



NEWS

General Meeting:
No August Meeting
Monday, September 6

Third Place
Lake Forest Park Town Centre
17171 Bothell Way NE
Lake Forest Park, WA 98155
Social meeting 6:30 PM
Business meeting 7:15 PM

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Message from the Prez: Countdown to the Big Show

By Tom Killion, RCC President

Summer is upon us (with a vengeance--I can show you the sunburn!). And now comes the chance for two or three months of great riding, unencumbered by rain gear, fenders, and what have you.

Seen recently was our esteemed former president George Thornton, taking part in the now-misnamed Mudflaps Tuesdays. George is looking good, but not so his bike--a UW trail stanchion leapt out and bit his front wheel.

Greg and Ruth Sneed have decided to do STP in one day at Ruth's urging. It seems that she has felt a bit left out these last three years as Greg drafted "guest stokers", not to mention that she is back to full strength and is possibly stronger than ever. Now Greg's going to have to get a new bike computer with numbers that go higher!

Ralph and Carol Nussbaum are where we all want to be: in France for nearly a month. Somewhere in that time they will hook up with the Tour, and I bet Carol will have to restrain Ralph from joining in and going off the front!

Terry Olmsted is out and about again, after pretty much laying off since last year's Fleche. He has dusted off his custom steel bike and discovered how nice a perfectly fitted machine can handle, extra weight be damned.

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But Where Is the Social Director?

By Sue Matthews

Well, there I was, at 2:30 a.m., standing at the staging area for Cannonball. It's dark and I don't recognize a single face, and no Duane. It does appear I'm in the right place. There are a few folks milling around with bicycles. I strike up a conversation with the lone female, Polly, and tell her how impressed I am that she is attempting this. Wrong--this is her third (or maybe she had completed three already?). Wow! Then she asked about Pete Rankin and Peg W. Aren't we a small community after all!

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Many Thanks

Several of the SIR 600k riders, including Dennis Slaback, Peg Winczewski, and Duane Wright, would like to thank the RCC Mazama ride organizers for all of their help on the Sunday.

Submissions due to Janet Heineck or Duane Wright by the 18th of each month.

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From the Prez

Heard at a local watering hole: Matt Dalton enquiring of Terry what bike xxxx dollars would buy. Sounds like he's in the market for something in, say, carbon fiber?

If your near-term plans change suddenly, give the RAMROD folks a call and offer your services on Thursday July 29 for the twenty-first edition of the best ride in these parts. Shane Balkovetz is coordinating volunteer efforts, so he's the man to talk to.

Recently acquired by yours truly and spouse: a Hobie Cat Mirage Tandem kayak. This plastic floater has "pedal" gizmos for propulsion with paddles available for emergencies. Smooth and very fast and, best of all, you have both hands free for drinks and sandwiches!

Elsewhere in this issue you will find information about RAPSody, the Ride Around Puget Sound, benefiting Bike Alliance. If you don't have anything already pencilled in for late August, please give these good folks a look.

The days are long and warm. Get out and ride!

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Social Director MIA

There's Duane, and in plenty of time. Maybe I will find out what my role is. As he looks at me and stuffs waivers and money in my hands it becomes clear: I do whatever someone gives me or looks like is necessary. The bags to cart for the few unsupported riders are next. But really, there was not much more. These riders are a very self-sufficient lot. I started inventing work. I'm good at that!

My next familiar face is Gil Sneed, and a very friendly face at that. So where was the other half of the team--his brother Greg, our very own Social Director--providing the support? Gil said Greg had dropped him off, and the rest was a bit vague. However, I wasn't worried. We were bound to run into each other, and I could touch base and see how they were both doing then.

There's Duane--counting down 6,5,4,3,2,1--start! And they're off! Whoops, I didn't get a head count. Oh well, I have the list of those pre-registered (just a handful) and a fist full of waivers and money. I waited for Duane and Eric to start (not in a hurry, their theme throughout the ride) and then I too was off, in search of a restroom.

I began a pattern of stopping along the side of the road to wave and check on rider progress. First stop was outside Issaquah. I quickly found that these riders were not typical. This was not an event done for a lark, as a social event. These folks were not into waving, stopping, or chatting. They were on a mission, and it was

just the beginning. But there's Polly, cheerily waving as she kept right up with some of the lead group. Wow!

Polly was the only one I recognized. Only counting twelve--I figured I had missed a few; I was supposed to have twenty--so I waited about twenty minutes and figured everyone had passed. Next stop the pass. Whoops, fell asleep for a few minutes. Probably missed some. It's just 6:00 a.m. and I've seen about five riders pass. I know that some must still be coming. My phone rings. It's Eric. Duane is lost. Quickly I backpedal to find Eric. I think I passed Duane. With the divided road I'm not sure. Eric had a flat and thinks they took different exits at North Bend to regroup. I work my way back up the pass and in four miles find Duane. They'll meet at the top. But Duane is only at mile post forty. They are a bit behind the rest of the group. And I never saw Gil. He must have passed while I napped. Duane assures me that he has seen Greg, driving a tan Suburu with two bikes on top. Easy enough to spot.

Off to Cle Elum for coffee. I need something to keep me going till Ellensburg. Here I am on the detour route taking Highway 10 rather than I-90 because of the construction. What a lucky accident. Guys, consider breaking with tradition (blasphemy??). The consensus from every rider I talked to was that this was the highlight of the trip. Ok, it might have had something to do with the tailwind (one fellow clocked 58 heading to the Vantage bridge), but the views! And no traffic! And no highway noise! And no radial wires and assorted debris! I got lost getting into Ellensburg: something about trying to follow Streets and Trips directions rather than just following the detour signs. But hey, finally Starbucks and a window to watch the world and the riders go by, and a plug-in for my laptop, all while sipping lattes. What more could a support gal want? By the way, my support still had not been needed. Truth be told, I think they just want me out of the way. This smiling, waving gal is distracting them from their mission!

Well, it's been two hours. Lots of folks have ridden by. Didn't see Gil. He must be way ahead. I'm not sure I got here fast enough for the leaders. Before I head for the bridge, I ought to backtrack and see how my route sweeps are doing. Back to Cle Elum so that I can do that marvelous route to Ellensburg again, and there they are, stopped just out of Cle Elum (it's 11:00 a.m. now), having a grand time slathering sunblock and enjoying the views. I'm a little worried about time, but Duane assures me they are just fine, and I need not be concerned about staying back. He's right, Mr. Wright. He is indestructible, and he vouches for Eric, so Eric must be also. And the record for this event is just over twelve hours, so I had better get moving and find the lead-

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Social Director MIA

ers. I'm headed for Vantage, and the tailwind seems to push me along, even in the car.

Climbing out of the gorge, I enjoy the view and start watching for a place to stop. Somewhere around mile 150, I assume folks might be in need of water (I brought two gallons), or electrolytes (got 'em), or sustenance (I brought Ensure and Power Bites). Lots of riders pass; no takers. Hmm, maybe they didn't know I was part of the RCC "support group"? So, motored along the road further. Really no good place to stop. Moved over as far as I could and got out of the car, smiling and waving and hollering "Need anything?" These are hardy folks. Nary a taker. Hardly a look! They just swerve and move on. Well, next time I will pull the jug of water out and hold it up. Nope, just gets heavy. Still no takers.

I finally figure it out as I stop to chat with one of the personal support drivers. As we talked, two of the riders, obviously friends, were laughing and hollering and one THREW his empty water bottle at his driver. So, that's it. They already have what they need. Let's hear it for the personal support drivers. They really take care of their riders. But wait a minute. A hundred and sixty miles in, it's hot, the asphalt must be baking, and they are LAUGHING and PLAYING? A special breed.

Time to find the lead rider. Maybe it's Gil. I still haven't seen Gil or Greg. I keep driving. These guys are soooo spread out! Mostly singles, once in a while a pair. No pacelines here. Finally at milepost 207, I run across the lead rider. He also swerves to avoid me and my water and my Ensure. Figuring time, I realize that this guy might be in before 4:00 p.m. He's been averaging, overall, around 23 or 24 m.p.h. Amazing. Time to boogie. I need to find my motel room, get keys for Duane and me, eat, and make it to the finish line.

With all that accomplished, I get there about 3:15 and wait. Read my book, try to find a comfortable position, try to stay awake. 4:00 p.m., 4:30. Where is he??? At 4:45 the first rider arrives, not the one I saw. I guess that was a local! Oh well. Andy Powell is from Colorado and comes in looking almost as fresh as when he started. And as he gracefully (yes, believe it) dismounted, he mentioned to his wife that this was only the second time he'd had to unclip. OK guys, maybe he'll share his secret. Yes, definitely an unusual breed. I asked Andy whether he was preparing for anything (Deathride, RAAM?). Nope, this was it. Well done, Andy, and well done to his lovely wife.

Riders came in spread apart. The next at 5:00 had made a valiant effort to catch Andy and really gave it his all. Maybe we

should share Andy's secret. I bet it would have saved at least fifteen minutes! At 5:22 another rider rolled in, but down the street. Hmm, must have made a wrong turn. I walked down the road to try to find him. Wandered the Best Western parking lot but no sign of him. Must be just a tourist out for a spin. An hour later he and his support folks in a very irritated frame of mind told me just what they thought of me sitting in the wrong parking lot at Airway Express. Moi? No, I got my instructions right off the web site. I'm in the right place! Then they showed me what THEY had: another document with the Best Western as the finish line. Oh, Duane? From then on, watching for riders to turn in anywhere in that stretch became quite a challenge. Oh well, have to stay awake.

By 7:10, we had about six or seven finishers, I believe. As it became dark I realized that sitting at my car was not going to work. For one, I would fall asleep. Then there was the issue of watching for riders to turn into Best Western and catch them before they were gone. So I found the best way to manage both was to walk from my car to the I-90 entrance about a mile away and return. In fact, it turned out that all the remaining riders went right for Airway Express, so I guess I really was in the right place, even if it was by mistake. But the walking kept me awake.

During this time, riders came in in various stages of exhaustion, except of course for my laughing boys who actually were still having so much fun that they SPRINTED to the finish. Thanks, guys, for the memory. Everyone was smiling as they finished. It really was a remarkable feat.

Duane and Eric made contact a few times--mostly for my benefit, I'm sure --I was still worried about the time it was taking them. But in their leisurely way, stopping to eat, stopping to nap, they were making progress. And hey, the sweeps are supposed to come in last. Each time we spoke, I provided the Gil and Greg report or lack of one. Now I'm concerned. I know Gil is faster than this. Where ARE they? At one point, around 1:00 a.m., I told Duane I was concerned that we still had seven folks out on the course unaccounted for (out of 20?). Was it possible that some had DNF'd and called in? Duane checked. No calls (except of course for our irritated support folks who had stopped at Best Western).

Duane suggested I leave my post and drive I-90 to see whether I could spot anyone. After only one more rider came in, I considered it. The folks at Subway tell me there's an exit only three miles away. I could do that loop and be reasonably assured of sprinting back to the finish should I see anyone. Three loops, no folks. Hmm, maybe I'll drive further and hope for an exit. Off to the Medical Lake exit twelve miles away. Ta da! I found Polly's sup-

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Social Director MIA

port vehicle with Tom as well! Seems Tom wears the same rose-colored lenses as I do and forgot the ten-percent rule, doubling, I believe, his longest mileage for the year. But hey, 200 miles before weighing the benefits of finishing versus a truly miserable ride is no small feat. Heading back to the finish to clock her in, I passed a cheery Polly still energetic enough to give me a happy wave as I passed. Wow!

After recording Polly's time and checking on Tom's plans (camping under a tree? I am still amazed), I decide to do one more Medical Lake loop before giving up. No sign of another rider. Polly gave me Scott's status last she saw him, having a leisurely dinner with his wife in Ritzville, was it? So, at 3:00 a.m. I was off for my room and a bed.

But what about the last three unaccounted-for riders, including Gil? All I can hope for is that they DNF'd and were safe in bed dreaming of next year.

And where WAS the Social Director?

Cannonball 2004 Has Great Conditions

By Duane Wright

This year's Cannonball had a big departure from tradition. There was a long detour required by construction on I-90. Riders left the interstate at Cle Elum and did not rejoin it until Vantage. This meant there was no climb of Indian John Hill, Elk Heights, or Rye Grass. In their place was a beautiful ride through the Yakima Canyon between Cle Elum and Ellensburg. From there the route followed the quiet Vantage Highway, passing by Schaake State Wildlife Area and then Ginkgo Petrified Forest State Park on a rapid descent into Vantage.

A special thanks is due to the start line volunteers, Bob Magyar, Amy Harman, Greg Sneed, Janet heineck, Michael Jochimsen, Kent Peterson and Christine Peterson. A big thanks is also due to Cannonball veteran Gil Sneed for scoping out the course and alerting the organizers of the above-mentioned detour. Gil astutely pointed out that the two detours could be combined into one successful tour of the Yakima Canyon and beyond.

After a dry start, the light rain forecast for western Washington held off. On the east side of the pass, it was sunny with great

CANNONBALL 2004 RESULTS

Last	First	Arrival	Elapsed	City	Miles	Times	Supported
Palmer	Randy	4:45 PM	13:45	Littleton, CO	275	Rookie	Sup
Caton	John	5:00 PM	14:00	Spokane	275	Rookie	Sup
Raaka	Mark	5:22 PM	14:22	Ellensburg	275	Rookie	Sup
Youngren	Scott	6:39 PM	15:39	Mt. Vernon	275	Rookie	Sup
Westby	Chris	7:10 PM	16:10	Poulsbo	275	3	Sup
Burns	Bob	8:45 PM	17:45	Issaquah	275	8	Sup
Dong	James	9:00 PM	18:00	Bellevue	275	2	Unsup
Moe	Donald	9:32 PM	18:32	Shoreline	275	Rookie	Sup
Urban	Shawn	12:22 AM	21:22	Othello	275	2	Sup
Davis	Dan	12:22 AM	21:22	Othello	275	2	Sup
Peterson	Polly	2:20 AM	23:20	Hansville	275	3	Sup
Wright	Duane	6:54 AM	27:54	Seattle	275	13	Unsup
Vigoren	Eric	6:54 AM	27:54	Bremerton	275	2	Unsup
Peterson	Kenneth		DNF	Gig Harbor	240	Rookie	
Naucler	Scott		DNF	Renton	231	Rookie	
Duggan	John		*DNS	Issaquah	228	8	
Mallard	Tom		DNF	Sea-Tac	200	1	
Bastian	David		DNF	Tacoma	176	Rookie	
Allen	Eric		DNF	Tacoma	176	Rookie	
Sneed	Gil		**DNS	Enumclaw	?	4	

* Started at mile 47, accompanied Bob Burns all the way to Spokane!

** Lastseen on Mercer Island

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Cannonball 2004

tailwinds in the Yakima Canyon and beyond. The climb out of the gorge had a slight breeze and temperatures only rose to ninety degrees or so, which is merciful for a Cannonball.

There were only single riders this year (no tandems), and all rode upright bikes (no recumbents).

The front four riders were all rookies. The first three finished very close together. Randy Palmer of Littleton, Colorado (formerly of Cheney), held on to arrive first in 13:45. Close behind was John Caton of Spokane in 14:00. At 14:22 was Mark Raaka of Ellensburg. The three support crews cheered on each other's riders during the event. Rumor has it that these first three finishers have their sights set on RAAM. Randy has been racing for years in the Spokane area as well as doing a fair bit of riding in the Seattle area. He currently races some in Colorado. Cannonball was a big distance for him, but he had the miles under his belt to carry him through.

Coming in fourth, at 15:39, was Scott Youngren of Mt. Vernon. Scott finished fifth in last year's S2S. Scott developed a severe hot spot on the ball of his right foot and tackled the last 80 miles with a Birkenstock and a platform pedal.

At 16:10 was Chris Westby. This is Chris's third Cannonball and his time just keeps improving. He attributes some of this to spending more time racing.

At 17:45 was Bob Burns, completing his eighth Cannonball. Bob was eventually accompanied by John Duggan. John had not planned to ride this year, instead wishing to save himself for an upcoming tough tour in the French Alps. But the temptation was too great, so he started out at the 47 mile mark, planning to accompany Bob for a short distance. He ended up riding all of the way! "Since I wasn't planning on riding, I didn't pack any extra clothes etc. Bob lent me an extra pair of shorts and let me sleep on the floor. Because I had to be back in Bellevue by 8:30 a.m., we got up at 3:00 a.m. I was at home in Bellevue by 7:00 a.m. and on the hike (of Tiger Mountain) by 9:00 a.m." We shall assume Bob and John obeyed posted speed limits on their return drive!

At 18:00 was James Dong. Riding in his second Cannonball, James was the first finisher in the "Unsupported" category, narrowly edging the serious competition in this category (see below)! Not to be outdone by Bob and John's impressive return, James caught the 1:45 a.m. Trailways bus in order to be back for a picnic at noon! James confessed, later in the week, to needing to take a day off from work just to catch up on his sleep!

At 18:32 was Don Moe of Shoreline, riding his first Cannonball. Don offered this information about his riding history. "I started riding on the backroads around Spokane about forty years ago. After moving to Seattle in 1983, I commuted by bike on the Burke-Gilman trail but was intimidated by the traffic and reluctant to venture much onto the roads. Needless to say, I got over that and the rides just kept getting longer and more challenging. My all-time favorite ride was Lisbon to Paris via Madrid, the first half with my oldest daughter. I know now why there aren't any bicycle touring books for northern Spain. My most exciting ride was the 2003 Etape du Tour, Pau to Bayonne, with roads closed to traffic and people lining the streets of towns cheering us on. My favorite ride around Seattle is on Whidbey Island."

After Don there was nearly a three-hour gap, during which time Sue Matthews, Cannonball 2004 volunteer extraordinaire, continued her finish-line vigil. Then two riders from Othello, Shawn Urban and Dan Davis, arrived with a time of 21:22. Last year they had attempted Cannonball unsupported and dropped out at the 183-mile mark. This year they were determined to finish, and finish they did! Shawn and Dan had several delays, early in the ride, including the dreaded 151st Ave typo on the cue sheet.

Sue's last official duty for the day was to welcome Polly Peterson as she finished her third Cannonball, this time in 23:20, taking more than two hours off of her last year's time. Last year she had fallen in with a bad bunch of riders who subjected her to things like group ditch naps. This year it was nose to the grindstone, no prisoners, focus, focus, focus, and it paid off!

Long after Sue was sound asleep and, as a matter of fact, a bit after the sun had risen, the final two finishers arrived, Eric Vigoren (completing his second Cannonball) and Duane Wright (completing more than he is willing to admit to). Their time, 27:54, was good enough for second place in the "Unsupported" category! Due to some tire issues and mental fatigue, they had to resort to several naps in the home stretch.

Not to be outdone by Bob, John, and James, Eric took a shower and departed immediately with his kind wife Maggie doing the driving. They headed to the Mount Rainier area to go hiking later that day.

Duane enjoyed a luxurious two hours of sleep before Sue woke him to inform him that the train was leaving. At the Geiger Road on-ramp they found Tom Mallard attempting to hitch a ride back to Seattle. They took him in and the three of them enjoyed a chatty ride home.

Several other riders, most of them first timers, made impres-

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Cannonball 2004

sive efforts though came up slightly short. David Bastian and Eric Allen, both of Tacoma, decided to call it quits at Moses Lake (a popular spot to do so) because of the heat. Tom Mallard of Sea-Tac covered 200 miles before being satisfied and deciding to call it a day. Scott Naucner of Renton made it through 231 miles. He is thinking about S2S for next year. Ken Peterson of Gig Harbor, in only his second year of long-distance cycling, made it to milepost 240 before being discouraged by those evil rumble strips and opting not to risk a fall while navigating around them in the dark. Also at the start was Gil Sneed, a Cannonball veteran from the late 80's. Gil disappeared on Mercer Island, however, never to be heard from again.

The Tour on the Big Screen!

From Bicycle Alliance of Washington

Outdoor Life Network & Cascade Bicycle Club present Experience The Cyclism Cinema le Tour: The Tour de France Cinema --3 unforgettable days of cycling magic on the big screen!

Get your gang together and head out to Sand Point Magnusson Park's 550-seat, newly refurbished vintage theater this July. Patrons will enjoy a 2-hour OLN broadcast of a Stage of the Tour de France on a 25 foot wide screen! Ride your bike on one of many organized bike rides before every event and enjoy a pre-Cinema BBQ in the park upon arrival. There will be tons of parking for bikes and cars and even a beer garden during the evening showing. You can win outstanding door prizes from Outdoor Life Network, TREK and even get your photo taken in the Lance Armstrong photo booth. And the best news, the Cinema le Tour is free to attend!

Monday July 5th 11:30-1:30 pm Second day of the tour, Sprinters stage aka "Super Mario Cipollini time"; today is a national holiday and is a great day for a viewing! Co-presented by the Northwest Lance Armstrong Juniors Racing series (www.auroracyclingclub.org) and Marymoor Velodrome Junior Racing Series (www.velodrome.org)

Weds July 14th 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. "Demystifying the Tour" Live presentation by Craig Udem. Find out all the in's and out's of the Tour from a pro! 8:00 - 10:30 p.m. OLN Broadcast & Silent Auction on balcony. First mountain stage of the Tour, 6:30pm. BBQ w/ beer garden in the adjoining facility. Presented by Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation (www.cascade.org).

Saturday July 24th 11:30am-1:30pm 60 km Individual time trial could decide the Tour! Co-presented by Bicycle Alliance of Washington (www.bicyclealliance.org) . Please note that we need volunteers to help -- please let Linda know if you're available...lindas@bicyclealliance.org.

Sand Point Magnusson Park Theater 7100 62nd Ave NE, Seattle, Wa, 98115 (Building 47) Directions and details can be found at www.cascade.org (website up on June 12) or by calling 206-206-517-4826 anytime.

Event Details

Admission will be free! Snack bar & Hot-dog cook-off 1 hour before every event; raise money for your favorite local Bicycle organization! Bike corral for bikes plus tons of free car parking. Speakers before every showing, including a special "Demystifying the Tour" presentation. Official "Bike Summer" event! (www.bikesummer.org). Free Door prizes from OLN Network, TREK Bicycles & silent auction. Lance Armstrong instant photo booth & other USPS surprises! Sign the "Good Luck Lance" CBC Banner on the 4th and 14th; we'll take it to the Alps d' Huez stage and hang it on the route! Free Rides before every event; please check www.cascade.org for complete listings.

Hope you can join in the fun!

Don't Forget the RCC Picnic!

By The Prez

Ladies and Gentlemen -

TRADITION (and the need to consume RAMROD leftovers pre-spoilage) dictate a SATURDAY (July 31) PICNIC.

Thus leaving us Sunday to recuperate from the weeks' festivities.

Beginning at noon would be good.

Jim and Ann Jensen

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Cycling: A Member's Journey Back From Our Worst Fear

By Tom Zylstra

June 8, 2004

Background:

As cyclists we are part of a relatively exclusive club, a club comprised of individuals who "get it". We understand what an amazing gift cycling is for its ability to allow us to explore the world at a speed at which we can enjoy with all our senses every part of this planet we traverse. At the same time there is something very right about voluntarily choosing a pastime in which in this age of mechanization we provide the power and we are doing our bodies, minds, and the environment some real good. It never ceases to amaze me how small our club is and how not everyone else around us "gets it". I have long made it an active pursuit of mine to recruit new blood into cycling. Is there anything better than hitting the base of a big climb, knowing how much effort it is going to take to summit, and that we are voluntarily choosing to take it on?

There is a dark side to our passion for cycling and doing the right thing for ourselves and our environment. I am referring to our classification as second class citizens, at least in the United States. We have all had to deal with being attacked by car drivers, many times just because we were there. Apparently it's fun for some people to attempt to harm another citizen while hiding behind the superiority of a vehicle. Many other drivers try to make us uncomfortable by driving far too close for no reason. Yet other drivers simply don't believe that we have a shared right to the road, and take our bike lane while waiting to turn, for example. The saddest example of this reality is that Lance Armstrong writes in his latest book that this problem is so bad in Texas that he won't ride alone there any more. He has a motorcycle lookout around him at all times. Yet he rides on.

All of this I think makes us rather hardened individuals. We all know that we are at risk from injury, harassment, and even the threat of being killed by these drivers. When you add drunk drivers and inattentive drivers into the risk equation, it's a bit sobering. We also understand that the government through its actions does not care much for our safety, continuing to build new roads with few if any bike lanes, and failing to redesign existing roads to provide us with a safer environment.

I am an optimist who does not deny these risks, but I need the positive effect that regular road cycling has on me.

As cyclists we don't like to talk about it, but I think our worst fear is being run over from behind, with no ability to defend ourselves or even be provided with a brief warning of the impending

collision. There is never any excuse for it when it happens, but it is the reaction of the agencies designed to protect us that probably hurts more than the physical pain of the accident itself.

The Event:

Last October 3, I went out for a quick lunchtime ride with my fellow RCC member and next door neighbor, Jeff Lampert. We live on the Sammamish Plateau. A standard training run takes us off the Plateau through Fall City and up to Snoqualmie Falls where we turn around.

All was going well. We were riding at a brisk pace up the straight, five percent grade section of Issaquah-Fall City Road, following all traffic rules, riding on the edge of the road single file. I remember two final thoughts: first, what a great weather day, and second, seeing 11.0 mph on my computer on the small climb.

Our greatest vulnerability as cyclists sharing the road will always be the actions of drivers behind us. It was my fate to have an 84-year-old driver drive directly over me without any warning--no noise, no slowing down, no braking, no turning of the wheel. She simply drove right over me at approximately 40 m.p.h.

Two things saved my life. First was the fact that she was driving a late model Pontiac Grand Am with very low ground clearance. The second was my helmet.

She struck me with such force that it bent my 2001 Lemond Zurich steel frame almost in half, turning me so that my left leg was pinned between the car bumper and the bike and ground surface. The best anyone can determine is that gravity and force were trying to drag me under the car, which statistically would have almost certainly resulted in my death. However, the unusually low ground clearance of this car created a situation in which the tibia and fibia bones in my left leg were being repeatedly broken and most of the skin on my left calf was being torn off by the car. Luckily, both I and my bike were thrown from the underside of the car at a fairly high rate of speed, fast enough to fly over Jeff's right shoulder. Unbelievably, Jeff was not struck by me, the bike, or the car as all three went flying past him.

Fortunately, I have no memory of the crash until landing hard on my head in the dirt and rocks. My head recoiled from the impact and I saw my left foot at a ninety-degree angle to my leg. I knew I was in big trouble.

Jeff immediately grabbed my cell phone and got 911, despite the phone's shorting out from the impact. Meanwhile, a Good Samaritan named Alan was helping me deal with the excruciating pain. I knew I had somehow to keep from going into shock, so I

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Our Worst Fear

was holding onto Alan's hand hard to transfer the pain. I can't say enough nice things about Alan's unselfish assistance in what must have been a tough situation to watch.

The driver eventually stopped. She came up to me and apologized. I understand that I asked repeatedly "Why did you do this?". I will never forget her response: "I just nicked you with my side view mirror."

There are only two explanations for a statement like that. Either she has absolutely no concern for anyone else, or she was not fully cognizant of the situation and honestly did not understand what she had done. I told her I forgave her, the paramedics arrived, and the very painful drive to Overlake commenced. I was not given any pain medication because the paramedics in that area are not authorized and trained to administer medicine, which still confuses me.

The emergency room doctors were terrific. I was knocked out and woke up to an orthopedic surgeon explaining how he had reset my left leg, installed a fourteen-inch-long titanium rod inside the tibia bone, coming in through the knee, and had secured the rod by drilling three holes in the tibia and installing screws.

Two days later, I had plastic surgery to attempt to replace all the skin missing from the left calf. The plastic surgeon had told me that he would need to graft skin from my thigh, but he was able to the gap without grafting.

Second Class Citizens:

This part of my experience might make your blood boil as a fellow cyclist, but it is only through the kind of tenacious struggle for justice that I am still pursuing that we will make strides toward equal treatment by the authorities sworn to serve both us and motorists.

Accident Scene:

The King County sheriff who responded to the 911 call essentially did nothing. He talked briefly with the driver and never questioned her for possible prescription drug use. He conducted an alcohol test and gave her a ticket for failing to comply with the state's "basic rule and maximum speed limits". I reviewed the ticket. It appears to have been a very minor moving traffic violation. The officer made no attempt to examine the car in detail, did not review or document the speed of the driver, did not note the fact that the two right tires had to be partially off the road in order for her to have hit me, and made no notes regarding the clear

weather and complete lack of traffic.

We all know that if a teenage driver had been involved, for example, the officer would very likely have processed the accident scene with proper diligence to attempt to determine the cause of the accident. The officer showed no regard for my situation. In fact, he was more concerned with the driver and bent over backwards to make the report as vague and low impact as possible. To this day, he has never returned my phone calls from eight months ago, nor he did come by the hospital to interview me.

The driver told the sheriff at the scene that she "did not see me at all". OK: so on a perfectly sunny day, with no traffic, on a straight slight uphill to make objects even easier to spot, she never saw two cyclists, both over six feet tall, both with brightly painted bicycles and bright cycling clothing? And nobody asks any questions?

"Not My Job":

I attempted to contact the sheriff, who never returned any of my polite messages. So I did some investigative work and located his superior, a sergeant.

I spoke to the sergeant at length on the phone about my concerns over the quality of his sheriff's accident scene investigation. His response: a polite but terse refusal to do anything about it.

I then asked the status of the driver's license for the driver. He noted no problem, inferring she would have to hit two more cyclists before any action would probably be taken. I pressed hard at this point, trying to get him to take some action to have her take a driving test to ensure she is able to operate a motor vehicle safely. Only when I threatened to speak to his superior officer did the sergeant commit to me last November personally to file the paperwork for a "Driver Re-examination Request", which he would transmit to the Department of Licensing. He noted about a two to three month timeline for the paperwork and posting the driving test results.

In February, I happened to catch a local TV news report with Washington State Representative for the First District Jeanne Edwards (D) of Bothell, who was soon to co-sponsor and introduce HB 2714 "Increasing Safety for Senior Drivers". I sent Representative Edwards an e-mail providing my support for the bill and offering to testify as a citizen attacked not only by an unsafe senior driver, but also by the very public officials who are supposed to be ensuring the public's safety. I also provided the driver's name and other information, and suggested that the driver herself might be the most powerful witness for the bill.

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Representative Edward's office was and is a ray of light in this whole nightmare. They responded to my offer and explained that the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) lobbied hard to shut the bill down immediately upon initial introduction. So my testimony was not needed.

At this point, I contacted the King County Sheriff's office sergeant to inquire about the status of the driver's re-examination. He quickly explained that he "had no idea" about the status. He fills out the paperwork, submits the document, and is done with his work. I asked for the name of his colleague/department who accepts his paperwork, and he didn't know!

I sensed I was being run over again, so I called Representative Edwards' office and apprised them of the situation. Within two days they had researched the driver's records via contacts at the Department of Licensing and confirmed that the King County Sheriff's office had never submitted a driver re-examination request. I challenged the sergeant with this information, and he replied with a "not my problem".

With the assistance of Representative Edwards' office and a contact in the Department of Licensing, I personally filed a "driver re-examination request" against the driver. That request was hand-carried through the Department of Licensing system to ensure prompt and accurate processing three weeks ago. The driver must appear and pass the driving test within the next month or have her license permanently suspended.

It gets worse. I hired a lawyer to assist with ensuring that my financial and medical rights were being protected, which was a smart move. At one point a few months ago, my lawyer advised me that it is difficult to convince the insurance company of extensive damage. The medical reports show a very badly broken leg, among other things, but the fact I had chosen to rehabilitate aggressively the leg, evidenced by riding in the Solvang Century, meant that I was experiencing very little "pain and suffering". So after you are mauled by a driver who has no idea of where she is or what she is doing, and who gets off with a very minor traffic violation, suffer through multiple surgeries, the insurance companies basically demand that you sit in a corner pumped up on pain killers for some period of time, the longer the better, in order for lawyers to be able to document impact. This is got to be the stupidest thing I have ever heard of. I would never have believed it if it hadn't happened to me. If the insurance company representatives had bothered to come see me and watch what I endured during all the physical therapy sessions or, better yet,

come out on one of my rehab training rides in January when it's thirty-five degrees out and raining, they might have seen the light. They are actually exacerbating a bad situation by in effect forcing accident victims not to try to get better, the exact opposite of how our society should operate.

Rehabilitation:

While I was in the hospital I was looking over the ride calendar, and decided that I would shoot for riding the Solvang Century in Central California in early March. That would be five months after the accident. The doctors thought it would be aggressive but doable if I could put up with the pain.

I began pretty intense physical therapy three weeks after the accident and went for my first ride on my new Lemond Victoire just over two months after the accident. It felt very strange. I could literally feel the titanium rod inside the leg and the screws, especially on the down stroke.

I started riding my Lemond RevMaster stationary bike every day in the garage, motivated by watching old Greg Lemond Tour de France tapes.

It took two months to get off crutches, and another two months using a cane until I could walk functionally without any assistance.

The Comeback:

So the stage was set. I had six great friends who trained with me and journeyed to Solvang in early March of this year to ride with me and support me in my effort.

My orthopedic surgeon and physical therapist both approved of training for and doing the ride, noting that I would probably be in significant short term pain during and shortly after riding, but that with the rigidity of the titanium rod and screws and the excellent healing of the tibia it should not cause any negative long term impacts.

I had ridden the Solvang Century nine times previously over the years and sort of knew the ride organizers, so I sent them a note explaining what I was trying to do.

I felt great the day of the ride. I had put 800 miles in on the road in January and February, and had not shied away from the hills, developing a technique in which I "cheated" heavily on my right leg, only using my left leg for auxiliary power up the hills.

All of us rode well, despite getting a little separated, and we all met up at the halfway rest stop. I actually broke my personal best to the 57-mile mark, with an average speed of 18.8 mph. I sensed that two of my friends were hurting (RCC member Eric Jorgensen

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and my brother John Zylstra), so I decided to ride in with both of them over some very challenging climbs.

I was strong to the end. It was such a rewarding feeling at the finish line to have used the very thing I was doing when I was struck down as my primary method of rehabilitation. It restored my faith in the positive power of cycling and my body's ability to heal.

We were invited to be the guests of honor the next morning at the ride organizer and volunteer awards brunch. I got a chance to speak to the 100+ volunteers and express my appreciation for their hard work, and most importantly inform them that not everyone you see on the ride is just there for another ride. Many of us cyclists have pointed to this challenge as a milestone to recover from setbacks, and without the volunteer effort our milestones could not be accomplished. With that we set out on a very challenging forty-eight-mile ride up and over some great climbs, including one that Lance Armstrong and the U.S. Postal team have come to ride every February to begin Tour de France preparations.

At some point over the climbs, my leg started to swell worse than before, but I just put my head down and hammered it over every hill, determined to get back what was taken from me.

The Setback:

Shortly after the Solvang Century, I started experiencing a lot of pain. It resulted in having to go back to using the cane just to walk. I went in for tests, and X-rays revealed that I had broken one of the three screws holding the titanium rod in place. The pain did not subside. Further tests showed that all healing in the leg had suddenly stopped, and something would have to be done soon to avoid being potentially crippled. Pretty tough news, to say the least.

Two weeks ago (May 28), I underwent surgery to realign the leg by breaking the fibia, removing the existing rod, extracting bone marrow from the tibia, and installing a larger rod into the tibia, securing it with only one screw this time.

I have collected numerous professional opinions. The consensus is that I should not attempt to walk on the leg at all for at least six months. At first this 24/7 crutch and wheelchair requirement was devastating, but I am trying to make it work for the best somehow.

The Revelations:

We have absolutely no idea how great we have it when we have our health and our passion for an active lifestyle. The

amount of effort that our fellow citizens with permanent disabilities have to exert to accomplish a simple task we ourselves take for granted is absolutely mind boggling.

I went to a concert tonight with my wife in Tacoma. I had to use the wheelchair, and there were no open handicap parking spots, so we parked a mile away at the top of a big hill. I was braking with both hands going down the steep hill in the rain in the wheelchair. I barely avoided running into cars because the wheelchair was skidding down the hill even with full braking power. The venues place you in sort of out of the way locations. Don't misunderstand me; they were nice and genuinely wanted to help. I tried to figure out how I was going to use the restroom. I decided the effort of the wheelchair and crutches was just too much to deal with and did not use the facility. My point is that I pray that I will eventually recover from this physical limitation. I will never take for granted my health or forget the lessons I am learning about life and people from the seat of a wheelchair.

I decided to investigate the capabilities of the niche "hand-cycle" bicycles that I have seen being ridden several times over the years. I drove out to Sand Point last weekend and met a half dozen really great folks, all members of the Northwest Handcycle Club (www.nwhclub.com). They were nice enough to let me demo some of the bikes. In plain English, these bikes are much harder to power with your arms than you might think. Combine arms versus legs as the power source with the awkward steering, braking and shifting designs, and you have to have a real passion for cycling to undertake handcycling.

I also quickly learned that purchasing these handcycles is very expensive because of the low production volume and the degree of customization required. This also means that it is almost impossible to order and receive one of these bikes in less than a month and a half.

I want to get one of these handcycles immediately, train as hard as I can for the next six weeks, and--you guessed it--I have a RAMROD ticket!

The highest-end handcycle comes with Shimano Ultegra STI shifting, a triple crank, and safe hands-on braking. They say it can do forty m.p.h. on a descent.

I have no illusions about finishing RAMROD. My research shows that most handcycle endurance events are in the twenty-five-mile range with moderate hills at best, none of which sounds like RAMROD at all.

If the stars line up and my efforts to acquire a top-end handcycle in the next couple of weeks come through, and I can get

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at least a month of intense training in, my wildest goal would be to start RAMROD with everyone else and somehow make it to Paradise Lodge. It might take me all day. Who knows?

So if you see a guy rolling off the start line for RAMROD in Enumclaw using a handcycle, please take a second to say hello, and we can wish each other luck. My goal is to get the wind in my face again this summer using a handcycle, and do everything I can to improve my situation while waiting for the leg to be able once again to support my unassisted walking.

I have already made arrangements with the great folks at Northwest Handcycling Club to donate the handcycle to the club to benefit a fellow citizen once I am able to resume riding my Lemond, and maybe one day even see that individual and handcycle at the start line for RAMROD.

Contacting the Driver:

I wanted to contact the driver ever since the accident for many reasons, primarily in hope of hearing or seeing something that would explain the cause of the accident. But my lawyer had correctly counseled me that any meeting would be inappropriate until the insurance settlements have been finalized.

In late May, the insurance matters were finalized. When I found out I was going to have to go in for another operation and not walk for at least six to seven months on top of the eight months I have already been through, I got a bit depressed and thought it would be good closure to contact the driver.

I called her the day before my surgery a couple of weeks ago. She was very polite. I had a couple of specific goals for the call. First, I wanted to update her on my condition. She started by asking whether I had healed up completely yet, so obviously there is a lack of understanding regarding the impact of her actions. I politely explained that the leg was broken pretty badly, and that I would be undergoing surgery to try finally to heal the leg. I asked her to pray for a safe surgery, and she was grateful for the opportunity to assist in that manner. Secondly, I restated my forgiveness for her actions, which she really appreciated. The third goal was to hear in her own words what the cause of the accident was. She explained that Issaquah-Fall City road is a dangerous road for bike riders, what with its many turns and minimal shoulder. I noted that where she struck me was not on a turn but in an area with excellent visibility, and that we were two cyclists riding safely single file with brightly colored equipment and clothing. She simply stated that I was in her "blind spot", which sort of means that anything in front of her is in her blind spot: small children walking,

bike riders, and joggers.

Finally, I shared briefly with her the struggles I have gone through to try and get the state to re-examine her driving skills. She understood that my motive was not personal. It was to make sure the roads are safe with her operating a motor vehicle. She noted that she does not believe she will contact me with the results of the test. I sensed that I had just talked with a very nice woman who was suffering from some form of age-induced dementia. I wondered who was looking out for her, as she told me that her husband had passed away two years ago.

Bottom Line:

I am extremely motivated to restore my ability to function actively as a husband, parent, and friend. The obstacles I have had to endure have at times worn me down, but I press on because I have to make sure that the roads, laws, and officials are doing everything possible to make cycling safer for all of us.

Oregon Implements Medically At-Risk Driver Program

By the Editors

On June 1 of this year the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles' Medically At-Risk Driver Program became law statewide, the first of its kind in the country. Health-care professionals must now report drivers with "cognitive" and "functional" impairments -- difficulties not based only on a medical condition -- that could affect their safe driving. These include poor attention, reaction time, memory, vision, strength and flexibility.

Once drivers are reported to the DMV, their licenses will be suspended with the chance for a retest or a hearing.

For details: <http://www.oregondmv.com/DriverLicensing/atriskquestions.htm>

Rides

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STP

Seattle to Portland. The classic.

<http://cascade.org>

2004 SIR Brevets

Schedule

200 km: July 24

<http://>

www.seattlerandonneur.org

Redmond Cycling Club Membership Subscription Form
Individual/Family* Membership Dues: \$15 per calendar year

Please complete this form and mail
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New Membership Renewal Information change. Start date: _____

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Address Line 1

Day Phone

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* One vote is allowed per membership when voting on RCC issues and one copy of the RCC newsletter is mailed for each membership. Use additional copies of this form if multiple family members are to be listed under this membership.

Redmond Cycling Club Information

The Redmond Cycling Club (“Where HILL is not a four-letter word”) is a group of cycling enthusiasts from the greater Seattle area. We meet on the first Monday of each month at 7:15 p.m. at Third Place, Lake Forest Park Town Center, 17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Park, WA 98155. Social hour starts at 6:30 p.m. Club phone number is (206) 781-3903.

Our members participate in endurance riding, racing, training and informal social rides. We sponsor the popular Ride Around Mt. Rainier in One Day (RAMROD) and the cross-state ultramarathons CANNONBALL and S2S.

For more information, attend one of our monthly meetings, write us at P.O. Box 1841, Bothell, WA 98041-1841, or email us at info@redmondcyclingclub.org. You can visit us on the Internet at <http://www.redmondcyclingclub.org>.



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