

# Chain Reaction

Winter 2025



A Quarterly Publication of



Orange County Wheelmen



# OCW CLUB LINKS

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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

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

# GENERAL MEETINGS

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Held typically the fourth Wednesday every other month at Irvine Ranch Water District, Sand Canyon Ave. in the city of Irvine. Light dinner starting at 6:30pm with meeting starting at 7pm. Different speaker each meeting.

# REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

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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!**

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# Editors Musings



**Michelle Vester**

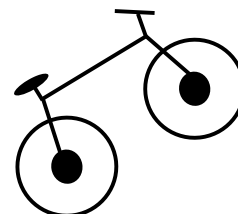
Happy winter! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and are now settled back into the usual routines of life.

Although this issue contains some wonderful stories from our members, it also holds memories told of two recently passed members who contributed so much to Orange County Wheelmen over the years. They will be missed.

Enjoy these winter months, riding, hiking or just getting out there. And think about putting all those wonderful adventures into an article for the spring edition of Chain Reaction!

Everyone have a wonderful and safe winter season!

Michelle





## IN MEMORIAM

BOB FAIRFIELD

The following article Bob wrote for his President's Message to be featured in this edition of Chain Reaction. He was always the first to submit his articles to me.

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The following is an excerpt of an article from one of our sponsors, BikeLegal. I'm sure you all know about these dangers, and navigating them safely, but the statistics for bike accidents continue to increase. A review of these dangers will remind everyone of them, and how to deal with them:

### [The Most Common Dangers of Cycling on the Road & How to Navigate Them](#)

By Mark Strohman • 04 Jul, 2024

Road cycling comes with inherent risks.

Think you know how to stay safe on the road as a cyclist? Think again. Even the most experienced riders can fall victim to a devastating accident. Thousands of cyclists are injured each year in collisions with vehicles. But that doesn't mean you have to live in fear. With the right knowledge and strategies, you can significantly reduce your risk. A Smart Cycling course covers most of these dangers, and how to deal with them.

Here's some of the dangers cyclists face:

#### Sharing the Road with Vehicles

- Driver Behavior
- Close Calls
- Blind Spots
- Reduced Lane Space
- Dooring

You can read the rest of the article at: <https://www.bikelegalfirm.com/dangers-of-cycling-onthe-road>

We will have other events, social meetings and parties during the year, so stay tuned to the club newsletter, the Chain Reaction, for announcement of events.

We are still looking for other ideas of events to have so email me, or attend one of our board meetings, with your ideas and suggestions.

This club is not just to have meetings, so I encourage every member to participate in the events and parties we have, and if you can't ride, then volunteer to help with our activities. You are also welcome to stop by one of our board meetings, to see how we spend your membership dollars.



# Vice President's Message

**Dan Ignosci**

As the cycling season heads toward Winter and with the recent passing of our President, Bob Fairfield, I wanted to pass out some kudos to the many Orange County Wheelmen (OCW) contributors. These members have helped provide the glue that keeps OCW proceeding forward and filling the many crucial roles that Bob did to keep our group heading in the right direction.

First, I would like to thank Larry Locken for his continuous dedication to facilitate our rides. Larry leads our Tuesday and Thursday rides and with the help of Lee Stebbins, has taken over the Saturday morning rides as well. As always, Larry has been marvelous at creating routes and keeping the calendar portion of our website up to date. When he is in town, Gary Ulrich leads our Friday morning rides. Max Hayter has been a lifesaver when called on to step in to lead several South County rides over the past few months.

Tony Perez keeps our information fresh and current on the OCW website. Tony also sends out many of the emails that keep our members in the know on events, etc. If it wasn't for the huge contributions from Larry and Tony, our organization would be in a world of hurt.

Liz and Stuart Gaston are instrumental in the success of our quarterly metric century rides. Liz is great with food and supply procurement; and Stuart is the key in our rest stops and SAG support when it is offered. Lee and Cathy Painter have been extremely gracious with their time manning our metric century rest stops when their availability permits.

Our heartfelt gratitude is extended to longtime OCW members, Jim and Irene Walker, who have been responsible for our Treasurer and Membership positions respectively. We are grateful that Lee

Stebbins has volunteered to serve as the OCW Treasurer for the 2025 calendar year. In addition, Rene Costales has agreed to assist with membership in 2025. Rene has been asked to streamline our annual dues and waiver processes, in attempt to grow our group by providing added value.

Despite not living locally, Michelle Vester has regularly created our wonderful Chain Reaction digital magazine. Terry Kessler is impressive as she swoops in on Facebook and provides updates to members and friends interested in OCW. Thank you to Dori Lewis for once again hosting our annual Holiday Party at her beautiful home.

We greatly appreciate Jim Pugh, for working tirelessly to calculate the riding statistics of OCW members. Going forward, OCW group statistics will be provided only on our Strava page. Thank you to Rob Crawford, who is waiting in the wings for our elections to close, and hopefully will be taking over as Vice President.

Monica McCarthy has served admirably as our Secretary and thankfully, Steve Loughran has agreed to take over documenting our monthly Board of Directors meetings. Also, much appreciation goes to Steve for leading the Burn It to Earn It ride on Thanksgiving Day. Steve's wife, Anne, has been instrumental in securing The Brewhouse in San Juan Capistrano, for one of our 2024 Metric Centuries, as well as for our upcoming Winter Metric.

If you contributed in any way over the past few months and I omitted to mention you, please accept my apology, and know that our members and I are extremely thankful for all that you have done.

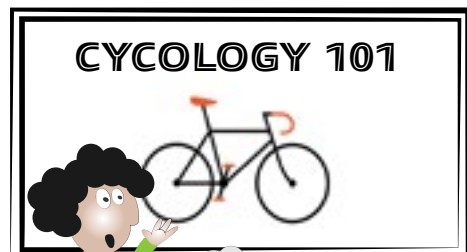
Most importantly I would like to thank YOU, our members, for paying your membership dues,

attending our rides, and inviting guests to join us. If you can help during any of the events during 2025, please do so. Also, if you have any ideas to improve our member experience, please let any Board Member or Director know.

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



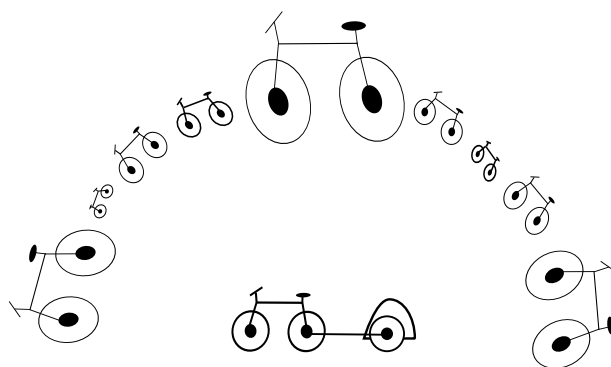
# BOARD MEETING MINUTES



## Find all the bikes!

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

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





# LOST AND FOUND

BY PETER GERRARD

I stopped under the toll road overpass on Laguna Canyon Road to borrow some shade and catch a break from the heat and dead air. Often, there's an invisible and tenuous barrier separating Laguna Beach from Irvine, keeping each community's divergent world views from catastrophically colliding: like matter meeting anti matter, no one really knowing what might happen but no one wanting to take the risk.

I'd been cycling inland from the beach, trying to not get hit by cars unwilling or unable to honor the 3' Rule in the short section between El Toro Rd. and the 73 that's always under construction. After peeling myself off the saddle and snapping out of the pedals, I leaned the bike against the guardrail. I used the rail as a brace for stretching, then as a seat. Balancing against the cold edge of the metal, I felt a wind-strangely cool and almost chilly-created by the passing cars, and watched it tease up the weeds and debris that was collecting along the side of the road, ebbing and flowing, with wafts of sage scent and damp asphalt.

Something tickled my left calf, and I looked to see a gum wrapper spiral off my leg and just be

yond the crumbling gutter, lying half in a small collection of water was a bag, a bicycle seat bag.

I bent down and retrieved it. How did it get there? Was it the detritus from a crash, or did it simply fall off the seatpost unbeknownst to the rider struggling up the Canyon, or maybe it was left on the roof of a car and picked this place to sail up and away?

I was curious about what story the contents might reveal about who the bag belonged to, and a glimpse into their cycling "personality." So, I opened it.

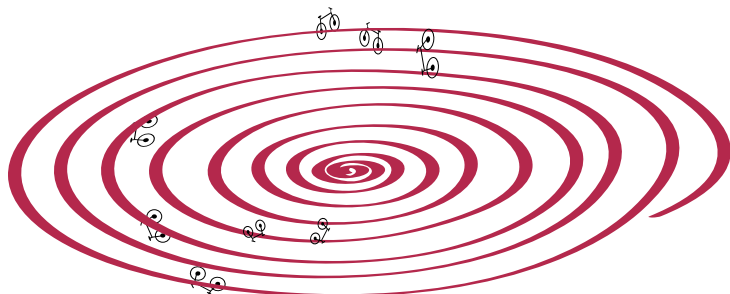
Here's what I found. Let your imagination run wild.

Inventory of A Found Saddle Bag, Serfas Mountain (Medium, expandable) with a broken buckle:

- Two and one-half tire levers, the one-half one with a broken rim hook.
- A small translucent-green plastic box, labeled "Speedy Tire Repair Kit," contents one large rectangular patch, sandpaper, but no

vulcanizing glue.

- Two CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges, one pierced and empty, still attached to the inflation head, one full. Both 16 gram, threaded.
- A “Cool Breeze Century 2021” sew-on event patch.
- Two GU “Lemon Lime Sublime” energy gel packets, both with expiration dates of 1/26/2020.
- A baggie, with a half-dozen small (and smaller) reddish-colored pills that look like Advil and Sudafed.
- One tube, used, size 700x28c, haphazardly wrapped with a rubber band, valve cap missing.
- A post-it note, folded, with a phone number (but no area code) and a note reminding someone to “Call Dr. Z. tomorrow!”
- Two tickets, yellow, to “Solvang Lion’s Club Annual Family Pancake Breakfast,” no other details.
- A 10-Day France/Italy Regional Eurailpass.
- Tucked in the webbing of the small pocket inside the back flap, one photograph, slightly crumpled, of a man in a beach chair, bare-chested, tan and smiling, brilliant white teeth a contrast to the almost black lenses on his sunglasses, and on the back the words, “Alessandro, Sara’s cousin, Portofino.”
- Also, one pacifier, still in its wrapper.



# WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

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

Blizzard	Rain	Chilly	Snow
Frostbite	Storm	Winter	Skiing
Snowboard	Sleet	Ice	Fireplace
Cozy	Igloo	Sled	Mittens
Jacket	Blanket	Freeze	Nippy

 Find the solved puzzle at the back of this issue





ONE OF OUR LONG TIME MEMBERS AND A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE CLUB, JIM BREWER PASSED AWAY ON SATURDAY NOV 30. HE WAS 86 YEARS OLD. DURING HIS MANY YEARS IN THE CLUB JIM WAS VERY ACTIVE AT OUR EVENTS TAKING PICTURES AND VIDEOS OF THE ACTIVITIES. HE CREATED SOME FANTASTIC VIDEOS THAT WERE PRESENTED AT THE HOLIDAY PARTIES AND THE ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUETS. A CELEBRATION OF JIM'S LIFE WILL BE PRESENTED ON JANUARY 17TH SEE THE NOTICE BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS.

RIP JIM - 1938 - 2024



## Is a GREAT Riding Destination

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**By David Moss**

Genivieve and I (now living in Santa Barbara) just returned from last week of December rides in Tucson. Here's a quick update.

**The Loop:** The famous or often talked about Tucson Loop is more of a loop-de-doop. Tucsonans pride themselves on a robust 150-mile loop but it is only a loop if someone who rides it often would have any idea where to go and how to follow it. It is mostly urban and lacks the grandiose vistas of the two Saguaro National Parks - East and West. But it is an opportunity to cover lots of area as long as you don't have an agenda. Had we not met Beverly from San Diego - who had ridden it before - we would have covered 60 miles without anything to show for it. Fortunately, she knew how to navigate to get to Old Spanish Trail and into the (easterly?) Saguaro NP loop. The loop was breathtaking. Some cars but an otherworldly 8 miles with vistas to remember. We suggest you bypass much of the loop and just figure out a way to get to the paved Trail and the NP.

**Gates Pass:** Next up was Gates Pass Rd -

another otherworldly option to see the (west-erly?) Saguaro NP. There is a steep climb with an ungodly number of cars - but there is a route in the middle of the NP that no cars seem to take. Find it and rejoice in the astounding density and quiet of the Saguaro world. Way different than Joshua Tree. Figure 25 miles and 2400 ft of climbing. With easy parking in one of the parking lots in the park areas. Remember it is dry beyond belief so stay hydrated.

**Mount Lemmon:** After a rest day, and catching some colds we tackled Mount Lemmon. We made it to the 8,000-ft-above-sea-level point and due to time and health, was able to do 48 miles with 5,500 ft of climbing. A group headed by Ms. Lauren Hall - a 45-yo pro started in front of us and did 4,000 ft of climb - but they were on a mission to set PRs beyond our reach. The full ride to the top ski area sets you up for around 8,000 ft of climbing to above 9,000 ft or so. The 1/1/25 traffic was verging on horrendous - but there is a great shoulder up, and the drivers were respectful going down at 35 mph. Most cyclists - especially



the pro-level ones were descending at 45 MPH and more and took the entire lane down - no cars traveled at that speed. Our suggestion is start way earlier than 10 am - it is in the 40s until 9 am so start cold and get warmer quicker than our starting at 10. Gen did this ride pretty sick - only her college and long-distance master swimming endurance made this possible - not sure how she did it.



Baldy in San Gabriel. More stunning in many ways but comparable. Great meals at the Marriott Grants Pass, Wildflower in Oro Valley, and of course the original El Charo Café Downtown. We stayed at the El Conquistador - make sure you have a mountain view in a quiet building like Numbers 3 and 4 - and only 3rd floor which is the highest. There are several breakfast/bread places filled with retirees but you might meet the four different Sun City ride groups with the red group still biking Mnt Lemmon weekly and > 70 yo average. Take a day off and go out to the 1797 church in the desert why dontcha!! The Saguaro and other cacti are beyond description and the views along Mnt Lemmon ride take what little breath away you have left going up. Enjoy and Happy New Year from David Moss and Genivieve.



**The Background:** Last - we flew from Santa Barbara - and rented bikes at Fair Wheels Cycle near the UA Tucson - they have limited number and sizes but nice Emonda and Domanes - but Gen is a 60 but could fit a 58-my usual size. Do not attempt to rent from the four warehouse locations known as Tucson Bike Rentals. Rude, unhelpful, and downright uncaring as to what size, brand, or condition a bike you may get. Only will talk by text - no human contact. And, you show up at an unmanned warehouse, bring your pedals and seats, and will be unsure if they have the tools, or what condition your rental will be in. If you can drive like Beverly did in 7 hours from SDi-ego, or fly with a bike case - that is the way to go. Otherwise it is around \$300 per bike for 3 days though they let us have them for 4 given they were closed on the first of the year.

**An Epic Trip:** - Mnt Lemmon is a bucket ride for many - see the online comparisons to Mnt





# Central Europe Adventure

**By Bob Bacin & Gloria Nafel**

We flew to Warsaw to start our 46-day bicycle trip which included three countries: Poland (mostly), Slovakia (a week), and Lithuania (a day).

We first went to Lithuania to explore the region of Bob's ancestry. Next, we spent a few days hiking in the Bialowieski Forest Reserve. This is Europe's largest primeval forest. Due to the large area of Poland, we took a train back to Warsaw. We spent the next week cycling south towards the mountainous region of Poland, going through small towns and the countryside to get a feel of what the landscape reveals.

We cycled Poland's premier cycling route, The Velo Dunajec. It was well marked and followed The Dunajec River through a mountainous gorge and the Pieninski National Park. The beginning of this route started on raised levees and we began seeing other touring cyclists. We passed through agricultural areas and

small towns with colorful houses. We crossed many dedicated cycling bridges over the river as part of the cycling trail with plenty of views of mountains and fall colors.

We climbed into Slovakia on quiet roads with views of the Tatra Mountains and followed a highway along the river. We visited Europe's largest castle ruins-the Spis Castle. In the same town, we visited Saint Martin's Cathedral. We rode west between two mountain ranges in Slovakia towards Poprad, our base-camp to venture into the Tatra Mountains, part of the Carpathian mountain range. Using a local train and a cog railway we arrived to hike rocky trails at a popular hiking location. Back on the bikes, we climbed the mountain range and secured accommodations at a thermal mineral resort and of course enjoyed a good soak. Next back to Poland, on mixed surface tracks to arrive at Zakopane -Poland's premier summer and winter resort town.



We spent three nights in Krakow, the previous capitol of Poland. Often referred to as the most beautiful city in Poland, primarily because most of the city is original and not restored like Warsaw. It was spared destruction in World War II. We had a wonderful walking tour of the city which included Wawel Castle, cathedrals, the main square plus the history of Krakow. We rode our bikes to visit the oldest monastery in Poland, the Benedictine Abbey and the Wieliczka Salt Mines.

Next, we followed the Eagle's Nest, one of Poland's well-known bike routes as it follows through the scenic Jurassic Highlands with its numerous castles, among the oldest in Poland. We loosely followed the bike route, which started out as a hiking route many years ago but due to weather concerns we avoided dirt trails.

We spent the last several days of our tour exploring Warsaw and packing our bikes. We took a very cold, windy walking tour of Warsaw which has been 80-90% rebuilt since WWII. We spent several hours in the 1944 Uprising Museum which was an immersive experience with multimedia and very informative.

We cycled over 1,000 miles with more than



A Sandy Dirt Trail

40,000 feet of climbing. We saw 14 castles and too many churches and shrines to count. We rode on designated bike routes, side-walks, forest roads,



Riding up to Spis Castle

dirt roads and highways. If you think the roads and infrastructure in Central Europe would be rudimentary, you would be pleasantly surprised. Most pavement was superior and public transportation was plentiful and reasonable, all while maintaining an old-world charm. Cars, pedestrians, bicycles, and scooters all cooperated to make traffic flow with no honking, close calls, or yelling. While Poland is not on most people's bucket list, we recommend it not only as a great cycling venue but as a destination for nature lovers, history buffs and those wanting to experience a different culture.

### FAQ

**Did you go with a tour group?** While there are some bicycle tours available in Poland, they are very limited in where they go and how many miles they cover. We traveled independently which allowed us to travel at our own speed and see a more extensive area. This was both rewarding and challenging. We had the daily challenge of figuring out where we were going, what route, and booking lodging. The rewards were seeing more of the country and having interactions with locals.

**How was the food?** It varied depending on the region. Some was wonderful and some was rather pedestrian. Pizzas and perogies were available everywhere but regions had their own specialties. While we ate out the majority of meals, we visited markets almost daily to purchase food snacks and meal ingredients

when we had lodging with kitchenettes.

**Did most people speak English?** While most people in the large cities spoke some English, especially younger people, many people spoke little or no English in the smaller towns. Polish is a very difficult language and we learned a few words but relied on a translator app.



A Polish Sampler Plate

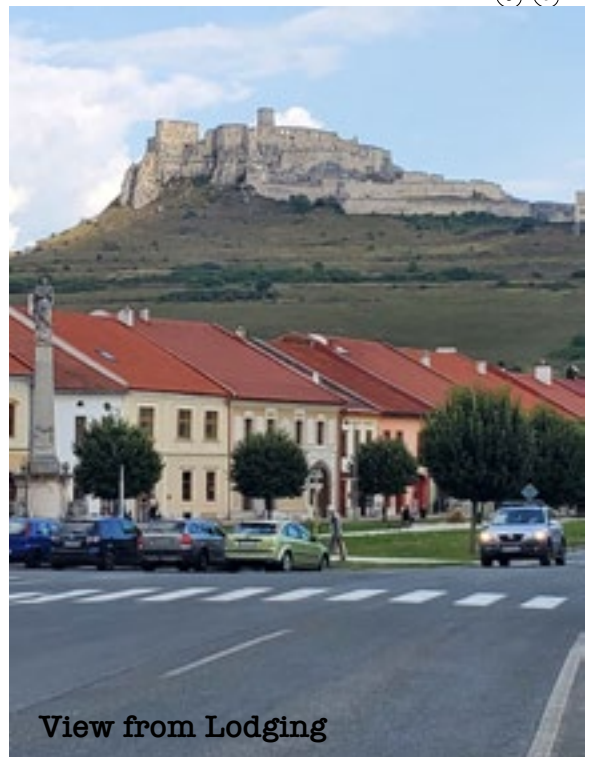
**Were you affected by the adverse weather in Europe?** While we received weather alerts on our phones about torrential rains and possible flooding, this was 200 miles away. We did hunker down several times to avoid riding in the rain which gave us a chance to explore local towns by foot. We arrived in a heatwave and left in cold and windy conditions. Pro Tip: They don't turn on radiators until October.

**What currency does Poland use and is Poland a good value?** Poland uses the złoty unlike Slovakia and Lithuania which use Euros. Poland is relatively cheaper than the neighboring European countries. We stayed in hotels, apartments and cabins which varied from

\$50 to \$110 depending on location, and often included breakfast. A nice dinner out averaged \$25 for the two of us.



Tenczyn Castle



View from Lodging



Wawel Castle in Krakow



Scenic Bike Path



Are there times when you just don't want to fight the traffic, red lights, stop signs, and road construction? Well, we feel like this quite often. That's why we like a 25-mile-all-bike- trails loop in Irvine. The route starts on the corner of Alton Parkway and Jeffrey Road. You can park in the Gelson's Shopping Center lot. Cross at the light and proceed up Jeffrey Road towards the 405 Freeway. You can ride on the sidewalk on the left side of the street. It's part of the trail. When you get to the traffic light, Quail Creek Road, cross Jeffrey to the right side of the road, and stay on the sidewalk, again heading towards the freeway. The sidewalk bends slightly to the right. Look for the sign that says, 'Freeway Trail'. The trail parallels the 405 Freeway heading north. It's a little noisy because of the freeway traffic, but it's tolerable. Cross under the Yale foot bridge as you head to Culver Drive. Cross Culver at the light and continue on the trail.

are now behind a sound wall and the decibels drop quite a bit.

After 3.5 miles, the Freeway Trail merges with the San Diego Creek Trail. Turn right and head towards the hills. If you go left, the trail will take you to the Back Bay. This is fine if you want some extra miles. Take the San Diego Creek Trail east and go under Coronado, Main Street, Alton Parkway, and continue around the backside of Bill Barber Memorial Park. Cross the foot bridge and turn left onto the Peter's Canyon Trail. Make sure you take the time to enjoy the wildlife that live in the channel. You'll see a large variety of waterfowl including White Egrets, Great Blue Heron, Cinnamon Teal Ducks, and American Coots, also known as Mud Hens. Many times, we see Turkey Vultures with their red heads and large wingspan gliding over the waterway. And keep an eye open for the Western

Pond Turtle. They like to sun themselves on the rocks.



You'll cross under several underpasses including Moffett Drive, where you'll see the impressive 108-foot-long bridge with its high steel archway. The trail continues under the 5 Freeway. After riding approximately 9 miles, you'll get to Hick's Canyon Trail. Bear to the right. At the Hick's Canyon Park, you'll have a restroom and water refill opportunity. The 2.5-mile Hick's Canyon Trail is a slight 2% grade for its entire length and is beautifully landscaped. There is a separated dirt trail alongside the paved path. It's hardpacked and if you are riding your gravel bike, have fun getting your wheels off the paved tarmac.

On all these trails make sure you watch out for pedestrians. These are all shared-use trails. During the weekday there are far less walkers than on the weekend.

The Hick's Trail will come to Portola Parkway. Again, bear to the right and stay on

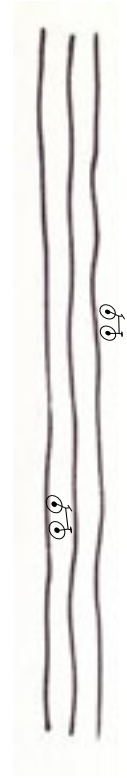
of the trail. Cross the light at Jeffrey Road and get on the Jeffrey Open Space Trail, JOST. In the near future the JOST will extend into a new recreation area to the east that the City of Irvine is developing called the Gateway Preserve. The Gateway will be an additional 700 acres of natural land and connect to Limestone Canyon, Blackstar Canyon, and the Cleveland National Forest. It will be the latest addition to the Irvine open space that the city has committed to. The current JOST trail is approximately 4 miles long. The trail meanders west and features a historic timeline with important dates in Orange County's history. The history lesson starts with the Spanish in California and progresses up through the Irvine Ranch, El Toro Marine Base, UC Irvine, and the city's development. There is also a gravel path that winds its way through the open space. Again, it's a good opportunity to use your gravel or mountain bike. Like the Hick's Trail, JOST is beautifully landscaped. The trail crosses over Irvine Boulevard, Trabuco Road, and Roosevelt via pedestrian foot bridges avoiding having to cross these streets at a traffic light.



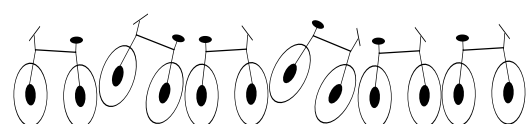
There is also another restroom and water stop available on route. The trail bends left at the 5 Freeway and heads up to Sand Canyon Avenue. At Sand Canyon, the only place where you need to ride in the street, ride under the 5 Freeway past Burt Road and enter the Walnut Trail as you pass under the train tracks.

food court. Relax at the outdoor tables and reflect on this very relaxing, traffic-free ride that you just completed.

Until next time.



The 3.5-mile trail runs next to the Amtrak Metrolink tracks. These tracks were used by the Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe Railway to move freight from the Midwest to Los Angeles. In 1971, Amtrak assumed operation and now share the tracks with the freight line. You'll ride along a treelined path of old eucalyptus before you cross over Jeffrey Road. The trail snakes along some grassy parks as it heads north. You'll ride under Yale Avenue and over Culver Drive as you come to Harvard Avenue. Cross Harvard, which is approximately 18 miles into the route, and you'll be back on the Peter's Canyon Trail. At this point you backtrack to your starting point at the Gelson's Shopping Center. You have completed the 25-mile route and roughly 650 feet of climbing. If you want more miles, there are options to reconnect to the San Diego Creek Trail and other parts of the Freeway Trail that would take you into Shady Canyon and Quail Hill. There are several places to eat, get a coffee, or even a beer at the center's





## Kickstart Your New Year With Orange County Wheelmen!

Our first 2025 weekend saw an enthusiastic turnout, with about 30 riders joining the Saturday ride at The Square in Irvine. Sunday brought even more camaraderie, with over 20 riders at GameCraft Brewing in Lake Forest and JD Flannel Donuts in San Juan Capistrano. Additionally, OCW kicked off the year by holding its first 2025 board meeting, setting the stage for another fantastic year of cycling adventures and community engagement.

**Go to OCW's webpage** to access all the links listed below and join the fun today: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org>

### **OCW Calendar:**

With club rides happening four days a week, including two options on Sundays, there's always an opportunity to hit the road. Members and guests are welcome to join these fantastic rides!

### **OCW Club Membership: Join or Renew Your Membership!**

For just \$35, support the club that has been a cornerstone of the Orange County cycling community for years. Membership perks include free supported metric rides during the season, access to the club's Ride with GPS (RWGPS) library, and participation in all OCW events!

**Free RWGPS access** to all club members!

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# Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

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

## 2024 Pivot Shuttle Rider Experience **6 Month Review**

Hello OCW mountain bike riders. I've been riding my 2024 Pivot Shuttle SL for 6 months now and time to share what I do and do not like about this bike.

### **Things I like about the bike**

The fun factor. The Pivot Shuttle SL is an easy-to-ride mountain bike. It handles well, just the right amount of travel and being a pedal-assist bike, it practically drives itself down the trails. I never thought I would like riding a pedal-assist bike, but I do. I can control the workout level of any ride. I can ride the bike in a wide range of assist modes. I can turn off the motor and ride with no assist for a maximum workout. I normally ride in breeze mode (green) and get the perfect balance of assist and resistance of the pedals.

Component specs are very nice. Fox fork and rear shock. Shimano XT, 4 piston brakes for more than adequate stopping power. The SRAM Transmission 12-speed electronic drivetrain is the bomb! The shift pod is clean, no annoying cable and offers very little resistance when shifting up or down.

The Fazua motor/battery combination is physically small, and the motor is much quieter than most pedal-assist e-bikes.

### **Things I do not like about the bike**

The Fox Transfer dropper post. I have used this dropper post on the Shuttle and other mountain bikes since 2019. I like the post when it works, but the problem I have run into with all of the Transfer posts is they intermittently stick in the down position and will not return to the up position without physically forcing the post up by pulling on the saddle. My new Shuttle has the same issue, and the bike is only 6 months old. I normally would not

consider this a big concern, except most Fox Transfer posts have to be sent back to Fox to be rebuilt, which means you are without a dropper post for 2-4 weeks. Every bike I have owned, I'm forced to purchase a second post as a spare while Fox is rebuilding the defective one.

Very little room for frame storage. I ride a large size frame, but the front triangle is still very small and does not leave much room for a frame bag. That means you have to come up with a way to carry tools, tube, pump, food and water.

Battery range. This will vary depending on the load and which level you ride at. I normally ride in the lowest assist level (Breeze) and I have not completely exhausted the battery, but I'm guessing it is about 40 miles. The bike is best suited for short day rides under 40 miles. It would not lend itself to a long epic weekend or bikepacking. Pivot is still working on an extended battery that would mount on the down tube for extended range. As of this writing, it is still not available.

The weight of the bike. My bike weighs just slightly over 40 lbs. with pedals. That would be considered lighter than most other brands of pedal-assist bikes.

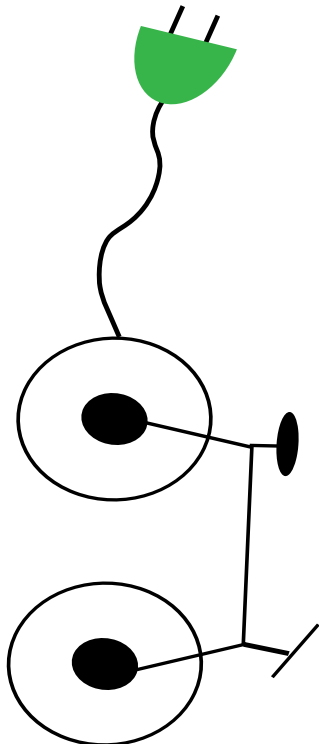
The only time this comes into play is when you are loading it on a bike rack that is attached to your vehicle. It is doable, but somewhat awkward when trying to lift and position the bike on a rack. You need some upper body strength to muscle it up.

To wrap up, the positives outweigh the negatives. I like having both a pedal assist and non-electric mountain bike. They are both different experiences, and I like them both.

## Rules of the Trail

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

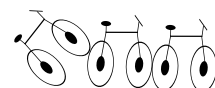
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# The Hungry Cyclist



## BBQ Style Meatloaf

By [What's Gaby Cooking](#)

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 yellow onion diced (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)
- 1 carrot diced (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)
- 1 stalk of celery diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup bread crumbs (panko is my personal preference)
- 2 lbs ground beef 80/20 blend
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon Tuscan seasoning
- 1 tablespoon chipotles in adobo minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper
- Topping
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup bbq sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon chipotles in adobo

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking pan with foil or parchment paper.

In a medium pan, sauté the onions in olive oil for 4-5 minutes. Add the carrots and celery and cook for another 4 minutes, until everything is soft. Remove from the heat and let cool.

In a large bowl, combine the milk, eggs, and breadcrumbs. Stir and let rest while the onion mixture cools, about 5-10 minutes.

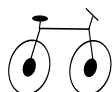
Add the ground beef, cooled onion mixture, Worcestershire sauce, Tuscan seasoning, and chipotles to the breadcrumb mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Mix gently until combined, being careful not to overmix.

Shape the meatloaf mixture into a loaf (roughly 9 x 6 inches) on the prepared baking sheet.

In a small bowl, combine the BBQ sauce, ketchup, and adobo sauce. Spread the mixture evenly over the top of the meatloaf.

Bake in the preheated oven for 50-60 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 160°F.

Let the meatloaf rest for 10-15 minutes before slicing and serving.





# GETTING OUR FEET WET PARIA CANYON

BY THERESA NELSON

My end-of-the-year Strava stats say I've hiked and walked more miles than I've cycled this year. I guess that is what happens when you are training for a multi-day backpacking trip.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a group of us Orange County Wheelmen members would plan and complete an annual fun weekend backpacking trip. It was usually short and easy and our normal bike training (75-150 miles per week) was enough to enable us to easily complete the hike. When Steve and I did Peru and Machu Picchu in 2014 hiking in the Andes up to 13,000 feet with pack animals and daypacks I was training for Ride Around the Bear which gave me the endurance and strength for our trip.

Last year's thru-hike was the 39.7-mile Trans Catalina Trail (9000 feet of elevation gain). So,

I needed a bit of hike mileage including elevation gains to prepare. This year's backpack was a little farther from home.

My daughter, Jessy, secured permits to hike Paria Canyon starting in Southern Utah (close to Kanab) and finishing in Lee's Ferry at the start of the Grand Canyon. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) only allows 20 people per day within the Canyon which is within the 112,500 acres of the Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness.

Our group included six hikers plus Jessy's dog, River. We planned for four days and three nights on the 38.5-mile trail. Although net elevation is downhill, hiking is a little slower than normal since often we were wading downriver with scores of crossings. Water depth ranged from

ankle deep to upper thigh in some places. The last day of the hike included some technical rock scrambling up and over ledges. Although some people do the hike in 3 days, we could have easily added an extra half a day.



October was the perfect time to do the hike. The river water wasn't recent snow melt so wool socks and non-waterproof trail shoes worked well to keep our feet warm. Waterproof shoes wouldn't have worked as the deeper water would have just allowed the water to enter at the ankle. Some people elect to do the hike in the Spring where the water might be deeper and definitely colder. Much of July and August is monsoon season in the area so with risk of flash flooding, hikers are not always allowed depending on current weather conditions.

The river actually starts in Bryce Canyon and dumps into the Colorado River. There is no actual trail for most of the trek as we just followed the river through narrow towering canyon walls, past red rock amphitheaters, Navajo sandstone and the occasional hanging garden. On the 2nd and 3rd day of our trip, we didn't

see any other hikers. Our campsites were secluded and one night included a tabletop mesa at a horseshoe bend in the river with an almost 300-degree view of the surrounding canyon walls.

Each evening, we rinsed out our shoes and socks that had accumulated sand during the day and carried a change of dry socks for the next day. Our walking in the river included sandy bottom, pebbles, rocks, boulders, sludge and the occasional fight with some quicksand. Which wouldn't have been so difficult to get out of had we not been carrying 40+ pound packs. It's funny to think about the cartoons we watched as kids assuming quicksand would be a much bigger problem in our adult life. Trekking poles were helpful to give us three points of contact while walking in and crossing the river as well as to use for measuring water holes before we



stepped.

I used the pup, River, as a guide. If she was walking across, I knew it was shallow enough for no issues. If she had to swim, then I knew I needed to be cautious. Although we had pack liners, none of us wanted to take a full dump into the river if it could be avoided.

We brought water filters and searched for the freshwater streams to gather our days' water for drinking and cooking. The first day we did have to filter from the river but we let the water sit in containers for a few hours which allowed for the silt to settle before we filtered it.

Jessy and I didn't use our rainfly at night so that we could gaze up at the millions of stars which seemed exaggerated next to the top of the canyon. As we hiked along during the day we could see where the recent flash floods had marked the area, tossed tree limbs and left mud and polished stones in its wake.

Although I've been through slot canyons before on day hikes, doing a multi-day hike in one as long as Paria was a great way to experience ever-changing nature and appreciate that these areas stay protected.



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✳️ Number of stick figure bikes is 43