

Chain Reaction

Summer 2023



A Quarterly Publication of



Orange County Wheelmen

OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

CALENDAR: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar

OFFICERS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020

EVENTS: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: 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.

GENERAL MEETINGS

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

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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On the cover: 2022 stage 11 of the Tour de France
Photo credit: Bicycling Magazine

Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

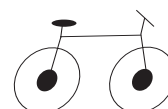
Woo Hoo it's almost summer, and you know what that means?! Tour de France! I look forward to this time every year and I can't wait to be glued to the television, or watching a recording of it if I can't watch it live. Then there are the commentaries after each stage on podcast or YouTube. I like listening to The Move podcast and/or Chris Horner on YouTube. Both really break down the stages and analyze the what, when, where and who of The Tour.

With summer also comes events that OCW has planned, or is planning. Check out page 8 for upcoming events or log onto www.ocwheelmen.org.

I'm sure a few of you are planning trips with your bike this summer, so be sure to share your experience by writing an article. Alan and I just got back from Prescott, Arizona with our mountain bikes so I'll be sharing the fun we had on some of the most awesome built trails that part of Arizona has to offer.

This issue is packed with fun and interesting articles, so grab a cold one and kick back and read it cover to cover. Then go out and plan your next adventure!

Have a fun summer everyone!





Bob Fairfield, ICI

The President



Welcome to Spring!

We certainly have had our more than fair share of spring-like weather, with 40 degree and 80 degree days, rain and sun, construction detours and flooded bike trails. Some days it's a pleasure to ride, and other days I prefer to wait until the temperature at least gets up to 40 degrees before starting out on a ride.

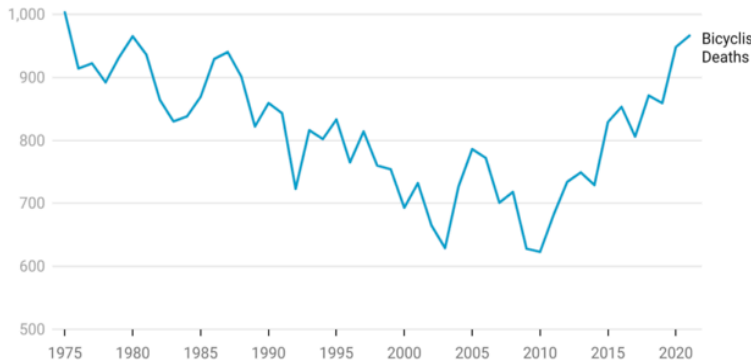
I'm originally from the southern New York/ New Jersey region, but I've been spoiled by the (more days than not) great weather of Southern California.

In other news,

NHTSA's 2021 fatality data is in and it shows the crisis isn't abating.

1.4.1: Number of Annual Bicyclist Fatalities

Number of recorded bicyclists killed in fatal crashes from 1975 to 2021



Data from 1975 until 1990 comes IIHS. Data from 1990 until 2006 from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Data from 2007 until 2021 comes from NHTSA's Fatality and Injury Reporting System Tool (FIRST)

Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: IIHS, BTS, and NHTSA FARS • Created with Datawrapper

Bicyclist fatalities have gone from a low of 623 cyclist deaths in 2010 to 966 people killed while bik-

ing in 2021. This is the highest number since 1975.

OCW does its part to reduce these numbers by offering Smart Cycling (formerly TS-101) training classes, and I remind the rides that I lead of ways of riding safely by staying in lane, using hand signals, and stopping at red traffic lights and stop signs.

The Spring Metric was well attended, with 54 brave souls coming out in warm sunny weather to ride the hills and valleys of Riverside County.

The OCW/ BCI was a success too, with 44 members taking on a variety of 4 new rides, with new roads and bike trails.

We have had a couple of bike industry businesses ask if they could sponsor us. We are currently in negotiation with them to see what they can offer us for promotions by OCW.

We will have other events, social meetings and parties during the year, so stay tuned to the club newsletter, the Chain Reaction, and emails from us for announcements 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.



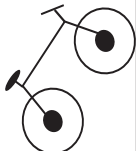
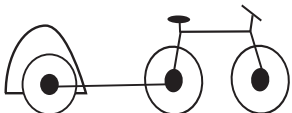
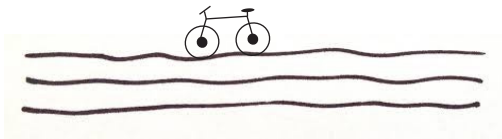
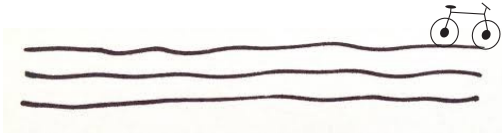
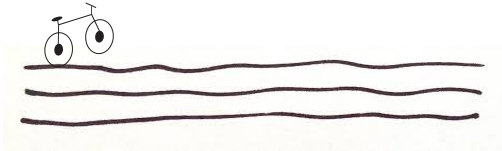
Find all the bikes!

BOARD
meeting
minutes



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 21. Did your numbers match??



WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

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

Travel	Sunburn	Humid	Hike
Swimsuit	Vacation	Sandcastle	Explore
Hot	Pool	Adventure	Hamburgers
Surfboard	Dehydration	BBQ	Fireworks
Cycling	Warm	Camp	Grill

 Find the solved puzzle at the back of this issue



the *VICE* President's Message

Dan Ignosci, Vice President

In our first General Meeting following the Covid pause, the team from Gear Coop were our April keynote speakers. Gear Coop is an outdoor retailer, similar to but on a smaller scale than REI. They shared the Gear Coop purpose and a desire to partner with OCW members. We utilized Facebook Live to allow our members, who couldn't attend the meeting in person, to still benefit remotely from the presentation. In addition, we had a potluck, 50/50 drawing and a raffle for items that Gear Coop brought to the meeting.

At the fast-approaching June 28 General Meeting, Todd Brown of Pedal Industries will be our guest speaker. Todd will talk about cycling gear that his company manufactures, his book "The Way of The RACER" and his Race-Day Ready Challenge training ideas. We invite you to attend and bring something for our potluck dinner at the Irvine Ranch Water District Community Meeting Room which starts at 6:30pm.

About eighteen cyclists participated in an Earth Day Ride on April 22. We started from the Tustin Metrolink Station, rode to Pizza Port in Carlsbad and sat down for an enjoyable meal. After polishing



off some pizza, we rode our bikes back to Oceanside and took a FREE Metrolink train to Tustin. Definitely an excellent afternoon!



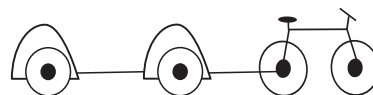
More than thirteen cyclists drove to Palos Verdes for our April Fifth Sunday Remote Ride. Palos Verdes was cold and drizzly at times, but we had a fun hill-filled ride none the less.

Lee Stebbins led our Memorial Day mystery ride from the Gear Coop in Tustin. The crew from Gear Coop provided bagels and coffee for the twenty-two riders in attendance. The essence of the mystery ride was to pick a destination and while



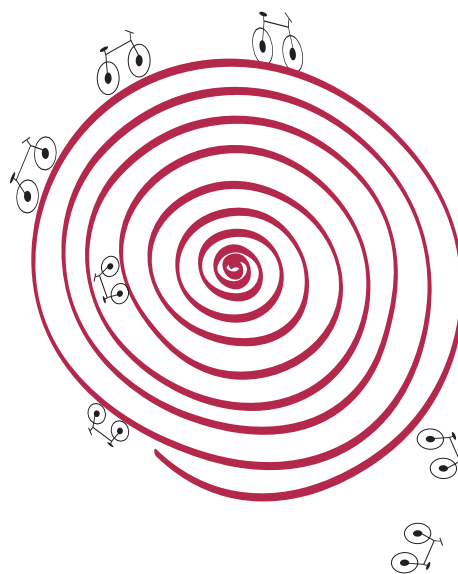
the ride is underway let several riders determine how to ride together to/from the destination. We rode (many dressed in red, white, and blue) to Castaways Park in Newport Beach to see the 1776 American flags that were on display.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me for any OCW matter at danignosci@cox.net.



Several OC Wheelmen members recently joined some cyclists from the Ladies & Gents group on a three-day ride from San Luis Obispo to Los Angeles. There were a total of twenty-six cyclists who rode approximately 200 miles, dined together and stayed in hotels overnight in Buellton and Ventura. Luckily for all involved, our support van had no crashes to deal with and only had to assist with about 5 flats over the three days.

We will be having another Fifth Sunday of the Month Remote Ride on July 30. Our remote rides tend to be in the range of 40 to 70 miles. Previous rides included Oceanside to Coronado, Oceanside to Torrey Pines Gliderport out and back, Palos Verdes, as well as an Inland San Diego Loop. More details about our upcoming Fifth Sunday excursion to follow via email as we get closer to the ride. If you have any rides that you are wanting to do, please contact me ASAP.



UPCOMING EVENTS

General Meeting on June 28
Guest Speaker: Todd Brown of Pedal Industries
IRWD Community Room @ 6:30 pm
Led by: Dan Ignosci

Board Meeting - July 2 (Everyone is welcome!)
Location: Lake Forest, CA @ 11:30 AM
Led by: Bob Fairfield

Fifth Sunday Remote Ride - July 30
Depart from: TBD
Led by: Dan Ignosci

Board Meeting - August 6 (Everyone is welcome!)
Location: Lake Forest, CA @ 11:30 AM
Led by: Bob Fairfield

OCW Does Cool Breeze - Aug 19th
Location: Ventura, CA
Led by: Terry Kessler

General Meeting - August 23
Guest Speaker - UC Irvine Triathlon Club
IRWD Community Room @ 6:30 pm
Led by: Dan Ignosci

Summer Metric - August 26
Depart from: TBD
Led by: OCW

Board Meeting - September 3 (Everyone is welcome!)
Location: Lake Forest, CA @ 11:30 AM
Led by: Bob Fairfield

OCW Does Mammoth Gran Fondo - September 9
Location: Mammoth Lakes, CA
Led by: Terry Kessler

Huntington Beach Airshow - September 29
Depart from ARTIC @ 10am
Led by: Dan Ignosci



The Hungry Eyelist



Cheddar Jalapeno Chicken Burgers



This recipe is from What's Gaby Cooking, another food blogger with great recipes that I follow. Burgers are perfect for summer BBQ and this one adds some simple but flavorful ingredients. Click [here](#) for the online recipe along with tricks and tips from Gaby on how to make this burger. Tip: Use brioche buns for even more flavor!

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ pounds ground chicken
½ cup finely chopped yellow onion
¼ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
2 garlic cloves finely chopped
2 teaspoons chopped jalapeño
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
½ cup finely shredded cheddar cheese
Kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper

Toppings:

4 burger buns toasted
1 cup guacamole
Sour Cream
Lettuce
Sliced Red Onion

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare an indoor or outdoor grill over medium heat.

Transfer the ground chicken to a medium bowl. Add in the onion, cilantro, garlic, jalapeño, cumin, paprika, cheddar cheese, salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Using your hands, incorporate everything together. Make sure everything is evenly incorporated without over mixing the ground chicken.

Form the mixture into four ½"-thick patties. Grill burgers over medium heat until cooked through, 5-7 minutes per side.

Serve each patty in a burger bun topped with guacamole and sour cream and any additional toppings needed.



Hiking Corner

There's Water in 'Dem 'Dar Hills

By Theresa Nelson

Last issue I wrote about how green and blooming all our Southern California hiking areas are. There are still many wildflowers flourishing if you want to get more hikes in before the heat of the summer starts. Another by-product of our winter rains, is more water in our creeks and rivers. More rain means more snow in the higher elevations, which means as we move from spring into summer – snow melt, which moves the water away from the hills and mountains channeling into formerly dry washes, flood control channels and swelling smaller creeks.

Did you know that Orange County does have a natural waterfall? It's located just outside of Trabuco Canyon and Rancho Santa Margarita in the Cleveland National Forest accessible by a fun little hike. The trail to the falls and surrounding areas have been closed since the fall of 2018 when a devastating fire raged

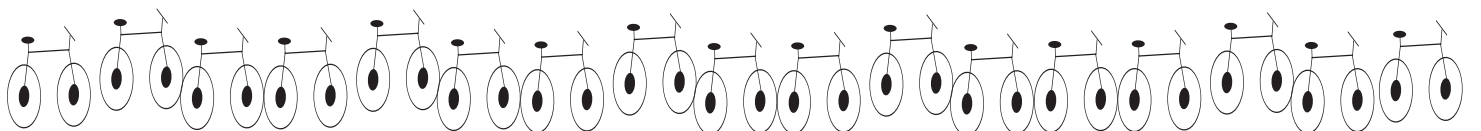
through the canyon, burning many trees and some cabins. The seasons following the fire created major erosion along the trail and major trail damage. The forest service had been diligently working on the area and public access and in late May 2023 had reopened the trail.

To access the trail head, requires a 5-mile off-road drive on an unpaved, dirt, rocky road. Also a National Forest Adventure Pass (or National Park Pass) is needed to leave a parked car while you do the hike. From the parking lot we walked up a dirt road past settlers cabins that have been around since the early 1900's and most of them have been restored. The actual trail head start is approximately ½ mile up this road. Round trip from the parking area was 3.9 miles.

It wasn't long before we approached our first

water crossing and carefully stepped across rocks and downed tree limbs to make it across. On our way to the falls, there was a total of 13 water crossings as the trail wove back and forth across the river. I've done this trail multiple times in the past but have never seen this much water flowing in the river which used to be considered more of a creek.

Just before the start of the switchbacks to head up to Santiago Peak, we made a right turn on the trail and were rewarded with a full flowing waterfall. So much more than the trickle we experienced in past trips. Extra precipitation from the winter rains made for lots of green growth, wildflowers, some poison oak and almost overgrown path. The forest service has done an amazing job clearing the trail and it was easy to follow. We spent a little time enjoying our snacks and the cool breeze from the fall before we headed back to our car.





Bicycle Touring the Natchez Trace

By Brad Hontz

In the fall of 2022, OCW members Brad and Gwen Hontz enjoyed a five-day bicycle tour from Charleston to Savannah hosted by the [Cycle of Life Adventures \(COLA\)](#) tour company. Tour discussions invariably get around to “What other tours have you been on?”, and we were pleased to discover that half of the other six like-minded tour guests had previously toured with COLA, and most recently, on COLA’s tour of the Natchez Trace.

The COLA Natchez Trace Tour - April 16th - 22nd, 2023

The Natchez Trace, a 444-mile-long National Park, was already on our bicycling bucket list. Along with two new friends from our fall tour, we made plans to join COLA’s mid-April 2023 seven-day Natchez Trace tour. We invited the always cheerful Riverside Bicycle Club mem-

ber, frequent OCW ride attendee, and previous bicycle touring partner Marianne Ronay to join us.

The Natchez Trace’s history dates back thousands of years. The Trace originated as a wildlife trail, with buffalo and other wildlife traveling from the deep south northeast to downtown Nashville; supposedly then the site of a massive salt lick. Native Americans naturally followed the game on the trail, and after many years the trail became a clearly marked path. In many marked places along the current trail, you can visit and walk within the deeply sunken route of the original trail worn down over thousands of years.

After American independence and prior to the steamboat era, large wooden flatboats originating from Kentucky and from as far north as Pittsburgh traveled south along the

Mississippi to sell cash crops, livestock, whisky and other goods in prosperous New Orleans. Lacking the ability to “power back up” the Mississippi, the flatboats were broken down at the end of their journey, their wood sold to build many of the piers and homes along the southern Mississippi, including at Natchez, Mississippi which prospered as a Mississippi river port. The cash-rich flatboaters used the Natchez Trace route to return home by foot or horse, on constant guard of thieves. The regular flatboater Trace traffic and need for safety led to the construction of “stands” being built along the Trace, where travelers could stay, resupply and eat. It was at Grinder’s Stand that Merriwether Lewis, of Lewis and Clark fame, died from a gunshot wound in 1803. Anyone with even a passing interest in this chapter of American history will likely enjoy the book “Life on the Mississippi: An Epic American Adventure” by Rinker Buck.

Essentially abandoned as an active route in the early 1900’s, the Trace was eventually established as a unit of the National Park Service in 1938, and completed to its current 444-mile completely paved form in 2005. Our fourteen member tour (twelve participants, two guides) started our tour just outside the northern Nashville Terminus and headed southwest, crossing through Tennessee, a corner of Alabama and then into Mississippi. Largely following the original Trace’s route, the paved Trace passes near only three cities of any appreciable size; Florence, Alabama (neighboring Muscle Shoals), Tupelo, Mississippi (Elvis’s birthplace) and Jackson, Mississippi. As a consequence, we rarely experienced vehicles traveling in both directions at the same time on this beautifully paved two-lane road. Traffic did pick up near Tupelo and considerably more so near the larger city of Jackson, where I would have felt more comfortable with a bike lane as the Trace offers no shoulder along its entire route. There were ample signs indicating to pass cyclists using a full lane and the vast majority of the drivers were courteous and observed this rule.



With very few crossing streets, the unbroken nature of the Trace allowed for fantastically long stretches of blissful continuous cycling (you’re not in Irvine anymore!). However, after multiple days, I personally found the wooded view line becoming a bit monotonous and I would have welcomed an occasional coffee or donut shop to break up the scenery. That being said, there were National Park points of interest turn-offs every 15 - 30 miles along the Trace, with roughly half of the stops viewpoints of the old dirt Trace. The other stops were worth exploring, and most of us turned off to read the signboards, take a stroll, and learn about the area’s history.

Bike camping is possible along the Trace, and we regularly intersected with bike packer “Bicycle Bill” several times along our route. Bill seemed to enjoy both conversation and inspecting what was available for lunch. It wasn’t clear to me if bike packers could camp anywhere along





the route or only at designated campsites, which seemed infrequent. Bike campers would also need to plan carefully for water, as there were long stretches without water (these are well marked with the NPS map). Our group became very familiar with “facilitree” terminology by the end of our tour.

With 444 miles to cover over 7 days, we were prepared for long mileage each day. Most evenings, we needed to ride off trail to our accommodations; a mix of AirBnB’s, business hotels and BnBs. In total we ended up with 474 miles, or 67 miles on average per day. We had two consecutive days over 80 miles. Most of our group opted for an optional van tour of the Vicksburg National Park (guided, very worthwhile!) which we could have elected to skip and add 30 miles to our overall total. The day of the Vicksburg tour was our shortest ride

distance of 37 miles.

While not a rail-to-trail route, the Trace is nearly as flat, as our overall ride elevation was only 15,600 feet. Most of the climbing was found within the rolling hills of the Tennessee portion of the Trace, which as luck would have it, also included 10-15 mph headwinds on those days. We additionally faced several short, punchy climbs on a day three Trace construction detour (roughly 30 miles) which included several spirited dog chases with thankfully good outcomes.

Just as in any group ride, our group of twelve broke into small groups of similar pace. As an example, we rarely caught up with one member of our group riding a very interesting CruzBike Vendetta recumbent. At the end of the day, the group’s timing revolved around the

sweep's return, and unfortunately on our longer days we were rushing to shower and then sprint off to dinner. The days went by quickly!

Gwen and I really enjoyed both the COLA team and our riding group, and we'd highly recommend bicycling the Trace and using the COLA team if you choose to do so. COLA chose great accommodations and restaurants, offered excellent on-ride support, two friendly and knowledgeable tour guides that were both excellent riders, and at reasonable rates. COLA offers the Natchez Trace tour nine times a year, four tours in the spring and Five tours in the fall.

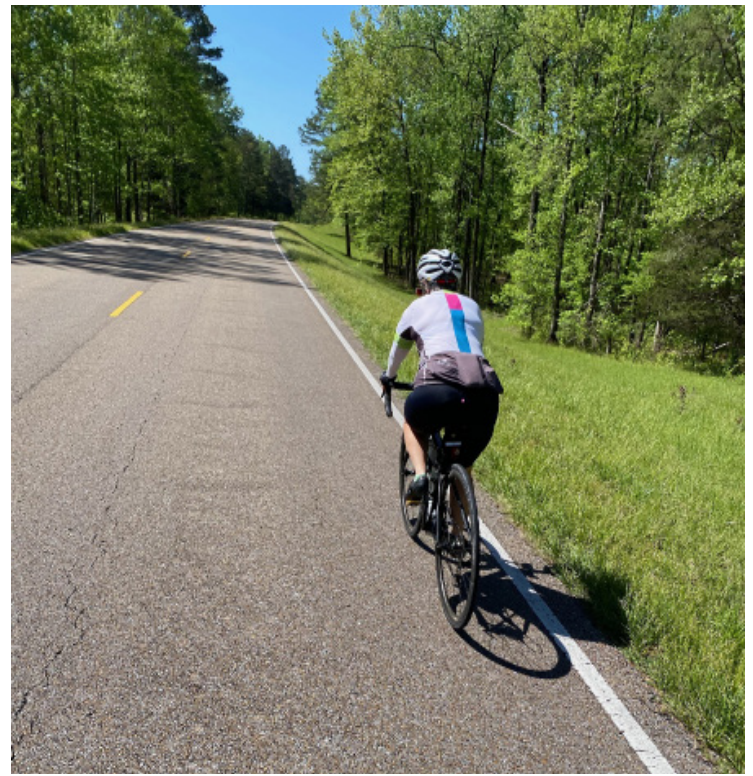
Our weather in mid-April was perfect; starting ride temps ranged from upper 40's to low 60's and ending temps from low 60's to low 80's. The famous humidity of the south was not a factor at all. We had only two very brief encounters with showers, including at the outset of our tour, but overall we considered ourselves very lucky.

Some of the highlights we encountered along the Trace included the picture-worthy double arched bridge over TN-96, the Merriwether Lewis's memorial, crossing the Tennessee River, several Native American mound and village sites, including a moving personal tribute to the "Trail of Tears" forced march called the Te-lah-nay's Wall (think of the Watts Towers as a miles long rock wall structure), a school and boarding house called French Camp where we stayed and had dinner one evening, the tiny town of Kosciusko named after a Polish Revolutionary War General, Vicksburg National Park (worth a trip on its own), a beautifully tranquil Cypress Swamp, the amazingly large Ross Barnett Reservoir just north of Jackson, and the charming city of Natchez at the southern terminus of the Trace. Natchez has a rich history with a number of existing antebellum-styled mansions left over from its golden era as a Mississippi port town. Currently, it appears to be a very popular weekend getaway, and we wished we could have stayed an extra day or two to ex-



plore.

Gwen and I added a few days in Nashville at the beginning of our tour, as neither of us had visited prior, and we weren't disappointed. What an amazing and rapidly growing city with live music venues at nearly every little restaurant and eatery. If you do plan to make this trip, please allow for a few extra days to visit downtown Nashville.







Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

Mountain and Gravel Bike Riding Geared Toward the 50+ Rider

Hip Check!

I was a bicycle road rider for many years. I can remember hearing stories of long-distance road riders risking Osteoarthritis or even worse, Osteoporosis which is a bone disease if they did not cross-train. The commonly talked about strategy was to cross-train, running, weight-lifting or any type of exercise that shocked the bones into forcing them to produce more calcium.

I'm in my 60's now and sure enough, I've developed slight joint pain in my hips. I had an exam and X-Rays and I do have a mild case of Osteoarthritis. I asked my doctor what the best strategy would be for dealing with this condition. I was elated when my doctor recommended physical therapy (instead of hip replacement surgery.) He didn't even recommend any drugs.

I was eligible for 6 sessions with a physical therapist which the insurance company would cover. I ended up going to Coast Therapy in Anaheim Hills, CA. Since I was also having slight back pain due to a herniated disk in the lower part of the spine, he suggested we work on the hips for some of the sessions and my back for the remainder of the sessions.

I must admit that I have never been very disciplined when it comes to stretching. My therapist did an initial assessment of how limber I was, and I did not do well. He started me on

some basic leg, hip stretching exercises, and some involved a 30-second stretch and some involved 20 reps.

Keep in mind, I was not there to try to improve my cycling skills or strength. I was there to stretch tendons and strengthen the muscles surrounding the hips and lower back. When I started 3 months ago, I was pathetic. I did not realize how much I was out of shape. I see the Physical Therapist once a week, but I do my best to perform stretching exercises at least 6 days a week at home.

Fast forward 3 months and I'm amazed at the progress I have made. Not only am I getting pain relief, but my cycling has improved. These exercises are not designed to improve my cycling, but I'm telling you, it has. I ride stronger, with better form and I seem less winded when climbing.

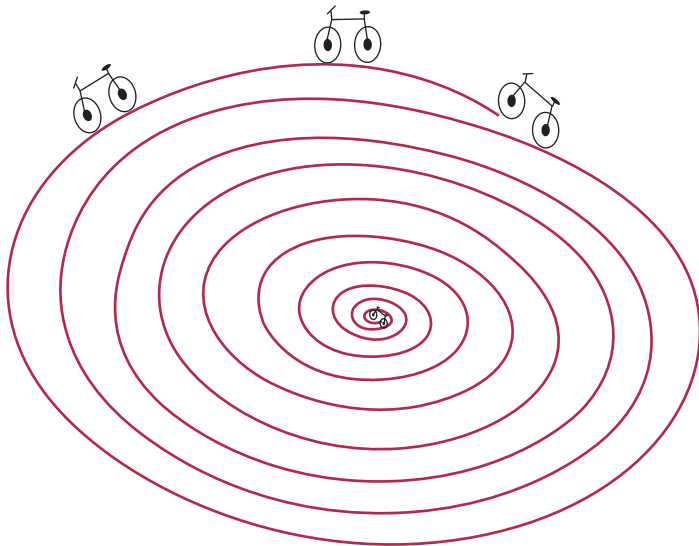
I'm sure there are some very qualified trainers at your local gym, but personally I have never had much success working with them. I like the idea of working with a licensed Physical Therapist because they have college degrees and usually are very qualified in specific parts of the body. I get the fact that going to a Physical Therapist costs more than the average trainer, but my only regret is not doing it years ago. I really like seeing the improvement in my body and cycling. I only have to spend 30 - 40

minutes a day, but it has become my favorite 30 - 40 minutes of the day.

Rules of the Trail

1. Ride open trails.
2. Leave No Trace.
3. Control your bicycle.
4. Yield appropriately.
5. Never scare animals.
6. Plan ahead.

Alan Vester
Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude
ocwgoathill@gmail.com



Join or Renew Your Membership



Just
Click



Bicycle Travel Weekend

By Kevin & Ximena Ansel

The first weekend in June was Adventure Cycling Association's seventh annual Bicycle Travel Weekend. We had participated in the previous six years. This year we would head to O'Neill Park in Live Oak Canyon. Our riding days would be on Friday and Saturday. Even though we tried to reserve a campsite in early April, Friday was the only day available. All of the local State and Regional Parks were completely booked. Our route would take us from Irvine south to San Juan Capistrano.

Before we got to San Juan, we stopped at the Farmer's Market. It happens every Friday from 9:00 to 1:00pm. Strolling through the booths, we stopped to talk to some of the vendors. They were curious about our trip and the route. We bought a few items to help support the local economy, but nothing too heavy. When you tour, it is a good idea to limit your souvenirs

because of space and weight.

Back on route, we rode east up the San Juan Creek Trail. This is a lovely trail that passes by equestrian stables and several of the owners were exercising their horses. After reaching Ortega Highway, we turned onto Antonio Parkway toward Rancho Santa Margarita and our steepest climb of the day. A few drivers slowed down and gave us a 'Thumbs Up'. We guess they are not used to seeing bicycle tourists with panniers and a sleeping bag strapped on a rear rack. Arriving at O'Neill Park, The ranger at the gate said, "You're traveling a little light, aren't you? Most of the people that come here have their vehicles loaded down with gear or are hauling a trailer". We told him, "We have everything we need packed in our bags". We did not bring cooking gear on this overnight tour, just a few snacks.

Our friends Joe and Margaret offered to meet us and bring dinner. Just after we finished setting up camp, they arrived with a delicious meal and wood for a post-dinner campfire. It was the perfect end to a fun day of touring.

The next morning we were awoken early by nature's alarm clock. A flock of wild parrots squawked loudly as they flew over our camp. I told Ximena, "Well, I guess it's time to get up." We took a leisurely stroll around the campground. Other campers were just starting to stir. It was cool, but it felt good to be out in the early morning air. After breaking down camp, we rode to breakfast at a local bakery and coffee shop. Our egg and cheese bagel would give us enough energy to head back home.

Our route was through Santiago Canyon. We love riding the canyon and traverse it often.



Making a stop at Cook's Corner, which is considered to be one of the most famous biker-bars in Southern California, we talked to another cyclist who flagged us down to ask us what we were doing. It just so happened that Santiago Canyon was one of the routes for the Orange County Wheelmen's Saturday ride as well. A group of about ten of our fellow club members rolled up.

After some conversation and a group photo, everyone was on their way. Ximena noted as we were making the climb out of Cook's, "We won't see them the rest of the day. Look how fast they are going". A speedy climb on our touring bikes does not happen. We have the gearing to make climbing enjoyable, but the weight we are hauling typically limits our MPH. We always say, "Our slow pace allows us to enjoy the beautiful scenery".

As we rode through the canyon, packs of other riders





passed us, several saying, “Bike camping, all right”.

Approaching the ‘Dump Grade’, the last climb in the canyon, we saw another cyclist coming our way on a touring bike with panniers. The three of us stopped to chat. Pam was on a training ride. She and her husband were heading out to ride the Northern Tier this summer. She was expecting to have a great adventure. Since we had ridden a large portion of the Northern Tier last summer, we believe her expectations will be met. We exchanged some touring stories about other common places we all had been. With that, we wished each other, “Safe Travels”.

Now out of the canyon and back on the flats, we were at a traffic light when we were caught by a group of riders on Tri-bikes. A joke was made about exchanging bicycles. One of the triathletes said, “You probably don’t want my bike. It weighs about 28 pounds”. I told her,

“Well, we are carrying about 60 pounds with our bikes and gear. I’ll take that trade.” As she rode pass Ximena she said, “Wow. That’s a lot of weight. No thanks”.

Taking the Peter’s Canyon Trail, we spotted a lot of wildlife. Besides seeing a lot of waterfowl, a large turtle was perched on a rock sunning himself. We enjoy seeing nature in our own backyard. We do not take it for granted. Our final stop was at a local coffee shop to sit, relax, and reminisce about our overnight 75-mile tour. Overnight trips like this are refreshing and always rekindle our love and desire for bicycle touring. Meeting people and adding a little adventure to our lives makes it memorable. We hope you give it a try too. It is a great way to travel. To see more of our bike tours, www.AnselAdventures.com and [Youtube.com/@AnselAdventures](https://www.youtube.com/@AnselAdventures)

Until next time...





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OCW

NOTO TOUR - OCW
BY LEE AND CATHY PAINTER

In fall 2019, OCW members Gwen and Brad Hontz, Theresa and Steve Nelson, and Cathy and Lee Painter booked a self-guided six-day bicycle tour on the Noto Peninsula of Japan through Oku Japan. The trip was scheduled for April 2020. We all know how nothing planned for 2020 worked... Gwen and Brad chose to get a refund, Theresa, Steve, Cathy and I waited it out and finally did the tour in April 2023.

During those three years, Oku phased out their bicycle tours, and now only offer walking tours. We were very pleased that they were able to support our bike tour - and without a price increase!

The Noto Peninsula is on the west coast of the main Japanese island of Honshu, about two hours by train north from Kyoto, or three hours northwest of Tokyo. The main industries are

agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Outside of the capital city of Kanazawa (population ~500,000), it's mountains, farmland, beaches and tiny villages.

We planned the trip for mid-April, hoping to see the sakura (cherry blossoms), but they were past their prime by the time we arrived. Still we saw a few.

We picked up our rental bikes in Kyoto two days before the start of the tour. We were happy with the bikes, Giant hybrids with flat bars. They came with a frame bag (which held a cable lock, spare tube, pump and patch kit). Also included was a rinko bag, which you put the bike in when taking a train. The bikes also came with an 11 L underseat bag for our clothes on the tour. When we picked up the bikes we swapped out platform pedals for our SPDs, and



most hotels and inns. The day before the tour we sent our suitcase to the inn where we'd stay the second night. When we checked in, we picked up our suitcase and repacked the underseat bag with clothes for the next two days. And repeat the process two days later. Solves two of the standard problems on a bike tour - where do you keep your luggage while on tour, and how do you have clothes for six days without full panniers or doing laundry.

installed our own saddles.

After picking up the bikes we did a short ride to the Gion district of Kyoto, then took the river trail back to our AirBnB.

The next day we rode to the Arashiyama bamboo forest and Tenryu-ji temple, it was way too crowded.

The six-day tour began with a non-riding day, starting with a two-hour train ride from Kyoto to Kanazawa. When we got off the train, we thought the next step would be to unbag the bikes and roll them out the exit of the train station. Wrong! A police officer told us to take the bikes to the street. She followed us to make sure we did that. At least she didn't make us re-bag the bikes before we left the station. We spent the afternoon taking the loop bus around Kanazawa. The first riding day started with a short train ride to Houdatsu. The riding days were from 30 to 40 miles, with 1000 to 2000 feet elevation gain. The fifth day, we started with a 10-mile taxi ride, rode a while, took a train for 7 miles to avoid traffic and tunnels, then finished on our bikes. The last day we rode to Wakura, took the train back to Kyoto, and rode to the Oku office to drop off the bikes.

In Japan, luggage forwarding services called takuhaibin are available at train stations and

On the tour, we mostly stayed in ryokans, traditional Japanese inns. When you arrive, you take off your shoes and put on the provided sandals (always too small), take a bath (sometimes en suite, sometimes public, but male/female separate), put on the supplied yukata (robe) and go to a kaiseki (multi-course) dinner. After dinner, you go to your room, with shoji walls and doors (paper screens on wood





lattice) with tatami floor mats (rush mats), put out your futon (bed) and get a comforter from the closet. In the morning, another kaiseki meal and hit the road.

Had to laugh when we finished a ten-plate meal and the innkeeper asked “Did you get enough to eat?” Or when the first thing the innkeeper says when you roll in is “You need to take a bath.”

When in Japan, it helps to be an adventurous eater. Most meals included sashimi (raw fish), sushi (rice with raw fish), miso soup (based on fermented soybeans), nori (dried seaweed). At one inn we got some sort of fried crustacean that you eat shell and all. The strangest thing we ate was pickled fish entrails. Not a favorite, but not awful. The Noto Peninsula is known for its mountain vegetables, so there were lots of

vegetables we didn’t recognize. And a couple of mistakes because we can’t read Japanese. For example, one hotel had two breakfast buffet lines, one Japanese, the other Western. You’d think the brown liquid in the plastic pouch next to the French toast would be syrup. But no, it was soy sauce. And before starting the tour, we bought groceries and cooked a couple of dinners. We bought what we thought was rice based on the picture on the package. But after cooking it, we think it was wheat. Oh well, just add some furikake (a dry Japanese condiment).

We got lucky with the weather, with rain the day before and the day after the tour. And ten days after we got home, there was a magnitude 6.5 earthquake on the peninsula.

Oku did an impressive job organizing the tour.

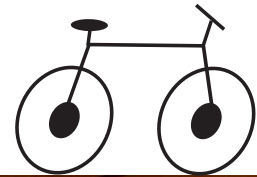
They booked the inns for the five nights, which included dinner and breakfast. They provided GPS units with route loaded, and links to download GPX files to our personal GPS. They provided the train tickets and booked the taxi.

Some thoughts on cycling in Japan. In Japan, cars and bicycles stay to the left. Turns out it's easier to do on a bike than a car. On a bike, as you come to an intersection, you can stop on the shoulder and think through how to proceed. Riding in Kyoto was a little hectic, with lots of traffic. In the busiest areas, you can ride on the sidewalk. Once in Noto, there was little traffic, and drivers were patient and polite (not like at home).

And finally some thoughts on language. In the cities, a fair number of people speak a little English, especially at places like train stations

and markets. Less so in the countryside. While riding we had to depend on the GPS tracks, since the street signs were in kanji, the pictographs adapted from Chinese. This was also an issue when looking at menus in restaurants, or buying snacks at convenience stores. Using the camera with Google Translate helped. And we were impressed with the smartphone app a couple of the innkeepers used. They could speak a sentence in Japanese into the phone, and the phone would say it in English.

We enjoyed the route, the scenery, the courteous drivers and amazing variety of food. We're glad the tour finally happened.



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