



The Spoke'n Word Newsletter

December 2008

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2

Greetings Merrymeeting Wheelers,

We have a full newsletter so I will keep my addition short.

November's meeting was a great one. Rich Cromwell, Charlie Cary and Dave Boyle came to talk with the group about winter-related sports and how to prepare and dress appropriately for them. Thanks Rich, Charlie and Dave!

There will be no meeting in December due to the busy holiday season. See the "coming up" section of the newsletter for info on upcoming meeting topics. The Cary's will host their annual New Year's Eve party, be sure to RSVP, this is always a great party!

Watch my weekly update for info on hikes and cross-country ski events. If you have suggestions on different places to visit please forward them to me.

The banquet is coming up in March, if you're interested in volunteering there are many tasks that will need to be done to prepare for this big event. Give me a call or email if you want to help out.

I would like to wish you all Merry Christmas and a Happy Chanukah to my Jewish friends.

See you on the road!

Jennifer

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COMING UP!

Monthly meetings:

December 2008 – no meeting, enjoy the holidays!

January 26, 2009 – Wilbraham's presentation
(see description below)

February 23, 2009 – Glen Flaming, PT

March 28, 2009 Annual Club Banquet

Wilbraham club presentation description Switzerland, the most recent Wilbraham family bike adventure. A country half the size of Maine, 4 languages, chocolate, cheese, wine, and cowbells. Hills optional. The Wilbrahams (Derek, Sharon, & Jenny - age 7) pedaled seven hundred miles over three weeks in August of 2008. Full of national and local bike routes, Switzerland offers on and off road cycling for every level of cyclist. The Wilbrahams chose to pedal mountain passes but there are bike friendly public transportation options to get you to your destinations. Come see a slideshow of the route they took.

The MWBC is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the encouragement of bicycle riding in the mid-coast Maine region. MWBC intends to stimulate the interests and activities of riders by the pursuit of the following types of programs: Creating and encouraging safe biking conditions and practices; Supporting accessible biking opportunities for riders of all abilities; Providing information concerning the health benefits of bicycle riding; and Promoting the community benefits realized by increased ridership

New memberships are always welcome!

2008 Illinois Great Rivers Ride by Merrymeeting Wheelers: *Toni Rees, Ellen Call, Elly Cary and Margaret Morrison*

On Friday, September 5, we flew to St Louis for a week of riding and overeating organized by the Illinois Department of Tourism. We were blessed with fine weather as our seven days of 400 hilly miles fell in between Hurricanes Hanna and Ike.

On Day 1 of the Illinois Great Rivers Ride we arrived at the Lewis and Clark State Historic Site in Hartford, Illinois where we scrambled to unpack our bike boxes before jumping onto a bus to take us to the Mississippi River for a dinner cruise. A buffet and porta-pottys were set up on a long flat barge with a tugboat attached to one end. As we ate, our barge pushed us into a long lock and up the Mississippi for a couple of hours sightseeing. That evening, back at our tent site, we wandered around a wooden fort site where in 1803 Captains William Clark and Meriwether Lewis trained men for their expedition.

The next morning (Sunday) we began a routine that would carry us through the week. Elly managed her own tent and air mattress while Ellen, Margaret and Toni used Padres luxury tent service. Up by 6:00am, we left packed bags near the transport vans, ate breakfast at 6:30am, water bottles filled, tired pumped, we were on the road around 7:30am. Water stops were every 20 or 30 miles, we arrived at camp in time to change before 4:30-5:30pm cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner and entertainment. Route marking was excellent, tents/bags were safely transported from camp site to campsite, food was good, but the portable hot showers trucks had been requisitioned for Hurricane Hanna so, some days, after biking in 85 to 90 degree temps we could only dab sweaty bodies with a couple of handy wipes and squirts from our water bottles.

The first two days of riding were flat. We rode high on levees with the Mississippi River and swampy land stretching to our right and farm land stretching to our left. There were no pine trees or potato fields. Instead Soy Beans, tall browning corn, brilliant yellow fields of flowers, shrieking insects and innumerable golden brown woolly caterpillars crossed the roads. We were told that growing corn for ethanol is subsidized so for the first time this year the US will import wheat as so much land has been turned over to planting corn. There were acres of knee high, broad, green leafed plants we had never seen before, but learned we were in the "Horseradish capital of the world".

Around 1:30pm, after only about 45 miles, we rolled into Bolm-Schuhkraft Memorial Park and were delighted to learn that we could use the high school showers. The "girls" shower was a large cement walled room where hard streams of cold water blasted away the days dirt. Food and entertainment that night was provided by elderly German musicians wearing lederhosen and playing German "oompa" songs.

Day two, Monday, we again rode about 45 miles to Prairie de Rocher, population 613 settled in 1722. We carried all our rain gear ready for predicted severe thunderstorms that never arrived. It was hot! Pretty butterflies, blue and black, yellow and orange, fluttered across the road. Whichever way we rode the wind was in our faces making the riding harder but cooler. Sitting under the shade of a frondy, very non-Maine tree for a lunch break I couldn't think for the noisy shrilling of cicadas. That night we camped next to Fort de Chartres, the seat of French government in Illinois and the last French possession surrendered to the British. At night the fort was lit by candlelight and guides in period costume told us the history of the area.

Day three, Tuesday, we rode about 65 miles, most of it lovely with no major hills except up to see a statue of Popeye near Chester, Illinois, overlooking the bluffs of the Mississippi. The statue honors Popeye's creator Elzie Segar who learned to be a cartoonist from a \$20 correspondence course. After Popeye, an eight mile stretch of narrow road was full of huge trucks in both directions. The soft shoulder had deep impressions where tires had swerved off the road, so, adrenalin pumping, we sped to a turning and on to another quiet levee road. Only ten miles from camp some of us stopped at the Bottoms Up Bar and Grill, the only eating place we had seen all day. That night we pitched our tents next to the Mississippi River at Devils Backbone State Park in Grand Tower and watched enormous barges carrying coal drift by. The shower truck had broken down, but there was one shower for women, one for men and a washbasin to get a few clothes clean. The blazing sun dried everything in no time and soon it was 4:30 pm, time for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, followed by dinner and entertainment by the Dirt Water Fox country band.

2008 Illinois Great Rivers Ride Continued.

Day four, Wednesday, another 65 miles, in the mid 80's, with no shade. There were a couple of stretches of heavy traffic and many hills. We biked along the Trail of Tears where 17,000 Cherokee had been displaced, forced to walk to Oklahoma with thousands dying on the way. Coffee from a gas station after 22 miles got us up a couple of big hills then being chased by a lone dog then a pair of dogs got us up another couple of hills. Lunch was served at the Cache River Nature Center where we learned about the numerous poisonous snakes that live in Illinois then biked a couple of slow miles on crushed gravel trails in welcome shade. We blissfully escaped into an air conditioned McDonalds about a mile from a golf course in Vienna where we were to camp that night.

Day five, Thursday, "only" about 40 miles, but the hills were cruel. At 23 miles our water stop was at the Blue Sky Winery. Margaret missed the turn so missed lunch. Ten extremely hilly miles later I was relieved to enter Giant City State Park BUT three hilly miles later had still not found the camp site. At last I came to a big lodge and saw Margaret's bike outside. After another iced coffee we coasted downhill to the tent sites. Dinner was back up at the lodge. Later we walked back along the moonlit road to camp. Most of the snakes we saw were dead by the side of the road, but that night I nearly stepped on a long, wriggling, brightly colored, specimen, shrieked and fled back down the road to my tent.

Day six, Friday, a hilly 72 miles. In the early morning, downhill from the lodge we rode

the fastest three miles we had ever ridden. Another McDonalds with iced coffee and later a burger helped us along. Out of water and dusty we eventually pulled in to the vast World Shooting and Recreation Complex in Sparta to camp. That night an Abe Lincoln impersonator entertained us after dinner.

Day seven, Saturday, almost 70 hot miles took us back to the Lewis and Clark State Historic Site in Hartford. We repacked our bikes in FedEx boxes ready to be shipped back to Maine and dressed up for the last night party. Hurricane Ike was approaching so we were advised not to sleep in tents. Local hotels filled up fast and a fellow rider kindly offered to take us home to St Louis with her after the farewell celebrations. She and another rider took us sightseeing to Alton where we saw a statue of the tallest man (Robert Wadlow, 8'11" died aged 22) and had a beer and burger at Fast Eddy's a "biker" bar full of leather clad, tattooed riders. That night we feasted, enjoyed a firework display and said goodbye to our fellow bicyclers for another year. As the rain and winds of Hurricane Ike hit the area we were delighted to sleep in a solid, dry house and very relieved to fly home safely and see Charlie Cary waiting for us at Portland Jetport.



Charlie and Elly Cary will be hosting their annual New Year's Eve Bash.

This is always a good time.

Please BYOB and a dish to share.

Call or email to RSVP 725-4048

elly@suscom-maine.net



Merry Meeting Wheelers Annual Banquet at The Harpswell Inn. Make sure you mark your calendars ahead of time so you don't miss out on this fun event.

Inter-Bike

By Bob Bruce



What is Inter-Bike? It is a convention for Bike Shop Dealers in Las Vegas. Why would a regular cyclist want to go to some thing like that? That is a good question. I could not buy anything, as they only wanted to sell to dealers. I was on Bath Cycles ticket. Davis agreed to include me with his people to get me through the door. The rest of the trip was on my dime as the saying goes. The trip proved to be an adventure.

It all started with Jennifer and me flying out to different destinations at the same time. I took off at 6:00 and she took off at 6:30. We shared some time before takeoff. Those of you that know Jennifer know how great that is. My flight took me to Washington DC and then to Las Vegas. I grabbed a cab from the airport and felt like I was getting the grand tour on the way to Circus Circus where I was staying. The price attracted me not the hotel. The trip back to the airport proved me correct as it was much less going there. He got a better tip than the first one.

Check in was slow. I was beginning to believe everyone in the country was checking in at the same time. I finally got my room and dumped my things on the bed and turned on the TV. There were about 12 channels available and two of them were about Circus Circus. They had ESPN so I could follow the Red Sox.

I decided to go register at Inter-Bike. It did not start until the next day. Most people were out in the canyon riding bikes that the different companies made available. I had the registration sheet of one of the employees. I told the registration lady that I was replacing him and she made me a new badge with no other questions other than what I wanted for a name, Bob or Robert. I looked around some but they would not let me into the showroom as they were still setting up. It looked massive and I would find out the next day just how massive it was.

My first bus ride was an adventure. The first bus came and only let three off and only three could get on. You guess it, I was not one of the three. The next bus didn't even stop. There could not have been any one getting off and they were full. The next thing I knew, two busses showed up at the same time. The ticket was one ride for \$2 and \$5 for all day but you needed the exact change. I didn't have that so I had to get out of line. I got change and finally got on the fifth bus that came. It is lucky that I was not in a hurry. I would up going only two stops to where I needed to get off. I could have walked that in less time.

The ride for day two was better. I knew the way and was able to help two others from Calgary Canada. That made me feel good. I got there a little early and milled around in the advocacy area outside in the lobby. I noticed the Thunderhead display by accident and there was Jeff Miller setting up his display. We hugged and talked for a while. It was good to see a friendly face.

I went over by the stairs, we were on the second floor, and watched the people coming up. I was looking for someone from the Bath Cycle group. I didn't have any cell phone numbers at that time. Some one grabbed me by the arm and when I turned around I was looking into the face of Preston Tyree. He is the Director for the LAB Education. I had taken the LCI course from him this July in Fryeburg and he recognized me. We talked for a while and he told me about the new manual for Road 1. The name has even changed. He was expecting a copy the next day. I turned my attention back to the stairs.

Lo and behold, Davis and two of his people were standing right in front of me. Darcey kind of took me under her wing. I definitely needed help. We exchanged phone numbers and started off. We immediately got separated. There was so much to see I didn't know where to start. I just kind of wondered around. I finally got out my floor plan and figured out where I was. I looked for some interesting displays and set out for them. There were bikes, accessories, clothing, and energy stuff I wanted to see. I found some neat things that I will follow up on. It was interesting to look at the newest thing on the market. A particular mirror got my attention. It bolts onto Shimano STI shifters. I will follow up and order one.

Davis had an owner only party to go to but suggest that I catch a free shuttle to Cross Vegas, a cyclocross bike race. It proved an interesting night. There were three races that I saw. The first was a men's race but not the elite men. The second was the elite women's race followed by the elite men's race. They announced during the second race that Lance Armstrong was registered to race with the elite men. They announced that his plane had landed and then that he was in the house. The race was full of the world's best cyclocross racers.

Continued on next page...



TREASURER'S REPORT

<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$6067.03
Interest	1.81
2008 Rally	2793.04
<u>Total</u>	\$8861.88
<u>Expenses</u>	
Banner & Bumper Stickers	743.46
Working lunch	27.82
<u>Total</u>	\$8090.60

A full financial report for 2008 is available upon request.

Inter-Bike cont.

By Bob Bruce

The ladies race was something else but the men was better. Lance did not fair very well. He finished around 21 of 40. He fell on a sharp turn on the first lap. It was a very different type of racing for him and he was in some very good competition. No one I talked to expected him to win or do very well.

Day two was much like Day one. I checked out some clothing contacts for club wear. We are thinking about new jerseys for next year. I returned to the hotel a little early and relaxed before the journey home. It would be an adventure in itself. I caught a couple of circus shows at the hotel and went to bed early.

The trip home started well. When it became time for the airplane to take they announced that there was a mechanical problem and the flight would be delayed 2 hours. That meant that I would not make the connecting flight. There were no seats on other flights into Portland so I was sent to Philadelphia and put up over night. I got to bed at 12:00. The flight from there went well. The whole trip must be considered an adventure but a success. I learned much more about the world of bicycles.

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FOR SALE

**Have something
You Want To Buy,
Sell or Trade?**

1. Yakima raptor roof bike carrier. Can fit either Thule or Yakima roof bars. You can secure your bike without removing the rear wheel. \$40.00.
2. Thule 440 Specialty Railing Carrier for Subaru Legacy wagons with factory racks. We had this on our 1999 model but I am sure it would fit on cars about that same vintage. It does not work on Subaru Outbacks. This is the cross bar only. It goes on and off very easily. It has 2 locks. Valued at \$110.00 a steal at \$65.00.

Pictures of these items can be emailed. Contact Mark Wheeler for more info (207) 443-5712 or kandmwheeler@suscom-maine.net

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