

# Chain Reaction

Summer 2025

A Quarterly Publication of



Orange County Wheelmen

# OCW CLUB LINKS

---

HOME PAGE: [www.ocwheelmen.org](http://www.ocwheelmen.org)

CALENDAR: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar)

OFFICERS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020)

EVENTS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map)

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: [www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members](http://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members)

## MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

---

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

## AMTRAK METRIC AND CENTURY

---

September 6, 2025. Both the Century and Metric routes will begin at the Irvine Transportation Center, where you'll check in, pick up your wristband, and have the option to drop off a small bag for transport to your destination (please note: no coolers allowed). More info: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/amtraksitemap>

## REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

---

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

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. Our website constantly updates new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. The website continually upgrades to protect your personal information along with having it available for our members to connect to each other.

**Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW!**

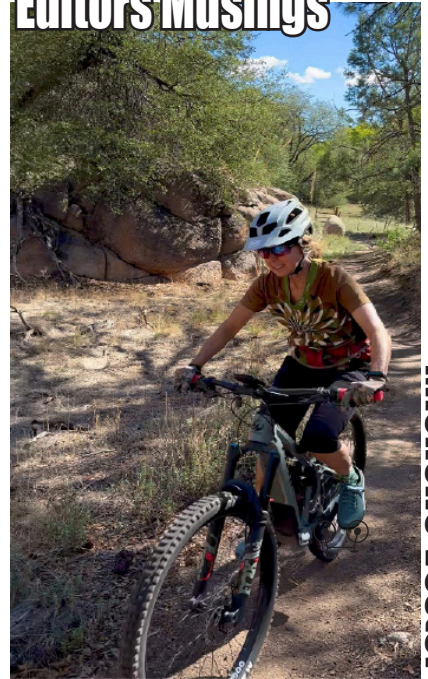
## IN THIS ISSUE

---

President's Message	Page 3
VP Message	Page 6
Word Search	Page 5
Amtrak Century	Page 8
Mountain Bike Dude	Page 17
Huntry Cyclist	Page 22
Word Search Solved	Page 19
Our Sponsors	Page 26



## Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

Hello Summer!

Summer is always the best time of the year, with longer daylight to get out on the bike or other fun outdoor activities.

This edition has a few of our members telling stories about their own adventures outdoors, and the pictures are amazing!

Be sure to check out all the fun events OCW is putting on for 2025, one of which is bringing back Amtrak in September! If you can't ride consider volunteering as it is so rewarding. Also, the jersey this year for Amtrak is truly awesome. Learn more by reading Dan's President's article on page 3, Rob's VP article on page 6, and Peter Gerard's article on page 8.

Don't forget about the OCW Member Challenge. Learn more about that on page 23.

I hope everyone enjoys summer. I know for me I can't wait for the Tour de France!

Michelle Vester  
Editor, Chain Reaction



# President's Dan Ignosci Message

Your current Orange County Wheelmen Board continues to work toward the 2025 Amtrak Century ride in early September. We currently have about 20 century train and truck registrations available and about 40 remaining for our metric century ride.

Secure your tickets now by clicking this [link](#). Cyclists that have registered will be able to purchase Amtrak Century commemorative wear like the picture provided. In an effort to sell out the 2025 ride, we are in the process of reaching out to cycling groups that participated in previous Amtrak centuries, so purchase your OCW member discounted tickets now while they are still available.



Several OCW Board members have recently taken part in two cycling advocacy events over the past month.

The Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) came to our May Board meeting to share information regarding the Streetcar project currently being built in Santa Ana. It is easy to

imagine that if the Santa Ana project was successful, streetcars could be replicated in other mobility-dependent Orange County areas, like Disneyland, etc.



Picture of route (above)



Picture of streetcar (above)

Lee Stebbins and I participated in the Irvine Mobility Summit, hosted by the Orange County Cycling Business Coalition, in early June. Given that most of our rides originate in the Irvine area, it is great to have a voice in potential infrastructure improvements.



Safe riding and as always, feel free to reach out to me regarding any OCW matter at [VP@OCWwheelmen.org](mailto:VP@OCWwheelmen.org)

## OCW CYCLING BAGS NOW AVAILABLE!



**CLASSIC, PRO, WL AND  
GIANT SIZES AVAILABLE  
STARTING AT \$84.99**

[HTTPS://PEDALINDUSTRIES.COM/COLLECTIONS/OCW-ORANGE-COUNTY-WHEELMEN-STORE](https://pedalindustries.com/collections/ocw-orange-county-wheelmen-store)

# BOARD MEETING MINUTES



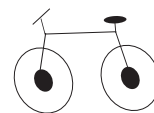
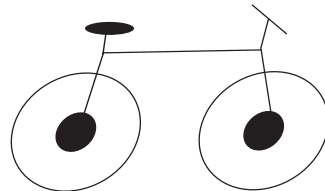
**Click Here**



**Find all the bikes!**

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

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



# WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

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

Sunny	Hot	Humid	Warm
Breezy	Relaxing	Vacation	Swimming
Gardening	Flowers	Beach	Sunshine
Lazy	Picnic	Barbeque	Fireworks
Outdoors	Tan	Sunburn	Fun

 Find the solved puzzle



# Vice President's Rob Crawford Message

Summer has arrived and even though we're only halfway through the year, we can easily say that 2025 has already been a busy year for OCW. As we've talked about, we kicked off this year with some ideas to improve membership engagement and build momentum for the club.

The first thing we did was put the Amtrak Century back on the calendar for early September of this year. Over the years, this ride has become one of the cornerstones of our club and this year we decided that it was time to bring it back. We've already seen that it's been a great way to re-engage our membership, but we're also learning that bringing it back after 7 years is proving to be a lot of work. Over the last few months we've been working to secure space with Amtrak, update our insurance, obtain multiple city permits, arrange for rest stops, find trucks to haul our bikes back to Irvine, etc. We're getting all the pieces in place and registration has been filling up fast, so we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. One of the last pieces is going to be getting a full team of volunteers assembled to help us support the ride - so if you're not going to ride, please use the website to sign up as a volunteer. If you can spare the time, we can use the help.

The good news is that over the last few months we've seen our membership jump back up significantly - over 50% growth in just a few months. We can attribute a lot of that uptick to the Amtrak ride, but it's also a result of our push to be more proactive in reaching out to members to remind them to renew. We can thank Rene Costales for his efforts to drive membership and improve member communication this year.

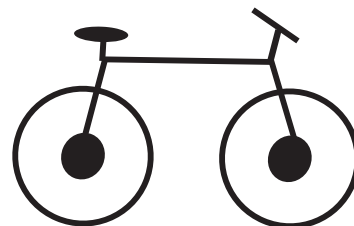
Coming into our Summer months, we can see the benefits of this momentum as our ride partici-

pation has been growing - our quarterly metrics, weekday rides, and weekend rides are all seeing great participation this year. Our Winter Metric ride hosted by the Brewhouse in San Juan Capistrano was well attended this year (at least partially due to the free beer tickets we handed out). Thanks to Larry Locken and others for planning, posting and supporting these rides for us all to enjoy.

We've also had some fun over the last few months tracking our progress in the OCW Member Challenge - this is the program that was initiated by Richard Pickup to track a scoreboard of member achievements for the year. Everything from miles ridden, to event participation contributes to points that are being tracked on our leaderboard.

As always, we are anxious to hear back from you as members. Please use email to provide your feedback on the club and any ideas you have to improve the membership experience.

Rob Crawford  
OCW Vice-President





# JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



**CLICK  
HERE**



# The Amtrak Century is Back!

By Peter Gerrard

Finally. One of SoCal's most iconic rides is "back on track."

For those unfamiliar with "Amtrak," it's a bike ride sponsored and organized by The Orange County Wheelmen. There's some history here: actually, quite a collection of events and a plethora of memories from the event's thousands of participants.

The first Amtrak Century rolled out in 1974. For several years it was a small group of OCW club members riding to San Diego and taking the train back to Santa Ana. The Irvine station did not yet exist.

Although the ridership kept growing, it remained a cozy club ride. Cycling grew in popularity, and so did Amtrak.

Over the years, the routes have been tweaked and tuned to accommodate changes in traffic patterns as Orange County and San Diego have grown and expanded. Too many other long-running events don't do this. The Amtrak Century really is a "rider's ride."

In 1984 there were 500 riders, and OCW bought two banks of group tickets for 250 riders each with staggered San Diego departures. This was a disaster for Amtrak's management. The riders filled most of the seats, leaving virtually no room for the public expecting to travel North.

The solution was a charter train. Simple economics required a minimum of 750 registered riders to keep the price reasonable. The event sold out quickly. The event's cap was increased to 900 riders on the train and 300 rides with a no-train option. This lasted through September 2018, the Amtrak Century's 44th anniversary and the event's final edition.

Until now.

For many of us, it was our first century ride. At least the first well-organized one with well-thought-out and spaced-out rest stops. Which leads me to my first Amtrak Century ride, which I must blame on Chris Horner and Floyd Landis.

They were on Team Mercury, a top-level U.S. Pro

Cycling Team that got tied into a criterium race to celebrate the opening of the Irvine Spectrum. I was working for Ford's Premier Automotive Group (Lincoln/Mercury was part of this) and got asked to help with the V.I.P. efforts. At the first meeting, the day before the race, the event's producer was in a snit: the squad of high school kids he'd hired for \$100 apiece to stuff swag bags and put up posters hadn't shown. I said I could get two kids right away, and my two sons, Graham and Jonathan, hustled over.

I need to note that they toiled away with aplomb. When they were done, the producer asked how old they were. "Sixteen and twelve." He took me aside and said he wasn't going to pay youngsters that much. I said he could man-up and do the right thing, and if he didn't, I'd add it to my expenses. He shrugged, called them over, and gave them the cash.

But the best part was the excitement of the racing, the sheer sound and force field that heralded the approach of the peloton every lap, and how it enthralled Jonathan.

Afterward, he said, "Dad, can my next bike be a road bike?" I told him yes, but that he'd have to agree to ride the Amtrak Century with me.

He agreed. I got him a size 49 Fuji ten-speed, and we started training. From ten miles, to twenty-five, then forty, fifty...all the way to seventy-five. I hoped it was enough.

The day of the ride, we dropped our bags at the Irvine Station and set off in a large sea of happy cyclists. He did great! We had to ride the 5 freeway, and I told him, for safety's sake, he was on his own. I time trialed it. I think he might've been faster.

And as good as it was going, it went south in Del Mar—right at 75 miles. Jonathan was done: I couldn't get him to even consider making it to the next rest stop.

What do you do when a rider goes on strike?

We were saved by a very strong double century guy, Chuck Bramwell, who had a kid the same age at the same school who was a good rider but might've been asserting his pre-teen independence by passing on Amtrak.

"I can't believe you've come this far!" Chuck exclaimed. "I thought I'd see you before San Clemente!"

Chuck's words were inspiring. Jonathan perked up, clipped in, pulled me to the first hilly part of Torrey Pines, and he was gone. He was on his second popsicle when I plodded into the rest stop. "How did you do that?" I asked. "You just do," he replied.

We made it to the end, loaded our bikes, grabbed a burger, and hopped on the train at the appointed hour.

Jonathan was asleep as soon as his head hit the seat back. I don't think he stirred until the train stopped at the Irvine station.

So, I didn't have to explain why all the riders from Arizona were chugging tequila, the meaning of beaded necklaces, and about lap dancing.

Thanks to Dan Ignosci, Terry Kessler, and Lee Stebbins for their research and suggestions.





## *Dixon Lake Overnight Bike Tour*

*By Kevin & Ximena Ansel*

We boarded the Saturday morning Metrolink train and headed to Oceanside, embarking on a weekend overnight bike tour with the Meet Up West Coast Self-Supported Bicycle Touring Group. Upon arriving in Oceanside, we joined eight others who were packed and ready to ride. As I looked at the group, I marveled at how everyone had their own unique touring style. There were standard drop-handlebar touring bikes with panniers, bikepacking bikes equipped with large seat bags, fat tire bikes, and a few hybrid bikes converted into touring machines.

The plan was to ride inland as a group to Escondido and camp at Dixon Lake Campground. Leaving Oceanside, we rode along Oceanside Boulevard for several miles. We encountered a Class II buffered bike lane as we moved out of the city, and with low traffic, the ride was particularly enjoyable. The typical June gloom

kept the temperature just right. We then jumped onto the Inland Rail Trail, which took us through Vista, San Marcos, and Escondido—a ten-mile trail we had no idea existed.

Riding through quaint downtown Vista, we stopped at Best Pizza and Brew for an excellent lunch, where we got to know each other better. Continuing, we passed through the Main Street Plaza in downtown Escondido, where we made our next stop at a gelato, coffee, and panini café for a refreshing ice cream treat. Most of the group indulged in this delightful pleasure.

By this time, the morning gloom was beginning to lift. On the outskirts of Escondido, we made a quick stop at a market for those who needed to pick up dinner and breakfast items. We were well-prepared with provisions for both meals and did not need anything. As we

approached the road leading to Dixon Lake, we encountered a surprise: a steep 17% grade leading to the campground's entrance. We tackled the climb together, taking a well-deserved break at the top.



Dixon Lake, nestled in the hills overlooking Escondido, is popular with fishermen and boaters. The 69-acre lake was created by the Dixon Reservoir Dam, which was constructed in 1971 to address a water shortage. After checking in at the ranger station, we still had to climb to the highest point in the park where our campsites were located. This marked the completion of our thirty-two-mile ride with a 1,700-foot riding day.

Once we set up our tents, we gathered around a picnic table to share snacks, treats, and stories. We sat quietly for a long time, enjoying the breathtaking view and the beautiful sunset, as the sun resembled an orange beach ball disappearing behind the distant hills. We then fired up our backpack stove, heating lentil bean soup and rice for dinner, which we enjoyed with a delicious salad, pita chips, and guacamole. The twinkling city lights below enhanced the magnificent view. As the evening grew quieter, we could hear music drifting up the hillside from townspeople celebrating what seemed to be a birthday or graduation. Mariachi music floated through the air, gradually fading away like smoke in the breeze. Soon, the group grew tired and retreated to

their tents, settling in for a peaceful night's rest.

The night brought cool, damp weather; when we woke the next morning, everything was drenched as if it had rained. We packed our wet tents, dried off our bikes, and began to leave the campground. That challenging 17% grade we had labored to climb the day before became an exhilarating descent back into Escondido. We turned onto some stunning backroads reminiscent of riding through Live Oak Canyon in inland Orange County. The route guided us past vineyards and a couple of wineries.



We took a break at the Old 395 bridge, which is now abandoned, with a new road serving the highway. Highway 395 is known as the 'Three Flags Highway' because it connects Mexico, the United States, and Canada from north to south. After meandering through the backroads, we connected to Highway 76 for a short distance. Despite being a busy highway, it featured an extensive bike lane that led us to the San Luis Rey River Trail.


We stopped for lunch at a Mexican restaurant near the San Luis Rey Mission, where the group reflected on our fantastic adventure. We returned to Oceanside just in time to catch the afternoon train home. We felt joy, knowing we had completed an outstanding seventy-three-mile tour in a new place with a group of like-minded touring friends.

Until next time!





**AMTRAK  
CENTURY  
2025**



IRVINE TO DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO - CENTURY  
IRVINE TO SOLANA BEACH - METRIC CENTURY

**BICYCLISTS GO BACK BY TRAIN &  
BIKES RETURN BY TRUCK**

RIDE DATE: SEPTEMBER 6, 2025  
**LIMITED TO ~300 CYCLISTS**  
PRIORITY REGISTRATION FOR ACTIVE OCW  
MEMBERS



# Cycling Across America

*By Rob Crawford, OCW Vice President*

*(Above) Riding through Lolo Pass on our way eastward toward Missoula, MT*

It was over 30 years ago when I was driving through Eastern Pennsylvania with my friend and co-worker that we started talking about our dream to one day take a bike trip across the country. At that time, we were both married, in our late 20s and with young kids at home, so we knew the reality of a multi-day bike trip was going to have to wait. On that day, we were driving through the Amish country in Eastern PA and marveling at the glorious scenery of the farmlands that laid out before us. As we were talking, we couldn't help but think about taking in that view from the seat of a bicycle - yeah, maybe someday.

Turn the clock forward to the Fall of 2022 and I got a call from that same co-worker (now lifelong friend) to gauge my appetite for finally fulfilling that dream of a coast-to-coast bike trip. Since we were both coming up on our 60th birthdays, we decided that we could make our plans to celebrate together the fol-

lowing year on the trip of a lifetime.

We started by looking into different options for the trip. Our original plan was based on the idea of an unsupported ride - pack it all with you and sleep in a tent every night. But, as reality set in for two guys in their 60s, we decided something a little more supported was probably a better choice. So, we decided that Trek Travel's offering for a "Portland to Portland" (Oregon to Maine) ride would be perfect - fully supported, top-end bikes provided, knowledgeable guides, using a proven & tested route. We talked to one of their travel consultants and committed to making the trip in the Fall of 2023.

The trip itinerary is designed for 47 days and covers about 3,900 miles and 150,000 feet of climbing. We had 4 rest days planned, so the daily mileage was about 100 miles with some longer stretches in the more remote parts of the country. The route we chose is referred to as the Northern route and passes through 15 states going West to East. The trip has been

modified over the last few years and follows mostly rural roads that avoid heavy traffic but still passes through some of the iconic natural scenery that can be found along the way.

## **Training**

With a year of time to train and get ready, I did what everyone else would do.... I put it off until the last few months. So, it wasn't until the spring of '23 that I started paying attention to a training plan and logging some miles to get myself ready. We used a training plan from Training Peaks that was based more on hours in the saddle than miles covered. In this case, the peak of the training plan happened about a month before the ride started and included the most difficult week with 20 hours of riding, or about 320 miles. I was managing training on top of a full-time job, so I had to get out early and started most of my training rides in the early hours of the morning in the dark.

## **Section 1 - Portland, OR to Missoula, MT**

It was late August when I got on my one-way flight to Oregon to meet the Trek team and take the ceremonial step of dipping our wheels in the Pacific Ocean. Upon arrival, we gathered our group of 20 riders and 5 guides at a waterfront pier in Astoria, OR. We had a little bit of time to get to know one another before starting our 47-day journey. In addition to my friend and I, most of the riders were in our same age group (60-ish +/- 5 yrs) with two married couples and a handful of Europeans hoping to experience the vast expanse of the Americas.

On our first day in the saddle, we rode the 100 miles from Astoria to Portland in a steady cold rain. This served as a bit of a wake-up call for most of us to the reality of what we'd signed up for - the daily route was not going to be optional, the weather was what it was, and we had to get to the next stop regardless of the conditions each day.

Our Eastward route sent us through the Columbia River Valley, up into Eastern Washington, then through Northern Idaho. Unfortunately, the typical prevailing winds that blow from West to East, were displaced by steady headwinds blowing the other direction and the



*Riding along the Columbia River on our way out of Hood River, OR*

resulting drag made for some long, slow days in the saddle. As we rolled through the fields of Eastern Oregon, we started to get a feel for the hills awaiting us as we made our way toward Montana. Leaving Kamiah, ID we followed the Clearwater River up through Lolo Pass, which might have been one of the prettiest sections of the trip, before dropping into Missoula, Montana for our first rest day.

Looking back at the trip, it was those first 10 days that were probably the hardest for me. Even though I'd trained pretty well, my body was still trying to get used to the daily grind of waking up each morning for another 6+ hours in the saddle. The novelty of the first few days had faded and the reality of the remaining 3,000 miles felt pretty daunting. Thankfully, the beautiful scenery and the growing comradery with the other riders helped to get me out of bed each morning for another day in the saddle.

## **Section 2 - Missoula, MT to Rapid City, SD**

After enjoying a rest day in the college town of Missoula, we worked our way through the rest of Montana hitting some of my favorite mountain towns, including Helena and Bozeman. One of the funniest parts of the trip happened as we passed through the small town of Springdale, MT where a street fair forced us to walk our bikes through a pig auction to get to the other side of town.

Leaving Montana, we entered Wyoming where we crossed the continental divide. Our route took us over Big Horn Pass which had us climb more than 6,000 feet over a 20-mile stretch. Working our way eastward out of Wyoming we rode through the Black Hills mountain range and got a glimpse of Devil's Tower, the famous rock outcropping featured in the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.



*Riding on the Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway just West of Rapid City, SD*

One of the biggest surprises on the trip was on our first day riding in South Dakota when we rode through the Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway. I'd never heard of this area before and was blown away by the beautiful, lush landscape in this canyon nestled just outside Rapid City, SD.

### **Section 3 - Rapid City, SD to Madison, WI**

After a rest day in Rapid City, we kept heading East and passed through the Badlands National Park where the canyons hold fossils that date back over 30 million years. It was a bit like riding your bike through an old Spaghetti Western with the rising spires of striped rock layers rising up out of deep canyons. As we worked our way eastward through South Dakota we saw more than our fair share of cornfields - culminating with our visit to the world-famous Corn Palace in Mitchell, SD.

As we entered Minnesota, we were able to take advantage of some converted rail trails that kept us off the streets and carried us on

gradual grades through the beautiful woodlands of the Midwest. As expected, weather was bound to become an issue on our trip and we had our first run-in with heavy rainfall as we rode through Southern Minnesota. On the stretch before crossing the river into Wisconsin, we had to ride about 40 miles in an absolute downpour that tested our resolve on pedaling through adversity.



*Riding on one of the country roads on our way to Madison, Wisconsin*

Wisconsin has some of the most beautiful cycling terrain in the country with winding farm roads that are light on car traffic but big on scenery. As part of our trip with Trek, they had arranged for us to visit the Trek headquarters in Waterloo, WI, which gave us some insight on the company's history and allowed us to see firsthand how they build their bikes.

### **Section 4 - Madison, WI to Cazenovia, NY**

On the morning we left Madison, we were cheered on by a crowd of local Trek employees that had gathered to send us on our way. One of the things I loved most about this trip was the small towns we traveled through along our way. If you make this trip in a car, you tend to stay on interstates and focus on speed and distance. On a bike, you can do the opposite, and this allowed us to ride through countless small towns that we would have never seen otherwise. I found the nostalgia of Small Town USA, in Wisconsin towns like Concord and Waterville where people waved and

smiled at us as we rode through, to be genuinely refreshing.

The first non-cycling part of our trip happened when we took the ferry from Milwaukee across Lake Michigan to Muskegon, MI. Once we arrived in Michigan, we headed toward Ohio and made a stop at the Gilmore Auto Museum in Hickory Corners, MI – one of the nicest car museums I’ve seen with plenty of classics from the years when Detroit car-makers owned the industry.

The next few days carried us through Ohio and the western corner of Pennsylvania providing us with some beautiful scenery with country roads and small towns that it seemed time had forgotten. We rode alongside Amish horse-drawn carriages on their way to church and pedaled over creeks on old wooden covered bridges. As we crossed over into New York State, it was now late September and we started to see the signs of Autumn as the leaves were starting to change.



*Taking a quick rest on the banks of Lake Pleasant in Upstate NY*

### **Section 5 – Cazenovia, NY to Portland, ME**

In many ways, the last section of our ride was the best – our fellow riders were all now comfortable friends, we had reached a level of fitness that made the daily mileage more routine and, since we were entering the peak season for Fall foliage, we were riding through some

of the most beautiful scenery our country has to offer.

Our route through Upstate New York took us through a string of beautiful small towns on clear, tranquil lakes. We then passed through Ticonderoga, NY where we saw the old fort that played a key role in the Revolutionary War and then put us on a ferry to cross Lake Champlain into Vermont. Our route then took an uphill turn as we rode through Brandon Gap, then descended into the town of Hanover, NH, home of Dartmouth College.

The toughest day of climbing came on the 45th day of our trip as we made our way over the Kancamagus Pass in the White Mountains – almost 7,000 feet of climbing over a 100-mile stretch. The climbing was challenging, but the scenery was breathtaking. On the day we rode through the White Mountains, we were lucky to have a warm blue-sky day that was filled with bright sunshine that made the colors from the Fall foliage shine.



*Cycling through the White Mountains in New Hampshire*

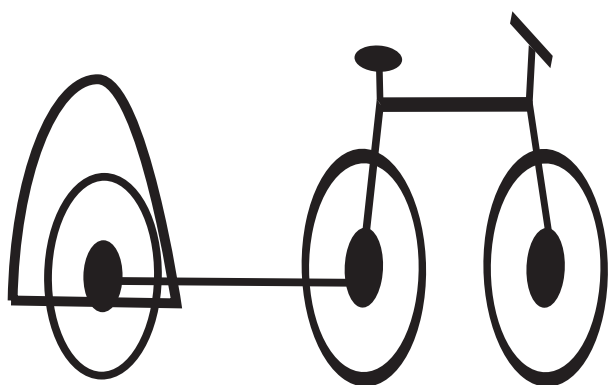
These last few days that brought us into Portland, ME were some of the most memorable from the trip – partially because they were so beautiful, but also because they represented the end of our cross-country journey. When we arrived at the coast, we walked our bikes down to the waterfront beach and dipped our

wheels in the Atlantic Ocean to mark the end of our journey.

### Looking Back

In hindsight, it was amazing how fast 47 days flew by on this trip – somewhere along the way, my mindset transitioned from anxiety about getting through another 100+ mile day to trying to slow things down and enjoy every minute.

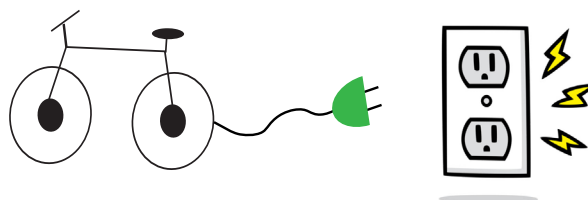
Overall, I found that traveling by bike is such a great and immersive way to see the world – very different from traveling in a car or plane. I also learned to appreciate the simplicity of bicycle travel – just you and the bike and the winding road. On this trip, I spent a month and a half away from the internet, away from the television, and away from social media (except Strava, which became my daily journal). I woke up every morning with only one thing to do for the day....follow the map and ride another 100 miles.



## THE MOST DIVERSE BICYCLE CLUB IN ORANGE COUNTY



**COME RIDE  
WITH US!**





# Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

**Mountain and Gravel  
Bike Riding  
Geared Toward  
the 60+ Rider**

## Mountain Bike Riding in Prescott, AZ

Hello OCW mountain bike riders. I have now lived in Prescott AZ since September 2023. I thought it was time to comment on the trails and trail system here in Prescott, especially since I ride at least 3 times a week.

Variety. A few things really stand out about the trail riding here in Prescott. I have never lived in a place where I could probably never ride all the existing trails. There are approximately 300 miles of trails, mostly single track here in the city of Prescott and Prescott National Forest. Many of the trails here are intermediate level. There are plenty of entry-level fire roads and advanced black diamond trails, such as the ones that exist in the Granite Dells.

The crown jewel of Prescott Mountain biking is Bean Peaks Gravity Park. Bean Peaks opened in June of 2024 and is free of charge to riders. It was built by IMBA Trail Solutions and many volunteers from the city of Prescott and surrounding towns. There are currently 9-11 miles of downhill trails, mostly green and blue level with a few single black diamond trails. You start at the bottom and ride 3 miles up to check point 4 where you have two different routes down, both trails rated green/blue level. You also have the option of riding from check point 4 up to check point 5 and experience the newest Bean Peak trails which just opened a few months ago. These trails are high-banked flowing fast downhill trails that pack nothing but fun and thrills.

You can easily make a complete uphill/downhill circuit in about an hour. We often will do 3 circuits up and down and still feel somewhat refreshed.

The other areas we often ride are Pioneer Park, Spence Basin, Metate recreational area. I won't list all the places to ride in this article because this would turn into a 75-page 300 bullet point monster.

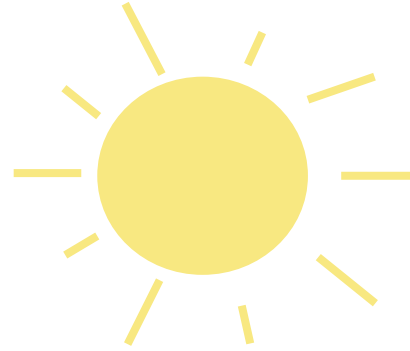
**Volunteers.** I have learned since living here, without hundreds of volunteers, equating to thousands of hours, none of this works. Prescott is unique because it has a great relationship with the city, Forest Service, local PMBA mountain bike club and all the volunteers. It is very well organized with leaders, tools and instruction all provided. Michelle and I volunteer for Bean Peaks and other venues at least twice a month for 3-4-hour sessions. Everyone who rides should volunteer at least once a month and generally, the turnout is very good.

**Weather.** Prescott is at 5500 ft above sea level and is a combination of high desert and forest. It does rain here, but what is unique, unlike most places is how fast the ground absorbs the rainwater. It can rain all day Monday and by Tuesday afternoon the trails are dry enough to ride. I would say the average temperatures year-round are in the high 70's. We do get some snow in winter, which will halt all riding, but

often it melts within a week, and we are back on the trails riding.

The city of Bentonville Arkansas is known as the “mountain bike capital of the world” and I would say Prescott is a very close second.

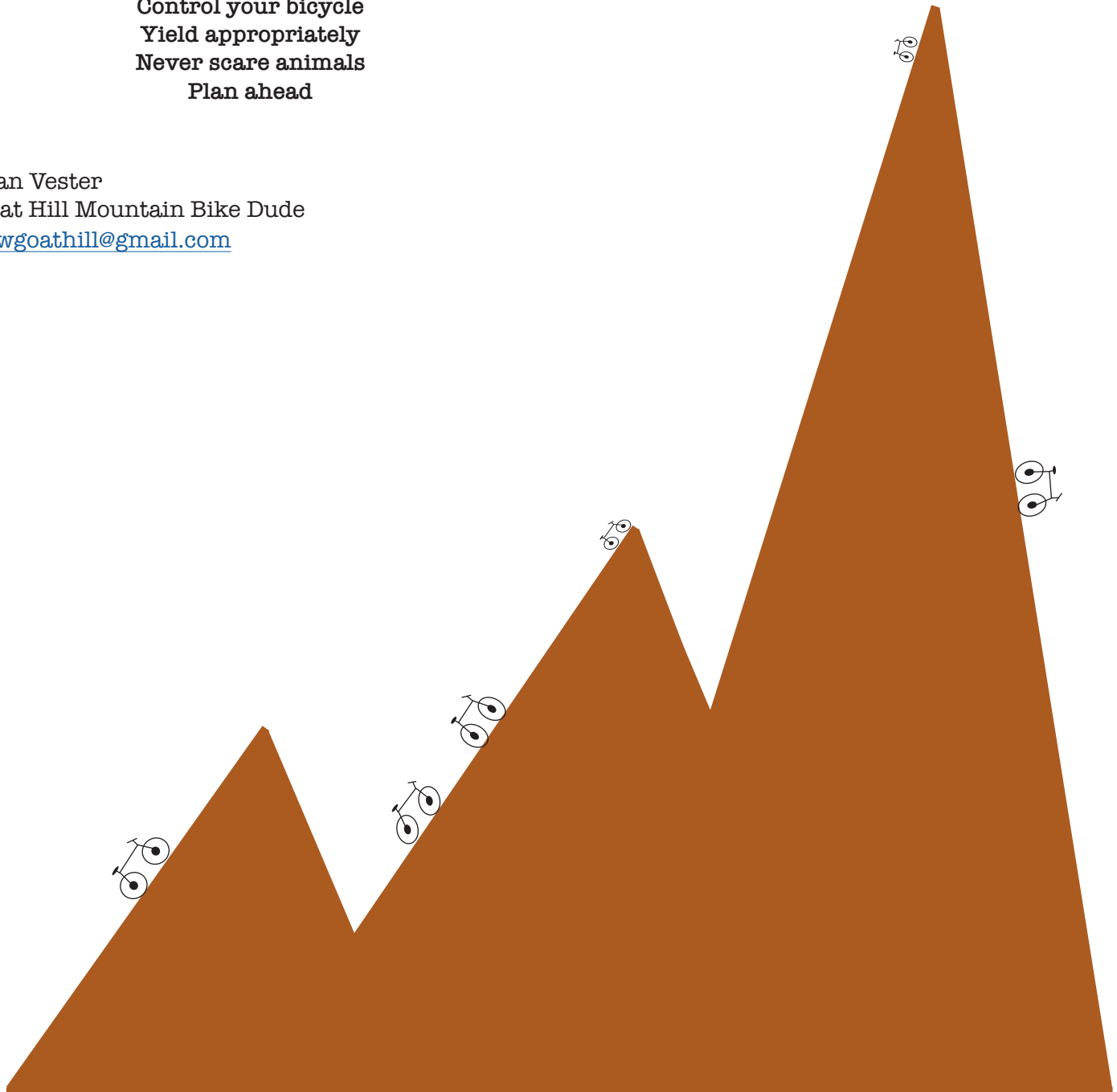
Come check out Prescott, and hopefully we will see you out on the trails.



## Rules of the Trail

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

Alan Vester  
Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude  
[ocwgoathill@gmail.com](mailto:ocwgoathill@gmail.com)



# WORD SEARCH

## SOLVED

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



# BIKE EXCURSION ON THE ERIE CANAL TRAIL, NEW YORK

A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY, SCENERY, AND ADVENTURE BY MIGUEL PEREA

The Erie Canal Trail in New York offers cyclists an unforgettable journey traversing scenic landscapes, charming towns, and a slice of American history. Spanning nearly 360 miles from Buffalo to Albany, this trail follows the historic Erie Canal, which was instrumental in shaping both the economy and culture of the region. The first week of June of this year, two former OCW Board members, Randy Kiefer and Miguel Perea, along with Randy's cousin, Don and their long-time friend, Dick, decided to explore this legendary and popular trail.

## THE HISTORY BEHIND THE TRAIL

The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, was a revolutionary engineering achievement. It connected the Great Lakes with the Hudson River, facilitating transportation and trade across the northeastern United States. This waterway reduced shipping costs dramatically and contributed to the growth of towns and cities along its route. Today, the Erie Canal Trail commemorates this historic feat, allowing visitors to experience its legacy from the saddle of a bike.

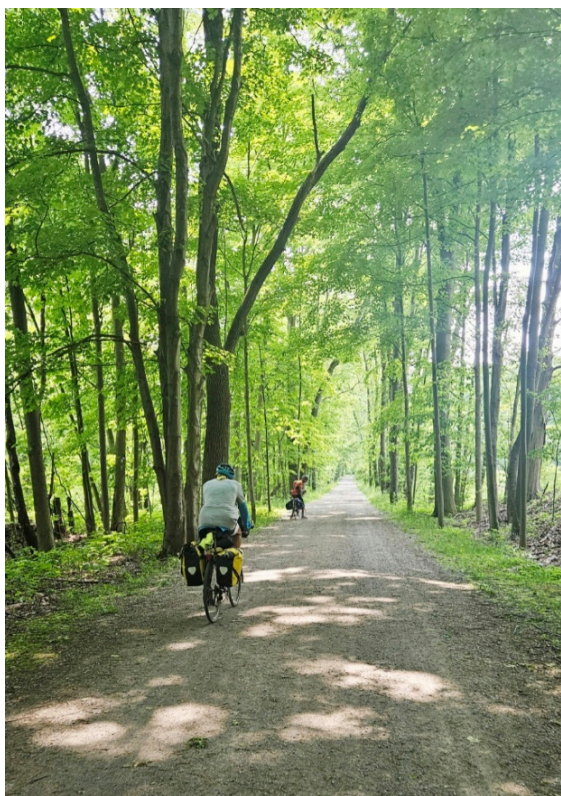
The trail offers diverse segments, each with its own unique appeal:

- **Buffalo to Rochester:** This western section features wide-open landscapes and picturesque villages such as Lockport and Medina.
- **Rochester to Syracuse:** This segment showcases the vibrant city of Rochester, the charming town of Pittsford, and plenty of canal-side beauty.
- **Syracuse to Albany:** The eastern portion includes historical landmarks and passes through scenic areas like Schenectady and Amsterdam.

The trail can be explored in a single day, focusing on one section, but we of course chose to ride it in its entirety over eight days. We took the route from West to East, starting in Buffalo and finishing in Albany, with a one-day detour going South along the western side of Lake Cayuga, to Ithaca, and coming back up north on the eastern side of the lake. The detour added another 50 miles to our overall journey, but it was worth exploring the namesake of Randy's

and Don's hometown, Cayuga, North Dakota.

Ideally one could do this tour on 50-60 miles per day, but we were limited by what suitable motels along the route we could find. Thus, our longest day we did 73 miles, whereas the shortest was only 32 miles.



### HIGHLIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

The Erie Canal Trail has many attractions and landmarks which makes the experience all the more interesting.

#### Lockport

Known for its historic locks, Lockport provides insight into the canal's engineering marvels. The Lockport Cave & Underground Boat Ride offers a fascinating perspective of the waterways.

#### Pittsford

This charming town is a favorite stop for cycling tourists, with canal-side cafés and a welcoming atmosphere.

#### Syracuse

Syracuse boasts many cultural and historical attractions, including the Erie Canal Museum. This museum dives into the canal's history and its impact on New York State.

#### Schenectady

Rich in history and architecture, Schenectady invites cyclists to explore its vibrant downtown and the Mohawk Harbor, a riverside destination filled with restaurants and entertainment.

#### Albany

The state capital marks the eastern end of the trail. Albany's rich history and landmarks, such as the New York State Capitol, offer a rewarding finish to your journey.

### SCENIC BEAUTY AND WILDLIFE

While history dominates the trail's narrative, the natural scenery is equally captivating. We got to enjoy:

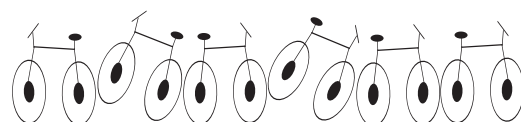
- Wide vistas of farmland and forests
- Peaceful waters of the canal reflecting the sky
- Plenty of local wildlife such as herons, turtles, and deer. Even a woodchuck came across the trail in front of Dick's bike, almost taking him down.

The trail transitions seamlessly between urban areas and tranquil stretches of nature, offering a balanced experience for riders seeking both activity and serenity.

We were also prepared for changing weather conditions, which are common in the Spring. We went from dry, warm weather the first couple of days to wet and rainy the second half of the trip.

A bike excursion on the Erie Canal Trail is more than just a physical journey—it's an exploration of history, culture, and natural beauty.

Pedaling through bustling towns or gliding along serene canal paths, this trail offers a unique opportunity to connect with the spirit of New York's past and present. For us it was an unforgettable adventure on one of America's most iconic trails.





# The Hungry Eyelist



## The Very Best Granola

By [Cookie+Kate](#)

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats (use certified gluten-free oats for gluten-free granola)

1 ½ cup raw nuts and/or seeds (I used 1 cup pecans and ½ cup pepitas)

1 teaspoon fine-grain sea salt (if you're using standard table salt, scale back to ¾ teaspoon)

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ cup melted coconut oil or olive oil

½ cup maple syrup or honey

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¾ cup dried fruit, chopped if large (I used dried cranberries)

Totally optional additional mix-ins: ½ cup chocolate chips or coconut flakes\*

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, nuts and/or seeds, salt and cinnamon. Stir to blend.

Pour in the oil, maple syrup and/or honey and vanilla. Mix well, until every oat and nut is lightly coated. Pour the granola onto your prepared pan and use a large spoon to spread it in an even layer.

Bake until lightly golden, about 21 to 24 minutes, stirring halfway (for extra-clumpy granola, press the stirred granola down with your spatula to create a more even layer). The granola will further crisp up as it cools.

Let the granola cool completely, undisturbed (at least 45 minutes). Top with the dried fruit (and optional chocolate chips, if using). Break the granola into pieces with your hands if you want to retain big chunks, or stir it around with a spoon if you don't want extra-clumpy granola.

Store the granola in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 to 2 weeks, or in a sealed freezer bag in the freezer for up to 3 months. The dried fruit can freeze solid, so let it warm to room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

# 2025 OCW MEMBER CHALLENGE

## **OCW Member Challenge Update**

The OCW Member Challenge has now been running since February and all active members have been accumulating points based upon their riding statistics and participating in activities to support the club. This includes participating or leading club rides, participating or volunteering at the Winter Metric, by referring new members to the club, or by contributing to the Spring edition of Chain Reaction. For full details of how you can score points, refer to the announcement on the OCW website.

## **Some quick Challenge statistics:**

More than half of our members have scored at least one Challenge point. Around a third of our members participate in an official club ride each month. Members have cumulatively ridden over 90,000 miles, climbing almost 3.8 million feet - that's the equivalent of riding around the world 3.7 times while climbing Mount Everest 140 times!

14 members have already achieved the Challenge annual miles target of 2025 miles, with several others right behind.

Two-thirds of active members use Strava to log their rides, but only about half of our members have connected to the OCW Club in Strava (<https://www.strava.com/clubs/orange-county-wheelmen>)

After crunching all of the numbers, the leading members in the 2025 OCW Member Challenge through April are (drum roll please...)

Rob Crawford 46 points	Max Hayter 36 points	Rick Lopes 33 points	Ron Hitchcock 31 pts
Dan Ignosci 41 points	Art Pressel 36 points	Bob Aguilar 31 points	Marc Maher 31 points
Larry Locken 38 points	Larry Fletcher 35 pts	Paul Defeo 31 points	
Bruce Campbell 36 Pts	Dori Lewis 34 points	Gary Ehrich 31 points	

For your riding statistics to be counted for the Challenge, your rides must be uploaded to Strava and your profile set to public so that the administrator can view your data (miles ridden, feet climbed). We respect the right to privacy of all our members and participation in the challenge is voluntary.



# Please Support The Premier Partners of Orange County Wheelmen

Many of our partners offer discounts to OCW members.  
Tell them you are from OCW and continue to support those who support us!


If you are interested in becoming an Orange County Wheelmen club Sponsor  
or to donate goods or services that we can raffle please contact Tony Perez  
[tony.perez@ocwheelmen.org](mailto:tony.perez@ocwheelmen.org)

We obviously welcome support from Cycling businesses; others may be  
subject to approval by the Board



**Edward Jones**<sup>®</sup> Member SIPC

**Supporting cyclist  
since 2016**



**Nick Garl, CFP<sup>®</sup>, AAMS<sup>™</sup>**  
Financial Advisor  
18002 Irvine Blvd Suite 102  
Tustin, CA 92780  
714-685-3091

MKT-5894P-A AECSPAD [edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com)



 Number of stick figure bikes is **40**