

## The Prez Sez:

I am writing this on the rest day of the 89<sup>th</sup> Tour de France. Lance is currently in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. It remains to be seen how well he will do in the mountain stages that begin tomorrow. If he wins (*he did, of course—ed*), I would expect that there will be an increase in road bike sales. Not since the early nineties, when Greg Lemond was on the top of his cycling form, has an American cyclist done so

**“Still,...far too many road bikes sit unused in garages and storage sheds.”**

much to publicize the sport of cycling as Lance Armstrong. Still, in this country, and especially in Alabama, far too many road bikes sit unused in garages and storage sheds.

This past Saturday, July 13, we held the second Bike Summit of the year at the Multimodal building of the Alabama Department of Transportation. There were representatives from clubs in Huntsville, Birmingham, Anniston, and Montgomery. I had hoped to see some representatives from Dothan and Mobile, but when I telephoned a few of the shops in those cities, I was distressed to learn that the local cycling clubs have gone inactive. Furthermore, the bike shop owners informed me that they see little interest in road bikes. Most of their sales are in mountain bikes.

It is not difficult to rehearse the reasons for the scarcity of bicycle traffic in this state. Most people are afraid to ride bicycles on the road. And even if they summoned the courage to get off the sidewalks and onto the streets with their bikes, most people lack adequate knowledge and skills to ride safely on trafficked roads. There are many people who deplore their lack of exercise and wish they had a better opportunity to cycle to work. The steady creep of urban sprawl, however, makes commuting to work by bicycle more difficult and less convenient. The average distance between home and work has dramatically increased over the past twenty years in most urban areas. Add in the high heat and humidity

of Alabama summers that often lingers well into the fall, and the attractiveness of commuting to work by bicycle wanes.

It is important, however, not to lose perspective. The reasons for the lack of interest in riding bicycle given in Alabama are the same as those given in other states, and yet many of those other states have considerably more cycling trails, bike lanes, and publicized bike routes. The potential for recreational riding in Alabama is as high as and in some cases higher than any other state. Thousands of miles of paved rural roads and the possibility of riding year-round beckon to the dedicated cyclist.

Three factors need to be in place if Alabama is to move forward to become the most bicycle friendly state in the union. 1. Develop the sport of road racing and mountain bike racing in the state. Much has already been done with mountain bike racing. More desperately needs to be done in road racing. The greater the presence of road racing in Alabama, the more familiarity motorists have with cyclists who share the road. 2. Better education about cycling offered to young people and adults. Currently there are only two League of American Bicyclists certified instructors in Alabama. There are few programs in elementary schools that teach bicycle safety to children. 3. Wider roads. Oregon passed a law a couple of decades ago that mandated shoulders on most road in that state. Cyclists had nothing to do with the writing or passing of the law. The motivation behind the passage of the bill was quality of life. Motorists and law enforcement wanted safer roads. When the shoulders were added, suddenly cyclists also appeared in large numbers. Now Oregon is touted as one of the most bicycle friendly states in the union. All three factors can come together in Alabama.

In the aftermath of the bike summit, those of us in attendance voiced interest in forming some sort of coalition of concerned cyclists in Alabama to promote safe cycling. There is much work to be done to make Alabama cycle friendly. We can all join in the effort. Nothing else makes a stronger statement that bicycles belong on the road than to get out and ride. ☺

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**August rides  
start at  
Pintlala Baptist  
at 7 a.m.**

**September rides  
start at  
Village Green  
at 8 a.m.**

**October rides  
start at the John  
Hall Store in Cecil  
at 9 a.m.**

**If you're planning  
to ride, put an e-  
mail out to the  
e-mail list (see  
page 6) and let  
everyone know  
you're going and  
how far you want  
to go!**

For more ride  
information,  
go to

[www.mgmbikeclub.org](http://www.mgmbikeclub.org)

and go to Ride  
Schedule.

## August-October Saturday Ride Directions

**August Saturdays**—7 a.m. — Pintlala Baptist Church. Take I-65 out of Montgomery approx. 7 miles south of the I-85 interchange to Exit 164. Follow US-31 south 7 miles to Pintlala. The church is located on the right at the stop light in Pintlala. Shakedown runs for the new century routes.

**September Saturdays**—8 a.m. — Millbrook's Village Green park. Travel north on I-65 to the Millbrook/Coosada exit (Hwy 143, you can only go one way) Follow 143 to the second stop light. The Village Park is on the left. If you turn left at the light and then left into the park, you'll find ample parking. From Prattville: take Hwy 14 east to Millbrook. Turn right at the stop light on Hwy 143 (Main Street). Village Green Park is on the right at the second stop light on 143.

**October Saturdays** — 9 a.m. — John Hall Store in Cecil at 1 p.m. To get to Cecil from I-85, take I-85 north to the Vaughn Exit . Turn left onto U.S. 80 at the BP station. Take the second right (Marler Road). Follow Marler Road until it dead ends into Vaughn Road (AL 110). Turn left on Vaughn. The John Hall Store will be on the right about one mile ahead at the junction of Vaughn Road and Flowers Road.

**If you're planning to ride, put an e-mail out to the e-mail list (see page 6) and let everyone know you're going and how far you want to go! .** 🚲

## Officer Nominations Due

If you (or someone you'd like to nominate) are interested in the position of President, Vice-President, Secretary, or Treasurer, or if you'd like to serve on the nominating committee, please contact Frank Buckner at

[president@mgmbikeclub.org](mailto:president@mgmbikeclub.org)

or 277-5251. 🚲

### Upcoming Club Meetings:

August 20, 2002

September 17, 2002

October 15, 2002

6:30 p.m. at Bell Rd. Library (Lowder Branch)

Check

[www.mgmbikeclub.org](http://www.mgmbikeclub.org)

for details and last-minute changes!

## Time Trials Continue until Daylight Savings Time Ends

October 23—mark it on your calendar. That's the last time trial for this season. Until then, be at the Deer Creek clubhouse at 6 p.m on Wednesdays for the MBC time trials. Race against the clock for fun, training, and, occasionally, prizes and goodies provided by David Orange.

For more information on time trials, contact the time trial poo-pah, Jerry Fosson, at [timetrials@mgmbikeclub.org](mailto:timetrials@mgmbikeclub.org) or 288-3816

Directions to Deer Creek: From I-85 take the Taylor Road exit. Go south on Taylor to Vaughn Road, turn left onto Vaughn. The entrance to Deer Creek is about 2 miles on the right. Follow the entry road to the first stop sign. Turn right and turn into the clubhouse parking lot (first left). Park on the farside of the clubhouse (furthest away from the pool). The bathroom facilities are in the clubhouse. 🚲

This year's Autumn Challenge is projected to top 250 riders. Each year's ride has set records for attendance for the past few years, and this Saturday before Labor Day promises to be the same.

Bilee Cauley and Alice Skinner are hard at work on the details, and need a few more volunteers, specifically:

- August 26—Bag stuffing
- Registration table at Pintlala 6-8:30
- Taking up tickets for breakfast at Pintlala 6-8:30

## Autumn Challenge August 31

- Check in returning riders at Pintlala 10-4:30
- REST STOPS! Several more volunteers are needed to work rest stops. We have some help from Montgomery Eye Physicians, but we need **cyclists** at each stop as well.

Montgomery Eye Physicians, Dr. Jim Glassner's practice, is a major sponsor of the event this year, and thanks go to Linda Lee, their PR Director, for help with promoting the 2002 Autumn Challenge. 🚲

**Volunteers needed for Autumn Challenge:**

[autumnchallenge@mgmbikeclub.org](mailto:autumnchallenge@mgmbikeclub.org)

**New Cyclist rides Thorington Road Baptist at 7 a.m. until August 24.**

## New Cyclist Rides Continue until August 24

New Cyclists are invited to meet at Thorington Road Baptist Church at 7 a.m. on Saturdays until August 24. We will offer short ride options such as 7 miles and 15 miles. Experienced cyclists will be there to answer questions and help make your cycling safer and more enjoyable.

Next year, new cyclist rides will begin in spring and the program will be more structured. The idea will be to follow a training schedule during the season that prepares

the new cyclist for a metric century (62 miles) or full century (100 miles) by time for the Autumn Challenge.

A few of this year's "beginners" are now averaging 16-17 mph over 50+ mile routes and planning to ride this year's century.

For more information, contact Gary at [gary@mgmbikeclub.org](mailto:gary@mgmbikeclub.org) or 462-8176. 🚲

## Swayback Bridge Trail Extension Planned

Parts of the Swayback Bridge trail will be logged on at the end of this month and into early August. The Trail of Legends association has received a Right of Entry onto property adjacent to the current trail where an extension to the trail will be worked on this fall and winter. Up to four miles of new single track should be ready for riding by sometime this winter.

Volunteers will be needed, so keep an eye out for announcements here and on

the bulletin board at the trailhead. In other Swayback news, TOLA is planning on organizing a race in the near future. Look for flyers and announcements soon. If you are willing to do trail work, please email me at

[csnyder103@charter.net](mailto:csnyder103@charter.net)

and give me your contact information.— Chris Snyder 🚲

For route narratives for June and July, go to

[www.mgmbikeclub.org](http://www.mgmbikeclub.org)

and go to Ride Schedule.

## The Long Overdue (or is it pre-mature?) Winter Maintenance Article

by Mike Munk

*(editor's note: ole' Mike hasn't lost his mind. Hmm, let me rephrase that. This article and its appearance in the August issue is more my doing than his. I had a glut of articles to use this past winter, and never got around to printing this one. And just like bell-bottoms, if you hang on to something long enough it'll come back in season again. Seasonal intro aside, maintenance is one of those things that we all need to pay more attention to, and I say*

*that having just gotten back from a ride punctuated (or is it punctureated) by two flat tires amongst our group—ed.)*

Every season has a purpose. As I peer out the window, snow is falling and I won't be riding today. What's the purpose of this season...depress cyclists of all levels? No, it's so you'll take time off the bike and recharge for next season. It's also a great time to take the focus off the enjoyment you derive from riding your bike and put it toward maintaining your trusty steed so it will be ready to perform to your expectations when you fire it back up in the spring...or as many of us who really don't quit during the winter, take advantage of the few days when the weather is foul to give that bike a complete overhaul. But I take my bike in every other year for a "tune up" you say. A tune up only insures that surface components are adjusted properly. An overhaul is a complete disassembly, cleaning, lubrication, reassembly, and adjustment of all working parts to guard against corrosion, excessive wear, and to maintain top performance of moving parts. All that being said, how often should you have an overhaul done, what does an overhaul include, and how much should you expect to pay? Let's take a look.

Basically, you should have an overhaul done once a year. If you ride very much in foul weather, you may want to do it more often but for the most part, yearly will suffice. If you are one of the many who have had your bike for 5 years and begin to break down after extended use and that only leads to excessive wear on bearings and other moving parts. This yearly schedule does not take the place of regular maintenance of the chain, cables, derailleurs, and shifters. These are external moving parts that require weekly or monthly attention depending on the amount of riding you do.

An overhaul should include the following items. You should disassemble, clean, lubricate, reassemble,

and adjust the fork (to include stem and headset), the drive train (to include the crankset, bottom bracket, chain, cogset, and derailleurs), front/rear hubs, and seatpost. You should inspect and lubricate cables, pedals, shifters, cassette housing, derailleur pulleys, chain, cable stops, etc., and replace any parts that are worn or corroded. If you have aerobars, you should take out each bolt and grease them before replacing to prevent corrosion and freeze up. Corrosion not only will prevent disassembly of a part but it will also eventually cause that part to fail. If your aerobar should fail during a ride, it will give new meaning to the term "lunch on the road." Check and lube the seatpost, handlebar, and stem bolts. Basically, your rule of thumb should be if it has threads, you should grease it! In addition to greasing moveable parts, you should true the wheels and insure even spoke tension (balance). Just because a wheel is perfectly true, doesn't mean it's a good wheel. If spoke tension is unbalanced, the spokes that are holding the most loads will eventually fail...or the rim will. You should inspect tires and tubes for wear, cuts, and abrasions. While you have your tires apart, you should check the rim tape to insure it's covering the spoke holes properly. Have the rear derailleur hanger checked for alignment. If you have trouble fine tuning the shifters, your problem may be here. Many of today's bikes don't require as much maintenance as older bikes due to sealed or cartridge bearings. But even cartridge bearings can use cleaning to prevent contaminants from getting into the moving areas.

Bikes are expensive and regular maintenance only helps prevent more costly repairs and early retirement to the bike bone yard. You should expect to pay in the neighborhood of \$115-\$150 depending on where you get it done and that will only cover labor charges. This may sound like a lot but it is well worth the time and money to get that bike in top working order. You won't believe how much better you'll feel riding a freshly overhauled bike...it probably will ride better than a new one. So while the cobwebs are collecting on your bike this winter, take it in for a face lift. Both you and your bike will be glad you did. ☺

### For Sale

Blue Steel Lemond(Rey 525) 56 CM RSX Components 700x25 Continental tires Trek Computer 53/39 crankrings on a Sugino 175 mm set with 11/24 7 speed cluster. Only 706 miles. Paid about \$900 for it; will take \$450

E-mail [nharrison@knology.net](mailto:nharrison@knology.net) or call 279-5517

Sportworks TranSport Series Bike Rack.

Carries 2 road or mountain bikes (4 bikes with included attachment). Features ratcheting quick-load system (no removing of front tire). Folds up when not carrying bikes. Requires 2" trailer hitch. Two years old; great condition; very strong and durable; awesome rack. Not compatible with my new car. \$420 new; will sell for \$250. Can be viewed at <http://www.sportworks.com/sttra.asp>.

Contact Colleen Snyder w) 277-2490 h)277-1661 c)462-2935 or [colleensnyder@mindspring.com](mailto:colleensnyder@mindspring.com)

Also available: 2000 Nissan XTerra to attach the rack to: excellent condition, one owner, cloud white with gray interior, V6, automatic, cd player, ABS, roof rack, trailer hitch (for bike rack!), 54K miles, power windows/locks, tilt wheel, cruise control, keyless entry/security system \$16,995.

# How to Survive Road Hazards

by Fred Matheny and Ed Pavelka of [www.RoadBikeRider.com](http://www.RoadBikeRider.com)

Cycling is a unique sport because its arena is the open road. That's the same place frequented by traffic, potholes, snarling dogs and absentminded pedestrians. But sometimes we're our own worst enemy. Inattention and poor technique can put us on the pavement as fast as any hazard. Use these tips and you'll be less likely to take a tumble.

**Always ride with your head up.** While cruising along, it's tempting to stare at the whirling pattern of the front spokes or fixate on your cyclecomputer's numbers. A momentary downward glance that lasts just a second too long can mean riding into a problem that could easily have been avoided.

**Focus.** The smooth and rhythmic motion of pedaling can have a hypnotic effect. Daydreaming cyclists have crashed into the back of parked cars, wandered far into the traffic lane or blithely ridden off the road. Don't let yourself be separated from the outside world by the vivid canvases created by your imagination. Keep your head in the game.

**Keep your bike in top mechanical condition.** Repair or replace faulty parts sooner rather than later. It's a loser's game to milk "just one more ride" out of worn brake pads, a frayed cable, or tires with a threadbare tread or bulging sidewall. Your first line of defense against the challenges of the real world is a bike with all parts in good working order.

## Flats

It's every rider's fate to flat. But it's relatively easy to limit the frequency.

- **Choose your line with care.** The best way to avoid punctures is also the easiest: Steer around broken glass, road rubble and potholes.
- **Use tires with a Kevlar belt under the tread.** Kevlar does a good job of stopping nasty things from penetrating. Inspect the tread after every ride for embedded debris. Remember, most punctures are caused by something sticking to the tread and working through during numerous wheel revolutions. Replace tires before they become so thin that they're virtually defenseless against pointy things.
- **Check inflation pressure every couple of days.** Tubes are slightly porous and may lose several pounds of pressure each day. Soft

tires slow you down, corner poorly, wear fast, and don't protect your rims against metal-bending impacts.

## Potholes

Hitting potholes can bend your rims beyond repair. If the chasm is deep enough, it will send you hurtling over the handlebar when you bury the front wheel and the bike suddenly stops. Here's a primer on pothole evasion.

- **Note where potholes lurk** on your normal training routes. Plan your line well in advance to avoid them. Don't expect the road to be in the same condition every day. Potholes have a habit of sprouting up out of nowhere, especially in the winter and early spring due to the daily freeze/thaw cycle.
- **Treat potholes like glass.** Ride around them, first checking behind for traffic. Be mindful of riding partners when you change your line. Newly minted pot-holes present a double hazard—the chasm itself, and the chunks of shattered pavement around it. If the pothole doesn't bend your wheel, the sharp bits of rubble might puncture your tire. Give these highway craters a wide berth.
- **Jump your bike over a pothole**, if you have the skill and are unable to ride around it because of traffic or adjacent riders. Learn this move on a grassy field. Level your pedals, crouch off the saddle, then spring up and lift with your feet and hands. Start by jumping over a line on the ground, then graduate to higher but forgiving objects such as a rolled-up towel or a shoebox.

## Railroad Tracks

Unlike most dangers, tracks can't be ridden around. You can suffer an instant crash if your tires slip on the shiny steel rails. Ride with extreme caution and follow these safety tips.

- **Slow down!** Tracks are rough, and even if you don't crash you could get a pinch flat. This happens when you ride into something abrupt, like a rail, and it pinches the tube between the tire and rim, slicing two little holes in the tube.
- **Rise slightly off the saddle.** Have equal weight on your hands and feet. Let the bike chatter beneath you. Use your flexed arms and legs as shock absorbers.
- **Cross tracks at a right angle.** If the rails are diagonal to the road and you cross them at an angle, your front wheel can be twisted out

from under you. A perpendicular passage is essential in the rain. Wet metal tracks are incredibly slippery. The slightest imbalance or abrupt move can send you sprawling.

- **Jump if you're real good.** Racers who need to cross tracks at maximum speed will jump them. They use the same technique that works for potholes, but with more speed and lift because they must clear two rails. Coming down too early means the rear wheel will hit the second rail, guaranteeing a ruined rim or a pinch flat. In most cases, jumping isn't worth the danger. It's better to slow down, square up, and creep across.

## Additional Slick Spots

- **Painted lines.** These can be slippery, especially the wide markings for pedestrian crossings at intersections. The paint fills in the asphalt's texture, producing a surface that's uncertain when dry and deadly when wet. The danger is worse when the paint is new.
- **Dry oil slicks.** These may be nearly invisible, but you can spot them as darker streaks on a gray pavement. Be real careful in corners. You aren't safe if you ride through oil on the straights. The greased tread might slip in a corner just ahead.
- **Wet oil slicks.** If it rains, a small oily patch can grow until it covers the whole lane. Be on the lookout for the telltale multi-colored water. There's no pot of gold at the end of this rainbow, only a black-and-blue meeting with the pavement.
- **Wet metal.** If it's been raining and you come upon *anything* metal in the road (manhole cover, steel-deck bridge, road-repair plate), it's as treacherous as riding on ice. Cross it with the bike absolutely upright. Even a slight lean can cause the wheels to slip. Smart riders walk their bikes across wet steel bridges.
- **Wet leaves.** Be very careful in the fall, or you will. Even if the road is dry, there can be moisture trapped between leaves littering the pavement. When you see leaves in a corner, slow down and round the bend with your bike upright, not angled.
- **Sewer grates.** Some old ones have bars that run parallel to the street and are wide enough to let a bike wheel fall through. If this happens, you can look forward to plastic surgery and possibly a lifetime of lawsuit riches. Many municipalities have replaced such grates with bicycle-friendly versions, but be careful in case a town hasn't gotten the message yet. 🚲

## What's on the Web

So you've gotten out of shape while watching hours of Tour de France coverage, your bike's dirty, and the days are getting shorter (but not any cooler). Hey, we understand. Just head on over to [www.mgmbikeclub.org](http://www.mgmbikeclub.org) where you'll find everything from links to other regional cycling clubs to info on time trials to routes for the next club excursion.

There is also information on MTBing, time trials, a current list of officers, information about the next club meeting, and an application.

The newsletters, formerly on the "Member's page," are now on the main page.

To subscribe to the e-mail list, see instructions in the article below. ☺

**Less than 30 training days left until the Autumn Challenge!**

**USE YOUR HEAD!  
WEAR A HELMET!**

## The MBC Email Mailing List

The latest word on who's riding this Saturday. An audience for your question on bike trails in central Alabama. It's all there on the MBC Email list.

How does it work? When you send email to the list address, it is copied to everyone who is subscribed (including you). Everyone gets your message, and can reply to you individually or to the entire list.

How does one subscribe to the list? We have just moved to a Yahoo! list, and it's as easy as sending mail to [mbcmembers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mbcmembers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). If you're already subscribed, you can send messages by posting them to [mbcmembers@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mbcmembers@yahoogroups.com).

Please note that messages are now visible on the web site! I made this change to allow for a little broader audience for announcements, for sale items, etc. Just don't blame me if your boss sees your message saying "Anyone up for a ride at 2:30?" ☺

## As Seen on the Web

"Many parents wait too long to expose their youngsters to the joys of competitive cycling. Influenced by over-cautious pediatricians, they often wait until their offspring are old enough to sit up wearing a helmet, in an old-fashioned baby seat or trailer... but doesn't YOUR child deserve a head start?"

- **Sheldon Brown**

[www.sheldonbrown.com/carrababy.html](http://www.sheldonbrown.com/carrababy.html)