

## FOURTH TIME AROUND

**T**his has been a good first year. I don't know how much money we'll make or lose—that report will go in the next issue—but we've made friends and still have about \$10,000 in the bank. I don't have a clear vision of what I want to do with Rivendell. *All* I'm sure of is that I don't want to owe anybody a lot of money or build an infrastructure that requires us to grow, grow, grow just to support it. There are companies out there with twenty times our annual sales and they still aren't making money; but they can't scale back at all or they collapse. How fun can that be? Anyway, right now I just want to deliver frames (finally) and get back to speed on shipping orders.

It would be nice to become less dependent on secret or long-lost caches of new-old-stockbike parts, because there is only so much Simplex, Mavic, SunTour, and old Campy to go around—to say nothing of Zeus. That's where our collaborative effort with Ted Durant's new Rona company will pay off. For those of you who haven't heard, Ted and Rivendell will work together to buy, design, and make (under the Willow brand name) the kinds of parts we like, but are having a hard time finding. On the list are Mafac-style cantilevers, assorted chainrings, clothing, maybe a 130 bolt-circle crank (since the 110bcd Ritchey is plenty fine).

What else? Work is hard, steady, overwhelming—everything a new business with little money and not enough people is supposed to be. There's no letting up, there's always at least ten major loose ends dangling out there demanding

to be resolved. I'm trying not to get fat from lack of riding, and I dearly look forward to my Sunday rides with Pal Jeff. There are at least half a dozen people I'd love to hire, but most are working another job making more money than the \$10 per hour I can afford to pay them, so what do you do?

I'm very happy with the bikes. After quadrillion prototypes and quintillion little tweaks, they seem to be perfect, at least by my standards, and one of these days we'll submit a bike or two to the magazines for review.

You will notice that this issue does not contain a catalogue. That's because, from now on, we're going to separate the Reader from the parts and accessories catalogue from the frame brochure. There are a few pages of parts listings, mostly new parts, but until we have our new **P & A** catalogue, refer to the RR3 for a more complete listing. We need your continued support, and we sure do appreciate it.—Grant

### Inside the RR-4:

- Shrieking about stems/The S Factor
- Death of a racer—not literally, though
- Why Wendell Berry won't buy a computer...and reactions from people who are threatened by that.
- Two—count 'em—contributions from Howard Runyon
- New items
- The Progress report, Random notes, the normal stuff

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## THE RIVENDELL READER

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*Sometimes we accept freelance work, but the pay is minimal and I generally edit it like a madman. Thick-skinned writers may submit manuscripts on Mac disk (Word 5.0 pref) or double-spaced and typed. If you have to handwrite, that's okay, too.*

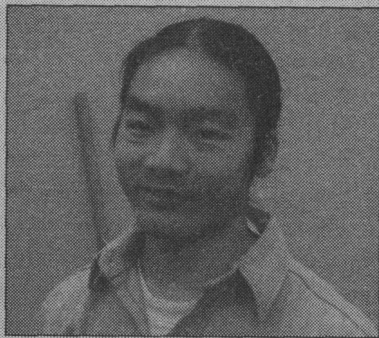
## PLEASE JOIN AND SUPPORT RIVENDELL

You get 6 issues per year of advertising-free bike noise and access to hard-to-find and some normal bike parts at fair prices. As a member, you can use the coupons in this issue (and future issues), and if you buy enough, they'll more than pay for your membership. We try hard to ship everything within 24 hours, and are constantly trying to improve our on-hand inventory and service. We do very little advertising, we sponsor nobody, Grant's take home averages less than \$2,250 per month, and we keep our overhead as low as possible to bring you the best goods at the best prices. Also, when we buy something ourselves, whether it's an inner tube or a frame, we pay the same price as you do. Even Pal Jeff pays full pop. (The prototype frames will be sold cheap so that we don't roll them over into our personal collection.)

As a mail order business, we are totally dependent on the support of those whom we will probably never meet. You'll notice, in this issue, that we're starting to carry a few normal things, too—tools, tubes, tires: and in the fall we'll have a few other normal things. If you're strictly price shopping you may be able to find some of these things cheaper at Nashbart, Performance, and other places that buy by the container load or source things from Shanghai. But they won't beat us by much, and we can guarantee they won't appreciate your patronage as much as we do. And finally, if you'd like extra Readers to give to friends, or if you know of anybody who might like to receive a copy, please tell us. This will not work without you.

—Maggi, Spencer, Grant, Rob, & Gary

## Meet Spencer Chan



Spencer is 22, single, an ex bike mechanic, a student, part owner of Rivendell, and pretty much the glue that holds Rivendell together (apologies to cliché-phobes). Spencer does much of the buying and most of the invoicing, packing, and shipping.

Once, when our account balance was below \$3,000 and we owed \$14,000, I told Spencer I couldn't

afford to have him come in for a while (not that I could have managed without him), and he worked free for two weeks.

Spencer has been taking engineering classes in college, but may change his major to business. He likes art and illustrates for the catalogue (MKS Track pedals, ACME wallet, others). Spencer commutes on a Bridgestone XO-1/48cm, but he's going to get a Rivendell road and All-Rounder bike (he pays full price, too). He is quiet by nature, but has adapted well to a job that requires talking.

*What are some of your other interests?*

I really like to work out every day. There's nothing like doing forty bar dips to start off the day. I also like to get out and run with my dog, Henry. Mostly, I just like to relax and do absolutely nothing while listening to Bjork and Portishead.

*What do you like about working here?*

Everything—especially being able to work with nice people. Nobody's mean or ever angry. Also, I get to do some of the illustrations. I like art.

*What would you like to change about Rivendell?*

We need more room, maybe a showroom or something. A shipping room would be nice...more storage here, so we don't have to rent it downtown. It would be nice to have a retail store, too, but it would never work in Walnut Creek.

*Has working at Rivendell interfered with your education?*

Yes, but I've learned more by working here than I would have by going away to school. I was going to major in engineering or industrial design, now it might be business. I've had a few years of college, and I take night classes now. I will complete my education. I like to learn more about designing things.

## and Gary Boulanger

Gary is 29, married to Jean, has two children (Samantha, 2 1/2, and Henri James, 1), lives in Wisconsin, has his own seasonal mobile bike repair business, is a freelance writer, and now spends 30 hours or so a week working at Waterford for Rivendell.

Gary makes sure the loose ends get taken care of before shipping, installs headsets, bottom brackets, and other fittings, and packs up your frame. Once you send us (in Walnut Creek) your order, we lateral to Gary, since he's right there. There's

not a better person for the job—he's a star. Call him at (414) 534-9494.

*Gary, justify your existence at Rivendell.*

I've known Richard, Marc, John, Shoe, and Liz for a few years, I know bikes, I live close, I like the cause, and I was looking for a job. Besides, you asked me.

*But can you be a real Rivendell guy? Do you understand the frames?*

Sure. I like the custom-drawn Reynolds 753 tubes, EJ's and John's brazing, Paul's forks...I like the details, the lugs, the bottle braze-ons, right down to the head badges.

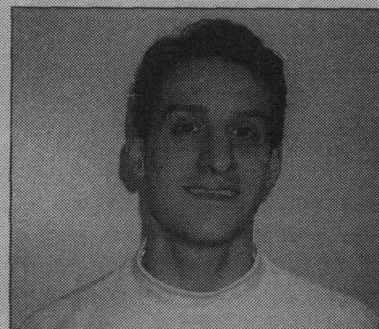
*As production coordinator you will do what?*

I'll treat ever order like my own.

I'll keep on top of everyone's order, all the details, I'll do the things you can't do from Walnut Creek. That's why you hired me, right?

*What if someone wants to buy a bike all built up. Can you do that?*

Maybe in the spring. We'll have to see how things go. Maybe.



# PROGRESS REPORT

**AUGUST 8.** A big day, good and bad. The Nitto/MKS order came in finally, and almost everything about it is right. The DirtDrop stem with the hole was supposed to be hand-buffed, but it came polished instead. I can live with that. Everything else is great. It'll be interesting to see how the MKS touring pedals do. I think you have to look at them from a pretty experienced and jaded perspective to appreciate them, but in light of what's available in the world of pedals, I think they're super. The only completely unpretentious pedal I know of, and perfect for all kinds of noncompetitive riding. The bad news is almost too bad to blurt: The road and all-rounder fork crown waxes came back, and they're still wrong. Damn. Marc is sending a NastyGram to them, and we (Marc or I, not both) may have to go there. These guys (Everest, in Taiwan) are as good as anybody, maybe better, and the lugs (which were harder) they nailed the first time. The frame customers are incredibly patient and understanding-- I mean, I have put them off for months now, and summer's nearly over. I feel stressed but grateful, and I sure am looking forward to October--- things have to be fixed by then.

**AUG 21.** It's been a while since the last entry, lots has happened. The main even is the crowns of course. Waterford built another fork with a heavily modified crown, with the rectangular windows turned into smaller ovals to get rid of the comers where the cracks were happening, and we got the test results today. Mark Deger from Specialized is testing them. There's not a one-word result. Marc (Waterford) and Mark (Specialized) were surprised that the earlier crowns broke, since there seemed to be plenty of metal

there, corners or not. And now in this one, the corners were gone, the fork lasted much longer, but this break happened where the fixture held the steer tube, a stress that wouldn't even occur on a bike, and it broke after the crown had already passed the earlier breaking point, and the load was doubled and it still didn't break, and finally the steerer gave (so the crown never did fail, which is good).

The earlier crowns, the ones that failed, were pre-cracked (this we found out later)--so that means the design is sound, anyway. Once the new castings are complete we'll have a very robust crown. But how long will that take? And will Everest pay me back for the 750 crowns I've already bought, since they have tiny cracks? And how long will the new crowns take? I'm asked this only about eight times a day, and I don't know the answer.

The cloisonne badges are almost here. We got a sample, but the ears for the screws were in the wrong place, so they had to be redone. We've been having a good August ordenvise, but we need it, too, with all those September bills due. We sent Mavic \$4,000 early, just to make the hit easier when the first of two big bills is due. The Campagnolo Gran Sport brakes are supposed to be here today, a good thing since we have 28 pair backordered. The Nitto order came and most of the Moustache H'bars have gone out already (filling backorders). The RR-3 is sort of a hangup.....it's been in layout for a month now. I've got to trim it down to a more manageable size, like maybe 24 pages instead of the 80 or so **63** will be. This one should be about 30 pages.

I don't know what to do about memberships. We counted the members and came up with 1,400, and that

can't be enough to sustain this, but somehow we've got to get it up to around 5,000.

**AUG 29.** We're having a good month, the best yet, and just in time for the big September bills. The fork crowns are late and still being tested-- I'm glad we have time, I'm glad the buyers are patient, and I'm especially glad we haven't put out anything dangerous. When they go out, there will be no doubt.

We have a built up drop-bar style mountain bike and an all-rounder now. They ride great, and now we just have to improve the clearances, which Marc says won't be too hard. The cloisonne badges will be in in a week or so, just before the Anaheim show. Carradice has agreed to make a front bag for Moustache Handlebars, and also to modify their regular front bag to our specs--no zippers and such. Even better news is that Reynolds-the-SHOE company from England is still in business. I found this out from Carradice, whom I'd asked, just in case. I thought they were gone. I called and talked to Cyrus, and he's sending a catalogue. He said "one of our customers said these shoes are so nice he'd wear them to visit the Queen," and they are. I know because I have a pair that Darryl gave to me. They look like \$200 dress shoes. Cyrus also said "we are concentrating on one model now. It's made with the best leather, has a double sole, and is made to be the most durable off-road shoe." (This is the same model that is Queen-worthy.)

RR-3 goes to the printer tomorrow. It's too thick, the print is a tad on the small side, and from now on we've got to keep in under control. I hope this one is around 24 pages, with just a listing of parts and an order form. We

need to have a quarterly catalogue and more frequent newsletters. Or maybe **two** catalogues a year, or maybe a parts catalogue and a frame catalogue, with color pictures and everything. I hope we hang in here. I can barely stand the stress, and I work too much. I'm not complaining, but I can't keep up this pace for too much longer.

**SEPT 2.** The last test results are in and the crowns passed wonderfully, meaning that they never broke at **all**. The fork ended up breaking at the steer tube, a failure caused by the test fixture's grip on it--it wouldn't happen like that on a bike. The passing crowns were the same as the failed crowns with one important difference—the failed crowns had small cracks in the corners (they were made broken!), and on the latest, passing crowns, Marc had filed out the cracks.

I still want to go with a more conservative, corner-free design, so Waterford took a sample crown and filled in the corners with brass and filed it nicely. I'll show a picture of it somewhere in this issue. I got it today, made some minor changes, and sent it off to Everest.

Jeff and I rode up the mountain today, I on the All-Rounder until we switched bikes. It's a nice bike, we both like it a lot. It rides like an **XO-1**, a good bike to ride like, but it's a little lighter and it has those pretty lugs and that 753 tubing. I need to make a frame brochure, and I think a loose-leaf one makes the most sense, since it will allow me to add to it easily. I also need to hire somebody full-time, and I have some good candidates.

**SEPT 6.** We sold **\$48,000** in bike stuff last month, our best by far, and after paying some **bills** and making payroll, we're down to \$5,000 in the bank. How does that work? Payroll taxes are outrageous--almost \$3,000 this month, and that's with two full

timers (me and Spencer) and a part timer (Maggi, no e). How do businesses **DO** it? We've got to ship frames soon--it's the only way we'll make it. I can't imagine having another month that good, and I'm just glad we had one, because we'd be sunk if it were an average month.

Everest got the crowns. They're going to be at the Anaheim show, so I can talk to them there. They know what to do, I just hope they can do it soon. I'm ordering some Shoes from England today, just a few pair. I've been looking for nice, **all** black leather touring and off-road shoes a long time. I asked David at Carradice, and he put me on to Reynolds. About **7** months ago Darryl sent me a pair of Reynolds shoes and a brochure, so I wrote and asked for information. No answer, and I couldn't find them in the directory. They'd moved, that's why.

I need to have another source of income. There are too many things I want to do here, but everything costs so much. A good day today, we're depositing \$3,000 or so--back up to \$8,000. Will it ever get to \$30? I can't relax until it's there. About once a week now I get a vision of the whole thing collapsing, and my life turning into some kind of living hell where **all** I have to be thankful for are family and health--good things, for sure, but is it too much to want Rivendell to survive, too? I don't know what I'd do. Freelance? Write catalogues and columns for other people? I don't know if they'd want me. Would I get a job unrelated to bikes, maybe close to home, maybe working for a temp agency doing light editing and word processing? I could have Rivendell on the side, but Spencer would be out a job, Maggi would be, too, and I've got five investors who have put from \$1,000 to \$30,000 into Rivendell, and I don't want to let them down.

Only 1,450 or so members so far. If I can cram in **six** RR's this year, then

maybe we can get lots of renewals in January--as much as **\$12,000** in memberships between January and March. I keep thinking "just **\$10,000** more in the bank and I wouldn't be worried at **all**." That money will come once we're shipping frames, and man I hope that's by the first week in October. It's those crowns. Everest has got to fire up some finals, and we've got to get them out there. I hope I don't have to lay off Maggi and Spencer or either one, or me.

There's a new cycling publication in California; maybe I could have a column in it. It would probably pay about \$300 per column and I always struggle with the writing stuff, so I can see it taking me a week to do that. It's not like this diary--a stuff here. I don't want to talk myself in to anything. Right now, except for my money worries, life is pretty good—I love the work, I can work a lot and still see my family. Anna is almost a year old and she comes into the bed in the mornings and is so smiley and playful, and there's no way I want to miss that. She's used to me, and if I get a real job I'll have to give that up. There are no bike industry jobs I want around here, so it would have to be freelancing, and when you freelance you never know if you'll be broke in a month or what. I may have to sell some of my shares in Rivendell, but after **all** this, who'd buy?

**SEPT 8.** Only one order by mail yesterday, time to panic. The day ended up at \$1,600 due mostly to a **\$1,040** order from Japan which included **two** Lowsaddle Longflaps and some Simplex. It was a tough day, emotionally. Mary was sick, Anna was sick, I was feeling nervous about money. I called my accountant and told him something like "I had a good August but where's the money? I need help. I don't even have a balance sheet, we've never done a financial statement, I keep buying more and more parts, and I'm going to run this into the ground

unless you stop me." So I have a meeting scheduled.

The day after tomorrow I go to the Anaheim show—and I sure hope I get the cloisonne headbadges tomorrow as semipromised, because Reynolds will have a Rivendell frame on display, and it ought to be sporting the cloisonne badge.

SEPT 14. I got back from the show yesterday and may write about it somewhere else in this issue. Someone will read it and yell at me, call me names, say "what purpose does your complaining serve? We're all in this together, blah blah blah," but I don't care. I don't have any advertisers to offend, I can say anything, and I won't take shots at anyone in particular. There's nobody to, anyway, it's just a movement.

Good news--Eric from J&B found some old SunTour downtube shifters with the power ratchet, and I can get them all. I wonder if they're convertible to bar-ends. Anyway, they work great on my test bike, and I'm excited.

Nitto can make a stainless bottle cage, I hear another one will soon be made HERE, but I've tried in vain and I don't need any more frustrations, so I'll just have Nitto make them, and they will be the best and prettiest-and probably the most expensive. Twenty dollars? I don't know.

SEPT 18. Down to \$2K in the bank with a few big bills to pay and the printing to pay for. We're pretty much broke, I'm feeling real crappy. I told Spencer and Maggi not to come in for a while, until we could afford to pay them. I don't know what to do. I feel like it's all crashing down and I've just blown it. It doesn't do much good to say "...if only the fork crowns had come on time and been correct," because they didn't and aren't and I don't know when they will be here and right. Long Shen has them now. They said they could do things fast, now they can prove it. Or not. This is my adult

nightmare, this is it. Man, I want things to be good. What now? I don't know. We've been ordering Waterford to build frames and we'll have to pay for those, even without forks. The buyers are patient, thank God (a2a), but we need the balance of the payments in the bank. I may have to sell some of my stock, but it's not worth much now. We owe Mavic another \$6,000 or so, most of which is due on Sept 26. RR3 will have been out a day or so by then, so if the orders come flying in maybe we'll make the deadline. I feel sick to my stomach, and I don't sound too good on the phone, either. I'm trying to sound okay, but this is serious. I've been working on a small mailer-flyer that I can probably send out tomorrow or the next day, but it'll cost \$300 to \$400 to do that, and it'll coincide with RR3, so what's the point?

SEPT 19. Spencer came in today to work for free. I talked to Marc and Richard and Shoe at Waterford and they were if not encouraging, at least helpful. They all suggested I go with the HJ crowns, rather than not being able to ship. Since, if we don't ship frames and collect the balance of the payments we go down the toilet. I'll contact all the frame orders, most of whom have been patient and waiting for the Rivendell crown, and ask them if we can ship with the HJ, and later, if they want, they can buy a Rivendell fork for \$50--which is well below cost. I hope they agree.

The good part of all this is that I learn how much the Waterfords care about Rivendell, what nice people they are. This is not the place to get weepy about it, but I feel as though they're my best friends.

We're sending out a flyer today. We need more sales. We're late paying somebody for the very first time ever, and that's a bad feeling. I swore that would never happen. I talked to them and said we'd send \$500 at least by

Friday, and the rest (another \$600) by the Friday after that. We got zero orders by mail today, and only three by fax. I'm selling all my bikes, even the Ritchey I've had since 1978, because we've got to get money in the account. About half of the flyers were collated backwards and the first sentence now sounds really desperate—I hope that doesn't, I don't know, turn people off or make us sound too pathetic. I wonder a lot whether or not this open diary progress report is a good idea. I don't mind disclosing, but I think some people might rather not read it and I don't want to take criticism for it.

I just received a fax from Long Shen telling me they can make the corners round, but anything else would require a new mold. I don't need anything else, so I'll ask them to go ahead.

SEPT 21. Friday, and it was a pretty good day. The post office said we overpaid by \$214 on the mailing of RR3, so we have that much in the account for next time. I asked if we could have it back now, and she said no, not "No!," just "no, but we'll just keep in there for next time." Okay. The flyers are out and we got at least one order from them. Today's total was only \$505, but we didn't get the mail, either. I'll do that tomorrow and input the orders on the weekend. Spencer came in again, worked hard all day for no pay. Our payroll will be very little this time--I think I'll try to get by with \$800. We ARE on a spending moratorium, but I bought some more SunTour downtube shifters today, and we get until April to pay them off. I think we can handle that. The right one is indexed with the "audible click" fake friction/fake indexing. The left is the wonderful power-ratchet. I got samples a few weeks ago and put them on a bike, and they work fine. The ghost click bugs me a little, but I think most people wouldn't be so bothered. I don't know—we'll see how they go.

They're beautifully shaped and pretty, and downtube shifters aren't going to be around for very long.

11:30 p.m. Great news! Mark F. from LS just faxed and phoned me with the best news I've had in six months: LS can modify the fork crown molds and get me samples in two weeks! I've changed the A/R crown to a non-plate style, which is more conservative, but I think, intuitively, for a wider crown the box section will be better. Everest said they couldn't modify the tool, but LS did it. Man, I am happy. The modification charges are \$800 each tool, so \$1600 total.

Just tonite I was working on another crown, for another bike. That'll be next year. A crown a year, all pretty.

**SEPT 25.** The first monday after the flyer went out, and we've sold twelve bikes already. The XO-1 has sold eleven times over. I sold my tandem, very sorry to see it go and having to pack it up and ship it Fed X doesn't make it easier. A great bike, a Ritchey road tandem I bought for \$1200 (frame, fork) on a year+ layaway plan back in 1980-81, and with all great parts. And I sold my 1990 Ritchey road classic, or whatever it's called. Chris G. bought it, promised it a good home, made sure I was able to part with it, promised I could buy it back at any time, and that if he sold it, he'd offer it to me first. What an amazing thing. Maynard called this morning. He calls about every two weeks now, and I always look forward to it. I owe him \$400, and he said if I kept the white Ritchey he'd wipe out the debt. Mark R. from Bike Guide just bought my oldest Ritchey lugged frame for \$300, and said I could buy it back any time. Man, people are nice. No matter how much I moan about Rivendell's finances or production delays, nobody should ever feel sorry for me.

**SEPT 27.** We're out of bikes and the people on the west coast and western

states got them first--how do we make it fair for all? I still have to mail out the foreign RR's and flyers. Another: I've decided to make a men's 50cm road frame with 26-inch wheels. The one we have already is really for women, but nobody has ordered one. It has a short top tube, etc. Spencer rides a 50cm and he can't ride it, so we ought to at least have a road bike he can ride. The design is finished, we'll have a prototype in a couple of weeks I think.

I am not really happy with my color selection. I find myself talking people out of the red, the greens, the tusk, because I don't have a great decal for them. I'm waiting for an all-gold outline, and I think that will work. I want the frame decals to be very low key. I don't know how that will strike the riders-buyers-customers, but I just like blendy decals and ornate head tube badges. The head badges are kind of a pain. I'd thought we would have self-taping screws, but it turns out we can't get them in a small enough size, so we have to drill the holes, then tap the holes, then mount the badge. TM said our pink was too salmon, and now I look at it sort of that way, too. I still like it, but it is salmonlike.

Sept 30. This is the day Bstone officially closed up, a year ago. Coincidentally I rode up Mt. Diablo with two ex Bstoners, Steve and Rob, Rob on a Slingshot he bought from Steve, who is now Sales Manager at Slingshot, and Steven on a Rivendell 575 prototype. I rode a 56. A good ride, but that's not the news. The news is that I got actual production samples of the head badges today (3 color combinations) and they're perfect. And I also got the drill and tap kit. I have a drilled frame here, and the only thing that can go wrong is if the headbadge ears don't line up with the holes already drilled in the frames. They word with the pewter badges, but I want them to work with both, and I'm afraid to try. Report late.

**OJ. DAY.** Ah...the new badges don't fit the same holes as the pewter ones, dang, dang, damn. I found that out yesterday, and Marc said it would take the better part of a day to make a new tool to drill the holes right. Then today he called with good news--I didn't quite understand it, but he said Chris discovered that the old tool would work with new holes in it, so yay. I got the gold decals back yesterday. These are for the greens and chameleon. They aren't clear winners, but I think they'll do fine. I have some reservations, but I'll have to see them on a real green frame. They give me an idea, though.

We're getting tons of orders, and today's sales were \$3,600. Some of the Readers are out there, and a few have bad print jobs, so if you get one of those ever, let me know right away.

I've started work on the new Rivendell catalogue, which I hope can be finished by January, but I doubt it. I really want to have smaller Readers, maybe 24 pages, and monthly mailings of certain other things we may have just a few of. It's too expensive to reprint the catalogue every time. I have a page design sketched out, I know just how I want it to be, and all I really need are illustrations. George can do them, but there's a timing and a cost issue. Robert could do some, he's really good, too. Spencer can do a lot (he did the MKS Track pedal and the ACME wallet). But I want there to be a consistent look to the illustrations, at least the hard goods. We'll see.

I should see the fork crowns this week. It's been that long. I am actually optimistic.

I found (with a little help from friends) a good source for toe clips, straps, and chromed steel bottle cages--ALE, of Italy. And Sergal can do jerseys. I know I'm not supposed to be buying anything right now, but the straps are every bit as nice or nicer than Binda Extras, and they could sell

for \$15 (Extras wholesale for \$20, when you can find them). ALE also sells a fur-lined, chamois covered bottle holder/insulator, and it's hard not to love that one. They cost me around \$4.50, and they'd be a steal at \$10. The steel bottle cages are a little more than a buck each, my cost, and I can easily sell them for \$10. Aluminum cages go for almost that much.

On an unrelated note, it has occurred to me that my singing the blues, even when it is appropriate, is inspiring pity, and I don't want to do that. Let me say this: Sales are wonderful, and any problems we have financially are due to extremely high start-up/tooling costs, and my own inability to not buy inventory. It's hard, when so much of what we buy is the last of its kind. I feel as though I've got to buy it all, because there won't be another chance. I know this is a bad way to be, I know. But it is hard hold back. Last month we went down to \$2,800 in the bank, while we owed \$14,000, and I had to lay off Spencer and Maggi--and it was my own fault, for buying too much. Maggi got some tutoring jobs that paid much more than she was making here, so I felt okay about that, and she's started coming in a few hours a week to help, as I can afford her a little bit now. Spencer worked two weeks sans pay, but now he's back on full time with pay. I have not been buying much, and the account is up to \$9,000 now. Ted D. says he's willing to loan us money to buy those Sergal wool jerseys, and we can pay him back as we go. I've got to take him up on that, really soon.

**OCTOBER 7**, a memorable day for lots of reasons. Saturday, and Spencer came in, Zac, too. I spent four and a half hours answering email, then we entered orders, addressed RRs, boxed and shipped, deposited the checks and "batched"--which is tallying up the week's credit card charges. Our account

is now up to \$19,800. Yesterday we got a call from one supplier saying we overpaid a bill by \$1,500; today another said we overpaid by \$300.

I got a Sergal brochure today, and there's lots of neat stuff in it--wool jerseys, arm warmers, leg warmers, tights, undershirts, even chamois undershirts. And ALE stuff came, too--a great steel bottle cage, a chamois bottle cover/insulator (wet it, it keeps the water cool by evaporation), great toe straps, stainless toe clips, I want it all. We'll have to narrow down our offerings, and maybe Ted can help us buy it. I ordered soap a few days ago; pine tar soap, really nice stuff I wonder how it'll go.

It's been an emotionally trying week. I had a disagreement with an old friend, a public figure, and I don't know where it'll lead. Sometimes I want to talk about it, get it all out, sometimes I just want to hide and scream. I don't know what to do about it. There is a huge difference between liking this kind of cycling gear and being an elitist snob, and I hope he knows it. The people I talk to every day are the nicest people I know. Oh, man.

**COLUMBUS DAY.** Last night I sent orders to Sergal and ALE and Carradice, and I was expecting some kind of reply, some good news about delivery, and some news on past orders, and all there was on the fax machine were two tooling bills from Everest, totalling \$7,800. Man, one day to be happy about the state of things, then this. I'll pay what I owe but I want some compensation for the cracked crowns, all 750 of them; and I'd like to have all my tooling transferred to LS--once that's done I'll feel better about paying, although since I still owe the final 1/3 tooling charge for the A/R crown and lugs, it's unlikely they'll ship it off to their competitor just yet. We haven't yet shipped out the personal bikes and prototypes, and so we

haven't cashed those checks yet, and that comes to about \$4,000. Not a good start this week, but at least we HAVE the money. If I'd received this fax two weeks ago, which wouldn't have been out of line, well, forget it.

**OCTOBER 10.** The headbadges and magnets came today. The badges are perfect (now that we're over the hump of them not matching the hole pattern of the pewter ones). The magnets are beautiful but weak. They're rubber magnets, not metal, and I put on over two thin papers on the Rivendell refrigerator and it slid right down the floor. Bummer! Typical! Then I tried it direct over nothing and it slid. I've got some rare earth magnets, bought from member B.R. in Texas. I was going to make some super refrigerator magnets with them and sell them for \$12, but now I'd better just make sure the \$8 magnets work. Next time I'll order buttons without magnets and just glue on the rare earthers, if I can still get them. They're a surplus item, and when they're gone, that's it. ("As rare earth magnets go, so goes Rivendell!") Bad magnets that can be fixed are no problem. I just hope the epoxy holds. The directions said "apply to a clean, dry, rough surface," and the magnet is smooth.

We got a bill from Mavic today--we're past due \$5,700 or so. It makes me sick, I hate it, but I can't do anything about it now except pay maybe a thousand of it. I'll try for a thousand a week. Not good. Mavic was helpful to me, extended me way more credit than I deserved, now I'm late. Sorry!

I glued 65 rare earth magnets onto the backs of the weaklings, that was two hours ago, and they seem to be holding--who would have guessed? A more likely scenario would have been for them not to hold, and somehow wrecking both the cloi disks and the magnets trying to separate them.

I called Reynolds Shoes and coinci-



dentially they're shipping today, and we'll have them in a week or **two**. I'm pretty excited about the shoes, but I sure do wish we had enough money to actually stock them. I don't know how many people will be willing to pay up front and wait a couple of months for shoes that may not fit. Nashbar would never do this, and that's probably why it's such a success.

**OCT 15.** The crown samples arrived and they're perfect. They look perfect to me, anyway. I'll check with Waterford and see what they think, then I'll order-up and maybe have the real crowns in **3** weeks.

**OCT 16.** Paid a lot of bills, but still owe Mavic \$4K, and another \$8K for tooling. But we have \$18K in the bank, and if we can have another good couple of weeks.....

A couple of 62 roads were accidentally built with the wrong tubing and lugs. That size is supposed to have the larger downtube and chainstays, and the same lugs as the A/R, but these went out with road tubing. Easy mistake to make, but of course we'll take the frames back and start over. Richard is remorseful, and I've offered to try to sell the frames.

The headbadges are turning out to be a pain. The holes required are so small, and they need to be tapped, AND the hole barely fits the screw, and the precision required for such an operation seems to be challenging, and I can believe it. I hope we don't have to go to epoxy, but it may come to that. Then the holes look stupid, so maybe we can ---or, I don't know. The badges are so beautiful. Why can't **SOME-THING** go right, just half the time?

**OCT 17.** A good day here, almost \$3,200 in sales, almost all back orders, but still that's good. Spencer shipped all day, I entered orders all day, both get burned out on it, but we're grateful.

I mean, is there something better to do? I haven't moved my body for two whole days--faxes come in the morning, I have to fax Italy and England in the mornings, the phones are ringing and I'm here alone until 9:30 or so. So it's not like I can just hop on my bike and ride before coming here. I finalized the jersey colors today, and Sergal is starting production. George Flegg retires in a week, and we ought to mail out the flyer and get the word out, so people (at least Brooks customers) can fax him a thanks and farewell. I can take it to Kinko's tomorrow, and we can have a marathon mailing Thursday. It pretty much has to happen then, I think. We need help here, but we're trying to keep costs down, and lower payroll equals lower payroll taxes. A \$10/hour employee costs \$14 an hour after everything is calculated. Last month I took home about \$2,000, and I owe the company almost \$600 in parts and stuff. Everytime I need my BOBshades for a ride, I can't find them and have to grab another pair, at \$12 each, but I am keeping track.

The super duper Nitto seat posts are supposed to be ready this month, and I sure hope we can have them by the end of November. They'll probably cost us \$50, and I used to have a personal policy against seat posts that retailed for more than \$40, but these are the best, and I just can't stand not to have them.

The magnets are great. I hope we can get more rare earth magnets for them.

**OCT 24.** The cloisonne headbadges are too hard to screw on to the frame, a real pain, so I don't know. I don't want to use glue, but I also don't want to drive Waterford crazy. Mike from Toronto says he has some self-tapping rivets from Germany, and he may be able to get more. I sent him some TA rings in exchange for some TA cleats and whatever help he can give me with the badges. That he's even trying is a

good sign. NITTO is working on the bottle cage, and we've got the ALE cages coming in soon. The other Japanese projects we have are racks (Nitto again) and the 700 x 29-actual tire. There will be another fork crown, not prettier, not better, just different, because I like fork crowns.

We just hired Gary Boulanger to stay at Waterford **3-4** days a week to help with the frame orders. He'll be good—he was already productive his first day.

**NOV 5.** It's been too busy to make entries here, let's see: We ordered a bunch of wool from Sergal in Italy, and today got a ~~fax~~ saying they're out of the black and green, so we can expect a delay. The last time I ordered from Sergal, back in 1990, the same thing happened and the delay was **two** months. They could have mentioned something earlier. Frames are shipping now, at least the road frames. This is good. Ted D's company, Rona Components, will be making some Willow branded parts soon--we should have some adapter chainrings in by January or so.

We are trying to hire Rob to do our books and help with organization and the Reader.

**NOV 14.** We just hired Rob formerly with Bicycle Guide and after that Geronimo, to help out with the flyers and books, but he's been packing and shipping since he got here. We were **two** weeks behind in shipping, now we're caught up except for the things on back order. I'm nervous about increasing payroll so much (first Gary, now Rob), but we need them both, so there's no choice. (Confidential to Rob and Gary: We like you, too.)

In a week or so the crowns will be mailed. That's good. David C., a frame customer came by yesterday from out of town, and he and I went for a two

*continued on back cover*



## LETTERS

### BY POPULAR DEMAND AND PERMISSION.....

*A Reprint of the letter to the editor Roger Durham Wrote to VeloNews in 1982 — thirteen and a half years ago — responding to another letter in a previous issue, on the topic of riding in traffic. This letter was mentioned in RR-2's Roger Durham interview, and many of you have requested a copy. It is here for your information only, and does not necessarily reflect anything. The topic of riding ethics and personal preservation are way too hot for the mild-mannered Rivendell Reader; however, we'll be happy to print thought-out responses in the next letters column. With sincere apologies to John Forester and certified Effective Cyclists everywhere, here she goes.. .*

To Dennis Koelmel:

I read your letter to the editor (VeloNews, Jan. 14) about how bicycle riders are often heedless of the proper rules for bicycling.

I used to ride the way you recommend, but find myself departing from it more with each passing year, based on a line of thinking much different from yours.

I began changing my way of thinking one night when I pulled in back of a biker who was properly waiting to make a left turn in an absolutely mad intersection...with cars going in all directions, signals getting ready to change, and everybody mad to get home from work. Somehow, he got through: nobody charged out from the sides when the light changed.

I realized how foolish the man was and how foolish he looked. A kid would have taken one glance at the intersection and cut to the left, through a gas station across the line of

stopped cars, or else he'd have gone down the sidewalk on the left side. The path of least exposure. I suppose "exposure time" is the key phrase for the way I ride mostly, now.

Talking about respect from motorists is an illusion. Motorists all break laws. They speed. They roll signals. The drive half drunk or all drunk. They argue with their spouses and drive in rages. They drive full of drugs. They drive with reckless abandon. It's a jungle out there, and sooner or later one of the beasts is going to mow a person down, right or wrong, so the best thing cyclists do is minimize their exposure...just like the cyclist did you objected to. Let's look at that:

He took advantage of the stopped cars (a stopped car is no threat unless you run into it), passed them, went through them, and was gone. Safe but illegal.

You waited while they waited and had to share the road with them while they were moving and therefore dangerous. Your exposure time was much greater while traversing that particular bit of roadway. While much more legal, getting through the intersection was more dangerous for you than it was for him.

If you want to see the safest and most efficient way to ride a bicycle or motorcycle in heavy traffic, you ought to spend some time in Washington, D.C. watching the messengers. Professionals...earning a living each day because they get the job done and don't get hurt.

They ride like children. They cross traffic, ride on the wrong side of the street, join pedestrians, go against red lights, cut through corners of parks, go

between parked cars. They are unhampered by police, because the police probably realize the regulations really can't apply to bicycles or motorcycles.

If you ride through a red light, usually by the time the cars catch up with you, they'll be strung out with some space between them, and they'll pass you in a more orderly manner than they will if you all leave the light together.. You'll have ridden a quarter of a block or so with almost no traffic.

If you ride through a barricaded area, dodging the workers, if it's done at a slow speed, it's safer than riding with automobiles around the obstruction.

Tail-gate a truck down a crowded street, if you can, because nobody in his right mind is going to make a left turn in front of such a big thing; because if you're close enough, nobody can make a left turn in front of you without hitting the side of the truck; because the truck driver almost never will make a panic stop.

You'll find you can do almost anything on a bicycle, even in front of a policeman, without fear of receiving a citation. Live by the rules of the jungle.

Putting it briefly, if it's safe, do anything on a bicycle which will reduce the time it takes to get to where you're going, because that reduces your exposure.

You see, there're other ways to do it.. .

ROGER DURHAM  
Durham Bicycles

### AS FOR OUR WRITE-INS...

Editor,

My first bicycle (still my favorite) was a 1987 Bridgestone MB-3. It was three inches too high but I didn't care.

The bike looked baaad. The Bridgestone label was painted on the top tube. I didn't know how to ride, but I didn't care. I wanted that bike.

Many years later I rediscovered Bridgestone. The Bridgestone catalogues were timelessly beautiful. It was an intelligent J. Peterman catalogue. Opening the cover was like popping a cork and reading the articles was like tasting a fine, light, crispy aged wine..I don't drink.

I yearned for an XO-1 with moustache handlebars. I imagined myself gliding down the alps with a beautiful girl on my lap. But I couldn't afford it.

No longer in debt to my parents for my first Bridgestone...I had my education to worry about. So I rode my MB-3 to McCully Bike Shop, asked for Bridgestone catalogues, and behaved like a proper capitalistic consumer. I fantasied about material, The catalogues did open my eyes to appropriate design. Was there a 1995 edition? How can I get one?

Good luck and many mahalos for doing a great job at BridgeXstone.

JUSTIN Wu  
Honolulu, HI

*Justin, thanks, but if I'd done a really great job, Bstone would still be around. There's no 1995 Bstone catalogue, but we're trying to carry on the direction in the Rivendell Reader. J. Peterman? I hear that comparison a lot, and never know how to take it. I think J. Peterman gear is probably quite well-made, but the copy gets a little hard to take sometimes. — Grant*

Editor,

As a kid (when Qwikcoin purses were at their peak) I scorned them, as nerdy or something. So when I rec'd my BOB purse back during the BOB days, I ignored it. Subsequently I somehow received two more during Riv joining. One of them has just been hanging in our kitchen since we moved

in. The other day I grabbed it to help me collect coins from three separate locations (washing machine, desk, bureau, etc) and somehow it ended up in my pocket during a normal working day. You know what? I LOVE it! The qwikcoin purse is the greatest thing since sliced bread. It's sort of like having an interest-bearing bank account in your pocket. Somehow it seems to breathe new life into the idea of a coin as legal tender.... what with coins otherwise seeming like so many un-connected useless small denominations. Pennies now mean something to me, again.

H. THUNDERBOLT

Editor,

I read with interest Mr. Runyon's opinions on off-road racing, and am left more than a little puzzled. I would assume that most of us ride more than race, does this mean we shouldn't ride off-road when it's muddy? Here in the Northwest our off-road season would be about 3 months long. Sorry, but I'm not willing to make that sacrifice. And to go road riding instead would be using the highway systems that have moved far more dirt than I will ever move in a lifetime of off-road cycling.

FRITZ STOUT  
Olympia, Wa

*Fritz, call him Howard. Maybe it's best to consider everything, including the soil type and what sort of damage you will do. Not all soils are alike in that way, I've never ridden in the PNW, but your soil has a lot of ferns and pine needles and other vegetable matter, doesn't it? That kind of soil soaks up a lot of water and doesn't suffer as much as, well, maybe the soil in Mr. Runyon's backyard I mean Howard's. — Grant*

Editor,

I like your page & your approach. I am currently in the information gathering stage of setting up a bike building business of my own. I've burned out on the high tech business and want to make things that truly benefit people, and do something where craftsmanship matters. I've always loved bikes, so here I am. I'm glad to see you seem to be enjoying yourselves and that you don't seem to be going broke. I hope to do as well...

PAT FRANZ

*The "page" Pat likes is our webpage on the internet. Steven Sheffield puts it together out of word files we send him. I don't even know how to access it, yet. Shameful! Grant*

Editor,

Spent 36 hours in Santa Barbara earlier this week. MTB's whizzing by everywhere (always on the street of course). It therefore occurs to me to advise you (for marketing information purposes) that Bicycling Demographics in California are to Bicycling Demographics Elsewhere in America, as California is to Elsewhere in America, which is to say there is no relationship at all. Even during the 3 month general public riding season here, there's just not that much riding going on. On the other hand this could just be a city thang. Check your BOB rep sales figures for further demographic information. Even more amazing was my observation that (unlike in Amsterdam, Munster, Brussels etc) people always seemed to be just HAMMERING AWAY on these things, i.e. always trying to go fast. That was weird.

HOWARD SMITH

*We welcome your comments. Address correspondence to us at 1547 Palos Verdes, #402, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Or send E-Mail to Rivobici@aol.com. If you send something that for some reason you don't want printed here, please say so. Don't let*

# The Happy Rider

IF YOU LIKE SOMETHING WITHOUT RESERVATION, TELL US AND WE'LL PRINT IT.

## Scott-Matthauser replacement Campagnolo brake pads

(They're American!) They fit perfectly in the Campy pad holders, and work very well wet or dry. The replacement pads are also cheaper than buying the whole shoe (I paid \$12 for four).

Tom MacDonald

## Victorinox Swiss Army Knife

(It's Swiss!) I like to carry the Tinker in my tool bag; it has two blades, phillips and regular screwdrivers, tweezers, toothpick, and a corkscrew (for winery visits). The one time I didn't pack it, my toe clip screws came loose. Don't let it happen to you.

Tom MacDonald

## The Survival of the Bark Canoe (it's a book!) by John McPhee

John McPhee wrote a whole book, and it was fascinating, about oranges and the Florida citrus industry, so imagine what he can do with a guy who still make canoes the way the Indians and French trappers did. You'll probably have to order this book, because even stores that carry a lot of McPhee's books generally ignore this one. The Survival of the Bark Canoe is inspirational, informational, and makes you think about things.

Grant Petersen

## Jonathan Richard Wool Caps

These are Fabrique en Irlande (from Dublin) 100% wool tweed caps, which come in flat, floppy, and drivers' styles (although I haven't seen the driving caps, which have fold down ear flaps and a chin strap, for years).

The virtues of the caps are that they don't ever wear out, they are extremely comfortable, they fit in a pocket, and

most important, they are made of the most beautiful, idiosyncratic tweed fabrics there are. Really, a sport jacket made of fabric this good would cost \$500 if it would cost a penny, so even though they have become quite expensive the caps are a bargain in terms of amount of cool-weather style obtained per dollar.

Second rate tweed caps are easy to find but the Jonathan Richard brand, being expensive and the best, is not. Good hat stores are rare but most big cities have at least one. I'm pretty sure the JR label is always left inside even when a store label is added. Or buy a couple next time you're in Ireland.

Paul Berk

## Burley Rain Jacket

I bought my first Burley rain jacket in 1989 for a six-month bicycling trip I took in Alaska. There was a 6-week stretch where the only time I did not wear it was when I was sleeping. I stayed drier than any of the other cyclists who wore more famous rain wear. The coats are made with Ultrex, one of the supposedly breathable yet waterproof textiles, but the greatest feature is the ventilation. The Burley is vented at the front, has underarm zips, and a rear flap across the back. Three years after I bought it the coat lost its waterproofness and Burley replaced it at no cost. I have convinced three other people to buy one since, and they all feel it is a superior rain jacket.

David Crispin

## DuPont 100% Teflon Lubricant

While the manufacturer recommends this product to be used on chains, I prefer using it on my brake and derailleur cables (like a poor man's Gore Ride-On cable). Because the

Teflon bonds to any metallic surface, it's ideal for coating cables to enhance shifting and braking, especially if you ride in rainy or cold weather. Just \$14.99 for about 18 grams that'll last a very long time. Comes in a handy syringe applicator.

Amos Thames

## Automaxi Roof Rack

My Universal 2000 roof rack system is out of this world. Installation and removal is a one-person job, and because of the system's telescopic design, I'm always confident that I've centered the rack on my vehicle. The Automaxi has built-in locks, and a simple ratchet mechanism allows me to easily tension the rack onto my roof. The main unit sells for about \$180, with two pairs of brackets and carriers adding another \$20 and \$65, respectively. A quiet rack on long trips.

Thom DeLorenz

## The Hozan 4th Hand tool.

Yeah I know that the 3rd Hand is the quintessential bike tool, that VAR's version is classic, blah blah. For pure functional pleasure, though, go with the Hozan. It holds the brakes in place as it grips and adjusts the cable: all you have to do is cinch down the bolt. And it isn't restricted to brakes, the way a 3rd Hand is. Its little jaws get into any nook or crannie, and the adjustment is smooth and infinitely variable. The Hozan is simply made, and after many years of use when the spring broke I hopped down to the hardware store and found a replacement in two minutes. Say goodbye to your needle-nose pliers forever, folks, because the Hozan 4th Hand is perfect.

Joe Appel

## A SOMEWHAT TECHNICAL COLUMN

## SHRIEKING ABOUT STEMS: THE S FACTOR

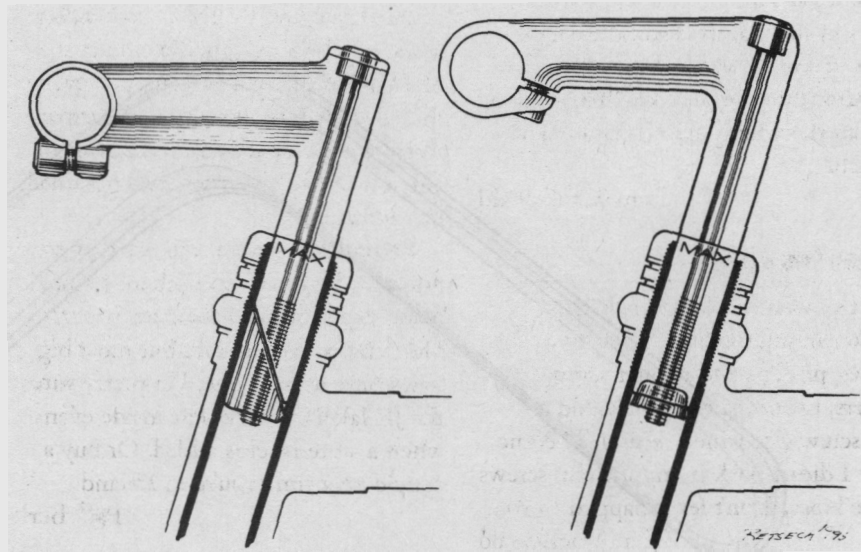
One of the things that most affects how you feel on the bike is the height of the handlebar. Low bars add weight to the front wheel and increase steering resistance make the bike slower; or to put it a nice way, less twitchy. But low bars can also lead to hand, nerve, back and neck problems, as Bob Gordon talks about somewhere else in this issue. (Well, he doesn't mention the hands.)

So, for a lot of people—and I don't just mean the old, the new, and the non-athletic—higher bars can make a huge, good difference. That's where the stem quill (the vertical portion of the stem) starts to matter.

Until the 1960's or so, many quills were around 160mm. Traditional forged Italian stems such as Cinelli and 3ttt have 135mm quills. Most TIG-welded stems have 125mm quills. That's pretty short.

Stems tighten either by a cone or a wedge. Cone stems, such as the traditional 3ttt or Cinelli forged models (some Nitto stems, too) tighten by spreading the split lower portion of the quill evenly, in all directions. If you overtighten them, they can bulge the steer tube, so don't.

The wedge stems work by the wedge sliding up the mating ramp on the quill until it increases the diameter enough to resist twisting;. Wedge stems are easier to make (that's good) and require less torque to keep the stem from twisting (good again), but they also present to the steer tube added stress at the top of the wedge, a full 30mm from the bottom of the quill. As the wedge "climbs" the ramp and tightens the stem in place, the point of the wedge moves out in



Notice that the short-quill wedge stem tightens in the threads, and the long-quill cone stem allow you to raise the bars higher and still doesn't stress the stem threads (you have to look hard to see them).

space, poking whatever is in its way, and if what's in its way happens to be threads in the steer tube, the steer tube may very likely break. I've seen it happen many times. (Steer tubes play a role, too—they should have no more threads than is necessary to adjust the headset. Many steer tubes, especially on replacement forks, have too many threads because the manufacturer or distributor wants to supply forks that can accommodate a range of frame sizes, to minimize inventory.)

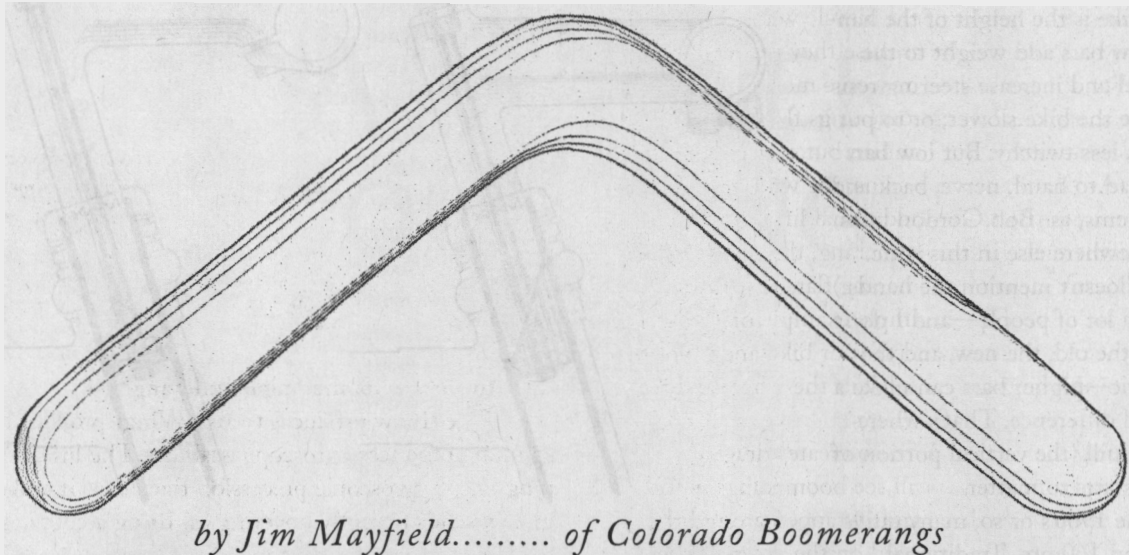
When setting the height of the stem, you can't just go by the MAX HEIGHT line on the quill. That line is in the same place regardless of whether the quill has a cone or a wedge, and that doesn't make sense, because the quill doesn't know where the steer tube threads are. If the top of the wedge is tightening in the threads, the stem is too high even if the MAX

HEIGHT line is well out of sight. You should find out by looking where your threads end, then hold the stem up outside the frame to see if the height you desire is acceptable.

Why are quills so short? I think it started with mountain bike. Mountain bike head tubes tend to be very short and longer quills bottom out sooner. Also, in the old days mountain bike stems had some rise to them, and so you could live with a shorter quill. Modern stems have little to no rise, but the quill is still short..

*I like high handlebars and long-quilled stems with 72° to 73° angles, which seem to flow in to the handlebar when viewed from the side. This is not the most efficient use of material (long quill, horizontal extension), but it looks nice, especially on a sleek road bike.*

# WHY A BOOMERANG BOOMERANGS

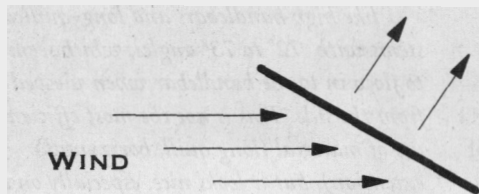


**A**s cyclists we understand the force of the wind as we battle it all day long. You're an airfoil! Well, a boomerang is two airfoils joined in the middle.

To understand what makes a boomerang work, it is necessary to understand aerodynamics and flight; and that means understanding *lift*, *thrust*, and *drag*.

The 1st law governing lift is Newton's Third Law of Motion: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

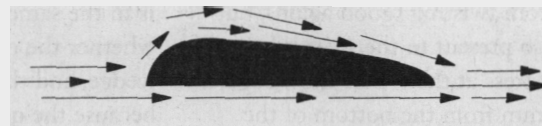
This implies that a wing is just an inclined plane. So when you give it thrust, the air is deflected down, which in turn deflects the wing up. This impact pressure of the air hitting the underside of the wing creates 30% of the lift of a wing. In the case of an airplane the thrust is produced by engines. In a boomerang, it is produced by the throw.



The 2nd law governing lift is Bernoulli's Law: An increase in the speed of air reduces the static pressure.

Tear off a strip of paper from a page, hold it in your hand letting it hang down, then blow over the top. The paper comes up, because the air pressure on top is reduced and the air pressure pushing up on the bottom is the same. Air produces roughly 14 pounds of pressure on everything from every direction.

As the air moves across the wing of a plane it has farther to go over its curved surface than it does over the flatter underside. The air needs to meet at the same time on the other side, so it speeds up over the top. **As** it moves faster over the top than it does on the bottom it creates less downward air pressure. Bernoulli's law produces 70% of the lift of a wing.



*Air moving across the wingplane has farther to go over its curved surface than it does its flatter underside*

If you're wondering why the air needs to meet at the same time on the back side of the airfoil, think of the air as being a fluid (because it is). If you push a basketball into a tub of water, the water level rises because the ball is taking up space and water is a fluid so it has to go somewhere. The airfoil produces a similar effect in the air.

The preceding laws plus gyroscopic stability and gyroscopic precession are why boomerangs boomerang.

*Gyroscopic stability* is the stabilizing effect resulting from an object spinning: a gyroscope, a bicycle wheel, a fastball. Knuckleballs move erratically because they lack gyroscopic stability of a fastball. Gyroscopic motion also keeps rockets on course, and helps boomerangs fly.

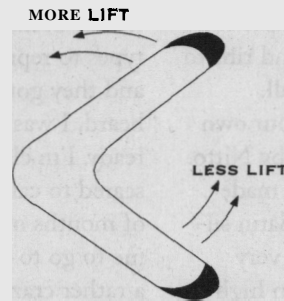
*Gyroscopic precession* is less familiar, but easy enough to understand: As the boomerang spins, the wing going over the top creates more lift. This additional lift at the top of the circle begins turning the boomerang, thus creating the return, and finally lays the boomerang flat, so it hovers in for an easy catch. For a quick simple example of gyroscopic precession, take a bicycle wheel off your bike and hold it by the axle while spinning the wheel. Tilt the wheel and feel the force.

But the thing that creates lift also creates drag. At boomerang tournaments you will see boomerangs with holes drilled in them, rubber bands wrapped around the wings, spoiler flaps and coins taped on the wings. These things create drag to produce different effects—reducing

the hover or keeping the flight lower, for instance.

Controlling the lift using drag on a boomerang is a delicate balance and something of an art.

When you throw a boomerang, try to release it with as much spin as possible. And when you release it, it should be nearly vertical (a sidearm throw will produce a straight up flight with a crashing return, usually resulting in a broken boomerang).



*As the boomerang spins, the wing going over the top creates more lift.*

**So why does a boomerang boomerang?**

The throw produces thrust. Wings produce lift. The spinning produces gyroscopic stability. The lift and spinning create gyroscopic precession that turns it and ultimately sends it gently hovering in. Bring a couple of boomerangs on your next ride. Stop at a clearing. Create some sculptures in the sky.

## MY NUMBER WAS THIRTEEN

The first catch set the hook. I realized the extent of my sickness after getting off the plane in L.A., returning from the Phoenix Open boomerang tournament. I just wanted to watch, but when I called for info, I was told I had to throw. What the heck...

Grassy field. People with bags of boomerangs and people painting circles on the grass. Numbers drawn, mine was #13. Bags opened and boomerangs emerged. Wood, plastic, carbon fiber, foam, aluminum...some with special holes and slots, coins or lead taped to them...bent or twisted tips—specialty booms ready for anything.

An elaborate points system and different events...accuracy, trick catches—behind the back, under the leg, even with the feet. My landings for the foot catch was softened by the water on the field, from the sprinklers. One guy's

MTA throw stayed in the air for 69 seconds, but he missed the catch and was never allowed to forget it. Joking, camaraderie, really nice people. One guy throws, does flips, bounces, lands upside down on one hand and catches with the other. I, pure novice, was made to feel part of the group. Serious throwers, working on USBA points, never too busy to teach or encourage. The last event was Endurance: most catches in 5 minutes wins, and 54 won. I did my number, 13. At the end we all threw every MTA boomerang we had at once, an amazing sight.

The next day I could barely walk. Felt great. Everyone went home with a certificate, a woodcut plaque, and a boomerang addiction.

—Tom Campbell

# ❁ RANDOM NOTES ❁

U.S. Patent No. 5,402,537 is for a new kind of baseball glove, which according to the inventor, Paul Kolada is "essentially made of hard polymer bones inside a soft polymer skin." Advantages over leather? "It doesn't need to be broken in. It's cheaper to make. It has a lot of bumps and ribs to make it easier to catch the ball. ....We're going to have our own touring racks, made in Japan by Nitto. They'll fit most bikes, but are made specifically to fit Rivendells. Satin silver, fillet brazed tubular steel, very pretty. We can choose between high-tensile and CrMo racks, and guess what? Nitto recommend high-tensile, because it'll bend in a crash, maybe preventing damage to the frame. High tensile steel is still way more rigid and stronger than the aluminums used for racks. We'll have to decide which to offer (CrMo or HT). We'll ask NITTO for all of its test data.....Nitto is **also** working on a stainless steel bottle cage for us. This project was put into the works before we found the ALE chromed steel cages, but we aren't backing out. I expect the NITTO cage to sell for close to \$30, but I'm hoping for \$20.....I want the RR to have a larger letters column. We get a fair amount of mail, but I usually just reply or file it without printing it. I want to print it, because Letters are usually one of the more interesting parts of any publication. If you send a letter and specifically don't want it printed, just say so.....Frame color update: Our old red is out because I couldn't get a good decal for it. It's being replaced with an Italian red, not unlike the RB-1/Ferrari red. Caramel orange has been split in two—a darker caramel color with more brown in it; and a burnt orange copied from a Ritchey seen at

the Anaheim show. I saw the bike, loved the color, told them I'd like to copy it, and they were most cooperative.....I'm not sure what's happening with the Men's Journal story on Rivendell. I kept putting off the photo shoots because I didn't want prototypes to represent us in the magazine, and they got angry and the last I heard, I was to call them when I was ready. I'm close to that now, but a-scared to call, since it's been a couple of months now. I think they might tell me to go to hell.....Mason St. Clair is a rather crazy man in Nashville, TN, and one of the best people I know of in bicycling. He publishes The Wire Donkey Press, a newsletter for practical cyclists, commuting cyclists, and anybody who needs an antidote to the big air, shredding, grimacing, hi-tech concoctions you often find representing our sport. Wire Donkey is a truly unique, homegrown mixture of practical tips, humor, corn, religion (apologies to.. ) and commentary. It **grows** on you. Mason has credentials: He's been an everyday, all-weather bicycle commuter for more than 15 years, an inveterate autophobe for as long, and I doubt anybody knows more about making cheap, effective, home-made bicycle lights than he. If bicycles are a big part of your life and you read all you can, you need to add The Wire Donkey Press to your diet. The Wire Donkey Press, 3620 Rolland Road, Nashville, TN 37205. I don't know the subscription price, but I sent him \$15 for a year, and it's a bargain. Phone 615-297-3252.....Gabe Konrad has a newsletter, too, called AEoleus Butterfly, and its emphasis is on old bikes, classics, books, bikes-as-transportation, collectibles, reprints, real old and interesting stuff. I thoroughly enjoy it and wouldn't want to do with-

out it. His official subscription price is **two** stamps (\$0.64) per issue, but that can't cover his costs. His issue, #6, is dedicated to Daniel Rebour, and you've got to get it. Issue #7 has a translation of the forward to an old Zeus catalogue. AEoleus Butterfly, 13028 Cypress Avenue, Sand Lake, MI 49343 (616) 636-4001.....Rivendell member Jeff Potter's newsletter is called Out Your Back Door. Another keeper, with an emphasis on practical bikes, outdoor sports, knife sharpening, bow-making, skiing, sledding, hopping freight trains, food, cameras, poetry, cheap travel—and it's all not just readable, but entertaining, fascinating, pretty much essential. Published several times per year. Back issues, \$3. I think it's \$12 per year. OYB, 4686 Meridian Road. Williamston, MI 48895.....Many of you know SunTour unloaded its remaining stock cheap to a U.S. distributor. We're trying to get our hands on some of it, and will pass it on to you if we do. We're most interested in bar-end shifters, Superbe and Superbe Pro brakes, and old cheap alloy derailleurs.....FLASH, we just got a mess of 1986 bar-end shifters, the first year of AccuShift (indexing). These are the ones to have, because when you switch off the indexing in the right lever, you get a pure, clickless friction. The left lever is SunTour's power ratchet style, and power-ratchet shifting is as good as it gets. So just use the left lever on the right (where the power ratchet **w**ll be called to action more) and use the right one, in friction mode, on the left. These come with cables and housing, and cost \$38/pair—a bargain, even if they are black. You can sand off the paint.....We're **sold** out of SunTour Superbe sidepulls, but have found a fairly good supply of SunTour Cyclone



sidepulls. These were two tiers below the Superbes, but they've got all the cold-forgedness of the Superbe, and a wonderful quick-release and o-ring barrel adjuster. Silver finish, non-allen bolts. That's probably why they were available for us to buy, but it's not a big deal—you just pretend the holes in the fork and the rear brake bridge are made for through-bolts, and away you go. I personally prefer these to any currently manufactured sidepull brake ..... We **also** found lots of Superbe Pro cranks with rings, in both 172.5 and 175mm. These have a road-standard 130mm bolt circle diameter, not sure what rings, and when used with the Superbe Pro bottom brackets we have, the Q-factor is in the low 140's.....Carradice is **working** on a waterproof saddle cover for us that works with Brooks saddles with or without a saddlebag. We will have a prototype by mid December, and maybe some to sell by January. Other Carradice projects: A day pack, a mini longflap-style saddlebag for sub-53cm road bikes, a handlebar bag for drop-bars. We will have at least two of these items by late January..... One item we'd like to see from Brooks is leather brake lever hoods. Wouldn't they be nice? They could match your saddle and last twenty-five years. We haven't approached Brooks with this idea, but soon will..... Rivendell stem update: We're trying hard to keep our expenses down for the last couple of months of this year, and if we finish the year in good shape, the stem will be the first thing on the menu for 1996. The earliest you'll see it is June, 1996..... Frame prices must goup starting January, from the current \$895/single color, to \$975. Our costs have risen, we gotta do it.....Those English touring shoes we're importing on a limited basis are sized rather large. If you wear a size 9 Converse and a 41 1/2 Sidi, try an 8 in these.....I want to say something about mail and letters. We actu-

ally get a fair amount, and many of you say some very nice things, really encouraging things. This is the most rewarding part of work, no question about it. Those letters mean so much, they keep us going and keep our enthusiasm up even when things look dreary. We don't reprint them in the letters column because I've always felt it was poor taste to print "way to go, guys!—you're the most!" letters. But I want to acknowledge that we read and appreciate them. Thanks.....Rivendell is the number one wool shorts dealer in the country, at least according to Kucharik, our supplier. That's only slightly more impressive than being the number one Carradice dealer.....The summer gloves never did come in. My importer/contact told me, and I believe him, that they were held up in a legal battle between he and his former business associates. Now it's winter and too late. We'll try again next spring.....The tooling is **all paid off!** Mavic is **all paid off** (or will be by the time you read this)! The next big expenses will be the stem lugs and yet another road crown. I like fork crowns, and I would like to do a new one every year. That probably won't quite happen, but this next one will be very nice, and is already in the works. It's no prettier than the first one and it won't replace it; it's just different, and this is the last you'll hear of it until it's completed.....Attention Carradice buyers: There seems to be some confusion as to how to route the straps, and it is not obvious, so: Each bag comes with three straps. One goes through the vertical leather and around the post. The remaining two: With the buckle up and the fuzzy side of the leather facing the ground, thread the strap from the outside into the hole in the canvas, under the wooden dowel into the main pouch, then do a U-turn and thread it over the dowel and out the upper side of the same hole. To mount the bag on a B.17 or adapter, thread the remaining

portion of the strap from the inside of the loop, through the loop, then just buckle it. From now on we'll supply an illustration. Anyway, do not use either the D-rings (on the Lowsaddle) or the leather patches (on the Nelson) to attach the bag. No harm will result if you do, and it is not dangerous; but it isn't what the maker intended, either.....Is anybody else just slightly bothered by the fourteenization of crank bolts? Anybody with a Campy crank bolt wrench has to be. This is not a retro-grouchy thing, is it?.....Frame notes: The underside of the brake bridges and the back side of the chainstay bridges are tapped for a mudguard bolt. You don't have to use it, but it's there. Also, the head tubes are 15 to 20mm extra tall, which allows you to get the bars higher without risk to the steer tube threads. Even some the steer tubes are extra long. High bar positions are easy to achieve, and if you want less height, just cut the steerer threads, using a made-for-this-job guide. Any good shop has one. **IF** you want all things standard, that's not a problem, either. You can have the extended head tube and a standard length steerer, or a standard head tube with a long steerer. We will explain all this in the frame brochure, with illustrations; but if you have questions in the meantime, just ask Grant (510) 933-7304 or Gary (414) 534-9494. The old Caramel Orange has been divided into two new colors: Burnt orange (copied with approval from a Ritchey at the Anaheim show this year) and Caramel, a brownish orange. The red is now brighter, not brick. It's an Italian red. We have too many colors.....Everyone **I** know who has a wool undershirt raves about it. I liked mine until it shrunk and I gave it to Spencer, and now he loves it. We'd like to offer them, but they're pretty expensive. If you want a short-sleeve

*continued on back cover*

*Howard Runyon*

# DEATH OF A RACER

...BUT WHEREFORE IT WAS THAT AFTER HAVING REPEATEDLY SMELT THE ROAD AS A BICYCLE RACER, I SHOULD NOW TAKE IT INTO MY HEAD TO BECOME A FRED; THIS THE INVISIBLE POLICE OFFICER OF THE FATES, WHO HAS THE CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE OF ME, AND SECRETLY DOGS ME, AND INFLUENCES ME IN SOME UNACCOUNTABLE WAY—HE CAN BETTER ANSWER THAN ANY ONE ELSE. AND, DOUBTLESS, MY GOING THROUGH THIS TRANSFORMATION, FORMED PART OF THE GRAND PROGRAMME OF PROVIDENCE THAT WAS DRAWN UP A LONG TIME AGO...

GRAND CONTESTED ELECTION FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED STATES.

WHALING VOYAGE BY ONE ISHMAEL. MAN GOES TO SLEEP A CYCLE RACER, WAKES UP A FRED.

BLOODY BATTLE IN AFFGHANISTAN.

—paraphrased, with apologies, from *Moby-Dick*, or, *The Whale*, by Herman Melville

In truth it didn't happen overnight. The first sign came a couple of years ago, when I looked into the road atlas to locate the upcoming race-of-the-week and noticed that I felt sort of dreary about it. I was going not because I wanted to race but because I didn't want to lose a step—or rather a stroke—on everybody else. Some races I did because I loved them or feared them, or both; some were just for maintenance. This was a maintenance race, and it was a couple of hours' drive away. I thought about the car time, the warmup and cooldown time, the waiting-around time, the chance that I'd puncture an expensive racing tubular, the tankful of gasoline that I'd burn in the course of the day... and decided to skip it—even though I'd already entered and paid. I decided that on that day I'd go for a hard, carefully structured training ride from my front door.

This was a scary step; on race day my rivals would be hunting each other's wheels and getting high-quality speed-work, and I'd be out plugging away on the same potholed roads as usual. But I remembered an interview I'd read in 1986 or so with a Danish pro named, I think, Jorgen Marcussen, who'd done some good rides at the CoreStates race in Philadelphia, and at the one-time-only Cititour in New York, despite having a full-time business career and no team and not racing much—and being about 40 years old. He'd explained his impressive results by saying, more or less,

“No, I don't have many opportunities to race nowadays, but I know how to race and I know how to make myself fit, so I do all right.” That Sunday, as I pushed myself through the hill repeats and anaerobic-threshold intervals and was haunted by the fear that I'd made a dumb choice, I took comfort in Mr. Marcussen's example.

Whatever the next important race was, it went fine, so I started skipping those maintenance races more and more. Last year (1994) I skipped the spring road races and didn't pin a number on until early May, because I wanted to be sure of having good morale in August and September (when some of my favorite races happened) and the length of the season had gotten to me in past years. I chose my races carefully—so carefully that by midsummer some of my club-mates thought I'd retired. But I was still racing at the track most Thursday nights and doing the few weekend events that I really cared about. And at the end of the season, when I looked back at the results, they were good: some new bests in timed events on road and track, and best-ever rides in two of my perennial target races, the district points race championship and the Chequamegon Fat Tire Festival.

Thus I learned that I could start late and still have a good season, and without racing every weekend—without even racing most weekends. But other changes were coming, and not from within my cycling life.

Just before the '94 season I'd gotten engaged to my long-

time girlfriend, Lia, and despite my lobbying for a fall '94 wedding she'd held out for the following June. An in-season wedding! —unthinkable for a bike racer. But we were going to have one **all** the same. For reasons both sentimental and astronomical Lia was drawn to a certain Saturday in June '95...which turned out to be the one just after the Thursday night on which the district points races would be run. Our Senior Men's race has a history of being crowded—46 starters in '94—and with that big a field, even given good riders, crashes happen. I thought about it and decided I definitely didn't want to break a collarbone in Chicago on Thursday night and have to drive to upstate New York the next day for my wedding. So the points race was out—a decision especially hard since I was in my late thirties and couldn't expect but a few more years, at most, of being able to hang with the youngsters in a race like that.

One of my other favorites was the aforementioned Chequamegon off-road race, where I'd had a four-year run of ever-better finishes and had most recently pulled off about as good a ride as I could hope for (43rd place). Conditions had been pretty dry the past two years, after several years of rain and muck and bad soil damage. For some time I'd been slouching toward a belief that long trips for big off-road races were bad, on account of the destruction wrought by racing in the wet (see "Off-Road Racing: Keep it Local," RR #3), and it seemed unlikely that Chequamegon could get three dry years in a row. So I had visions of a trip up there (far-northern Wisconsin) that would prove to be the one too many, where I'd find the place a quagmire again and fail miserably to carry on my upward trend on the finish list. Also, a certain friend with whom I'd made the trip the last time, and who'd been one of my favorite racing buddies, had revealed to me on the way home from that last Chequamegon that he belonged to an evangelical Christian church. (I'd brought it out myself, by asking "Oh, what church do you go to?" after the subject of churchgoing came up during some talk about how his kids had spent the weekend while we'd been off racing.) That had been the first time religion had ever come up between us, and I'd been obliged by the trajectory of our conversation to reveal that I was an atheist, or at best a self-taught nature-worshiper. We'd had a lovely time up north; his wife, whom I liked a lot, had been along too; we'd stayed with a bunch of other bike nuts at a very convivial bed-and-breakfast where there was a sweet-tempered retriever mutt named Emma and the lady of the house had made bushels of the most astounding cookies... but by the time we'd got home it had been silently, heartbreakingly clear that my inability to accept Jesus as my savior had put me in a category labeled "Do not get closer to:".

So, having little to look forward to in another trip to

Chequamegon, I decided to skip it. That left me with one other big-favorite event to consider: the regional 100-kilometer four-up team time trial. Only trouble was, the same recently self-revealed evangelical had been my favorite TTT partner, and we'd last ridden the four-man with two old friends of his. So the gloom had spread over my whole racing picture for the year, it seemed. By midwinter I wasn't saying whether I'd race in 1995.

I spent the winter getting most of my exercise on a rowing ergometer, which for a couple of years had been my main off-season training gimmick. Lia had begun using it too, and though I'd rowed on a good college crew I didn't feel knowledgeable enough about technique to coach her with **full** confidence. So I started doing homework, which included browsing through a rowers' newsgroup (rec.sport.rowing) on the Internet. There I found myself reading "coach wanted" ads—idly, or so I thought, figuring they'd all be from Boston and Philadelphia and southern California—and lo and

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**...BUT BY THE TIME WE'D GOT HOME IT HAD BEEN SILENTLY, HEARTBREAKINGLY CLEAR THAT MY INABILITY TO ACCEPT JESUS AS MY SAVIOR HAD PUT ME IN A CATEGORY LABELED "DO NOT GET CLOSER TO:".**

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behold there was one from a club in Chicago that wanted to pay a coach from May through September. Coaching was something toward which I'd been, let's say (again), slouching—I'd held a Cat 4 coach's license from the USCF for about four years and had been dispensing advice and training plans to my clubmates. But there'd been no money in it, and I craved a more refreshing way to earn money than the freelance medical editing I'd been doing for too many years. And I wanted to earn that money in a place I could ride a bike to.

I had some qualms about competitive rowing as a social phenomenon—though once a wildly popular professional sport in this country, since the Depression or so it's been chiefly an upper-crust amateur pastime, the turf of overprivileged people with lockjaw. Recently it's lost a lot of that Ivy-League gin-and-tonic aroma, mainly because of a

nationwide explosion of collegiate rowing programs. (Granted, anything that's mainly a collegiate sport isn't exactly of the masses.) But all of that aside, from my point of view at that moment rowing had one great advantage over cycling: No one learns how to do it without a coach. It lacked cycling's honest salt-of-the-earth social fabric, but it had lots of job opportunities. So I took a deep breath, put aside my dislike of large concentrations of lawyers and bankers, threw together a resume of my rowing and coaching experience, and sent it to those folks.

They offered me the job. I took it. Now it was early May, about the time I would have been getting out on the road for my late transition from indoor to outdoor training, and all of a sudden I was getting up at 4:45 a.m., riding 10 miles to the boathouse, spending three hours out on the water either row-

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**I KNEW I LOOKED LIKE SOME  
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FACE FROM THE PAST.**

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ing a single scull for demonstration purposes or sitting in a launch and hollering through a megaphone (electric bullhorns have caught on some since my own rowing days, but I hate them, and thank god you can still find a plain acoustic megaphone for sale if you look hard enough), and riding home. And guess what? When I got home at 10:30 a.m. and hung up my bike and put down my bag full of rain clothes and stroke watch and sunglasses (BOBshades, I admit) and parka and hat and all the other stuff you have to wear to stay warm and not go blind while sitting out in the wind and the weather in a tin boat for three hours when it's 60°F... well, after hanging that up and putting that down I didn't want to change into dry cycling clothes and go outside again. I wanted to get clean and stay inside, where it was warm and there was no wind and the sun didn't hit me on the head...

That was it: metamorphosis complete. For the past five months I've commuted up and down Chicago's lakefront on an old FW Evans tourer fitted with a fixed gear. I haven't shaved a leg or worn a number in over a year. Now it's

October, my summer job at the boat club is over, and I'm coaching the University of Chicago's men's and women's crews. They can't pay me much—they're a near-penniless club team—so I'll probably be editing again soon... boo hoo. But it still feels like the right thing to do. And I still want to stay inside when I get home from work.

The boathouse where I coached during the summer is on a breakwater that sticks out into Lake Michigan from downtown Chicago—part of a barrier, comprising a lock, that separates the Chicago River from the lake. (The rowers launch from the inland side and train on the river.) One morning, after finishing at work, I pedaled back along the breakwater and turned onto the lakefront bike path to head home. A pack of racer-types came over a rise and bore down on me—about a dozen, all men, coming along briskly. One—worried, I guess, that I might not see them—made a sort of whoop. “Woo!”, it sounded like, a ghost's noise. Two were wearing my cycling club's jersey—the jersey whose design I voted on, the club for which I raced for five years, of which I'm still secretary and newsletter editor. As they drew nearer I offered a jocular “Woo yourself,” expecting to know them and to get into the usual “Hey!”/mutual turnaround/put one foot down/“How you doing?” thing that happens when we pass friends on the road. But when the faces were in focus I didn't recognize them, nor they me, and as they whooshed by someone said back, “Woo yourself?”, and they were gone.

So there I was: Tooling up the lakefront on a fixed-gear bike with fenders and a rack, exposed brake cables, mismatched bottle cages (one held on with hose clamps), toe-clips and cyclocross shoes, a white T-shirt tucked into my shorts, a five-year-old helmet with crash damage, and a messenger bag stuffed with the things I used at work. It felt strange to pass racers and not get the casual, respectful little wave or nod that they normally offer their own kind. I could hardly be surprised—I knew I looked like some weird kind of duffer. But it hurt that they hadn't recognized me even as a former insider, an honorable face from the past. Still, you never know; maybe, a moment later, one of them said to the others, “Did you see that? That guy's shoes, they were those funky old Sidi ‘cross shoes.” I thought about that and took a little comfort in it.

A few raindrops hit me, then some more. I thought about sitting up to tug a jacket out of my bag, decided against it, and wondered how wet I was going to get. Then I started going over my next day's coaching plans. My legs were hairy, and they weren't warming up for intervals or tempo; they were just taking me home. My mind flashed back to the riders who'd just gone by, and I thought, “Boy, people shouldn't go that fast in groups on a path like this.” That was when I knew I'd crossed over. 🍄

# ❁ A Holiday Sermonette ❁

by Howard Runyon

**T**he older I get, the more grateful I become for my good luck. In some ways it hasn't been so good: I dropped out of college just in time to miss an undefeated season for the rowing team I'd been on, one they capped with a trip to the Henley regatta, in England, something I'd dreamed of for years; spent two years and tons of money going to film school and never sold a screenplay or got any other kind of work in the movies; went on an expedition in Nepal with some friends, telling myself on the two-week approach hike that on the north ridge of a 7220-meter peak called Baruntse I'd finally have my Henley, the great adventure of my life, and then came down with dysentery when it was time to go onto the mountain. Then there's been the usual assortment of lost loves, and some friends and relatives who've died too soon.

All those memories stalk me now and again. But for every day when I flash back to one of them there's a day when I wake up fantastically restored from a great sleep; or go out at dusk on a winter afternoon to run along Chicago's lakefront, trot out onto a breakwater, turn back toward the city, and find I'm seeing through an atmosphere so clear that everything, but everything, is beautiful to look at; or set out to make some simple piece of food, like an

omelette, and with no conscious effort somehow do everything right—no unfortunate burner setting, no sticking spatula, no inept toss that tears the almost-finished product in two—and end up with something so perfect that I have to thank the eggs and olive oil and black pepper for existing before I can jab it with a fork.

This does have something to do with cycling. Life can suck, but it can also be good, and at this time of year especially we should remind ourselves of our blessings. If you're bummed because you had a bad season or can't find that new bike or titanium doodad at the price you want to pay, take a moment to think how lucky you are to be involved in cycling at all. A bike is a marvelous machine, and many human beings can't afford to own one of any kind, much less eat well enough and sleep well enough and put in the necessary training to ride 40 kilometers in less than an hour or even an hour and a half. When things in our sport don't seem so hot, let's remember that lots of people spend their days and nights worrying about things far uglier than training routines and race schedules and equipment discounts. (If you have trouble holding this thought in mind, see the movie *Hoop Dreams*.) Let's be grateful that we have a sport and the time and material wealth to be somehow involved in it. Let's be conscious of our good fortune.

## FRAME NEWS & INFO

We're starting to deliver frames. Road frames first, then All-Rounders later this month, then Mountains by February. We will have a frame brochure by February. Until then, here are some common questions and our usual answers:

### 1. Cost?

a. \$900 frame and fork with single color paint (except Chameleon, which costs another \$100). With a painted head tube and seat tube stripes, \$1,000. Customs—that includes anything that requires a new drawing and a couple days of work, start at \$1200. Special braze-on requests cost more, but not that much. Let's talk. Note: Our prices

have increase substantially (we've added labor-intensive details), so starting February, frame prices go up \$100. A pre-February deposit holds the price, but please don't be disappointed at the new prices. They're necessary and the frames are still a bargain.

### 2. Colors?

a. Red, silver, burnt orange, caramel, Brit. Racing Green, Sherwood (deep metallic emerald green), light metallic blue, grey-blue, pink, golden olive, tusk, black, and purple metallic. In the case of offset painted head tubes, we have pre-selected combinations—call or write or wait for the brochure. Please keep in

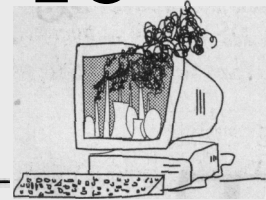
mind that our decals have been developed specifically for our colors.

### 3. How do I order?

a. Call or write for an order packet, or use the page in RR-3 with the order information. Send a \$300 refundable deposit, or \$100 minimum if you want to do a layaway. (Make monthly payments of \$50 minimum, try to pay the frame off in a year.) Upon receipt of your order, we pass the information on to Gary, our Rivendellian at Waterford, and he'll mail you paint chips.

If you have questions about your order or want to change something, call Gary at (414) 534-9494 or fax -4194. And any time you want to talk about your frame, please don't hesitate to call me (Grant), Spencer, or Rob, at (510) 933-7304/fax -7305.

# WHY I AM NOT GOING TO BUY A COMPUTER



by Wendell Berry

**L**ike almost everybody else, I am hooked to the energy corporations, which I do not admire. I hope to become less hooked to them. In my work, I try to be as little hooked to them as possible. As a farmer, I do almost all of my work with horses. As a writer, I work with a pencil or a pen and a piece of paper.

My wife types my work on a Royal standard typewriter bought new in 1956 and as good now as it was then. As she types, she sees things that are wrong and marks them with small checks in the margins. She is my best critic because she is the one most familiar with my habitual errors and weaknesses. She also understands, sometimes better than I do, what ought to be said. We have, I think, a literary cottage industry that works well and pleasantly. I do not see anything wrong with it.

A number of people, by now, have told me that I could greatly improve things by buying a computer. My answer is that I am not going to do it. I have several reasons, and they are good ones.

The first is the one I mentioned at the beginning. I would hate to think that my work as a writer could not be done without a direct dependence on strip-mined coal. How could I write conscientiously against the rape of nature if I were, in the act of writing, implicated in the rape? For the same reason, it matters to me that my writing is done in the daytime, without electric light.

I do not admire the computer manufacturers a great deal more than I admire the energy industries. I have seen their advertisements, attempting to seduce struggling or failing farmers into the belief that they can solve their problems by buying yet another piece of expensive equipment. I am familiar with their propaganda campaigns that have put computers into public schools in need of books. That computers are expected to become as common as TV sets in "the future" does not impress me or matter to me. I do not own a TV set. I do not see that computers are bringing us one step nearer to anything that does matter to me: peace, economic justice, ecological health, political honesty, family and community stability, good work.

What would a computer cost me? More money, for one

thing, than I can afford, and more than I wish to pay to people whom I do not admire. But the cost would not be just monetary. It is well understood that technological innovation always requires the discarding of the "old model"—the "old model" in this case being not just our old Royal standard, but my wife, my critic, my closest reader, my fellow worker. Thus (and I think this is typical of present-day technological innovation), what would be superseded would not only be something, but somebody. In order to be technologically up-to-date as a writer, I would have to sacrifice an association that I am dependent upon and that I treasure.

My final and perhaps my best reason for not owning a computer is that I do not wish to fool myself. I disbelieve, and therefore strongly resent, the assertion that I or anyone else could write better or more easily with a computer than with a pencil. I do not see why I should not be as scientific about this as the next fellow: when somebody has used a computer to write work that is demonstrably better than Dante's, and when this better is demonstrably attributable to the use of a computer, then I will speak of computers with a more respectful tone of voice, though I still ~~will~~ not buy one.

To make myself as plain as I can, I should give my standards for technological innovation in my own work. They are as follows:

1. *The new tool should be cheaper than the one it replaces.*
2. *It should be at least as small in scale as the one it replaces.*
3. *It should do work that is clearly and demonstrably better than the one it replaces.*
4. *It should use less energy than the one it replaces.*
5. *If possible, it should use some form of solar energy, such as that of the body.*
6. *It should be repairable by a person of ordinary intelligence, provided that he or she has the necessary tools.*
7. *It should be purchasable and repairable as near to home as possible.*
8. *It should come from a small, privately owned shop or store that will take it back for maintenance or repair.*
9. *It should not replace or disrupt anything good that already exists, and this includes family and community relationships.*

—1987

*After the foregoing essay, first published in the New England Review and Bread Loaf Quarterly, was reprinted in Harper?, the Harper? editors published the following letters in response, and permitted me a reply. —W. B.*

#### LETTERS

Wendell better provides writers enslaved by the computer with a handy alternative: Wife—a low-tech energy-saving device. Drop a pile of handwritten notes on Wife and you get back a finished manuscript, edited while it was typed. What computer can do that? Wife meets all of Berry's uncompromising standards for technological innovation: she's cheap, repairable near home, and good for the family structure. Best of all, Wife is politically correct because she breaks a writer's "direct dependence on strip-mined coal."

History teaches us that Wife can also be used to beat rugs and wash clothes by hand, thus eliminating the need for the vacuum cleaner and washing machine, two more nasty machines that threaten the act of writing.

Gordon Inkeles  
Miranda, Calif

I have no quarrel with Berry because he prefers to write with pencil and paper; that is his choice. But he implies that I and others are somehow impure because we choose to write on a computer. I do not admire the energy corporations, either. Their shortcoming is not that they produce electricity but how they go about it. They are poorly managed because they are blind to long term consequences. To solve this problem, wouldn't it make more sense to correct the precise error they are making rather than simply ignore their product? I would be happy to join Berry in a protest against strip mining, but I intend to keep plugging this computer into a wall with a clear conscience.

James Rhoads  
Battle Creek, Mich.

I enjoyed reading Berry's declaration of intent never to buy a personal computer in the same way that I enjoy reading about the belief systems of unfamiliar tribal cultures. I tried to imagine a tool that would meet Berry's criteria for superiority to his old manual typewriter. The clear winner is the quill pen. It is cheaper, smaller, more energy-efficient, human powered, easily repaired, and non-disruptive of existing relationships.

Berry also requires that this tool must be "clearly and demonstrably better" than the one it replaces. But surely we all recognize by now that "better" is in the mind of the beholder. To the quill pen aficionado, the benefits obtained from elegant calligraphy might well outweigh all others.

I have no particular desire to see Berry use a word processor; if he doesn't like computers, that's fine with me. However, I do object to his portrayal of this reluctance as a moral virtue. Many of us have found that computers can be an invaluable tool in the fight to protect our environment. In addition to helping me write, my personal computer gives me access to up-to-the-minute reports on the workings of the EPA and the nuclear industry. I participate in electronic bulletin boards on which environmental activists discuss strategy and warn each other about urgent legislative issues. Perhaps Berry feels that the Sierra Club should eschew modern printing technology, which is highly wasteful of energy, in favor of having its members hand-copy the club's magazines and other mailings each month?

Nathaniel S. Borenstein  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The value of a computer to a writer is that it is a tool not for generating ideas but for typing and editing words. It is cheaper than a secretary (or a wife!) and arguably more fuel-efficient. And it enables spouses who are not inclined to provide free labor more time to concentrate on their own work.

We should support alternatives both to coal-generated electricity and to IBM-style technocracy. But I am reluctant to entertain alternatives that presuppose the traditional subservience of one class to another. Let the PCs come and the wives and servants go seek more meaningful work.

Toby Koosman  
Knoxville, Tenn.

Berry asks how he could write conscientiously against the rape of nature if in the act of writing on a computer he was implicated in the rape. I find it ironic that a writer who sees the underlying connectedness of things would allow his diatribe against computers to be published in a magazine that carries ads for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Marlboro, Phillips Petroleum, McDonnell Douglas, and yes, even Smith-Corona. If Berry rests comfortably at night, he must be using sleeping pills.

Bradley C. Johnson  
Grand Forks, N.D.

#### WENDELL BERRY REPLIES:

The foregoing letters surprised me with the intensity of the feelings they expressed. According to the writers' testimony, there is nothing wrong with their computers; they are utterly satisfied with them and all that they stand for. My correspondents are certainly that I am wrong and that I am, moreover, on the losing side, a side already relegated to the dustbin of history. And yet they grow huffy and conde-

scending over my tiny dissent. What are they so anxious about?

I can only conclude that I have scratched the skin of a technological fundamentalism that, like other fundamentalisms, wishes to monopolize a whole society and, therefore, cannot tolerate the smallest difference of opinion. At the slightest hint of a threat to their complacency, they repeat, like a chorus of toads, the notes sounded by their leaders in industry. The past was gloomy, drudgery-ridden, servile, meaningless, and slow. The present, thanks only to purchasable products, is going to be even better. Thus consumers become salesmen, and the world is made safer for corporations.

I am also surprised by the meanness with which two of these writers refer to my wife. In order to imply that I am a tyrant, they suggest by both direct statement and innuendo that she is subservient, characterless, and stupid—a mere “device” easily forced to provide meaningless “free labor.” I understand that it is impossible to make an adequate public defense of one’s private life, and so I will only point out that there are a number of kinder possibilities that my critics have disdained to imagine: that my wife may do this work because she wants to and likes to; that she may find some use and some meaning in it; that she may not work for nothing. These gentlemen obviously think themselves feminists of the most correct and principled sort, and yet they do not hesitate to stereotype and insult, on the basis of one fact, a woman they do not know. They are audacious and irresponsible gossips.

In his letter, Bradley C. Johnson rushes past the possibility of sense in what I said in my essay by implying that I am or ought to be a fanatic. That I am a person of this century and am implicated in many practices that I regret is fully acknowledged at the beginning of my essay. I did not say that I proposed to end forthwith **all** my involvement in harmful technology, for I do not know how to do that. I said merely that I want to limit such involvement, and to a certain extent I do know how to do that. If some technology does damage to the world—as **two** of the above letters seem to agree that it does—then why is it not reasonable, and indeed moral, to **try** to limit one’s use of that technology? Of course, I think that I am right to do this.

I would not think so, obviously, I agreed with Nathaniel S. Borenstein that “‘better’ is in the mind of the beholder.” But if he truly believe this, I do not see why he bothers with his personal computer’s “up-to-the-minute reports on the workings of the EPA and the nuclear industry” or why he wishes to be warned about “urgent legislative issues.” According to his system, the “better” in a bureaucratic, industrial, or legislative mind is as good as the “better” in his. His mind apparently is being subverted by an objective

standard of some sort, and he had better look out.

Borenstein does not say what he does after his computer has drummed him awake. I assume from his letter that he must send donations to conservation organizations and letters to officials. Like James Rhoads, at any rate, he has a clear conscience. But this is what is wrong with the conservation movement. It has a clear conscience. The guilty always are other people, and the wrong is always somewhere else. That is why Borenstein finds his “electronic bulletin board” so handy. To the Conservation movement, it is only production that causes environmental degradation; the consumption that supports the production is rarely acknowledged to be at fault. The ideal of the run-of-the-mill conservationist is to impose restraints upon production without limiting consumption or burdening the consciences of consumers.

But virtually all of our consumption now is extravagant, and virtually all of it consumes the world. It is not beside the point that most electrical power comes from strip-mined coal. The history of the exploitation of the Appalachian coal fields is long, and it is available to readers. I do not see how anyone can read it and plug in any appliance with a clear conscience. If Rhoads can do so, that does not mean that his conscience is clear; it means that his conscience is not working.

To the extent that we consume, in our present circumstances, we are guilty. To the extent that we guilty consumers are conservationists, we are absurd. But what can we do? Must go on writing letters to politicians and donating to conservation organizations until the majority of our fellow citizens agree with us? Or can we do something directly to solve our share of the problem?

I am a conservationist. I believe wholeheartedly in putting pressure on the politicians and in maintaining the conservation organizations. But I wrote my little essay partly in distrust of centralization. I don’t think that the government and the conservation organizations alone will ever make us a conserving society. Why do I need a centralized computer system to alert me to environmental crises? That I live every hour of every day in an environmental crisis I know from **all** my senses. Why then is not my first duty to reduce, so far as I can, my own consumption?

Finally, it seems to me that none of my correspondents recognizes the innovativeness of my essay. If the use of the computer is a new idea, then a newer idea is not to use one.

*This essay, the letters, and Wendell Berry’s reply appear in a Wendell Berry’s book What Are People For?, published by North Point Press, a division of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Reprinted with permission. They and everything else in this Reader were shamefully typed in on a Power Macintosh.*



# New Items & Some Old Ones

NON-NEW MEMBERS MAY REMEMBER SOME OF THESE FROM OUR NOVEMBER FLYER.

## Pine Tar Soap—\$4

Many of you received free sampler chunks of this with your orders, and may have thought that when you pay \$4 you get not one of those. No! What you get is a real quarter-pounder. (Apologies to Dave). Wonderful soap. Dark brown and stinkier dry than wet. Most women hate the smell—that's a fact, although Maggi uses it. Spencer finally tried it and was recently seen beating his head against the wall for not having jumped on it as soon as we got it in. Excellent for people with skin problems, but it won't cause same if you have none, and as stated earlier, we will make no assumptions upon purchase. Made for over 100 years.

## Framesaver—\$12

Framebuilder Peter Weigle got tired seeing nice frames rust clean through, so he worked with a chemical company to develop a product that will prevent your steel frame from rusting out from the inside. Yes, there are other ways to do this, but none is as effective or easier. One can do at least four frames. Don't be paranoid, but don't be foolish, either. Goodness gracious, if you've got a frame or two you plan to keep for a good long time, spray the inside and don't worry. Provided free with every Rivendell frame.

## SunTour Microlight Grease Guard Bottom Bracket—\$35

English cups, 115mm spindle—a versatile length, but if you have any questions, call.

The smart guys at Wilderness Trail Bikes figured out a way to channel grease injected into the special crank bolts INTO the bearings, simultaneously purging the bearings of the bad

grease. It works, and aside from the whole concept perhaps sending the wrong message (that it is difficult to overhaul a standard bottom bracket), I like it.

## Bicycles (bella cosa)—a book—\$13

A gorgeous picture book of bikes from ancient to modern, with brief but excellent text describing them. Full color, clear-as-a-bell photos. Leaf through this book and you'll be a changed person by the time you're finished. In Italian, "bella" means beautiful; "cosa" means thing.

## A Book of Nonsense—\$13

Edward Lear's classic, first published 159 years ago (1846), and a favorite of mine for years. Mostly limericks ("There was an Old Person of Bray, / Who sang through the whole of the day / To his ducks and his pigs / Whom he fed upon Figs, / That valuable Person of Bray"). Besides having most of E.L.'s limericks, it also includes *The Owl and the Pussycat*, Lear's most intelligible story, and *The Quangle Wangle's Hat*, which is more typical of his work. Hardbound and a bargain. An antidote for a hectic life; read this ten minutes a day and you'll wish you could live happily in an asylum. (apologies to those of us whose loved ones....). Each limerick is illustrated by Lear himself, and the illustrations look just like the limericks read. *Double your money back guarantee if not delighted* (Not kidding.)

## Rivendell Refrigerator Magnets 410

Beautiful cloy-zo-nay discs in the style of our headbadge log, onto which is glued a terribly weak magnet, onto

which is glued, right here at the Works, a terribly strong one. If you're the type who likes to keep corrugated cardboard notes and children's art on your refrigerator, this magnet will make you both happy and simultaneously dissatisfied with all other magnets. Assorted colors. If you already have a green one, say so and we'll try to give you a blue, etc.

## Rivendell Pins—\$10

As above, but there's a pin in place of the magnet.

## SunTour Cyclone sidepull brake calipers—\$55

Ah! Short reach (40 min/50 max) to fit all modern road frames, Through-bolts (not allen), but perfectly compatible with allen frames—just use a washer outside the allen hole. A wonderful brake caliper set with all the right features, including a true micro-adjusting quick release, a real rubber-O-ring barrel adjuster, wheel guides, nice silver finish, good enough for any bike.

## Dia-Compe "Royal Compe II" sidepull brake calipers 450 with Mathauser shoes,

For many years Dia Compe had so many models with "Royal" and "Compe" in the name that they had to resort to Roman numerals. These have a nicer finish than the Cyclones, a great micro-adjust quick-release, and a functional but tacky one-piece, injection molded barrel adjuster. Comes with shoes, but we throw in Mathausers. Good enough for any bike, and a steal at this price.

## Four Ritchey Tires—\$23 each

All with kevlar beads for easy shipping and handling: 26 x 1-inch road

tire that fits on mountain bike rims 23mm wide and narrower; the slightly more dirt worthy **26 x 1.1** Crossbite; and the comfy, grippy, featherweight 220g **700 x 28** Road.

**Coming in February:** the new Clement Campionato Del Mondo.

**XC pro brakes:** \$37 with the stock shoes. \$50 with the stockies and Mathausers.

These are easier to set up than most, have the highest quality hardware, and even though they're a little heavy, they're still the best deal out there on canti brakes.

**Nitto Pearl stems** — \$45

Up \$5 since last time, but that never should have been, anyway. These are gorgeous, cold-forged road stems with 26mm clamps, longish 150mm quills, and they tighten with a cone. Nitto stems are measured differently, so a Nitto 11 is almost a 12, etc. Sizes 8 to 13in stock, 1cm jumps.

**Ritchey Cranks** — \$175 doubles, \$190 triples

Light, strong, elegant, no built-in stresses, and a low Q-Factor. Doubles come with 53x38 rings (at this time; Ritchey may change this) and sell for \$175. Triples come with 46x36x24 rings, for \$190. Lengths are 170, 172.5, 175, 177.5, 180. If you want custom rings, call and we'll discuss prices. We stock only the standard version, not el compacto. I think, this is just my opinion, that this crank blows all other currently made cranks to smithereens. Ritchey's finest effort, and that's saying a lot.

**ALE stuff finally in stock!**

Stainless steel toe clips in all sizes (\$15), chromed steel bottle cages (\$12), fancy laminated leather toe straps with buckle pads (\$15), and the ever-essential sheepskin chamois water bottle cover (\$8). All Italian.

**Sergal LS Wool Jerseys (\$75) and Tights (\$68)**

Classic, all 100% Superwash wool jerseys in green or red. Knitted on a tube, the old way, the T-shirt way. Sizes 3/med, 4/med large, 5/large, 6/xlarge in green or red (\$74). Wool tights, same sizes, all black (\$68).

**SunTour XC Ltd. thumb shifters** — \$28

The left is a power-ratchet; the right is indexed with a switch to a quasi-friction mode that works with all free-wheels, cassettes, whatever. Small, compact, mostly metal, pretty nice, complete with cables and housing. Perfect for city bikes with swept-back bars—mount the shifters on the outside of the bars, so the movement is vertical. Or make a traditional mountain bike.

**SunTour 1986 model AccuShift bar end shifters!** — \$37

We panicked when we ran out of SunTour's Rushmore-bound power ratchet model, and then we came upon these 1986 model Accushifts. It is special in that the indexed right shifter also has a pure friction mode. (Subsequent models had a fake index friction mode, which means when you flipped it to friction, you still felt clicks, although you could fine-tune in between them.) What you can do, if you like, is to use the left on on the right and vice versa. I don't like the

black, and if you don't either, just sand it off, put a colorful Campy shifter cover on the lever. These are wonderful shifters. With cables and housing.

**SunTour Superbe Power-Ratchet Downtube Shifters** — \$30

I bought them when we ran out of Campy C-Record shifters, which I like even better than these, but not by much. When you pull back the lever and let go, it springs forward a hair. When I first noticed this I thought "what? Isn't that throwing my shift off? But no, I think it helps. I never miss a shift with these, really.

**Small wallet** — \$12

Rear pocket-sized, made from 1202 waxed cotton duck. Put coins in the deep back pocket, then tilt the wallet and let them slip down and be caught by the lip. Far be it from us to suggest you get rid of a nice leather wallet, but if you're carrying around a nylon one and it's wearing out, why not replace it with this? Get the plastic picture/credit card carrier and slip in into the middle pocket of this one—it works great.

**Vista Lights (rear)** — \$13

This is the red, 5 LED model, and comes with a seat post mount for those rare times when you're not toting your Carradice. It also mounts on rack eyeBrighter than the 3 LED version.

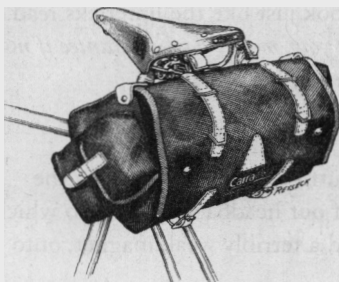
**Wheel reflectors** — \$5 per each (per wheel)

About 10g, mounts in seconds, comes off in seconds, doesn't throw the wheel out of balance, why ride at night without them?

## FLASH

### New smaller Carradice!

Starting January 9 we will be stocking a special-for-Rivendell "mini-longflap" model for road frames under 53cm.



*A properly mounted Carradice looks like this. The straps go under the dowel, into the bag, then over the dowel and exit the bag. The fuzzy side of the strap contacts the dowel. The buckle is on the DOWN side, with the prong poking UP. Do not use the "d" rings for attaching the bag to the saddle—they're for your bedroll, extra cloths, loaves of French bread, etc. The bag tilts backwards, giving good access to the contents. The rear (forward-facing) portion of the bag may touch your thighs as you pedal. This is normal, not a big deal, feels good*

Rivendell Ankle Reflectors —\$5

The most surface area for the fewest dollars of any ankle reflectors. Protect your ankles. Schoolbus yellow.

Kucharik Wool shorts —\$58

The most comfortable, best-fitting wool shorts I've tried, and they've made me give up spandex. Do they fit as well as the old Assos bib shorts? Don't be silly! But they do not ride down or sag, and you'll like how they feel. Medium fits up to 33 waist, about. Large, to 36. S-M-L-XL

Fancy English Touring Shoes —\$140, 3 months wail, send tracing.

Smooth leather, stiff sole with a steel shank, rubber covered leather. You can still nail on a cleat. Call or write if interested. Each is made by a single cobbler, so be patient.

Winter Gloves with or without fingertips —\$11

Eighty-five percent rag wool, with rubber dots in the grip area. One is a full-fingered model, the other is just missing the tips. For weather down to 35°F or so. The fingertipless models actually cost us more than the full-fingered ones, but we're selling them for the same. Made in North Carolina—and possibly available at your local hardware store for a couple dollars less than we sell them for, if that matters.

Specify full fingers or tipless (not half-fingered; just tipless). Large only, but it fits medium hands just fine, too.

Technomic stem, 9cm extension, 225mm quill —\$28

A true gooseneck. Gets those bars up there high, and sometimes that's just what you want.

Nitto Touring bars —\$20

A beautiful swept-back bar perfect for short commutes, shopping bikes, casual rides, whatever you like. It's mountain bike sized—22.2 bar, so it fits mountain bike shifters and brake levers and grips. 25.4mm clamp. Good

with the Technomic stem. I know \$20 seems like a lot, but it's a Nitto!

Nitto Mod 185bars —\$35

Medium drop (140mm), similar to a Cinelli #64, but with a 260 sleeve. Three widths—40, 42, 44, c-c.

Nitto Mod 155bars —\$35

Medium-deep drop (150mm), similar to a Cinelli #65 criterium bend, but with a 260 sleeve. Now in three widths—40, 42, 44, c-c. The prettiest bar of them all.

The Worlds Strongest Seal Post —\$70

A new Nitto, made to NJS (Keirin) standards. Nitto says it's the strongest post in the world, and they'd know. It's a two-bolt design like the old Campy, but much easier to use. 210mm only, 27.2mm only, 270g. A fair amount of setback. I ordered 40 of them, don't know the cost, and if it ends up being less than \$70 I'll refund the difference.

Ritchey 26 x 17 Megabite Z-Max (kevlar bead) —\$35

Surely Tom will stop production on this in a couple of years due to lack of sales, but what a fine tire in the meantime. We sell the skinwall, black rubber version. It's about 405g with a kevlar bead. If you're used to riding road bikes on trails but sometimes want a little more cushion, grip, and forgiveness, this one's a good bet.

Ritchey 26 x 2.1 Megabite Z-Max (kevlar bead) —\$35

The basic Ritchey fat knobby. The Ritchey brochure talks about its versatility, all-roundedness, and the fact that people much faster than us win important races on it. I like it because, even though I can't honestly detect much difference between tread designs, I like the theory behind these knobs, and I like the round profile of the tire. Don't get caught up in the special-purpose tire hubub; for crying out loud, if soils changed as often as tire treds that are designed for them, you wouldn't recog-

nize the earth from one year to the next. This tire has worked well for years and always will. The only thing that could make me like it any more is if it were named the Basic Fat Knobby. Skinwall, black rubber, around 540g.

Silca Frame Pumps —\$20 (available January 15?)

Chrome only, with plastic Silca head (presta). It is a little-known fact that Silca has discontinued its changeable-head frame pumps in colors, but El Chromio still has that nice feature. Even though a Zefal HPX pump works better than a Silca, it's not that much better and it's much uglier. Silca pumps have been around and been the standard racer's frame pump for at least twenty-five years, and rare is the old guy who doesn't have at least two of them that are still going strong after ten. The Silca heads are no match for the Campy steel heads, but so far as I know those are no longer made. Maybe Bicycle Classics in Needham, MA has them, but we don't.

Leg Warmers —\$35

Made by Kucharik. More expensive than we listed in the last RR, but the ones we almost got we didn't. These are superb—soft, washable wool, cozy as the day is long, black as night. Pull them high on your thigh and wear the shorts OVER them. S-M-L only. We'll try to get XL later, maybe in time for our catalogue coming out in January.

WE HAVE MUCH MORE  
THAN THIS! PLEASE  
REFER TO RR#3 FOR MORE  
ITEMS, OR CALL TO CHECK  
STOCK. OUR PARTS AND  
ACCESSORIES CATALOGUE  
WILL BE OUT IN EARLY  
FEBRUARY, BUT PLEASE  
DON'T WAIT UNTIL  
THEN TO ORDER.

# RAISE DAT STEM!

by Bob Gordon

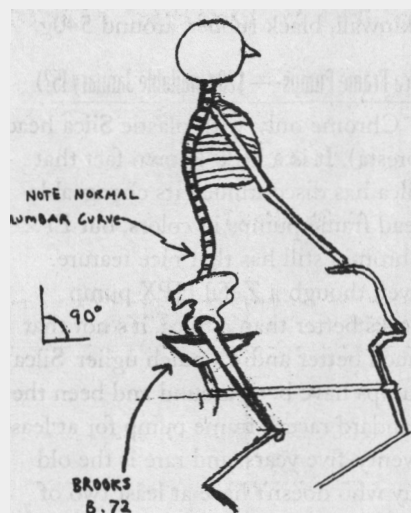


FIG. 1.

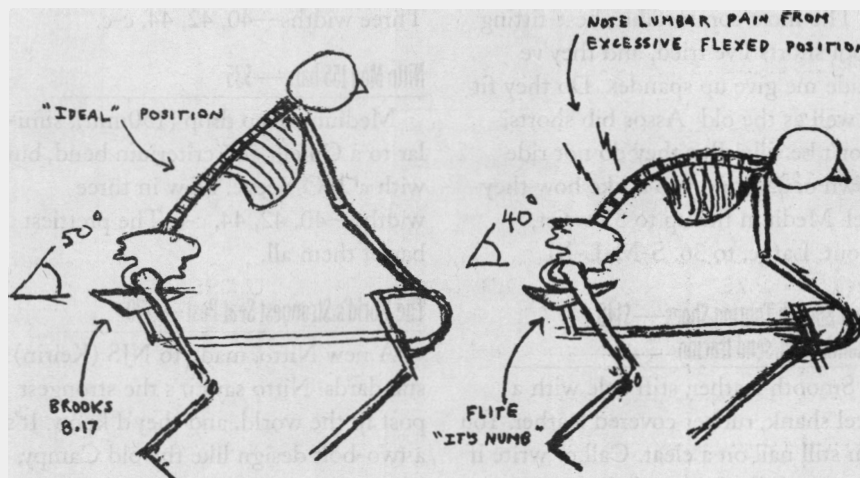


FIG 2

FIG. 3

A flat back is one of the hallmarks of an experienced cyclist, particularly a racer, and over the years I have seen the prevailing attitudes towards rider positioning devolve to the point where if you don't cycle with your back parallel to the ground, you're cast off as a beginner.

But like many other concepts recreational riders adopt, the low back originated in the professional ranks after extensive research in aerodynamics proved this would help the fast go faster. Competitive athletes routinely sacrifice both their short and long term health for the express purpose of winning, but you may have a different agenda.

Lower back disc problems peak the ages of 30 and 50. There are many causes, but if your back pain is exacerbated by riding, it's a good bet the cause is bouncing around on your bike while your lower spine is extensively flexed (loss of lower back arch). A low, forward torso causes the inner portion of the disc (the nucleus pulposus) to press back against the outer restraining fibers (the annulus fibrosus). This pressure eventually causes the disc to bulge or herniate. The nearby nerves get squeezed, and the next thing you know, someone like me is telling you you have sciatica.

Cycling mitigates some of the problems of a habitually flexed lumbar spine because of the "bridge effect" that's created by resting some of your weight on your hands. But the lumbar region and its soft tissues are still at risk just by being continuously hyper flexed, and if you sit all day at

your job, the danger is compounded.

On the flip side, cycling entirely upright does not solve the problem either. True, the inter vertebral discs and spinal ligaments are in a more neutral position and absorb shock better, but the load is now transmitted *axially*, which is fatiguing and jarring. *Also*, in a bolt-upright position you can't use your gluteus or hamstrings to great advantage, which means your thighs (quadriceps) get overworked, you lose a lot of power, the unused hamstrings and gluteal muscles go flabby, and you catch all that wind. It's hard to be happy about all that, racer or no.

There is, however, a position that allows good performance while minimizing risk of lower back injury. I like a stem height and length that puts your back about 50 degrees from horizontal, while your arms and legs bend slightly at the elbows, as shown in figure 2 up there. To achieve this, you'll probably have to raise your bars, and assuming you want to keep the same bar style (as opposed to riding with stingray bars or something), that usually means getting another stem, one with a taller quill or a steep rise to it. If you hit the sweet spot, a photo of you from the side will reveal a nice pyramid composed of top tube, torso and arms.

*Bob Gordon is an orthopedic physical therapist and exercise physiologist who practices in New England, and catches a bit of wind on his chest when he rides. He drew the pictures, too.*

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**Random Notes***continued from page 17*

undershirt and are willing to pay \$32 for it (no coupon, that's a small markup), drop us a note and we'll get you one. Long-sleevers are \$38, same no-coupon deal.....We are not getting very many Happy Rider contributions. Surely you must have things you're completely, 100% satisfied with. Write and tell us about them!.....Silca **has** discontinued its classic, removeable head frame pump in favor of a nonremovable head model, with a hi tech black moulded plastic handgrip in place of the metal one. The chrome pump remains the same, and we'll offer it soon. I believe Campy has discontinued its pump-heads, but we'll look into it. In the meantime, there's always the Silca plastic head, and it's okay.....We will

soon carry Clement Campionato del Mondo tubular tires. The current ones are made in Bangkok and reports are that they mount **strater**, are fatter, and are in every way better than the Italian cotton ones. They measure, I'm told, 28.3mm wide, which is 4.3mm wider than a Ritchey 700x28 .....we're **also** going to be carrying more tools and books..... Attention frame buyers: We regularly add on 20mm to the height of the head tube, to allow a greater upper range of bar heights---and we cut the steer tubes long and supply spacers (about 14mm worth). You can, at no extra charge, have a standard head tube, or the long head tube with a fork cut to fit exactly--whatever you like. If you're confused, call Grant at 510 933 7304 or Gary at 414 534 9494. Gary is at Rivendell, and that's his direct number. 

**Progress Report***continued from page 9*

hour ride in the nearby hills and roads. He rode the second prototype A/R in a size too small for him, and he's riding it on Mt. Diablo today. I've been riding a 56 Road, the most recent and very nearly final version. The geometry is correct, everything is right. It feels like the nicest bike I've ridden yet, and I'm trying to figure out why. I know it's not the headbadge, and I think it may be the bottom bracket height. I am beginning to think that BB height has more influence on the ride than I've suspected, and I suspected it had a lot.



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