

Chain Reaction

Fall 2024



A Quarterly Publication of



Orange County Wheelmen

OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

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

OFFICERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020

EVENTS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Check website for location, day and time. All Officers and Directors are expected to attend. Other interested members may also attend.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Held typically the fourth Wednesday 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. Our website constantly updates new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. The website continually upgrades to protect your personal information along with having it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW!

IN THIS ISSUE

In Memoriam	Page 3
VP Message	Page 6
Word Search	Page 8
Hungry Cyclist	Page 9
Mountain Bike Dude	Page 14
Hiking Corner	Page 18
Word Search Solved	Page 22
Sponsors	Page 24



Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

This issue was very hard to put together as the club had to announce the passing of Bob Fairfield, OCW's President.

My sincerest condolences to his wife, Monica.

Please read page 3 to learn more about Bob's wonderful impact on our club, and page 4 to read some of the memorials to Bob from our members.

Rest in peace Bob.

Michelle



Orange County Wheelmen (OCW) Family,

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of OCW's President, Bob Fairfield. Bob bravely battled cancer for the last two years, maintaining a positive outlook, always supported by his loving wife, Monica McCarthy. On Thursday morning, October 3rd, Bob passed away peacefully.

Since 2006, Bob has been an integral part of OCW. He was always the first to volunteer at events, leading Saturday rides with warm greetings and wise safety advice before sending riders on their way. An example of his selflessness, Bob often accompanied newer or slower riders offering guidance and support. As President of OCW for the past three years, Bob provided steady leadership and dedication to the club. His presence and kindness will be deeply missed.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Bob's devoted wife, Monica McCarthy.

A memorial service will be held on October 25th at 10:30 AM at St. Killian Church in Mission Viejo, followed by a reception. More details will be distributed as they become available.

IN MEMORIAM

BOB FAIRFIELD

"In his unique and mild manner way, Bob always looked out for the well-being of OCW members. Bob was taken from Monica and all of us, way too soon. Rest in peace!"

Dan Ignosci

"Bob, I'll always remember you. The memorable times being when we would serve the cyclists on all the rides; at the start points and end points. You had a warm humor, one that always made me laugh. Your dedication and humbleness will continue to inspire me. I'm grateful for those moments we shared and will always carry your spirit with me."

Elizabeth Nunez Tuberg

"Bob was always there handling registration at the Metric Century rides. When he was unable to ride he would hang out after the riders had left and keep us company while we waited for everyone to return for pizza. Always kind, always willing to lend a hand, a true gentleman. We will miss him."

Liz Gaston

"Bob was always one of the first to step up and volunteer for OCW. He led the Saturday rides for as long as I can remember and rarely was a no-show, even in the middle of his recent health issues. As president, he would keep meetings on track and offer fresh ideas to improve the club. To me, it was obvious that he loved OCW and spent much time thinking about how to keep the club focused on the members. I know he shared a love of wines and Anne and I would have dinners occasionally with a small group of us on an every-other-month basis, to socialize and share tastings of wine. He was a member of the Orange County Wine Society and would volunteer at the annual OC wine competition; which is a very prestigious award for wineries to win. His energy will be missed by the club and my heart goes out to Monica who stood by him to the last."

Steve Loughran

"Bob was always there with his cheerful smile on the Saturday morning rides. It took a lot of dedication to the club to do this every week. He always gave us some good safety tips before sending us on our way. When the club needed volunteers he was always there to help whenever he could. Bob will be greatly missed."

Larry Locken

"Bob was a giant in his own world. He had a heart and soul that only God would really understand and appreciate. I knew Bob not only as a cycling buddy, but as a dedicated LCI, where we were trained and certified in the same class. We even car pooled together to the training in San Clemente. Bob would never say no to any request you had and would always help the common person. I will miss him both as a cycling associate, but as a special and dear friend."

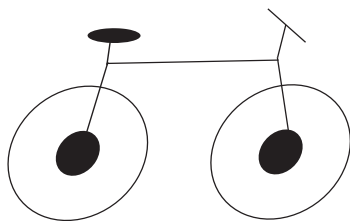
Lee Stebbins

Bob was always the first to submit his President's Message, and he always offered guidance whenever needed. He will be missed.

Michelle Vester



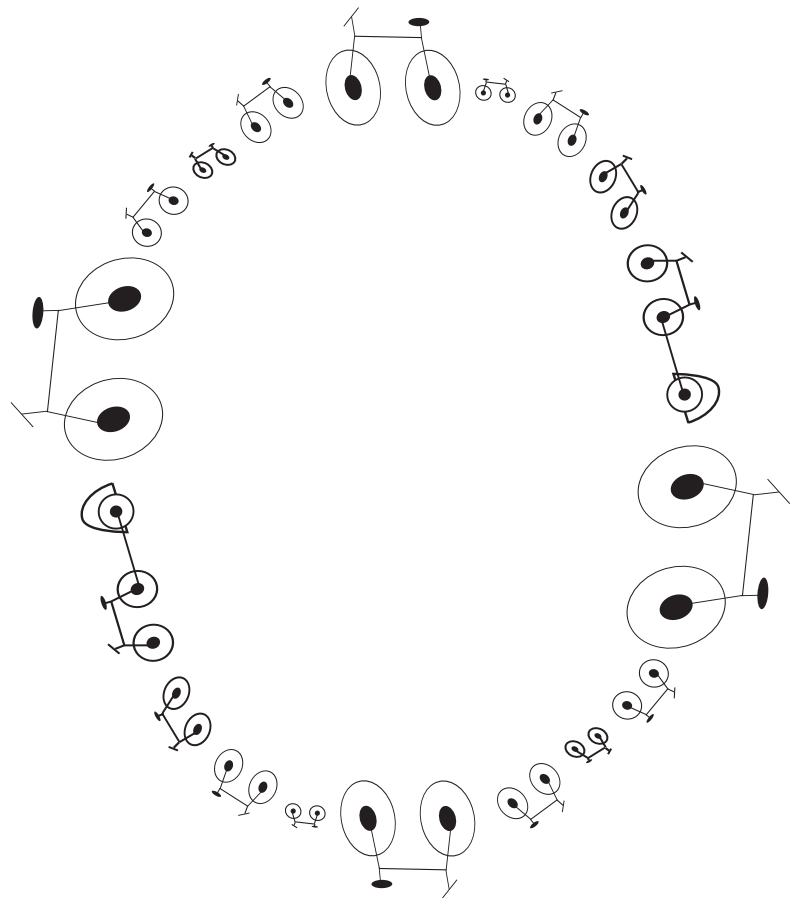
Board meeting minutes



Find all the bikes!

There are SEVERAL "stick figure" bikes, including the ones below, all throughout this issue. Can you find them?

The answer is on the bottom of page 20. Did your numbers match??





the *VICE* President's Message

Dan Ignosci, Vice President

The fifth Sunday in a month came up last Sunday, which led to a remote ride for interested OCW members and guests. Our ride originated at the Oceanside Transit Center, then we did an out and back to the Torrey Pines Gliderport.

This route is generally low traffic, long distances between stoplights, with super bike lanes. Given the day was overcast, there was even less car traffic than usual along the coast. The climb of Torrey Pines is always a much-anticipated personal cycling challenge.



When we got to Torrey Pines Gliderport, the pilots were in a holding pattern due to low cloud (overcast) conditions, which meant we didn't get to see any hang gliding. We hung out for a few minutes and bought or consumed a snack that we brought along on the ride.



Next we got back on our bikes and returned toward Oceanside. The descent of Torrey Pines is always FAST, but otherwise the ride north was uneventful. Thankfully none of the cyclists experienced mechanical problems on the day. Once we got back to Oceanside, some of us changed into some dry clothes and headed about a quarter of a mile away to Parlor Doughnuts.



Being somewhat of a doughnut connoisseur, I believe that Parlor has the best selection of doughnut flavors. While eating, we discussed that Parlor is a maker of cro-nuts, a combination of croissants and sweet flavor toppings.



Our Torrey Pines adventure worked up quite an appetite, so after doughnuts we went to [Heritage Beer Company](#) in Oceanside. The restaurant was nice and there were lots of sporting events on the many flat screen televisions available. The food was excellent, but the service was a bit slow. In summary, I felt like we emptied our “tanks” riding the 50 miles and had refilled them with awesome food and company after the ride. Hopefully you join us on our next remote adventure.

Our Sunday South County rides continue to be well attended, usually between six and fifteen cyclists. Check the [OCW website](#) for day of ride specifics, but the rides and food choices are always great in the South County. Keep in mind that the freeway traffic is usually the fastest on Sunday mornings, so we are within 30 minutes from most areas of Orange County.

As always, feel free to reach out to me for any OCW matter at VP@OCWheelmen.org.



WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

G	P	H	C	H	I	L	L	Y	Q	D	S	N	A	F
G	H	A	U	N	T	E	D	Y	U	I	O	U	P	E
L	K	R	J	H	G	A	F	D	S	A	T	Z	X	A
N	M	V	H	U	L	V	M	G	N	U	B	V	C	S
I	X	E	B	F	C	E	V	I	M	B	N	M	H	T
K	N	S	A	L	S	S	D	N	F	G	C	O	Z	Y
P	E	T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G	H
M	E	S	D	N	X	C	H	E	V	B	D	B	N	M
U	W	F	D	N	S	O	X	R	C	V	E	R	E	B
P	O	G	C	E	U	H	F	B	Z	X	R	E	G	C
H	L	J	R	L	K	L	F	R	M	N	B	E	A	V
Q	L	W	I	E	R	T	A	E	O	Y	U	Z	I	I
B	A	S	S	H	Y	U	L	A	I	S	P	Y	L	O
N	H	M	P	M	H	B	L	D	G	V	T	Y	O	P
E	Q	S	C	A	R	E	C	R	O	W	L	K	F	J

Autumn	Halloween	Harvest	Haunted
Crisp	Thanksgiving	Cozy	Gingerbread
Leaves	Fall	Foliage	Feast
Frost	Chilly	Breezy	Ghoulish
Pumpkin	Cider	Flannel	Scarecrow

 Find the solved puzzle at the back of this issue

The Hungry Cyclist



Sage Butter Pumpkin Cheese Ravioli

INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) salted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1/4 cup roughly chopped walnuts
- 16 fresh sage leaves
- 1/2 cup apple cider, or use a white wine such as Pinot Grigio
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 pound pumpkin cheese ravioli (Trader Joe's)
- 1/3 cup shaved manchego cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Boil the ravioli according to package directions, 3-4 minutes. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, melt together the butter, garlic, walnuts, and sage in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally until the butter is browning and the sage is crisp, 4-5 minutes. Remove the sage leaves from the butter and set aside.
3. Reduce the heat to low, add the apple cider or wine, apple cider vinegar, and season the sauce with nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Simmer 1 minute, then drop the ravioli into the butter sauce, gently tossing to combine. Remove from the heat.
4. Serve the ravioli and butter sauce with the crispy sage and a sprinkle of manchego.

<https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/sage-butter-pumpkin-cheese-ravioli/>





ALBANY, NEW YORK TO CALIFORNIA..... WELL, NOT QUITE

By Kevin and Ximena Ansel

We took a four-day train ride from Los Angeles to Schenectady, New York, and were ready to begin our latest bicycle tour. Our plan was to ride 4,000 miles from Upstate New York back home to California. After visiting family in Middleburgh, New York, we made our way to Albany. It rained for the first two days of the tour, but nothing too terrible. We rode south on the Empire State Rail Trail toward New York City for three days, made a right turn and started heading west.

The route was beautiful with forested, trails, backroads, creeks and rivers. Part of the route went through the Amish Country farmlands. Ximena bought some fabric for a quilting project at an Amish Dry Goods store. We only camped four nights on this tour since there were not many campgrounds on our route. Also, during the evenings we had sev-

eral rainstorms blow through, so we were happy to be in a nice dry hotel on those nights.

Traveling through New York, New Jersey, and into Pennsylvania, the roads were fantastic. Many had been freshly paved with wide shoulders. The drivers were polite and gave us a wide berth when they passed. We met friendly people who stopped to talk to us about our trip. Most were in disbelief that we were riding to California. Many passing drivers honked, waved, and gave us a thumbs up. That always made us feel good.

We enjoyed riding through small towns with quaint downtowns, mom and pop restaurants, and lots of old cemeteries. It was fun stopping at several points of interest, such as the Pocono Indian Museum, where we met the owner, Mal, in the parking lot. He was impressed

with our trip and gave us free passes to the museum.

We took a couple of days off at a lovely B&B in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to recover from the 550 miles and 30,000 feet of climbing we had done so far. Punxsutawney, as you may know, is the home of Phil, the groundhog, where Groundhog Day is celebrated every February 2nd. After riding through the Catskills, Poconos, the Appalachians, and the Northern Allegheny Mountains, with some climbs as steep as 17%, we were ready for another break in Pittsburgh. We spent a couple of days exploring the city, including taking a trolley tour, visiting the annual Art Festival, riding on the famous Duquesne Incline, and watching a military reenactment at Fort Pitt, which was built by the French in 1759.



Next, our bike route took us through West Virginia and into Ohio. The numerous Rail Trails in Ohio were car free, and tree lined which provided shade from the hot midwest sun. The 326-mile Ohio Erie Trail runs from Cincinnati to Cleveland and is a very popular route for touring cyclists. We spent time talking to fellow riders and swapping stories. A woman rider stopped and wanted to say a prayer to keep us safe on the road. We thought that was very kind of her. The hills finally started to flatten out in central Ohio. We visited museums and historic sites on route such as the John and Annie Glenn Museum, the National Road/Zane Grey Museum, the famous Y

Bridge in Zanesville, and we saw the world's largest basket in Newark, Ohio.



In Indiana, we took a day off to go to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to watch a vintage car race. We had a great time watching cars from the 1920's to the 1980's race around the classic Brickyard Racetrack. I must say, the noise was deafening. Needless to say, besides our bike riding, we were having fun with non-biking activities. We met Brother Nicholas, a Catholic Friar, at a gas station. He had just returned from a trip to a small Mexican village helping the townspeople. He gave us a St. Benedict medallion for safe travels and to protect us from evil.

In Indiana, the temperature, humidity, and headwinds increased dramatically. The entire country was in the grips of an extreme heat wave. We had ridden in 95-degree heat for a week. Combined with the humidity, the heat index was in the low 100's and the forecast was similar conditions for the next 10 days. Adding in the headwinds, it was very uncomfortable riding. In Illinois, we met Michael at a convenience store. He had his own plumbing business and was at the store buying some cold drinks. He told us that this weather was unusual and that even the locals were struggling with it. He kindly invited us to stay at his house to get out of the heat. We declined because it was too early in the day. Even the construction workers we came across shook their heads as we rode by. One of them said,

“We don’t have a choice but to be out here. Why are you guys riding in this heat?”

We were riding on the same route as the Race Across America. Our path crossed with a handful of racers. We received friendly waves and thumbs up from both the riders and their crews as they flew by in the opposite direction. We stopped to talk to one of the racers’ team. The rider, James Golding from Britain, was in the support van sleeping. His crew said they were all struggling with the heat. The winner of the 2024 RAAM was Jimmy Rönn, from Sweden. His time for riding the 3,000 miles was an incredible 8 days, 18 hours, averaging 14.58 MPH. I say sarcastically, “That was a little faster than we were riding.”



Outside of St. Louis, Missouri we decided not to continue our tour. The heat, humidity, and headwinds were taking its toll. Our health and well-being was more important. We had ridden 1,300 miles and climbed over 56,000 feet over four mountain ranges. Reflecting back, we met so many kind and friendly people who just wanted to talk to us or wish us well. This country and its people continue to amaze us.

Did we make it back to California? No. But we were not disappointed. We shared a wonderful experience that we will never forget. And we are not done with this tour. We will head back to St. Louis next fall when the weather is cooler to continue our journey. We are already making plans. If you would like to see more photos and two videos of our trip, go to

our blog at <https://www.AnselAdventures.com>. Until Next Time....



EVENTS

Mark Your Calendar

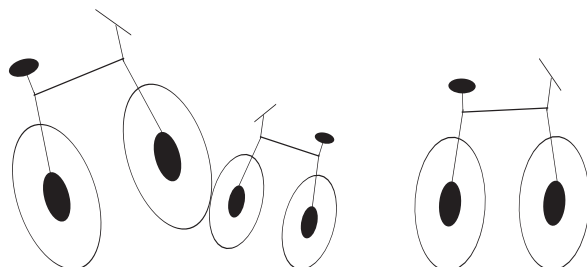
VINTAGE BIKE RIDE - THE SQUARE ON OCTOBER 12

FALL METRIC - YORBA REGIONAL PARK ON NOVEMBER 16

SHARE OURSELVES ADOPT A FAMILY BIKE BUILD - OC
FAIRGROUNDS ON DECEMBER 14

SEEKING BOARD MEMBERS FOR OUR UPCOMING ELECTION -
MEETINGS ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH, VOTING
IN DECEMBER AND ANNOUNCEMENT IN JANUARY

CHECK OUT [OCW WEBSITE](http://www.ocwheelmen.org) FOR MORE INFORMATION!





Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

**Mountain and Gravel
Bike Riding
Geared Toward
the 50+ Rider**

2024 Pivot Shuttle Rider Experience

3 Month Review

Hello OCW mountain bike riders. I've been riding my 2024 Pivot Shuttle SL for 3 months now. I'm not a professional rider nor reviewer, but I'll share my firsthand experience with you. My initial concern with purchasing a pedal-assist bike was the handling and weight. I wanted to be sure it felt more like a mountain bike on the trails and not a 75-ton cargo ship, trying to navigate through the Panama Canal. The bike weighs 40 lbs. with pedals.

The bike is so much fun to ride, I'm surprised I held out so long. The Shuttle SL barely looks like your typical E-pedal assist bike due to Pivot's decision to go with a smaller battery and the smaller FAZUA motor.

So, how does it handle and ride with no pedal-assist? I can answer; just fine. I have completely turned off the pedal assist while riding so I can experience how it felt when pedaling. You can ride this bike with no pedal assist, and it feels like a normal mountain bike. It does weigh 40 lbs. and the average mountain bike weighs 30 lbs., so there is slight weight penalty. This is an important characteristic of the bike because there is always a chance you will be out on a long ride and deplete the battery and have to pedal back without any sort of pedal assist from the motor.

I prefer to use the term E-Assist instead of E-

bike because the Class 1 mountain bikes are not true electric-powered bikes. E-assist means it kicks in when you are pedaling. Riding the Shuttle SL in pedal assist mode is so much fun. Instead of struggling up hills, you just kick in pedal assist mode, and you can power up almost any hill. I find myself using it on trails that have just a slight incline also.

Pedal Assist Modes

The pedal assist modes are controlled by a very friendly control lever on the handlebars.

Changing Levels of Support increase support by briefly pushing up on the switch. To decrease support briefly push down on the switch. The 5 LEDs in the LED Hub on the top tube will illuminate in different colors for each support mode.

White LEDs:

No Support- as if you were riding a conventional bike.

Green LEDs:

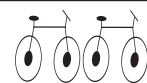
Breeze- low but effective support for maximum range.

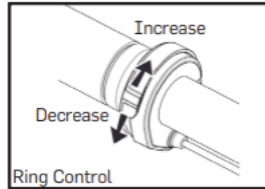
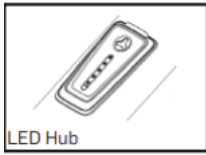
Blue LEDs:

River- reliable support for most applications.

Pink LEDs:

Rocket- maximum support for very demanding terrain.





I normally ride in the white and green modes, switching back and forth as needed. I rarely feel the need to go into blue or pink modes. There are also two very cool modes I don't use often, but I have used, and they are Walk Assist mode and Boost mode.

Boost Mode

Boost mode is an additional function the drive system has outside of the support levels. The Boost function allows you to ride with a (higher) maximum power of 450 watts for a short time to give you an extra push. The duration of Boost mode depends on when you activate it.

Walk Assist Mode

The Shuttle SL features a Walk Assist Mode for when you may need to walk your bike. This function helps propel the bike forward to reduce your effort to push the bike. 1. Set the assistance level to "none." (LEDs will be white) 2. Press and hold the control switch towards the center of the handlebar to use walk assist. After 2 seconds, walk assist is activated and sets the bike in motion as long as you keep the control switch pressed. 3. Guide the bike with both hands and control the speed of the bike with your walking pace. 4. To end using walk assist release the control switch.

Battery Life

Normally I take three-hour rides (20-25 miles) and so far, I only use about 30-40% of available battery charge. How long the battery will last on a full charge will be up to you. The variables that deplete the battery are: speed, which modes you are using, the more boost the more battery voltage you are going to use. It's just like an electric car, more demand, the more the battery will de-

plete on the ride. The Shuttle comes with a charger, so after a ride I plug one end into a regular 110 wall outlet and the other end into the motor and depending on how depleted it is, it will take between 2 to 3 hours to recharge.

Bike Specs

KIT

Pro XO Eagle Transmission

MSRP

\$10,999 USD

WHEEL SIZE

29"

FRAME

Shuttle SL Carbon

WHEEL MATERIAL

Alloy

REAR SHOCK

Fox Factory Float X

FORK

Fox Factory 36 29", 44mm offset, GRIP2 - 150mm

HEADSET

Pivot Precision Sealed Cartridge

REAR DER

Sram XO Eagle Transmission 12-Speed

CASSETTE

Sram XO 1295 Eagle Transmission 10-52t

SHIFTER

Sram AXS Pod Controller

BRAKES

Shimano XT M8120 4-piston

CRANKSET

ROTOR EKAPIC E-MTB 34t - 165mm

HANDLEBAR

Phoenix Team Low Rise Carbon -780mm

GRIPS

Phoenix Factory Lock-On

STEM

Phoenix Team Enduro/Trail - 45mm

SEATPOST

Fox Transfer Factory Series 150mm (SM), 175mm (MD-LG), 200mm (XL)

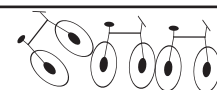
SADDLE

Pivot Pro E-Bike

WHEELS

DT Swiss XM1700 w/ DT Swiss 350 hub & 36t Star Ratchet 30mm - 29"

15x110 F/12x157 R



TIRES

Maxxis Minion DHRII 29" x 2.4" WT, TR, 3C, EXO+,
MAXXTERRA

Maxxis Dissector 29" x 2.4" WT, TR, 3C, EXO, MAXX-
TERRA

ROTOR

Galfer Rotor 203mm

Galfer Rotor 180mm

CHAIN

Sram XO Eagle Transmission Flattop 12-Speed

DRIVE UNIT

FAZUA RIDE 60

The Shuttle is an expensive bike. I did end up paying less than MSRP because Pivot had discounted the bike earlier this year. I recommend you get ahold of your local Pivot dealer and see if the Pivot rep can get you a demo to ride for the day. Never spend this kind of money on a bike that you did not ride for a few hours to get a feel if this is the right bike for you.

The bike comes with the new SRAM transmission electronic shifting. I really like this drivetrain setup. No cables, precise shifting, no wear and tear on your right thumb and hand. You do have to charge the battery in the rear derailleur. I purchased a spare battery and on the first of the month I just swap in the freshly charged battery and I never have to think about it. Well worth the slight inconvenience.

Next article I will do my 6th month review of the bike.

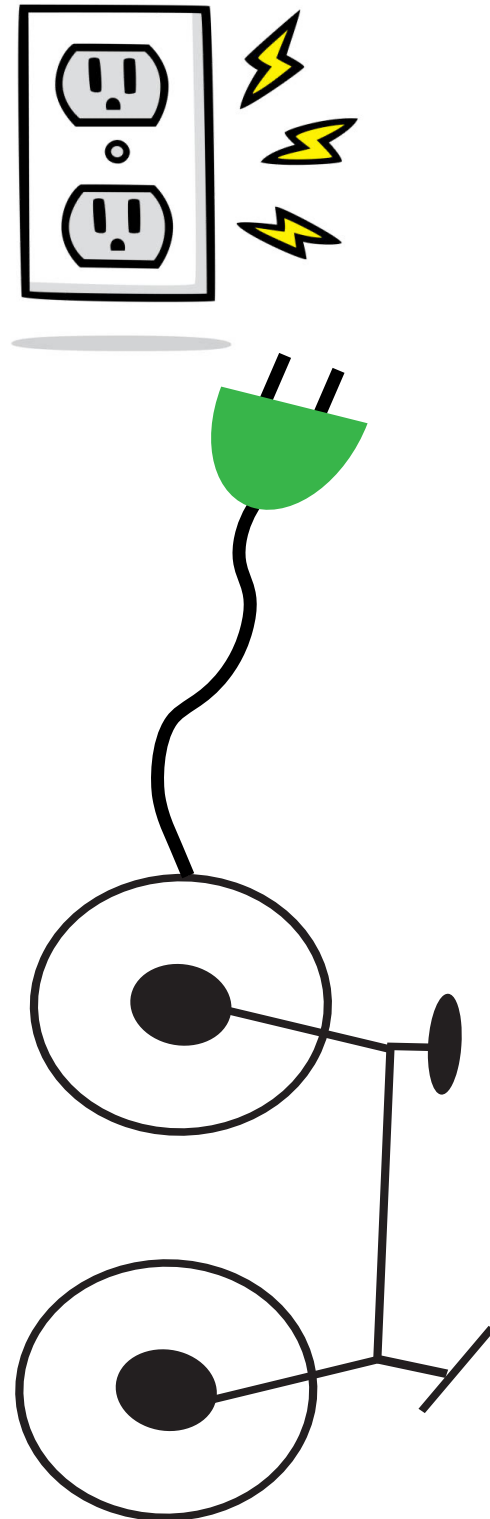
Rules of the Trail

- Ride open trails
- Leave No Trace
- Control your bicycle
- Yield appropriately
- Never scare animals
- Plan ahead

Alan Vester

Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude

ocwgoathill@gmail.com





As cyclists, we understand the importance of endurance, strength, and recovery. Well, I hope we do:) However, many riders overlook a critical factor: the quality of the fuel we give our bodies. That's where macronutrients—proteins, fats, and carbohydrates—come in.

Macronutrients are the building blocks of our diet, each playing a unique role in helping us perform at our best.

I usually use the analogy of a car when I describe macros. Think of protein as the hard parts of the car, the exterior, the engine, the seats, etc Protein is the building block of our structure! Fats are similar to the fluids in your engine...it keeps the car running smoothly. Your Carbohydrates are like gasoline, what you need to get from place A to place B. If you're driving from the east coast to the west coast, you're going to need to keep refueling to make it. While if you're driving from Newport to Huntington Beach, little fuel is required.

Carbohydrates are the body's primary energy source, especially during intense rides. Complex carbs (like whole grains, oats, and sweet potatoes) provide slow-releasing energy, helping you sustain long rides without the dreaded energy crash. Simple carbs (like fruits) can be used for quick energy boosts, especially in the middle of a ride.

Proteins are vital for muscle repair and recovery. After a tough ride, your muscles need to rebuild stronger, and protein (found in lean meats, fish, beans, and dairy) provides the necessary amino acids for that process. Aim to include high-quality protein in your post-ride meals or snacks to help with recovery.

Fats often get a bad rap, but they are crucial for long-duration energy. Healthy fats, like those found in avocados, nuts, and olive oil, offer a steady fuel source for endurance activities. They also help in absorbing essential vitamins that contribute to overall health and performance.

By understanding and balancing these macronutrients, you can optimize your energy, enhance recovery, and make each ride more efficient and enjoyable. Your body is a finely tuned machine—fuel it well, and you'll notice the difference both on and off the bike! I wonder how many of you know how much protein, fat and carbs you eat on a daily basis??

About the author...

Michele has over 30 years of experience in the fitness industry. She is one of a rare few health coaches who specializes in strength training, mobility, injury prevention, nutrition, menopause and hormones. You can follow her on FB Michele Meinville & IG @coachmichelemfitness

Michele Meinville
CPT, Certified Nutrition Coach
MFitness for Life

Voxer:coachmichelemfitness
FB Michele Meinville
IG @coachmichelemfitness



By Theresa Nelson

Do you know about Dark Sky Communities? According to Dark Sky International, “A Dark Sky Community is a town, city, municipality, or other legally organized community that has shown exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through the implementation and enforcement of a quality outdoor lighting ordinance, dark sky education, and citizen support of dark skies.” Places like Sedona and Flagstaff, Arizona are considered Dark Sky Communities where people follow guidelines to limit light pollution like using special porch lights.

Sadly, living in Orange County we have so much light pollution that our skies aren’t conducive to really seeing stars regularly. A few shine through but it’s nothing compared to being out in the wilderness where the additional quietness provides the right mindset to do some amazing stargazing.

To stay current with my hike training, I talked my siblings into doing a “wilderness” trip staying a few days in a retired fire lookout in the Mendocino National Forest. Along with some great hiking, we were rewarded with gorgeous sunsets and clear night skies with so many stars. My brother, a retired Coast Guard officer knew the names of the stars by sight and location.

Pine Mountain Fire Lookout was built in 1933 and used to detect fires in a specific area on the side of the mountain up until 1942. It has a limited 180-degree view unlike most fire lookouts. With the threat of aerial attack on the US during World War II the lookout was used for aircraft defense monitoring. After the war, advancements in fire detection made the lookout and other lookouts obsolete and

many were abandoned or torn down. With the historic significance of Pine Mountain it has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, Pine Mountain Lookout can be rented for rustic camping and since all of us siblings are retired and more flexible for timing, it was easy to secure some dates in the fall. The lookout sits at 4,400 feet and includes a fire ring, picnic table and clean, large (accessible) toilet a couple hundred yards away from the lookout.

We gathered in Alameda where my brother lives and made the 3 ½ hour drive to Mendocino National Forest. About 1 hour of our drive was on twisty, dirt roads. Modern maps made it a challenge as well as recent fires and downed trees covering known roads. But we made it to the lookout before evening set in and then didn't see another person or car for the three days we were there.



We brought sleeping bags to use on the army cots provided, brought in our own water, and cooked on our camp stove. You are allowed to gather downed wood on the ground for a fire and each night we had a small fire to end our evening, after the amazing sunset and before our stargazing.

Our days were spent doing day hikes from the lookout with approximate 1000 foot of elevation gain each day as we descended and ascended trails in the area. There were quite a few areas that had been affected by previous recent fires, but it was nice to see the regrowth. We did see many types of squirrels, bats, a snake but no deer or bear. Deer hunting season had just ended, but we were really hoping to see the local juvenile bear which had been seen by other visitors in the last couple of months as indicated in the lookout's guest book. I ended my hike day with a short nap and caught up on reading in my hammock.

Enjoying the peacefulness and calmness of the secluded area reminds me of the quote by Edward Abbey, "Wilderness is not a luxury, but a necessity of the human spirit".





By Theresa Nelson

Concierge Bike Rides? Yes, Please. As a scuba diver I was used to prepping my gear before a dive, hauling it and then cleaning everything after the dive. I once did a dive in Hawaii where all the gear was provided, the gear hauling handled and afterwards we just walked off the dock and the crew did the cleanup and prepping for the next guest. I could get used to that.

In spring I wrote about bringing our personal helmets to ride the Sunburst Rail Bikes. We have done several different mostly self-guided bike tours in different countries and the US where we used rental bikes. For this last trip which included a land tour of Alaska plus a cruise, we were able to do three guided bike trips which were a lot of fun and required no prepping on our part. We showed

up and the tour companies provided helmets, gloves, rain gear and appropriate bikes.

The first was in the city of Skagway. We took a train into Canada up to the White Pass Summit. There we mounted downhill multi-gear mountain bikes with disc brakes and took off for an exhilarating downhill. My windbreaker and buff kept me warm with the provided helmet and heavy gloves. Normally I don't think a downhill counts if I didn't climb it, but I was on vacation. The wide tires and disc brakes made for a steady ride. My top speed was only 30 mph, as we did have to stay in a single-file line and they asked us not to pass the rider in front of us. It was enough to feel the thrill as we made our way around curves alongside the ravine and waterfalls and gor-

geous scenery. Within a couple of miles of our start, we did have to stop at the Canadian/US border to cross back into the states. Our group sat behind a tour bus waiting for our turn. Then it was off 13 more miles back into town where we handed over the bikes and borrowed gear and looked for the local brewery.



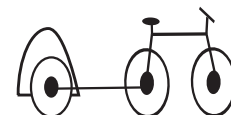
Next up was in Juneau with a promise of a ride to see the 3,000-year-old Mendenhall Glacier. The day was rainy and although we brought our own rain gear, decided to use the tour company's foul weather gear instead and proceeded on an 8 mile rolling ride through town stopping at the Mendenhall lake to see the 100 year glacier point before finishing at the visitor's center. The majority of the ride was in rain, and I was especially glad I didn't use my own gear or that I wasn't riding my own bike as we splashed through puddles on a muddy path at the end of the ride. Everyone ended up with a muddy stripe up the back of their jackets. We finished the ride and handed off the bikes for someone else to clean and worry about.

The last ride of the trip was a Vancouver city tour. There were only three of us plus our tour guide for this 13-mile ride around Stanley Park, taking an aquabus to Gran-

ville Island and seeing Vancouver sites. We used Townie cruisers with gears and hand brakes. (As a long time roadie, I think I might kill myself with coaster brakes). The Townie took a little getting used since you sit upright and the frame configuration was designed so that you can sit on the seat with a foot on the ground. Vancouver has developed a 17.5-mile seawall (bike path) all the way around the city. The city is very bike friendly and the car roads are set up for cyclist use with divided cycle paths. Taking a tour is a great way to get an introduction to a city and see all the major neighborhoods.



As an owner of many bikes, it is sometimes hard to think about spending money to "rent" a bike, but doing these tours provided a great experience as guides are so knowledgeable about the history and love to share their story and local experiences.



WORD SEARCH

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* Number of stick figure bikes is 58