

SPOKES & FOLKS

Get a bicycle. You will certainly not regret it, if you live.

Mark Twain

Issue Two: September(ish) 2010



From The Director's Chair: Affecting Lives

By Dan Lill

What R Community Bikes does best is give away and repair bicycles. However, we also affect lives in ways mostly unseen but equally as important to our main mission. Several examples have occurred over the past few months and would seem to be worthy of some mention.

One of our 2010 initiatives has been the appearance of RCB at the Westside Farmers' Market on the last Tuesday of each month. We repair bikes and replace parts for the Westside community where bike services are sparse - if available at all. Once each month we trail over to the parking lot of St Monica's Church on Genesee St. and for three hours, we do what we can to keep folks and their bikes working together. On one particular Tuesday, a young boy, perhaps 8 years old, approached and asked if we could help fix his bike which was missing a pedal or two, had a flat rear tire and was in need of some other work as well. The group at the time was not being overrun with work so we all teamed up on the bike. Dave, (who also provided our friend with a cookie or two), Steve, Rich, Ellen, Bill, Tom and Len all had a hand in the bike as its owner looked on eagerly. Task completed, he rode off around the parking lot, [Continued on Page 2](#)

RCB Picnic 2010

By Dan Lill

Pictures by Bill D'Anza

August 15th 2010 was the second RCB sponsored social event, the first being a much smaller gathering two years ago at the Lills' in Greece. This year's event was an attempt to thank all of our volunteers for the many hours contributed toward accomplishing our mission in the Rochester community.

Rain on the date of our picnic could not deter nearly 70 hearty souls from attending our gathering held in Ellison Park's Old Meadow pavilion. Volunteers [Continued on Page 2](#)



RCB Volunteers gathered for the annual appreciation picnic.

From Page 1 grinning from ear to ear and soon rode back home. It was not until a staff member of St Monica's spoke up that we became aware of the young lad's recent history. Several days earlier, our new friend's sister had been tragically killed in a car accident and the family had spent the last few days mourning her death and preparing for her funeral. The same was true of their neighborhood school where both attended summer sessions and where there was a vigil for her that day. He had come to the Market, in his words, "to get away from it for a while". He had brought his bike and we had given him a few minutes of respite before returning to his home. We affected his life – and he had affected ours. We also affect lives, in ways that we are unaware of, at the shop. One of our relatively new wrenches became a regular and stood out for several reasons one of which was that he was younger than most of us. He displayed very good mechanical skills which were probably related to what he did in "the outside world". Little did we know how we had, somewhat inadvertently, affected his life. He had been unemployed for the first time in his adult life and his volunteering at RCB had initially given him a place to go but then as he became more comfortable, had given him a place to give back during a time when he had lots of time to deal with. In what was partially hyperbole, exaggeration for effect, he said that we had saved his life during that time. Now back to full time employment, he continues to be with us whenever his new work schedule allows. Another life affected.

From Page 1 and their guests enjoyed dogs and sausage, salads, snacks, desserts, beverage in moderation but most of all sharing of friendships, both old and new. Many volunteers work specific days during each week and so do not know volunteers from other days. The picnic gave those folks the opportunity to meet and greet each other.

One of the highlights was Kevin's very eloquent thanks delivered during the awards segment of the "program" such that it was. Kevin spoke of how he had been displaced from other agencies for a variety of reasons and was floundering about trying to avoid trouble. RCB came to his rescue and he to ours as he has become a daily mainstay in Mary and Andre's Parts corner.

The Century Club was also announced and its members, all of whom had given more than 100 hours since the beginning of the year, received a memento of their service. One glaring omission was the name of Gary Young who when told of the error very graciously commented that he was fine with that as long as he still has the biggest tool box.

It was a wonderful day celebrated with family and friends and thanks to all who attended or who wanted to attend but could not. Thanks also to all who helped in any way big or small, to the Board of Directors for sponsoring the event but especially to Tim and Bill for all they did.



St. Joe's Crew: Joe Bonazza, John Zachman, Bill D'Anza, Tom Haley, Len Letteu and Wayne Coleman. Not pictured: Gordon Robinson

Volunteer Spotlight: Rich Wheaton

By Dan Lill

Choosing a volunteer to highlight in our newsletter is becoming a daunting task as our list of contributors is quite lengthy. There are several, however, who stand out for their immediate willingness to help. One of those special folks is Rich Wheaton. Rich could be called our "cold room consultant" or our "master carpenter" or our "trailer king" as each of those terms describes one aspect of this multi-faceted gentleman.

Rich has taken over the cold room/bike storage room and has, with the help of several others, organized our wheel and tire inventory so that when mechanics are in need of a specific size rim, their job is much simpler. Also in this same room, he has set up a rack for

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From Page 2 our repaired tubes so that we can determine if they are ready to be used. In the workroom Rich's handiwork is evident in several areas. Used forks have found a home and we have a pamphlet rack where instructional materials can be found and used by our mechanics. The front office is also a place where his work shows up. Our volunteer name tag board and helmet rack were both built by Rich. What sets Rich apart is that each time he is asked to design a piece for us, he does so quickly, willingly and most of all skillfully. His work is not only functional, it is also beautifully done.

Several months ago, a brand new trailer was donated to RCB by two very generous supporters. The problem was that a special towing package was needed to pull our mobile repair unit. One of the first to come forward to volunteer to pull the rig was of course Rich. He has been one of our most consistent "trailers", going to pick up bikes and also going to special events where the trailer might be needed. Rich has also plied his trade inside the trailer by constructing shelving and cupboards so that tools and supplies do not have to be loaded and unloaded for each adventure.

Rich, obviously, has contributed much in a material way to the success of RCB. His greatest contribution however may be something much more subtle. In all things that he does in and around Hudson Ave. or in the community, Rich Wheaton displays a calmness and gentleness which is sometimes hard to come by in our endeavors. He is never rattled, always respectful and always a credit to what we are trying to accomplish. We are fortunate that Rich Wheaton found us and are proud to call him one of RCB's finest. Thanks, Rich.

Consideration For My Backyard

By Eric Marlowe

We were in White Horse, British Columbia and my pride was swollen with the thought of what we just had done. There were 40 of us in all and we'd just spent the last eight weeks pedaling our bicycles from Austin, Texas. In just 10 days we would be rolling into Anchorage to complete a 4,500 mile ride that was aimed at raising money for cancer research.

My ego had grown at the same rate as my beard which, at the time, was enormous. Normally I try my best to maintain a sense of modesty but, as I sat outside of a laundry mat, I decided to allow my head to grow just a bit. Why shouldn't I be just a little arrogant? In the last 4,000 miles we rode across some of the toughest terrain imaginable. We fought the heat of Texas summer, faced 40 mile-an-hour head winds in Wyoming and destroyed mountain passes all through the Canadian Rockies.

We were champions. We were unstoppable. There was nobody on the road that could match us. I believed all of this until I met Glen and Jin.

Starting in Key West, Florida, Glen and Jin spent four months on the road pedaling for the same reason as us, to raise money for cancer research. But unlike us they didn't have mini vans to carry their camping gear and food. Everything they needed was strapped to their touring frames, all 50 lbs of it. They rode, more or less, the same route as us, climbed the same mountains and fought the same wind and heat. Only they did it hauling the weight of a 3rd grader.

Bring on the humble pie.

Hearing their stories replanted my feet firmly on the ground and kindled new inspiration. I knew there were people out there that undertook extremely long, unsupported rides but it wasn't until I met one of them that I had a sense of the complexities such a ride presented. Their routes were planned, their food was rationed and everything they carried, every piece of equipment, was meticulously scrutinized.

I knew then that my days of supported rides were just about over so I began gathering as much information as possible. I asked them about their frames and panniers, what brand of tires they used and how many miles a day they averaged. They responded by telling me about the trials and errors they made along the way and they scoffed disgustingly at the items in their bags

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From Page 3 that turned out to be worthless. As we talked and asked each other questions, the topic of home towns was eventually brought up.

“I’m from Rochester, New York,” I told Glen.

“Rochester? Really?” he said excitedly. “You must ride in the Finger Lakes all the time!”

Bring on slice number two.

With great humility, I told him them I’d never ridden in the Finger Lakes. Actually, I said, I hadn’t even *driven* through the Finger Lakes. Although it’s only about 30 miles from my house, I was almost completely unfamiliar with the region.

Without skipping a beat, Glen launched into a long and enthusiastic explanation of why the Finger Lakes are such an amazing place to ride. The wide shoulders, smooth roads, beautiful scenery and epic climbs make the area perfect for cycling. He told me that of everyplace he’d biked through, the Finger Lakes region was one of his favorites.

Again I was inspired. Not only would all future rides be unsupported, but my first would be in a place that could almost be considered my own backyard. So this summer I convinced six friends to spend a week with me, pedaling 300 miles through a place that I’d practically lived in my whole life but never explored.

At the end of the first day, sitting by a waterfall in Sonyea State Forest, I finally found out for myself the truth of Glen’s words. And although 300 miles is a modest length when compared to the 4,500 miles we rode to Alaska, it was a ride that was in some ways just as important.



Six friends, 300 miles and eight days without a shower. Yikes.

Tool Tip: Precession

By Gary Young

It's common knowledge that left-hand pedals and the right-hand cups of “English” bottom brackets are reverse threaded to prevent them from unscrewing in use.

But what makes left-hand pedals and right-hand cups prone to unscrewing? The only explanation I've ever seen comes from Jobst Brandt, a mechanical engineer who wrote *The Bicycle Wheel* and who holds forth on a number technical subjects at the usenet group rec.bicycles.tech.

His answer: precession.

According to Brandt, you can picture how precession works by forming the thumb and index finger of one hand into an “O.” Now insert the index finger of the other hand and roll it along the inside wall of the O in a clockwise direction. You'll see that your index finger spins counter-clockwise as you roll it clockwise. That's precession.

Of course, with tightly threaded parts, there's not much room for rolling to occur. However, there is some clearance built in (otherwise it wouldn't be possible to thread the parts together). Furthermore, according to Brandt, “even tightly fitting parts have relative clearance due to their elasticity, metals not being rigid materials as is evident from steel springs. Under load, micro deformations, enough to cause motion, occur in such joints.”

The range of motion may be very small, but routine pedaling repeats the process thousands of times, enough to cause pedals and cups to unscrew.

Right-hand pedals and left-hand cups are also subject to precession, but in their case precession moves them clockwise – in other words, in a tightening direction. Using reverse threads on left-hand pedals and right-hand cups also ensures that precession promotes tightening and not loosening.

Grant News and Shop Tip

By Carl W. Christensen

RCB's grant to the Greater Rochester Health Foundation for \$7400 was approved! This was used to outfit the trailer with tool and workbenches for our outreach repair clinics. This support will contribute greatly to our expanding repair service. Thank you GRHF!

We have applied to NEXTGEN Rochester (part of the Rochester Area Community Foundation) for \$750 to purchase additional tool kits for the youths who are increasingly volunteering in the shop. We await their ok to proceed with a full application.

Shop tip: Recently a question came up about sizing derailleur. If you are replacing a derailleur, it needs to have sufficient capacity (and chain length) to cover the range of gears. To determine the proper size (length between the upper and lower chain tension wheels), count the difference between the number of teeth on the chain crank high and low gear, and the largest to smallest gears on the rear wheel sprocket, add the two numbers and divide by two. The resulting number is the range of the number of chain links the derailleur needs to cover. There are approximately two chain links per inch and that is the distance between the two wheels. Notice that mountain bikes with wide gearing have long cages and racing bikes with closely spaced gears have short cages.

Final Note

If you have information on Rochester's Bike Master Plan or the Mixed Use Trail in Tryon Park, please share! They'd make a great stories for the next addition.

I tried to incorporate as many suggestions as possible and will keep on trying. Keep the feedback coming! It's greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Eric Marlowe
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Featured Ride: Mendon Ponds Loop -25 miles-

By Eric Marlowe

- From downtown, take Clinton Ave South
- Turn east (left) on Westfall Rd
- Turn south (right) on Edgewood Ave
- Turn east (left) on French Rd
- Turn south (right) on Clover St

There are at least three options upon reaching Mendon Ponds Park. You can enter the park via the northern most entrance at Canfield road or, if you want to add a few more miles, you can enter the park at Co Rd 45/Williams Rd. You can go even a little further and ride down to Mendon Center Rd. All three options will bring you to Mendon Center Rd./Co Rd 64.

- Turn north (left) on Mendon Center Rd/Co Rd 64
- Stay straight at the stop light to get onto Tobey Rd/Co Rd 62
- Turn west (left) onto Stone Rd/Co Rd 37
- Turn north (right) onto Clover St
- Turn west (left) onto Elmwood Ave
- Arrive back downtown safe and sound

This is a route I've been riding for a few years now and one thing I really love about it is its versatility. First of all if you don't like riding the roads, you can take the Erie Canal Trail to Clover St, exiting at Lock 32. The three entrances into Mendon Ponds Park provide enough options to keep the ride from growing stale over time all three have some great scenery. My personal favorite is atop a hill on Mendon Center Rd/Co Rd 64 where there's an impressive view of the city's skyline across acres of farmland. And of course you're almost guaranteed to see at least two dozen deer and even some fox and turkey if you're lucky.

If you really want to tack on some miles, you can take Clover St into Honeoye Falls, turn east (Left) onto East St/Co Rd 243 then make another left onto Quaker Meeting House Rd. From there, turn east (Right) onto Rush Mendon Rd. then north (Left) onto Mendon Center Rd. You can then follow the original directions back home. Beware! Google Maps is misleading and if you're directionally handicap as I am, you might get lost. I ended up in Henrietta the first time I took this route. Make sure you're going north on Mendon Center Road!

DISCLAIMER Please, please, PLEASE consult a map before heading out. I'm pretty sure these directions are correct but I wasn't kidding about being directionally handicapped!