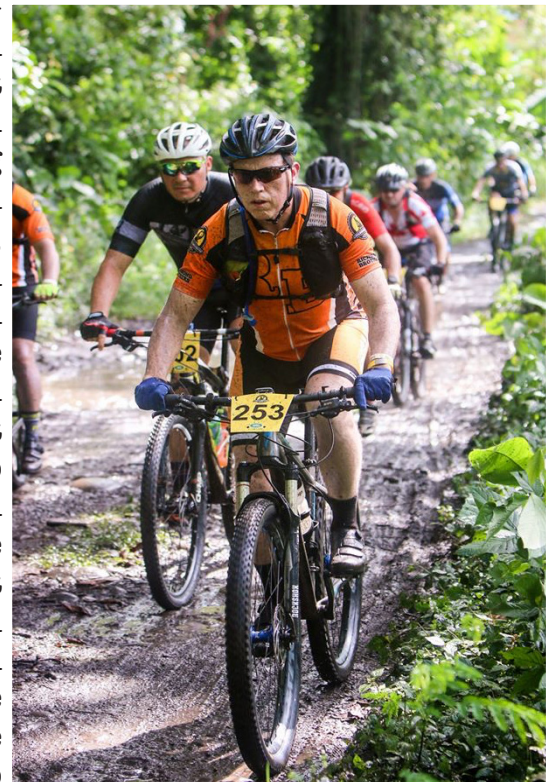
La Ruta Day 3

Today is a scheduled late start time, so we took advantage of the wonderful coffee plantation where we slept last night. For breakfast there was coffee grown on site, and dripped into your cup on the table. Man, did it smell awesome!

Ok, back to biking...the route today only climbs 100 feet as soon as we exit the town of Siquirres on the Caribbean plains, and then everyone hits their afterburners. The road was fast gravel that led onto double track through a grassy trail. All riders were in Zone 5 heart rate because we all knew it’s time to STAND and MASH! It was like

remained straight enough to ride two wide and then it opened up into a wide section about the size of a soccer field. The middle of the field was ankle-deep mud with downed trees across it. The riders split left and right to the outside of the swamp, and everyone was walking. We thought, “Let’s go through the mud!!” So, we went into Super Spartan mode, picked up our bikes and ran full stride through the middle, splashing like savages, yelling “Sparta!!!” (or something like that). We probably passed 40 people there, and jumped back on the saddle cyclocross-style to continue the escape from Dagobah. The

trail finished with some tight technical weaving through the plants, and then landed us on the gravel road that points to the finish line. There were a lot of cars on that road because they were trying to



beat us to the finish line.

As we caught our breath, we agreed to hook up into a pace line where we would draft single file for speed. As we plowed forward, more friends latched onto the rear wheel, increasing the size of our peloton. Eventually, some dropped off which left us alone to enter the final chute of La Ruta. It started to sink in that the journey which began days before on the beach has now come coast-to-coast. Your heart wants to scream out of excitement, and your mouth cries “Yes! We did it!!” We have conquered La Ruta.

La Ruta is much more than the accommodations, food, trophies, or vacation. It is a journey of your mind and heart. Sure, we did lots of ridiculous things this week but the spirit of a warrior helps us overcome our personal challenges and brings out the best of our energies

and skills.

We are so thankful for our wives and families, for supporting us in this craziness. We thank Jesus for the strength needed and the discipline to train with focus all year long. Thank you all for the awesome support and encouragement. Thank you, Victor, John and Colm for following on the journey, you did great! Muchas gracias to our nephews/cousins the Richmond Brothers, without you there would not be a La Ruta and finally thank you to [La Ruta de los Conquistadores](#) for creating a space for people to accomplish the impossible.

With that, we bid farewell to Costa Rica. Time to chill out on the plane. What better way to relax than with a recovery drink in-flight?

Pura Vida!





By David Moss

Biking in Spain

Although I have only done a small number of rides with you over the years I wanted to let you know that I just came back from a Trek bicycle base camp in Girona, Spain. It was a life-changing experience in every way. The quality of the bicycles, the SAG and unsupported rides, the use of Garmins preloaded with the routes were all first class and made for an amazing experience. Though the camp was seven days I chose to bike five out of seven.

There were three daily ride options - I tended to do the 60+ mile rides with about 4500 feet of climbing and the "avid" ride one day - 90 miles and 7500 feet of climbing for a total of 300 miles and 23,000 feet of climbing. I highly recommend that when you are able you consider doing a trip like this. It was a life-changing event. It gave me an opportunity to get deep into the



culture of Catalonia Spain and to bike in beautiful places in a totally stress-free and supported manner. The roads were amazingly good quality, the car drivers unbelievably deferential and because there are 150 pro bikers living in Girona, the drivers tend to always give you the right of passage.



I traveled another seven days and visited Granada and Córdoba, Spain, walked 30 miles to visit spectacular buildings and monuments dating back to Roman times and updated/influenced over the centuries due to Arabic and Christian/Catholic monarchies, eat incredible food and live life large.



Cycling from CANADA to MEXICO

By Kevin and Ximena Ansel

We had wanted to bicycle the west coast of the United States for a long time. The timing was right to embark on this tour in early September 2019. Our friends Sam and Gay, who we met on the Trans America trip in 2016, agreed to join us. Sam would ride with us for 11 days. Gay would join us for the entire tour. After flying to Vancouver B.C., we assembled our bikes and met up with Gay to begin the trip. Sam met us in Bellingham, Washington. Fall was a good time to do this tour because the summer crowds would be gone and there would be fewer recreational vehicles on the road.

We used the Adventure Cycling Association maps, as do many other cyclists who ride this route. The route follows highway 101, highway 1, and frontage roads whenever possible.

The weather was cooler than we expected. Locals told us that Fall had arrived early. That fact was confirmed with 11 days of rain through Washington and Oregon. It did not hamper our riding since we were prepared with our rain gear.

In Washington, we were surprised by some climbs that were steep but short. A few climbs were 18% and one climb was 21%. Washington and Oregon were lush with green forests and beautiful coastlines. We spotted several whales off the Oregon coast. As we rode through northern California we were treated to the Redwood Forest. That was just one of the highlights of the trip. It was fantastic riding and camping among those enormous trees. The smell of the Redwood Forest was almost sweet with an aroma of damp wood and foliage.

Crossing the span of the Golden Gate Bridge was another treat as the weather was outstanding that day. We were blessed with several days of tailwinds as we navigated the California coast. The ride along Big Sur was challenging but picturesque. Many people think of this stretch when you mention riding south from San Francisco. It was Gay's 70th birthday the day we rode into Big Sur and he celebrated by riding 70 miles. This was also our highest climbing day with 5,000 feet of elevation gain.



We finished the tour in 40 riding days, plus 3 days off to rest. The total distance was 1835 miles and 82,540 feet of climbing. We camped 50% of the time and the other 50% was hotels and Warm Showers hosts. The trip was challenging and everything we expected. We met so many friendly people and saw countless beautiful sights. If you like bicycle touring this is a trip you will want to add to your list. If you would like to see a few more pictures and a short video, check out our Blog at www.anseladventures.com.

With most of the tough climbs behind us we made our way south through the central coast towns of San Simeon, Morro Bay, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. We camped in Malibu at a lovely site overlooking the ocean. The following night we were hosted by a Warm Showers family in Long Beach that takes in traveling cyclists. With only 100 miles to go, we spent the night at our house in Irvine before continuing to San Diego.

From the Port of San Diego we took the ferry to Coronado Island, which left us only 18 miles to the US / Mexico border. We climbed the final hill to reach the border and touched “the wall” to make it an official border to border tour.



CBD OR COPAIBA?

BY DAWN DINH

Have you heard all the buzz about CBD oil? Have you been considering trying it?

The CBD industry would have you believe that cannabidiol (CBD) oil never contains the psychoactive compound tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) or any of its isomers. Both of these claims, not surprisingly, downplay the risk that CBD oil can pose to your health and/or mental state. Such misinformation has been perpetuated to the point that many people are convinced there are no negative effects with CBD oil.

If you've been considering a holistic pain or chronic inflammation remedy without side effects, you may want to look in to another option:

What is Copaiba?

Copaiba BCP blends four types of copal resin to create an oil with 60% BCP (Beta-Carophyllene.) Effectively, Copaiba oil gives the therapeutic effect of Cannabis oil (CBD) without any negative or psychotropic side effects.

BCP has been extensively studied to modulate the body's response to irritation. A truly better therapeutic alternative to cannabidiol! (Plus, it's actually legal in all 50 states!)

How is Copaiba made?

Copaiba essential oil is obtained by steam distillation of the resin collected from four different species of *Copaifera* trees: *Copaifera*

reticulata, *C. officinalis*, *C. coriacea*, and *C. langsdorffii*. All four of these trees are native to Central and South America. It has been described as having a spicy, woody aroma. The primary chemical constituent of Copaiba essential oil is caryophyllene, a bicyclic sesquiterpene that is also found in Black Pepper. While caryophyllene is responsible for some of the bioactive properties of Copaiba, many other properties of the oil are attributed to di-terpenes uniquely found in Copaiba.

For more information check out these links:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3820295/>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cam4.816>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378874106004168>

<https://aposchange4rg.com/chronic-disease-pain-management-through-use-of-the-endo-cannabinoid-system/>

<https://www.doterra.com/US/en/blog/science-research-news-a-chemists-perspective>

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Next time you change out an old tire due to wear, if it is still safe to ride for one more ride, hang on to it and bring it to an upcoming OCW General Meeting. We are collecting useable tires from our members to be used by our SAG drivers at our major events, Pacific Coast 100 and Breathless Agony. Rather than purchasing a new tire to help out a stranded rider with a cut tire, we would prefer to save money and use one of these donated tires to help get them to the finish line. They can then replace the worn tire with a fresh one at their own expense rather than the Club's.





Today is a Gift

By: Mitchell M. Gaswirth

Never before had I ridden 119 miles in a cold all-day rain. With headwinds. Check that off the “undone list”. Also check the corresponding box on the “will never need to repeat” list.

We were primed for Ride 29 of a 31-ride, fully-supported, West to East cross-country bicycle tour. The day’s route was across mid-state New York, Syracuse to Amsterdam. Our hotels, both for the night, and the remaining nights, as well as our carefully orchestrated finish at the Atlantic two days hence, were arranged intricately months before. We could not change our itinerary. Same percentage chance – zero – that we could just hunker down for the day, and ride from Syracuse tomorrow.

Oh my. It rained all day. All. Day. Long. The forecast was 100% rain. That prophesy held. It was 100% rain, and it was rain 100%, because it rained, non-stop, all day. All right that last statement is probably incorrect, but the few moments it was not raining were essentially inconsequential.

I was warm enough and dry enough. For maybe fifteen miles. Then my gloves became wet, both inside and out, and I was pedaling in puddles. Not puddles on the road. Well yes, I was pedaling through puddles on the road. But I

was referring to the puddles inside my shoes. Slosh slosh, every pedal stroke. I changed socks at the first rest stop. That helped. A fellow rider loaned me her extra pair of “waterproof” socks. They were not. But they were way better than what I was wearing.

So about the Ride. We rode through some towns. I couldn’t tell you the names without looking at the route sheet. Except Herkimer. It really rained heavily in Herkimer. We rode through open spaces. I couldn’t see them well through my rain-spotted glasses. There was a major endless climb right after lunch. I didn’t mind. It wasn’t as windy on the ascent. The route was probably quite pretty. I couldn’t tell. All I saw all day was gray and gloom.

It could have been a truly miserable day on the bike. In so many ways it really was. I live in Southern California. I do not ride in the rain. And I do mean virtually never. This Ride confirmed why. But on this rainy day I did not have the practical choice not to ride. Sure, I could be vanned to the next hotel while my fellow riders suffered, but then I would never be able to say I rode my bicycle cross-country, every single mile. I’d come so far, from the Southern California shoreline to Eastern New York. I had ridden every mile, more than 3,100

already, and the Atlantic was just a few hundred miles away. Thus I did not have the realistic choice not to ride. But I did have another choice to make, and I made it early. I could be miserable. That would be natural for me, and really easy given the adverse elements.

I chose otherwise. This day was a gift. An experience I will never have again. At the start I felt strong on the bike despite the horrendous conditions. I don't know why. I was wet and I was cold and I had so far to ride today. But I had some legs, and I had some will.

Today is a gift. I kept repeating that mantra, all day long, both quietly to myself, and right out loud, and not just when I was riding alone. Today is a gift.

This day was not a gift that Randy Siercks received. I learned of his death 24 hours earlier. Before retiring just recently he taught math at The Buckley School, which his son and both my children attended. He was a great teacher. He liked fast cars. He loved his son, his only child. He loved my daughter like his own. He doted on the grandchild we shared.

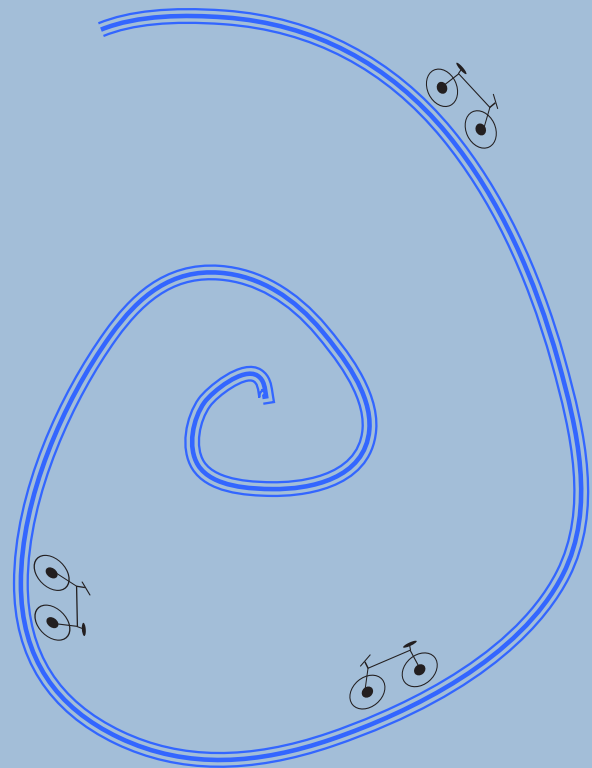
He had just retired. Moved to the desert. Time to live life! Until Pancreatic Cancer tapped him on the shoulder. An insidious, hideous disease, its only saving grace is the sinister swiftness with which it imposes, and carries out, its death sentence.

I don't know why that tap was on that grandfather's shoulder, and not mine. But for me, that made this ride a gift. I embraced it. Never again would I want to ride all day in a cold rain, but I was not looking this gift ride in the mouth. Bring it on, rain. Bring it on, headwinds. Is this all you've got? Cycling has so many metaphors to offer for life. One is this: it is confronting, and conquering, the adversities we face on the bike, and in life, the climbs, the headwinds, the rains, that contribute so mightily to the content of our character.

Randy got cheated. Our family got cheated. But there is a lesson here. None of us ever knows when our light will dim, or be extinguished. Ride while the light is bright. Even if the day is gray, and exceedingly wet.

This Ride was 119.15 rain-drenched miles with 2,654 feet of soaking wet elevation gain taking me 8:29.49 of water-logged pedal time to complete, a really long time to be sitting on a very wet bicycle saddle in very extremely wet clothing.

It was such a beautiful day.



COME RIDE WITH US!



SATURDAY RIDE LIKE A PRO

Please check out the opportunity to ride the Saturday short ride with one of our friendly League Certified Instructors (LCIs).

We are fortunate that we have a dedicated group of LCIs that volunteer to head this ride every Saturday.

This ride is for those who would like to have a bit of personalized training, like learning to be a bit more comfortable riding on the road. Our LCIs cover many topics, and you can ask all the questions you want.

The Saturday Ride Like a Pro is a slow “no drop” ride to sharpen your skills. So come on out, learn to ride safer and have some fun!

For more information go to: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/419732-ride-like-a-pro-rides

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