

THE LOUISVILLE BICYCLE CLUB

Founded in 1897

www.louisvillebicycleclub.org

May/June 2009

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New Rider / Bike Handling
Classes begin May 4, 2009

Masters Natz June 27-July 4
Volunteer Today!

*The Louisville Cyclist is a bi-monthly
newsletter of the Louisville Bicycle Club.*

*Please submit articles and photos to:
David Ryan ("PaCkMaN")
1906 Lower Hunters Trace
Louisville, KY 40216,
editor@louisvillebicycleclub.org,
502-447-7814.*

**Deadline for the July/August
2009 issue is June 10**

*Please let us know what you think this
newsletter needs. After all, it's your
newsletter!*



Paul Battle: The 100,000-Mile Man

On April 4, 2009, in his 24th riding season, Paul Battle became the first known person to ride 100,000 miles with the Louisville Bicycle Club. That is 100,000 miles on official scheduled club rides, not counting any other riding he may have done in the last quarter-century.

Tim Meyer asked Paul via the KyCycList mailing list, "For [posterity] do you remember your first club mile, when, where, what kind of bike you rode, who were the heavy hitters in the club?"

Paul's response was:

Yes, I remember my first ride with the club, it was a 35 miler from Tom Sawyer park. I showed up on my Nashiki sport 10 speed, long pants, and with a feeling of anticipation of doing a long ride with a group. Jim Tretter knew I was new to the group and rode with me at the start so I would feel comfortable. But after a short while I told him I was good and he could go ahead and ride with the faster riders. Alan Darby and Emily Boone were also encouraging. The ride that day was to the old Brownsboro Store on Hwy 329, an out and back which meant you had to do the mountain valley of Sleepy Hollow - twice. When I saw my first cow and all of the country side that was there, now called the "Commons", I thought I was in heaven.

I wasn't fast in those days so it wasn't long before I was last at the back of the group trying desperately to keep up with two mature looking ladies riding at a speedy 12 miles per hour. It was a good ride. The hills were intimidating and a challenge but everyone was encouraging and I was hooked. There is nothing like a natural high, and I was high on bicycling, and have never returned to earth.

Asked on behalf of this newsletter for some further reminiscences, Paul Battle sent the following:

I have so many memories on rides with the club I have no idea where to begin, but here are a few.

Friendship: I was on a ride several years ago in Indiana, a fifty-miler I think, and was trying to keep up with the front group that was flying over the course at a pretty good clip. I could hang when they were on the flats but would get dropped going up hills. I was riding



Paul Battle congratulated by Bobbie Leslie at the point of his 100,000th club mile. (photo courtesy Dr. Lawrence Preble)

Continued on p. 10

EMAIL NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

The LBC 2006 budget for newsletter costs is \$5,000, which represents nearly 25% of our total program costs. In an attempt to reduce this cost so monies can be used by other programs, the Executive Committee has introduced email newsletter delivery. This optional service began with the newsletter for May/June 2006. The newsletter is sent in PDF format to those who have signed up for this service. Each delivery saves the club \$1.25 in printing and mailing costs per issue per membership. Those who choose email delivery will typically receive their newsletter 4-7 days before those who receive their newsletters via regular mail.

Club membership applications and membership reminder postcards will be modified to include this option. If, after trying email delivery, you find you prefer the paper copy, you can revert back to regular mail delivery.

As of January 2009, almost 2/3 of LBC members have signed up to receive the e-newsletter!

Thanks for your cooperation.
LBC Executive Committee

Also, beginning with March/April 2007:
The electronic newsletter contains
COLOR PICTURES!

To sign up for this option please go to
<http://www.louisvillebicycleclub.org/forms/enewsletter.htm>.

**Receive
Your Newsletter
by Email!**

YOUR CLUB OFFICERS (Executive Committee)

Earl Jones

President

502 287-7770

president@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Andrew Murphy

VP Advocacy

502 895-9094

advocacy@louisvillebicycleclub.org

David Ryan (Packman)

VP Communications

502 447-7814

communications@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Tom Armstrong

VP Education

502 499-7089

education@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Mark Luking

VP Racing

502 423-7072

racing@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Kevin Jones

VP Touring

502 599-1981

touring@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Barbara Tretter

Secretary

502 491-7120

secretary@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Jim Tretter

Treasurer

502 491-7120

treasurer@louisvillebicycleclub.org

The Louisville Bicycle Club is affiliated with the **League of American Bicyclists (LAB)** and the **United States Cycling Federation (USCF)**.

NEW MEMBERS

Anderson, Casey	1442 Christy Ave	Louisville, KY	40204 (502) 572-0361
Auerbach, Rob	3738 Lexington Rd	Louisville, KY	40207 (502) 396-7011
Barnhouse, Steven	816 Ahland Rd	Louisville, KY	40207 (502) 797-8696
Beasley, Kyle	3111 Lakewood Blvd	Jeffersonville, IN	47130 (502) 681-7039
Beeles, Edward & Justeen	1627 Cedar Circle Dr	Crestwood, KY	40014 (502) 241-8182
Beisner, Bryan	12700 Woodside Dr	Prospect, KY	40059 (502) 228-7523
Brodth, Tom	6409 Moorhaven Drive	Louisville, KY	40228 (502) 239-0488
Brown, Ray	517 Harrison Cir	Mt. Washington, KY	40047 (502) 538-8677
Browne, Raylene & Jeff	363 Mt Eden Rd	Shepherdsville, KY	40165 (502) 921-9286
Delph, Daniel	5609 Clearridge Place	Louisville, KY	40229 (502) 807-0158
Durso, Frank	315 Monohan Dr	Louisville, KY	40207 (502) 384-6517
Eberhardt, John & Rayna	4909 Celeste Dr	Louisville, KY	40228 (502) 417-4685
Fitzgerald MD, Marjorie	2902 Juniper Hill Rd	Louisville, KY	40206 (502) 895-4583
Helm, Gene	12419 Greenbriar Blvd	Sellersburg, IN	47172 (502) 263-9137
Lickteig, Greg	3501 Axton Lane	Goshen, KY	40026 (502) 228-9170
Morris, Stephen	2009 Crooked Creek Ct	Crestwood, KY	40014
Newbold, Mark	1000 Veterans Pkwy	Clarksville, IN	47129 (812) 288-6100
Newman, Ruth	731 Greenridge Lane	Louisville, KY	40207 (502) 895-8113
Pocker, Eric	9905 Sunkist Way	Louisville, KY	40272 (502) 290-4114
Raque, Greg	1231 Bardstown Rd	Louisville, KY	40204 (502) 775-9444
Rhyne, Sarah	6 Eastover Ct	Louisville, KY	40206 (502) 899-2961
Roberson, Jesse	11520 Shelbyville Rd	Louisville, KY	40243 (502) 245-1955
Scharff, Bob & Judy	3009 Evanna Ct	Floyds Knobs, IN	47119 (812) 923-0916
Snow, Donald	1029 Springside Way	Louisville, KY	40223 (502) 245-6870
Sullivan, Cindi	1508 Cherokee Rd	Louisville, KY	40205
Weinberger, Jason	323 W Broadway Ste 700	Louisville, KY	40202
Wheat, Susan & Family	7011 Ridge Run Circle	Prospect, KY	40059 (502) 241-2008
Wheatley, Crystal	822 S 6th Street	Louisville, KY	40202 (502) 714-8710
Yates, David	2346 Julian Circle	Newbury, IN	47676 (812) 490-9374
Zinsious, Paul	6808 Fernhaven Rd	Louisville, KY	40228 (502) 376-7248

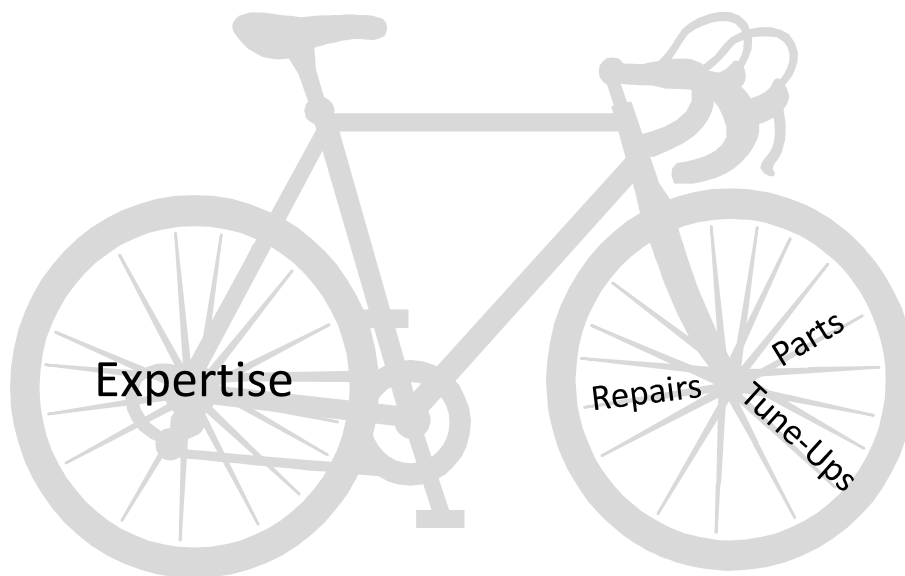
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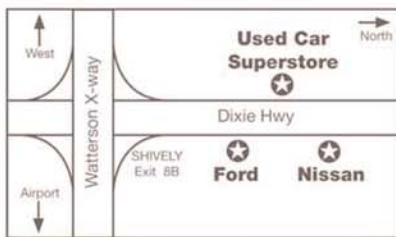
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Spring Racing Great, Best to Come

by Mark Luking, LBC VP Racing



CYCLING TEAM



The McDonald's Spring Classic Race Series got underway on March 14th with the Long Run Park Circuit race, which was hosted by LBC's racing team: BikeClicks/Team Louisville. Though the weather was less than ideal (cold and rainy) we still had over 175 racers from around the region come out and test their fitness on the 1.8-mile rolling loop in the park.

BC/TL members had been training well in the months leading up to the race and we were anxious to see how our Cat 4 & 5 racers, several of whom were racing for the first time, would stack up. This would also be the debut of our new Cat 3 squad. A combination of the weather conditions, difficulties negotiating the large fields of racers and some mechanical problems prevented us from doing as well as we had hoped. Chris Nevitt and Jay Porter finished 7th and 8th in the Cat 3 race. In the 4/5 race, James Freeman finished 3rd and Charles Garner and Nick Hayes finished 9th and 10th. Teri Meek was 4th and Suzanne Webster finished 6th in the Cat 4 women's race, and Carol Flinchbaugh finished 5th in the women's Cat 1-2-3 race.

The Promotion Cycling Circuit Race in Lexington was the next race on the schedule and both the weather and the results were much better this time around. BC/TL teammates worked together, covering any breaks and positioned themselves well throughout the races and everyone's hard work paid off. Aaron Mundy won the Cat 3 race, Tim Hargrave was 5th and Steven Webster and Jay Porter finished 7th and 9th. Charles Garner won the Cat 4/5 race and James Freeman was 7th. Dan Loescher took 2nd place in the Master's 50+ race and Darrell Edwards finished 5th. Teri Meek won the women's Cat 4 race and Suzanne was 4th. This was one of the best showing ever for our team!

The third race was the Shelby County road race, which was a 10-mile loop with 4 corners in Waddy, Ky. Our results weren't quite as spectacular as Lexington, but they were still pretty good, with several members finishing in the top ten, including Aaron Mundy, 3rd; Tim Hargrave, 5th, Chris Nevitt, 8th and Jay Porter 10th in the Cat 3 race. Dan Loescher was 3rd in the Master's 50+. Teri Meek took 3rd place in the women's Cat 4, while Joan Hanscom was 4th and Suzanne was 7th. James Freeman finished 7th in the Cat 4/5 race and Will Bain was 3rd in the juniors 15-16 yr. race.

There are still several races to go in the spring series, including the Fallen Heroes Circuit Race hosted by the Louisville

Firefighters in Shawnee Park. The highlight of the series will be a weekend of crits beginning on Saturday, May 16th, in Frankfort. Then on Sunday, May 17th, Norton's Commons will host the series finale, including presentation of the overall prizes for the spring series. This is definitely a race you will not want to miss. Norton's Commons is the perfect venue for criterium racing. It has a classic village atmosphere that gives it the look and feel of European races and residents are even planning a street festival that will further add to the excitement of this event.

Here are a couple of other racing events that you should mark on your calendar:

On June 13, the Olmsted Conservancy is hosting the first-ever "Tour de Olmsted", a bicycle festival presented by Rainbow Blossom, which will feature family cycling activities, a time trial race to the top of the park's overlook and circuit races around the lower loop. It should be a great opportunity to enjoy one of Louisville's finest Olmsted Parks, so bring your family and your bikes.

June 27 thru July 4 USA Cycling Masters Nationals will be back in Louisville. This is a national competition featuring some of the best men and women Masters racers from around the country including several from right here in our hometown.

The venues include road races in Cherokee Park, June 28 thru 30; Time Trials on July 1 and Crits at Churchill Downs on July 2 thru 4th. These are great races to come and watch. Cherokee Park offers some spectacular views of the course, perfect for a picnic while you watch the cyclists speeding by! And Churchill Downs; where else could you watch bicycle and horse racing at the same time?

As always, we also need a ton of volunteers to help with this weeklong event. In Cherokee Park alone, there are 16 intersections that each requires corner marshals. With two shifts a day for 3 days this is nearly 100 people for just this job. If you would like to help out, please take a minute to log on to the Greater Louisville Sports Commission's web site: www.louisvillesports.org, click on volunteer and register your contact information. Be sure and indicate cycling as your preferred activity.

Come on out and cheer for the men and women on your club's racing team!

2008 Financial Report

by Jim Tretter, LBC Treasurer

Club by-laws require that the treasurer file “a written Annual Financial Report for each fiscal year outlining the financial condition of the Club and summarizing the previous year’s transactions and events, said Annual Financial Report to be published in the Newsletter.” The Club accounting is on a “cash” basis so the accounting reflects when receipts are actually received or expenses actually paid vs. when they are incurred; there are no accruals. (details on p.7) Key points relating to the 2008 Financial Report are as follows:

- The OKHT in 2008 netted \$10,945 compared to \$8,594 and \$16,986 in the two previous years.
- The Annual Awards Banquet for 2007 was held January 19, 2008 at Big Spring Country Club. Most of the banquet costs in 2008 are from that banquet. The Annual Awards Banquet for 2008 was held January 31, 2009 at Big Spring Country Club and most costs from that banquet will be reflected in the 2009 Operating Statement.
- LBC Membership was at an all-time high of 1,071 at 12/31/2008, up from 1,010 at 12/31/2007. Receipts from Memberships were \$12,205 in 2008 vs. \$11,690 in 2007.
- About 60% of the November/December 2008 newsletters were sent via e-mail vs. 30% from the year before. This increase in email saves the Club over \$2000 / year in printing, postage and handling costs.



Lexington: Aaron Mundy's winning sprint in the Cat 3 race.
(photo courtesy Craig Dooley, Backroads Photography)



The BikeClicks/Team Louisville squad at Lexington.
(photo courtesy Craig Dooley, Backroads Photography)

Louisville Bicycle Club
Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances
For the year ended December 31, 2008

	2008	2007	
Receipts			
Advertising	-	-	
Gross Sale of Products	13,285.00	18,460.00	
Interest Income	1,313.62	2,277.89	
Memberships	12,205.00	11,690.00	
Other Revenues	0.07	305.00	
Program Receipts	62,805.00	56,976.00	
Sponsorships	30,600.00	31,190.00	
Uniform Collections	16,985.04	12,928.00	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	137,193.73	133,826.89	
Expenditures			
Affiliations (LAB, USCF)	245.00	485.00	
Awards & Door Prizes	3,596.27	12,514.37	
Contractor Fees	1,581.10	1,485.00	
Cost of Goods Sold	11,542.50	15,067.00	
Donations to Charities	6,750.00	7,497.00	
Entertainment	1,850.00	1,925.00	
Entry Fees	10,919.46	1,696.00	
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	5,544.15	6,809.63	
Fees(Acctg,Banking)	258.15	22.00	
Fees(Legal, Incorp)	4.00	4.00	
Insurance	5,060.40	3,499.78	
Occupancy & Rental	3,700.00	5,523.50	
Postage & Shipping	2,249.76	3,117.49	
Printing & Publications	3,292.58	4,350.72	
Prizes (Races)	2,658.00	1,617.84	
Program Expense & Other	12,856.31	19,735.64	
Refreshments & Food	15,646.40	24,125.45	
Sales & Usage Tax	3,876.72	1,500.41	
Seminars, Classes, T&L	381.54	1,440.80	
Supplies(computer,postage,etc)	731.53	872.38	
Sympathy/Bereavement	-	-	
Telephone & Internet	325.15	269.55	
Uniforms & Club Merchandise	24,297.96	23,796.29	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	117,366.98	137,354.85	
Excess of Receipts over Expenditures	19,826.75	(3,527.96)	
Profit and Loss by Program in 2008			
	Receipts	Expenses	Net
Banquet	1,580.00	5,538.46	(3,958.46)
Brevet	1,415.00	1,106.95	308.05
Communications	-	4,079.60	(4,079.60)
Education	-	2,721.58	(2,721.58)
General	14,574.91	3,699.41	10,875.50
OKHT	64,610.50	53,665.54	10,944.96
Racing	55,013.32	44,621.99	10,391.33
Socials	-	1,424.92	(1,424.92)
Summit	-	283.53	(283.53)
Touring	-	225.00	(225.00)
Overall Total	137,193.73	117,366.98	19,826.75
Fund Balances			
	31-Dec-08	31-Dec-07	
General Account CD's	30,792.25	33,508.55	
General Account Checking	19,758.51	9,869.79	
Racing Money Market	8,641.24	8,611.32	
Racing Checking	19,368.03	6,460.09	
Summit Checking	269.85	553.38	
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	78,829.88	59,003.13	
Memberships			
	31-Dec-08	31-Dec-07	
Individual/Youth	468	475	
Family (at 2.5 members)	241	214	
TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS	1,071	1,010	



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 HARO-SE-PREMIUM-FIT-DK

TANDEM-TRIWHEELER-UNICYCLE-TRAILERS

SCHWINN & BH EXERCISERS

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CLOTHING : CANNONDALE-DECSENTE-PEARL IZUMI-PRIMAL

SHOES : SHIMANO-SIDI-DIADORA-PEARL IZUMI

HELMETS : BELL-GIRO-PROTEC

EYEWEAR : OAKLEY-GIRO-TIFOSI

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2009 New Rider / Bike Handling Classes

by Tom Armstrong, LBC VP Education

Are you just joining the club, and want to ride fast with the folks in the spiffy jerseys? Or are you more interested in riding by yourself on the country roads surrounding our area? Would you rather learn to use your bicycle for errand-running and/or commuting, but aren't sure about where you belong on the road? Do these questions apply to someone you know? The New Rider Classes are for you! We teach you essential safety skills to help you prevent incidents, emergency maneuvers to avoid crashes, and what to do when stuff does go wrong.

This summer's classes will be offered in two different locations. The first session will begin Monday May 4 and run through June 29. We will not have a class on Memorial Day May 25 (the date of the Mayor's Hike and Bike). This first class will meet at the Yellow Parking Lot for Waterfront Park (where Stop Lite Liquors used to be) on River Road.

The second session will begin July 6 and run through August 24. The second session will meet at 4500 Bowling Blvd, next to the Baptist East Wellness Center (in the parking lot for the Jillian's Office Center).

Please note that all classes will begin promptly at 6:15 PM. This is a change from prior years.

Based on feedback from last year's participants and discussions among the instructors, we have made a few minor changes to the program. Participants will be encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible, as different hands on skills will be covered each week by different instructors. We will be tracking attendance and working on weekly evaluations. Riders will receive a simple handbook with basic cycling information, a mileage log to track their class participation, and evaluation forms. Certificates of Completion will be given to all participants who attend six of the eight sessions. These will be handed out during the Mayor's Labor Day ride or will be sent by mail, as appropriate.

Tracking attendance and getting feedback from the participants will help us improve the format for future classes. If you are interested in volunteering to work with these classes throughout the summer, please contact Tom Armstrong at 523-9581. Mileage credit will be given to all LBC members who assist in the classes. We will need some extra people willing to be there for all eight sessions.

LOUISVILLE BICYCLE CLUB

2009 NEW RIDER / BIKE HANDLING CLASSES
EVERY MONDAY EVENING – 6:15 PM – 9:00 PM
MAY 4 – JUNE 29
RIVERFRONT PARK - YELLOW PARKING LOT
RIVER ROAD - EAST OF DOWNTOWN

- 5/4 ABC QUICK CHECK: Things to do before every ride
ROAD RULES AND ETIQUETTE: Traffic Rules, hand signals, voice signals, eye contact, road courtesy
- 5/11 HELMET FIT / CLOTHING AND GEAR: (1) What is required (2) What you should have (3) Additional items that are nice to have
GEARING AND SHIFTING: (1) What gear to ride in (2) Number of gears available (3) When to change gears (4) Big or small ring?
- 5/18 LANE POSITIONING: Where do you ride, preparing to turn
SCANNING / LANE CHANGING: How to change lanes smoothly and correctly
- 6/1 BIKE FIT: Fitting the bike to you. The number 1 problem with most new bikes and riders
TIRE CHANGING: How to repair a flat – by yourself – 15 miles from anywhere
- 6/8 ROCK / HAZARD DODGING: How to avoid a rock, hole, or other hazard in the road
QUICK TURNS: How to turn your bike to avoid accidents
- 6/15 EMERGENCY STOPS: For those times when you don't have any other choice
JUMPING: How to lift your bike over road hazards to avoid snakebite flats and blowouts
- 6/22 BUMPING: How to survive a bump, avoid panic, and stay upright
TRACK STAND: Definition, purpose, and advantage
- 6/29 BASIC BIKE MAINTENANCE: What you should do regularly and what to have a bike shop do
RIDING TIPS: Things to do to improve riding safety, speed, turning, climbing, and shifting
NUTRITION: What, when, and how much should you eat before, during and after a ride

EVERY CLASS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- One hour of instruction by seasoned riders followed by practice on your bike.
- An easy, 10 to 12 mile "practice" ride with traffic, signals, stop signs, lights, busy roads, park roads, and subdivision streets.
- Class participants are split into smaller groups of similar ability with instructors in the front and rear of each group. Individual instruction / assistance is provided if needed.
- Rest stops if and when needed – nobody gets dropped or left behind.
- Follow-up discussion and evaluation after the rides.
- Certificates of Completion will be awarded to all participants attending six of the eight sessions.
- Take-Home educational material provided to all participants.

THESE FREE CLASSES ARE SPONSORED BY THE LOUISVILLE BICYCLE CLUB IN SUPPORT OF THE MAYOR'S HEALTHY HOMETOWN MOVEMENT AND THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLIST'S "BIKE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY" PROGRAM.

(See July/Aug 2009 newsletter for July/August class schedule or go to <http://www.louisvillebicycleclub.org/>.)

Paul Battle: The 100,000-Mile Man (cont. from p.1)

with another rider who had only been with the club a year or so and, like me, was working hard to keep up. We didn't know one another but had seen each other at a few rides and our riding abilities were about the same, so together we were. Well at one of the climbs we lost ground on the main group but were at the top of the hill as they were flying down the other side. At the bottom of the hill was a sharp 90 degree turn to the left. Two of the riders in the group went flying off into this corn field while their buddies just kept on going, never stopping to check on their well-being, nothing. Jay Palmer and I stopped to see if the two were okay and made a pact with one another. If one ever went down, had a flat ect., the other would stay and help where needed. From that day a friendship was born. Oh, by the way, except for a few scratches, torn shorts and damaged dignity, the two in the corn field were fine.

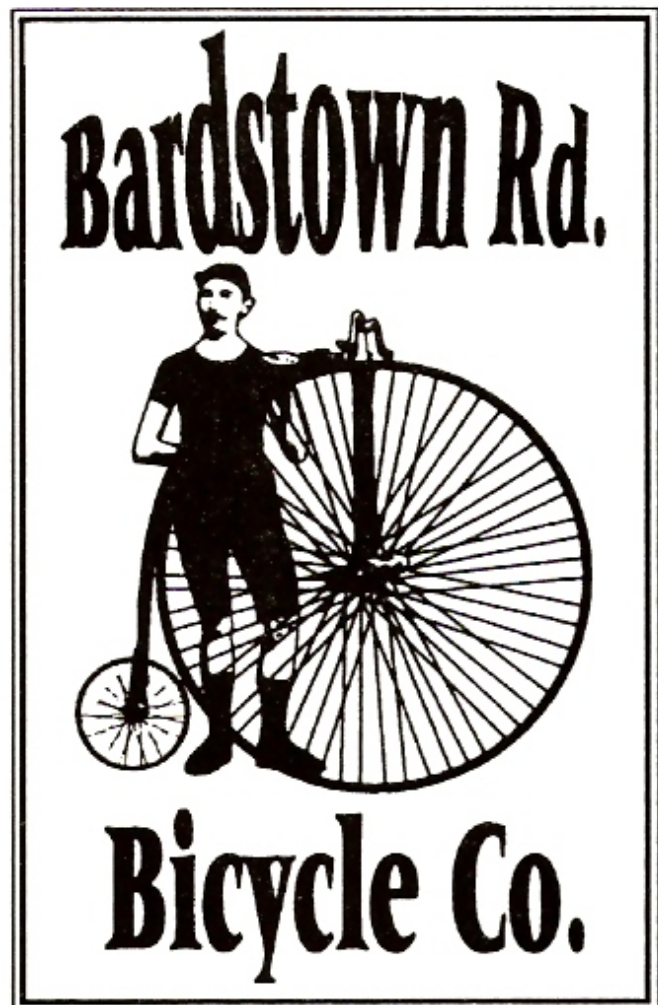
What's in a name? Self-contained, the buzz word when going on a ride with or without a group, meaning you carry the needed tools in case you have bike problems on the road. Most of us carry our stuff in those little black bags you see hanging on the backs of our bikes. I said "most of us"! On a ride several years ago a rider showed up for a club ride on a mountain bike with this bag on his back. Didn't ride too fast, didn't say much, but he could ride. Well after a few rides with the club our curiosity got the best of us so we inquired as to what was in the bag. "Tools", was the reply and nothing else. Well if you keep riding long enough sooner or later something will be needed to be fixed on the bike. New guy had a flat or something and out from the bag came a tool kit, not your typical tire iron, no sir, but winches and pliers and stuff. I was impressed. It was on a later ride that gave way to legend. It started to rain on one of the rides and everyone stopped to put on their rain gear, you know, a light rain jacket, but not David. Out of his bag came a full rainsuit, a yellow, rubberized, heavy, walk-around rainsuit - and a pair of rubber rain boots, not the kind you pull over you shoe, oh no, these came up to the calf, with buckles. We were impressed. And some one in the group said he is one heck of a Packman and in time the name just stuck.

Watch what you drink. I rode a Dave Runge century in Indiana one lovely day in May, destination: Laconia. Jay, Jim Tretter, John Larson and several others made our way over the route having a pretty good time. We were hot and tired when we got to Laconia but were heartened to see the welcome sign on the Dairy Bell store that said "Welcome Louisville Wheelmen". Jay, John and son Kile, myself and others went into the Dairy Bell as others went down to the local grocery. We had hamburgers, cokes and ice cream at the Dairy Bell, filled up our water bottles with the same nice cool water we had drunk inside and off we went to continue the ride. We made it back to parking lot at the Holiday Inn in good time and feeling that sense of accomplishment after a tough century. The ride was on a Saturday. The plan was to take Sunday off and ride on Monday, Memorial Day.

Sometime late Sunday night and into the early morning hours of Monday the pain struck. Agony, the porcelain bowl became my only friend all morning. What did my wife put into the fried chicken from the night before? Whatever it was was running through me. Mercy, I swore off eating chicken of any kind that day. Needless to say, I didn't make it to the ride later on or work

the following day. When I did go to work I went out to see Jay and he began talking about how sick he was the day after the century and his symptoms were the same as mine. Strange, I thought, he hadn't eaten any fried chicken. So I called around to see if anyone else had been sick and found out that Jim had had the same affection for his toilet bowl as I had. While he was throwing up, Barbara was giving him hell for being drunk on his son's graduation night. Several others had similar stories except those who ate at the local grocery. They were fine. Why? Because the owner of the store recommended that they buy bottled water because the town water was contaminated. Bad water; it wasn't the chicken. It had taken almost 36 hours for the water to take effect, so no one tied the ride to our illnesses. Since then, whenever I ride in Indiana I buy bottled water.

Tap water: Don't do it.



CARSON TORPEY
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 (502) 485-9795

I ran the experiment and was immediately nonplussed! The measurements were nowhere near “close.” After 24 hours, the tire filled with CO2 had lost precisely 35 pounds of pressure. A day later, I had my result for plain air—a loss of only 8 PSI! I tried it again and got the same results. The difference was very real. What was going on here?



Nitrogen and oxygen molecules each contain two atoms. A carbon dioxide molecule contains three atoms, one carbon atom, and two oxygen atoms. Wouldn't that require carbon dioxide to be a bigger molecule than either nitrogen or oxygen? Wouldn't that imply that CO2 should have a harder time leaking through the pores in the rubber than regular air? Well, no, actually—it doesn't.

All three molecules in question are very tiny. Their sizes are measured in angstroms—that is one ten-billionth of a meter! However, nitrogen dominates the molecular contest as the biggest with a size of 3.6 angstroms. Oxygen comes in second place at 3.5 angstroms. Poor little carbon dioxide is only 3.4 angstroms wide! Wow, it has more atoms but ends up being a smaller molecule!

It turns out that there is a complex interaction between the electrical forces binding the atoms together that affects the overall size of the molecules. Because of that, the atoms in CO2 are confined to a smaller space than either O2 or N2 even though CO2 has more atoms! This means that carbon dioxide very effectively dissolves into butyl rubber and evaporates out the other side.

Manufacturers of gas products often use what is called a molecular sieve to separate nitrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide from air. A bike inner tube makes a pretty good molecular sieve. Pure oxygen will leak out of a tire 3—5 times faster than pure nitrogen, because of oxygen's smaller size. But carbon dioxide will leak out much faster than that, up to 12 times faster than nitrogen.

One manufacturer of cycling products has come up with a direct replacement for CO2 cartridges guaranteed to keep bike tires inflated for up to a year. It's called “Stayfill” available from <http://stayfill.com>. It uses a proprietary gas made with much bigger gas molecules than normal air. They recommend this product for mountain bikes with the motto, “Fill it and forget it.” However, it is expensive, and in my opinion, not practical for routine road bike usage—

the slowest leaking gas offers little benefit if frequent punctures allow all that expensive “Stayfill” gas to leak out through a hole in the tire. Mountain bike tires are more durable and should fare better. My recommendation for road bikes would be to do what most experienced road bikers already do: Use CO2 for quick repairs only. It will get you home, but not much farther. Pump daily before each ride, with fresh, free air. Free is a very good price.

Dr. Larry Preble is LBC's resident Mad (Dog) Scientist and a graduate of both Vanderbilt University and Logan College of Chiropractic. He has headed research projects in computer science, psychology and biomechanics. After moving to Louisville, he wrote for both PCM and Rainbow Magazines for several years and continues in the practice of chiropractic in the Louisville area. Larry is an enthusiastic LBC Mad Dog cyclist and is often spotted riding either his Bacchetta recumbent or Trek upright bicycle.



References: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/60431/High-Btu-Projects-Using-Pressure-Swing-Absorption-Technology>, <http://www.moleculargate.com/carbon-dioxide-co2-removal/Pipeline-Quality-Natural-Gas-SPEarticle.html>, <http://www.stayfill.com/>

(For the view that solubility of CO2 into polymers is more heavily influenced by other factors than molecular size, that CO2 is electrically attracted to the rubber molecules gorging them into interstices while O2 and N2 are repelled and must be forced through, see <http://www.madsci.org/posts/archives/may98/895552329.Ch.r.html>. - Ed.)

BICYCLE SPORT INC.

132 BRECKINRIDGE LANE
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40207
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Is CO2 Bad Air?
by Laurence D. Preble, D.C.

I was incredulous! But when long-time bike mechanic Tom Armstrong has something to say, it is wise to listen. We had just finished fixing a flat—I am still impressed how fast Tom can do that. I inflated the inner tube with a CO2 cartridge and was about to get underway when Tom reminded me to release all the CO2 that evening and refill with air before the next ride, because any residual CO2 would cause the tire to lose pressure faster than normal.

I had heard this before but thought it sounded like an urban myth. I asked Tom why CO2 should lose pressure faster than normal air. He was confident of his assertion, but wasn't sure why it should be so.

One might ask why a tire loses pressure at all, even with normal air. That much I knew: bicycle inner tubes are generally made of synthetic butyl rubber which is slightly porous. Air molecules, mostly nitrogen (N2) and oxygen (O2), are

small enough to fit through the miniscule gaps in the material so that over time, the tube loses pressure. Why should carbon dioxide (CO2) fit through the pores in the butyl rubber any faster than nitrogen or oxygen molecules? Is the CO2 molecule much smaller than nitrogen or oxygen molecules? Has anyone actually bothered to test the claim that tires filled with CO2 deflate more quickly than air-filled tires? I had questions and wanted some answers!

Designing an experiment would be easy. I would fill a tire with CO2, measure the pressure and let it stand for a day, check the pressure again, empty out the tire and repeat the procedure with normal air; then compare the loss in pressure for air versus CO2. I figured that if the measurements turned out to be close, I could repeat the experiment until I became certain whether the difference was real or not. A quick test showed that a 16 gram CO2 cartridge gave me 101 PSI; I would use that test pressure for plain air as well.

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The Louisville Bicycle Club

P.O. Box 35541
Louisville, KY 40232-5541

Louisville Bicycle Club Contacts:

Statisticians

Carl and Sandy Davis
statistician@louisvillebicycleclub.org
3001 Lincoln Trail Court
Crestwood, KY 40014

Website

www.louisvillebicycleclub.org

Listserve

kycyclist@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Webmaster

David "PaCkMaN" Ryan
webmaster@louisvillebicycleclub.org

Newsletter Editor

David "PaCkMaN" Ryan
editor@louisvillebicycleclub.org