

DERAILLEUR MAILLEUR

March 2008

Riding in the Holy Land

BY JULIE HOCHSTADTER

I know for many of you reading this article, biking is an important part of your life. My father instilled in me the importance of staying fit when I was a little girl. Almost every Sunday in the summers when I was a young girl my dad and I had our daddy-daughter "exertion." I started on the Green Bay Trail, biking next to my running father. We would end our trip at a farmers market. These weekly trips were the basis of the beginning of my biking and environmental awareness. This extended to 2-week bike trips across Israel in May of 2006 and 2007.

I'm not exactly sure how I first heard about this bike ride from Jerusalem to Eilat (the most southern tip of Israel) that raised money for the environment and co-existence between Jews, Muslims & Christians, but I do know that someone named Nigel Savage started sending me emails every month or so about this environmental charity bike ride. I'd usually glance at it with my spam filtered eyes, but once in a while I'd read someone's fantastic experience or look at some pretty cool looking biking and amazing scenic pictures. It sounded neat to me, but as an unemployed (or semi-employed) babysitter, the timing wasn't right. Finally after holding down a job for 2 entire years & grieving the recent loss of my mother, I decided it was the right time for me. I courageously asked my boss for 2 weeks off during the busiest season for us (he subsequently went on a 2 week bike ride in Italy the next year). I didn't know a soul that had signed up for the ride.

As soon as I registered, I began sending emails out to anyone and everyone I knew who would possibly be interested in joining me and/or donating to my ride. I needed to raise \$3,000. Although a daunting task, I dove in head first and ended up raising over \$5,000! Raising the money was a lot easier that I had imagined. Instead of feeling bad asking people for money, I was excited and so passionate about where the money was going: The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies and Hazon. Both non-profit organizations focus on sustainability.

The Arava Institute's special focus is cross cultural training. They recruit Arab students from Jordan, Kuwait and the Occupied Territories of Israel to study (and live) along side Jewish Israelis and Americans. The other organization sponsoring the ride is Hazon, a smaller New York based environmental organization focuses on sustainability, food (specifically where the food we put in our bodies comes from), CSAs (Community Sponsored Agriculture) and more.

Many of the Arab students come only because

of the free tuition in their degree (almost none of their families would support them studying in Israel). It is the same situation for the Jews; many of them come to study, not to live, eat and study alongside Arabs. But the outcome is beautiful. Hearing these students and alum speak about the experience brings tears to my eyes. They go on to form Environmental NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations), and other high powered jobs. They become best friends throughout the semester and learn to talk openly



and freely about the Middle East's political situation. The students travel alongside us during the ride and, for most riders, it is the first opportunity to meet an Arab as a friend and as part of the community.

The bike ride was 10 times better than I expected, and 100 times better the second year. We began the ride at 6 a.m. outside the Old City's Jerusalem. It began with the traveler's prayer for a safe journey in English, Hebrew and Arabic. I was so moved and that powerful feeling stayed with me the entire trip. Leaving Jerusalem through its windy streets and passing my old apartment was very emotional. The first day alone we passed through 5 of Israel's 7 water ecosystems. We began in the green forests of Jerusalem and ended our trip in the desert sand of the Arava and Eilat.

I have faith in a more sustainable and peaceful world because of these students. For more information on the bike ride, visit www.israelride.org. For information on The Arava Institute and Hazon, visit www.arava.org and www.hazon.org.



Randonneuring (An Invitation)

BY THOMAS BÉRUBÉ

What is "randonneuring" you might ask (if you already know you may skip to the next paragraph). Succinctly put, it is the doing of "randonnées," non-competitive rides over proscribed distances and courses within set time limits. Riders are expected to be self-sufficient. A support car is a big no-no. Organizers do not provide much more than a route sheet and a brevet card which participants must get stamped at control points along the route to verify comple-

tion of the course. Common randonneuring events include the "brevets" which cover distances of 200, 300, 400 and 600 kilometers. These rides serve as qualifiers for participating in the 1,200K "long brevets" such as Boston-Montreal-Boston, the Cascade 1200 and, of course, the venerable Paris-Brest-Paris. Unlike racing the emphasis is not on crossing the finish line first, although this will give one some bragging rights, but to reach the finish line no matter what. Doing a randonné is about battling bad weather, bad pavements, bad equipment, bad food and charging farm dogs rather than other riders. The de-emphasis on competition is something that makes randonneuring so much fun.

On a randonneuring event, the other riders are not the enemy but comrades in arms who may be called upon for assistance in changing flat tires in a cold rain or providing moral support when riding in the middle of the night. There's plenty of time to talk to interesting people, make new friends and drive your riding companions insane with an endless litany of complaints about broken pavement, inaccurate weather forecasts, obnoxious suburban utility vehicle drivers and the quality of bicycle components. Does this sound like fun to you?

I hope so. Because I'd like to see you on the road when the 2008 brevet season gets underway.

There is a long-standing local brevet series run by a group called Great Lakes Randonneuers and over the years various Chicago Cycling Club members have participated in their events. Routes and starting locations have varied some over the years but the courses have always run somewhere through northeastern Illinois and southeastern Wisconsin. The starting location is typically somewhere around the Illinois/Wisconsin state line and is currently the town of Delavan, WI. The 2008 brevet schedule is:

- 200k 7:00 a.m. April 26, 2008
- 300k 7:00 a.m. May 17, 2008
- 400k 6:00 a.m. June 7, 2008
- 600k 6:00 a.m. June 28, 2008
- 200k 8:00 a.m. August 16, 2008

It would be great to have more CCC members participating in these events. A bigger participation in the local brevet series means more interest in our club having more long-distance rides and more people to lead these rides. I hope to see you on the road. 

Commuting – How to Start

BY JIM KREPS

Every year around this time, I seem to get many questions related to bike commuting, this column is for those who want to start commuting but for one reason or another haven't done it. Commuting takes time if it's to become an everyday, comfortable experience. You'll have to (continued on page 2)

Prez Sez

BY MICHAEL WASSERMAN



On behalf of everyone here at the Club's world headquarters, I'd like to welcome you to the 2008 riding season, and to thank you for your ongoing participation in our ventures. There are so many wonderful things on the horizon, I hardly know where to begin. Of course, that's not entirely true. We are a riding club so the starting point, as always, are the rides. As I compose this, we have more than a dozen rides already scheduled for this year with many, many more still in production. Many are time tested crowd pleasers with some new adventures and something for everyone, so I do hope you can join us (and in the Chicago tradition, early and often!)

I see March as a month of great possibilities for the club and you are at the core of our potential and our future. As much as your steering committee would like to run the club to suit our own personal needs and agendas, we are keenly aware that we serve at your discretion and that we are here to provide a fun, safe, dynamic cycling experience for you. To that end, we would very much love your help in envisioning and actualizing our full potential. Here are a few great ways you can join in the fun:

First: Please let us know if you have any great ideas for ride themes, routes or destinations. Those time-tested crowd pleaser rides? Where do you suppose they came from? We are able to offer such a diverse schedule of rides precisely because we have such a diverse membership. Combine your "other" hobby or avocation with a bike ride. If you design it, they (we) will come. Submit your suggestions to the ride committee: rides@chicagocyclingclub.org.

Second: If you have led a ride in the last year or so, please share your "cue sheet" with us so that we can update our ride library. Most often, we find that newer ride leaders rely heavily on this resource. The ride library is a great way to help these folks who want to lead a ride (or venture out on their own) but who may not have designed a good route themselves. Perhaps one of the greatest flatteries in the club is to see someone else co-opt your ride and make it their own. Help us out by submitting your cue sheets to the crypt keeper, Anne Alt: anne.alt@gmail.com

Third: Help us to implement your great ride idea (or keep someone else's great ride idea alive) by hosting your own ride event! No prior experience necessary, but training is available and suggested. You can always look to veteran club riders for help and advice, or be matched to a mentor with an introduction from the ride committee. Still unsure? Consider sharing the fun with a co-ride leader. All our ride leaders are volunteers (just like you). Everyone starts out with a first ride lead (just like you). All any of us have ever had to do to get started is contact our intrepid ride chair, Corina Schusheim, at rides@chicagocyclingclub.org.

chicagocyclingclub.org.

This fourth truth can now be revealed; some of us may not have great ride ideas or be willing to lead rides. That's OK, still plenty more ways to be of assistance. We are always looking for new ways to promote the club. If you are willing to share your marketing skills, media contacts, or promotional ideas, let's have at it. We would warmly welcome these contributions as well. Help us get the word out to those poor innocents who have not yet discovered what we already know about Chicago cycling. Feel free to hit me on this at pres@chicagocyclingclub.org.

Still not finding the right fit? We can ALWAYS use help promoting club activities at several annual cycling events throughout the year. Our club is a proud participant at Bike the Drive, the Mayor's Bike to Work Rally, the Boulevard Lakefront Tour; and we intend this year to participate at several other regional fairs and events. This is a great way to spend time meeting with other cycling enthusiasts who are our potential fellow riders and club members. Help spread the good word about your Chicago Cycling Club at any of these events. Again, please let me know if you can lend a hand.

This list is far from complete. There are plenty of other ways that you can lend a hand, and we will be glad to accept your help, at any level you are willing to offer. Please let us know how we can make the club better. Better still, let us know how you can help us do that.

Regards from the road. 

Commuting – How to Start

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consider the route, weather, distance, timing, traffic, parking, clothing, the perspiration factor and the machine (you and the bike).

The Route: "Scope alternatives and determine the route ahead of time". Analyze distance, traffic, number of signals, width of lanes, parked cars along the route, and neighborhood safety before commuting in for the first time. I have recommended and started commuting myself by testing my assumptions on Saturdays around 10:00 a.m. (weekend rush hours are not the same as weekday and starting later may give you that similar comparison to weekday rush hour traffic).

The Weather: "Start out dry, mild and temperature tolerant." For those just starting out, commute only when the pavement is dry, the humidity is mild and the temperatures moderate. If you have access to a shower at work, you may elect to get riskier when temperatures are hot and humid or freezing and cold. But the number one issue when starting to commute is your own safety, which is why you want to start out on dry pavement only. Have a backup reserve commute plan if it rains in the afternoon (take that El or Metra pass with you).

How Far / Distance: "Number One Tip – Start out Slow and Short". If you live up to 5 miles from work, commuting to work is not going to be much effort and you will be surprised that the door to door time will likely be the same if you commute by bike, car or El. Beyond 5 miles, consider driving in halfway, parking your car and commuting from a remote point within 5 miles of work. As you become comfortable with the route, distance and timing, start increasing

your commute distance.

Timing, what's this: "Leave earlier if you can when starting out as a beginner." Experience will bring confidence in urban commuting at the heart of rush hour with heavier traffic, but start slow and easy. Commuting in downtown Chicago requires a sixth sense and experience level if you are in the heart of rush hour. A recommended morning time for a 5 mile half-hour commute could be between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. in the morning and after 6:30 p.m. at night, while still in daylight hours. Night riding will require more equipment (lights and bright colored clothing) and with experience, you could venture into pre-dawn and eventually night riding. Survey your specific location and note the times when traffic is heavy and light before starting.

Traffic, Traffic, Traffic: "Backup on the Kennedy, 50 minutes from the junction to the loop." Why would you want to deal with this every morning or night? When surveying your route, select the route that has a traffic flow and density you are comfortable with during your leisure rides. Streets such as Clark or Milwaukee you might want to avoid at first. Elston or Lincoln are wider and may seem less heavily traveled by autos. With experience, you may find yourself tempting Clark or Milwaukee only because they get you from point "A" to "B" faster. But the recommendation here is to start out with comfortable traffic conditions.

Bike Parking: Second biggest concern to a potential commuter behind the perspiration factor is parking. Will the building and your employer allow you to bring a bike into your place of employment? Does the building have a common storage area for bicyclists and is it safe and secure? Will you need to lock your bike up outside? If so, is there a well lit, well-trafficked area for locking up? Consider a minimum of two locks (the more time you take securing your bike, the less time a potential common thief will think twice at trying to remove it). Finally, consider the weather, if you ride in the morning and the weather person lied to you and you cannot ride home in the afternoon, consider your bike's safety after hours. You might also consider the value of your bike (see below).

Clothing: "What do I Wear? What do I do about wrinkles?" Consider at-work storage of clothing brought in on "no-ride" days. If considering carrying clothing to work, roll your clothes to reduce wrinkles and do not keep them rolled for longer than necessary. Store clothing in clean plastic bags to protect it from inside pannier grime. Also consider very carefully, if you are going to ride in your work clothes or bike clothes. Bike clothes are made for the sport and breath, stretch, expand for the movements of cycling. However, if you live really close to work, it's your call where jeans or casual slacks might work just as well.

The Perspiration Factor: "What if I get to work all sweaty?" Start slow, easy and on cool dry days, especially if no shower facility awaits you at work. Or join a health club near where you work. Another advantage to commuting early is allowing time to sponge bath and apply deodorant in the office restroom. Further, commute in the morning "easy" and "push" the pace in the evening.

The Machine - You: "Keep your self nutritionally

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Commuting – How to Start

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fit” Don’t say to yourself you have no time for breakfast or coffee anymore because you need to commute. Eat earlier, be persistent, and give yourself the time. Once you are beyond beginner status, you will be surprised that commuting by bike does not take any longer than commuting any other way except having to dress twice each morning.

The Machine - Bike: “Keep your bike maintained and tires filled at all times” Survey your route for potential “breakdown-help” locations such as fire stations, police stations, large vestibules or covered areas (to get out of the wind or cold). Bring cash for the unexpected cab trip or transit ride. Put together a tool kit with an extra tube (tube replacements are faster than patching—plus you can patch your tire at home that evening). Also, consider an inexpensive, but functional and working, bike if you have to park it outside.

I have just scratched the surface of many recommendations and my experiences with commuting. But I hope these suggestions help you start the experience. Commuting does wonders for the cyclist including being more alert at work, saving money, avoiding delays in traffic, being in charge of your time, and getting your exercise in while getting to work. 

Rolling Along: Calendar of Events

3/7 – Frozen Snot Century (more info at www.bikewinter.org)

3/11 – Monthly Club Meeting at Hostelling International, 24 E. Congress, Chicago (see pg. 3)

3/28 – March Critical Mass, 6 p.m. at Daley Plaza (more info at www.chicagocriticalmass.org)

4/6 – CCC Champagne Ride (more info at www.chicagocyclingclub.org/rides) 

The March Meeting

Our next club meeting is March 11, 2008. Join us for a Night at the Movies (early spring edition). We will screen the classic cycling comedy “Six Day Bike Rider.” Enjoy snacks, drinks, and the camaraderie we are all so accustomed to every second Tuesday. The meeting is at Hostelling International, 24 East Congress Parkway, 2nd floor, starting at 7:00 p.m. Bike parking is available and the building is accessible to CTA and Metra. Questions? Contact Kathy Schubert at 773-248-5499 or kangarookathy@yahoo.com 

Ride Leader Training Returns!

Have you ever been on a great CCC ride and thought “I wonder what it takes to lead a ride, it sure looks like fun!”

Wonder no more, my friend. The CCC is offering its one-of-a-kind ride leader training class Saturday, March 22 at 9 a.m. In this free and fun class open to all members, you will learn some of the techniques to leading and sweeping a ride. Not sure if you are ready? Come to this class to seek out past and future ride leaders.

We are there to help you lead your first or even your tenth ride. You will learn how to sign up to lead a ride and the benefits of being a ride leader, how to create a new ride or use an existing ride from the library, what to do the day before and the day of the ride. Feel free to ask for help or even brainstorm ideas.

You will also learn skills that will make you a better rider even if you aren’t sure you’re ready to lead a ride. Then we’ll get out and test our skills on a ride to Roscoe Village.

The CCC wants to help you become a better and more confident rider, all you have to do is show up to the Bucktown-Wicker Park Library, 1701 N. Milwaukee Avenue, March 22 at 9 a.m. Bike parking is available at and around the library. 

About the Club

Mission

To facilitate recreational bicycling in a non-competitive environment in and around the Chicago area; to promote safe bicycling habits and proper bicycling etiquette; to provide bicyclists an opportunity to network with other bicyclists; to encourage bicycling as a safe and viable alternative to other modes of transportation.

Contact

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Officers

President: Michael Wasserman

Vice President: James Adgate

Treasurer: Alice Kroman

Secretary: Jennifer Richards

Member at Large: Art Gilfand,
Joseph Dickstein

Education: TBD

Newsletter: Justin Sondak,
Karmen Lei

Rides: Duane O’Laughlin



BECOME A MEMBER FILL OUT THE FORM AND MAIL IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB

I, for myself and for any other minor on whose behalf I sign this membership application, agree that 1) bicycling is a potentially hazardous activity and that accidents can occur from negligence or carelessness; 2) ride leaders’ maps and/or written directions are provided for my convenience only and not to guarantee a safe route or trip; and 3) I voluntarily participate in club events and assume all risks associated with participation therein, including but not limited to injury, falls, contact with other participants, weather, traffic, and road conditions, all such risks being known and appreciated by me.

Name(s) _____ Birthdate(s) _____

Name(s) _____ Birthdate(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Primary phone _____

Secondary phone _____ E-mail _____

Emergency contact/phone _____

I obtained this membership application from _____

I want a paper copy of the member directory & newsletter Yes No

I would like to help with the following: ride planning newsletter publicity meetings social events

Annual dues: Individual (\$23) Family (multiple individuals at one address \$25)

Do not share my contact information: within the Chicago Cycling Club with other bike-related organizations

Signature _____ Date _____

MAIL FORM TO: CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB, PO BOX 1178 CHICAGO, IL 60690-1178

Chicago Cycling Club Newsletter

March 2008



"City in a Garden" Ride, 2004

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGO CYCLING CLUB
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