

THE RIVENDELL READER • ISSUE 13 • 1998 / FALL

## WHEN HOOD MEANT A PERSON AND HOMEY DIDN'T

**I** lost some email, and among the lost things is a retrofriction blurb one of you wrote for a future RR. I can't remember who, and I want it for RR14, so if it was you, please send it again. Sorry & thanks. Rivgp@earthlink.net.

The Reader has an alarming lack of female contributors, and after 13 issues, it's starting to make me uncomfortable. I think the Reader topics have been unisex, because bikes are unisex, but when all the bylines are guys, it makes it an issue. I think we have around 200 female subscribers, or about 6 percent of our total. That seems low, and I'd like to make it more appealing to women, but I don't know how to go about that. Suggestions? We'd like more women contributors, but how do you ask for more women contributors without making them tokens? We don't want that, either, so there's no clear answer. Anything anybody writes still has to fit in here. We don't need stories on travel, personal growth, recipes, or racing, and we don't want women-authored stories on "the day I beat the boy," or "the time the bike shop treated me disrespectfully because of my gender." The topics *can* be women-specific (good ways to deal with on-the-bike harrassment; or cycling during your period, if that's a big deal). *but* they can also be regular bike topics.

Big bad news here, please cry along for the right reasons: Velox bar plugs are no longer being made. Whether you use them or not, *you* should care. Velox has been a cycling institution for more than half a century, making cloth handlebar tape

(Tressostar and Chimiplast), cloth rim tape (Velox brand), tubular tire repair kits, and handlebar plugs. Other companies still market those things, but who else actually makes them? CheapStuffCo. in the Far East, in most cases. Velox made those things before any of the new companies were born. You can get lighter, higher tech rim tape from Taiwan, and cushier, more absorbent, and easier to wrap bar tape from Everywhere, and chromed plastic bar plugs with World Champion stripes on them from twelve sources, but comparing those to Velox is like comparing cotton candy to a Cajun lobster burrito.

We have maybe 50 pair of Velox plugs left, and we don't want to sell them to collectors. Use them if you buy them. Don't let them live out their life as cute French bike curios, stuck away in your drawer with the Simplex this and Huret that and the Stronglight 93 still in the original box just waiting for the right appreciative audience. *You* won't impress a soul with bar plugs, unless you have the red ones. *All* we have are green and blue, so we aren't going to be able to help out in that dept.

I got a few emails questioning RR13's headline. German Shepherds *did* used to be called police dogs, but I understandably wanted to differentiate the canine kind from people who happened to be both German and shepherds: and I thought I had that covered in the parentheses. This Reader's headline, whatever it ends *up* being, won't be so troubling!

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**Note:**

**Due to the volume, we can't  
 answer all email. We'll try.**

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 little to nothing, even for feature sto-  
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 to [Rivbici@aol.com](mailto:Rivbici@aol.com). No travel,  
 recipes, or personal growth stories,  
 unless satirical.*

BY FRANK BERTO

# THE SHINS OF SHIMANO

THIS ARTICLE STARTED OUT AS A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW BRITISH MAGAZINE BYCYCLING. TWO ARTICLES BASHED SHIMANO FOR THE CUTAWAY HYPERGLIDE SPROCKETS AND NARROW CHAINS. BOTH WERE SAID TO CAUSE RAPID SPROCKET WEAR. I SAID TO MYSELF, "SHIMANO HAS COMMITTED ENOUGH SINS AGAINST BICYCLISTS THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO MAKE ANYTHING UP." MY LETTER DEVELOPED INTO A SHORT ARTICLE FOR BYCYCLING. NOW I'VE REVISED IT FOR RR. IN PASSING, BYCYCLING IS STARTING OUT TO BE A WORTHWHILE READABLE DECENT MAGAZINE. IT IS PUBLISHED BY THE SAME FOLKS WHO PRODUCE BIKE CULTURE QUARTERLY. —FRANK BERTO

**I** think Shimano has done some good things for bicyclists in the past 15 years. The folks at Rivendell may not agree completely with this list (*that is true—G*), but in order of importance, I credit Shimano for:

**Shimano Indexed Shifting (SIS)**

**Freehubs (combined rear hub and freewheel)**

**Hyperglide sprockets.**

**Superglide chainwheels.**

**Modern rear derailleurs with slant parallelograms and two spring-loaded pivots.**

**Light-action brakes.**

**Integrated brake and shift levers.**

Shimano didn't invent these improvements, but it refined them and made them available to the mass market. If I could pick my perfect "retro" bike, it would have all of the above and a six-sprocket, wide-spaced, half-step freewheel and a half-step plus granny crankset.

Shimano's worst sin is lack of standardization. Shimano doesn't allow parts from one year or group to be functionally compatible with parts from another year or group. We've been spoiled by Campy. You could replace a 1951 Campagnolo Gran Sport rear derailleur with a 1962 Record, or a 1969 Nuovo Record, or a 1987 Super Record. Your old shift levers and the new derailleur would shift over whatever freewheel and whatever chain was on your bike. That's how standardization protects the loyal customer..

By and large, you can't mix Shimano mountain bike gear trains with its road hike gear trains. This is a hassle when equipping a touring hike. In many cases, you can't mix high priced Shimano components with low-priced ones.

Many of Shimano's "upgrades" from six to nine speeds obsoleted the previous equipment. Old gear train components such as freehubs, chainwheels, chains, shifters, cables, cassettes, and derailleurs could not be used on the new Shimano bike. In many cases, the new components won't work

on your old Shimano bike unless you replace the entire drive train. There are exceptions, but over the past fifteen years, it's clear that standardization is low on Shimano's list of priorities.

The Shimano Technical Information Manuals for the last five years make a pile two inches high. Much of this explains what does and does **not** interchange between each year's latest offerings and past equipment. The mechanic at your friendly bike shop has a major problem absorbing all of this information.

Here are three examples that illustrate the extent of the problem:

**Front Derailleur Cable Travel.** Before indexing, front derailleurs required about 0.4 inches of cable travel to shift over a double crankset and about 0.65 inches to shift over a triple. The same front derailleurs were used for the first indexed shifters so the detents provided this cable travel. ("Detents" are the indexing notches inside the indexed shift levers). Cable travel of a front derailleur is determined by the length of the parallelogram arm. It became impossible to interchange Shimano road and mountain derailleurs when Shimano reduced the cable travel of its top of the line road front derailleurs and increased the cable travel of its mountain bike front derailleurs. Yet there are many instances—loaded touring is one—when being able to use a combination of road and mountain parts would be giving you the best of both.

**Rear Derailleur Cable Travel.** Shimano did much the same thing to its rear derailleurs and shift levers. Even when the number of sprockets and sprocket spacing are identical, different rear derailleurs require different cable travel. Sometimes you can interchange, often you cannot.

## **Chain, Chainwheel, Sprocket Compatibility**

There are now five different Shimano chains:

- Wide UG (Uniglide) is for the old wide-spaced S-and 6-speeds.
- Narrow UG is for the mid 1980s narrow 6-and 7-speeds.
- HG (Hyperglide) is for the early 1990s 7- and 8-speeds with Hyperglide sprockets.
- IG (Integrated) is a narrower chain with notched outer plates

for Shimano's 1995-and-on compact drive trains with smaller IG chainwheels and IG sprockets.

- An even narrower (6.6 mm) chain, for the latest Shimano 9-speeds. This does not have an acronym yet, but more important even than that is its lack of pin protrusion. The side plates are held in place with pins, and if the end of the pin is flush with the plate, as it is on these, there's no tolerance for error. Taking apart one of these chains almost requires one to have Shimano in their blood. This is a hot point with me because every few months I take my chains apart to dip them in hot wax, my chain lube of choice.

### *In My Opinion...*

...the law of diminishing returns set in ten years ago at seven speeds. Eight- and now nine-sprocket clusters are dumb. You get more duplicate gears at the expense of critical tolerances and almost no safety factor. The buyers perceive that the a 27-speed bicycle must be better than a 21-speed bicycle. I think they're wrong. but 27-speeds is selling today's expensive bicycles. Gears 2U! —*Frank Berto*

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

This is not Shimano bashing! Even though Shimano might not agree. The facts is, Shimano parts work great, and everyone knows it. But Shimano is Goliath and we are baby ants, and have a different perspective on things.

Shimano introduces major revisions every couple of years, with remarkable reliability, and fixes the rare screw-up fast and at its own expense. Shimano's "sins," can be attributable mainly to its being **so** big and owning **85** percent of the world derailleur-equipped bicycle market. Such size requires far more accurate sales-projections and manufacturing efficiency than a small company can get away with.

Not to imply that the **overttechnologizationism** of simple parts isn't part of Shimano's plan, because I believe it is. From Shimano's perspective, it has to be. For whatever reasons. Shimano is the universe leader in bicycle parts, and most of the hike industry counts on it to develop new technology. The prevailing notion, and I'm not saying it's wrong, is that new technology excites and attracts people and drives sales.

The bicycle industry in America is comprised mostly of a handful of giants (Trek, Specialized, Schwinn/GT, Cannondale and Giant) who together account for almost two million hikes per year— **70** percent of all bike-shop bikes sold. Throw in Derby/Raleigh and Brunswick/Mongoose, and you've got **7** companies with **85** percent of the market, and they all want high-higher-highest tech bikes. And each of these companies has major growth plans in an overall market that isn't growing at **all**.

There are only two ways to maintain and increase sales. One is selling new stuff every couple of years to riders who haven't worn out their old stuff, and Shimano helps this happen by total redesigning, and making new versions incompatible with old ones. So you can't upgrade just one

part—by the time you've priced out the changes you'd have to make to get the new stuff, it makes sense to just get a whole new bike. The new stuff is promoted as high tech, and appeals to new cyclists who still believe the secret to not petting dropped on the club ride is shifting more often to an increasing number of rear cogs. **Pro** race sponsorship reinforces the high tech image.

The other aspect of growth, with much more potential, is making bicycles attractive to nonriders, since there are a **lot** more of them, by a factor of eight to ten. Non-riders (**or** new riders) are attracted to new technology, and they want no learning curve, and that's Shimano's specialty.

By default, choice, and bad upbringing, we're out of that loop. We like the normal stuff that works well and lasts long and sometimes asks you to pay some attention, **or** learn a wee bit of technique. It's a challenge to simultaneously promote **or** at least justify our direction without seeming to poke fun at theirs, and we don't always pull it off.

Here's a story. Shimano is even bigger in fishing than it is in bicycles, and seven years ago, **bass** fishermen and fishing retailers were complaining that Shimano's reels were getting too complicated to operate on the lake or demonstrate in the store. One reel, the Digitana SLS—for Shimano Line System—even boasted of a built-in electric motor that "reduces fatigue by freeing the fisherman from manually bobbing the line, and allows anybody to fish with the same technique as the pros." Sound familiar?

Finally, the hard core fisherfolk said "Enough! Make a simple, strong, smooth, high quality bait-casting reel with no gimmicks—please!" **So** Shimano introduced such a reel, the Calcutta 200. It was simple, expensive, well-received, and doesn't seem to have harmed sales in other areas. I don't know if it's still in production. The point is, Shimano listened and even pulled a rabbit out of the hat.

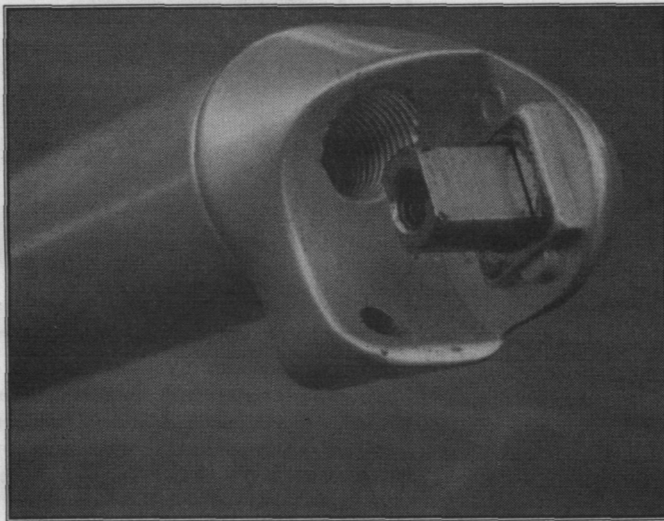
Shimano makes more money in fishing than **in** bikes, but there are more fishers than riders, and Shimano isn't as dominant. Other makers were already making simple, high quality reels, and hard-core, non-sponsored bait-casters were using them. Shimano's choice was to either lose sales to a small but prestigious customer group and lock in a reputation as the gee-gaw specialists, or give it their best shot, and they gave it their best shot with the Calcutta **200**.

The bike market is different, in that nobody's making simple, versatile stuff anymore, and outside of the road market (tiny), Shimano has no competition. **SRAM** is not yet competition. The cycling market has changed to high-tech and soft core customers who want to buy performance, and Shimano is accomodating it. You can't fault them for that, but in the meantime, the wants and needs of a small-but-growing group of cyclists are being ignored.

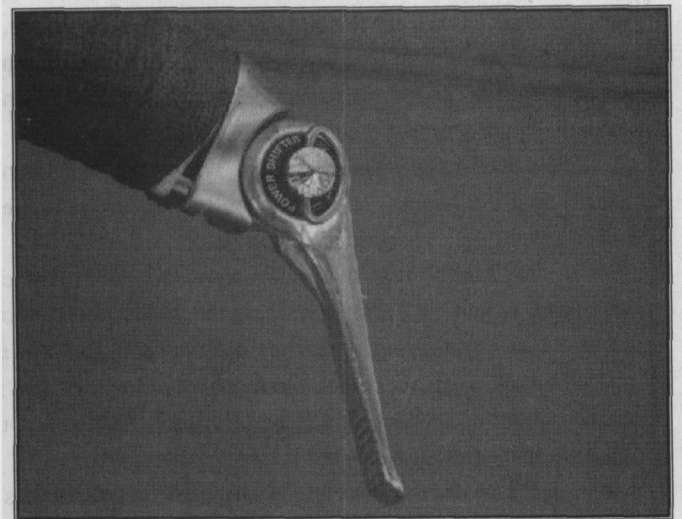
**SUNTOUR IS MAKING A COMEBACK.** That's the rumor, anyway, and my sources say it's true. It won't happen in a few months, but there are plans for the next couple of years. We'll follow this up in RR14. —*Grant*

## HOW TO MAKE BAR-END SHIFTERS OUT OF DOWNTUBE SHIFTERS

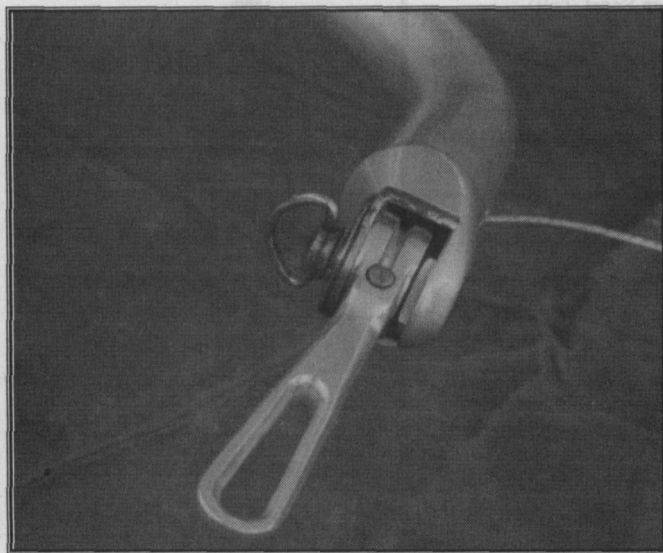
You can put most downtube shifters onto Shimano's bar-end shifter mounts. How come? Well, when Shimano designed the mount for the bar-end shifter, it used a regular old downtube shifter mount **as** a model. The lever mounts the same way, *so* it works. After **I** took these pictures, and after **two** months and thousands **of** perfect shifts and one hundred percent satisfaction, I figured out a better way to do it than is shown here. It's a **small** difference. First, **file/dremel off** the bump below the cast-in square in the upper left photo. Then, you know the downtube shifter boss that most non-Shimano downtube shifters come with? (The first piece you mount when you mount downtube shifters.) **Snip off** the stop itself, *so* you end up with a round spacer with a square hole. Then, see the bump at the base of the square boss in the mount? **Look** at the upper left photo. That bump interferes with the spacer, *so* you have two choices: **1)** Dremel **off** the bump; **2)** Cut away the section **of** spacer that would otherwise interfere. They both work, but way **#2** is easier. Then slip the **modified** spacer (not used in any of the photos below) over the boss, and mount your levers. As one **of** our way too many costly projects, we're trying to get a bar-end mount cast. Shimano's aren't sold separately, and given the nature of the project, it's unlikely Shimano would make an exception for us.



*Close-up of a Shimano bar-end shifter mount. If we can get this piece cast or machined, we'll be in fat city (bar-end shifterwise). It is El Key.*



*SunTour Sprint downtube shifter mounted on Shimano's mount. I have several hundred miles on this, and it works perfectly.*



*Huret Jubilee downtube shifter on Shimano mount. One **of** many downtube shifters that mount onto the Shimano piece. I haven't actually ridden with this, but it'd work.*



*SunTour Superbe Pro on Shimano's mount. I haven't ridden with this, either, but I have no doubts it'll work.*

# SHORT-REACH SIDEPULLS AND FENDERS

**B**raking force isn't the only thing to consider whilst brake-shopping. Some stop you more easily than others, and for some riders and some situations, that's good. But for most riders, that's like saying some spoons hold more cereal than others—it just doesn't matter. There are other things that do matter, though; or may. Here we take a look at several different models with an eye toward how they work with fenders.

I put each of the brakes here on a Rivendell fork, and mounted a 700x25 tire. Rivendell forks are designed to maximize clearance, so they give the brakes every possible chance to allow fenders. It's possible that a brake that allows fender room on a Rivendell (or Rivendell-designed Heron) won't work on another bike. Actually, that's almost a sure bet.

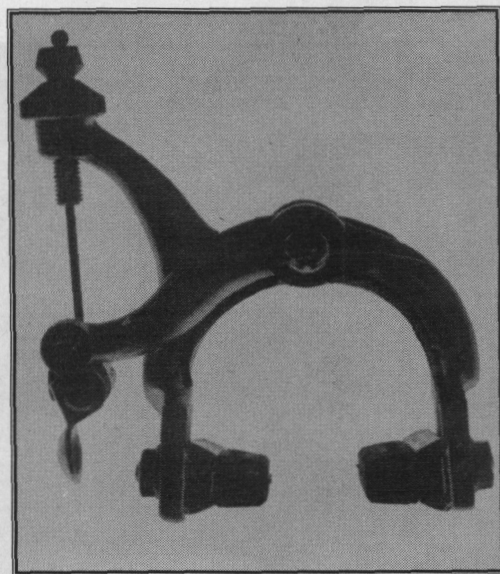
I used Esge 700x35 fenders. The wider 700x45s have a larger radius arch, which clear tires better, but these won't fit under the arches of any dual pivot, and I didn't want the experiment to stop before it started.

In these photos, the brakes were squeezed to the contact point on a Mavic MA2 rim, which, at 20.5mm wide, is the widest sporty (non-touring) 700c rim out there. Most non-touring road rims are between 18.5mm and 19.5mm. The more open the brakes are at contact, the more room there is for a fender; so at some point in the equation, a wider rim helps clearance. That is not useful information. It is splitting hairs ridiculously, but it is nevertheless true.

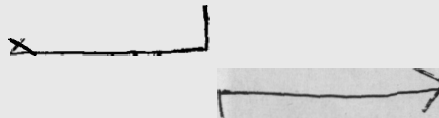
Please excuse the blotchy photos. I shot the brakes on a light table, and the underside of the arch took on too much light and wasn't silhouetted, and I wanted it to show up sharp, so I filled in the light parts with a Sharpie.



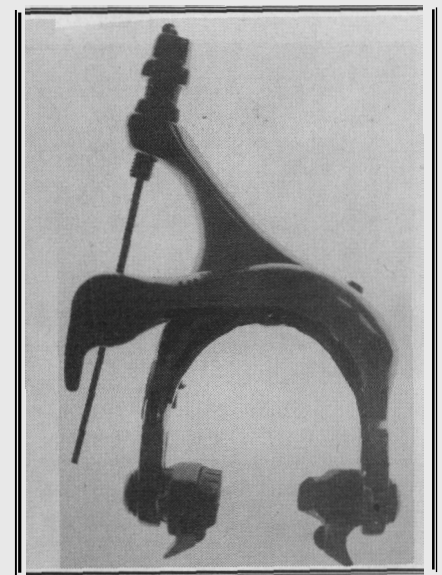
**Campagnolo Chorus**  
Mechanically excellent and visually spectacular, but incompatible with fenders. You can barely get clearance when the brakes are open, but as soon as you apply the brakes, the calipers push the front of the fender down onto the tire. Too bad.



**Campagnolo Gran Sport (Left)**  
Nice wide under-arch, plenty of room for fenders, and the same shape as Campy's Nuovo Record. An "old" short reach brake, with a maximum reach of 52mm. Why brakemakers went to 49mm is anybody's guess, but there can be no good, smart, rider-friendly and functional reason for doing so. In any case, this brake arch is shaped well for fenders



**Shimano Ultegra (Right)**  
These are skinny-looking brakes, and I didn't think they'd have a chance to pass the fender test. But the under-arch is surprisingly open, and allows fenders with tires up to a typical 700x28, so long as the brake shoe placement is at or near the bottom of the slot.





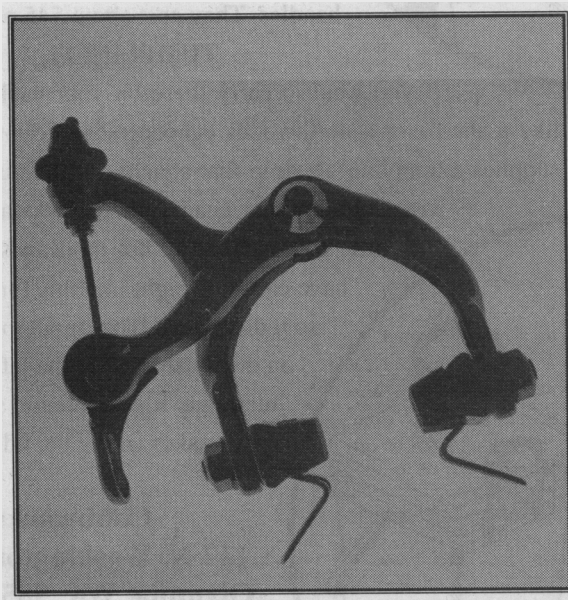
Shimano RX100

Our favorite dual-pivot sidepull, mainly because it's fairly cheap and works great. Like the Ultegras, the under-arch shape is more sort of like an inverted flat U. With a low shoe position, it'll clear a tire up to **700x28**. Shown is a short-reach version. There's a standard reach version also, which makes fenders a cinch.



SunTour Cyclone

Our most popular model. Single pivot, and the open under-arch gives plenty of clearance, even with a wide fender. The flipper-things below the brake shoes are metal wheel guides, which make it easy to reinstall a wheel.



Dia-Compe Royal Compe II

Typical of the mid-'80s Dia-Compe brakes, and a lot like the Cyclones. Fender-compatible. No longer made. We show it just to reinforce the notion that old designs were smart. Good arch shape.



Weinmann 500.

The cheapest non-Chinese sidepull ever made, the ones Tom Ritchey used to race with because they're so light, and original equipment on Schwinn Varsities. Look at that gorgeously wide, flat, "come hither, fender" underarch. Made by the enigmatic, yet ever cagey Swiss. Watchfolk!

End

THINGS WE DON'T SELL, BUT DO LIKE

# COBBWORKS OYSTER BUCKETS

**T**

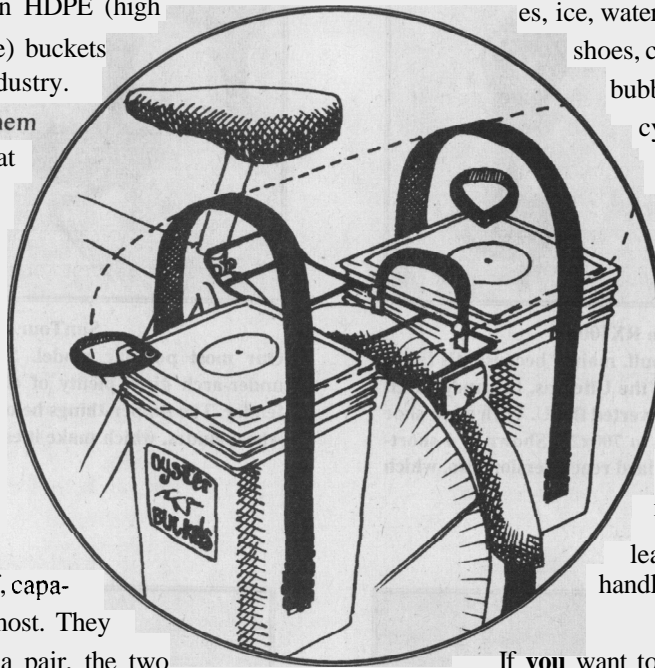
hey're rigid, 4-gallon HDPE (high density polyethylene) buckets made for the food industry.

You've seen them before, somewhere. They're wider at the top than at the bottom, so they're stackable, and they have rounded corners. The tubs are non-recyclable, because the secret additive that makes the plastic so rigid is non-recyclable, so they either get tossed out or reused or made into Cobbworks Oyster Buckets.

As panniers go, they're waterproof, capacious, and stick out farther than most. They hold a lot, and when you mount a pair, the two buckets combine with the rear rack to provide a huge, wide, level platform suitable for lashing on the world's bulkiest bedroll.

The design is simple, smart, and so obvious that Cobbworks's Mike Cobb says "People see these and say 'I could do that myself!' But they don't, and probably won't, and we've done it, and they're cheap!" Plus, they've worked out the bugs, and that's worth something.

If you're looking for a cheap but strong way to haul oysters, galosh-



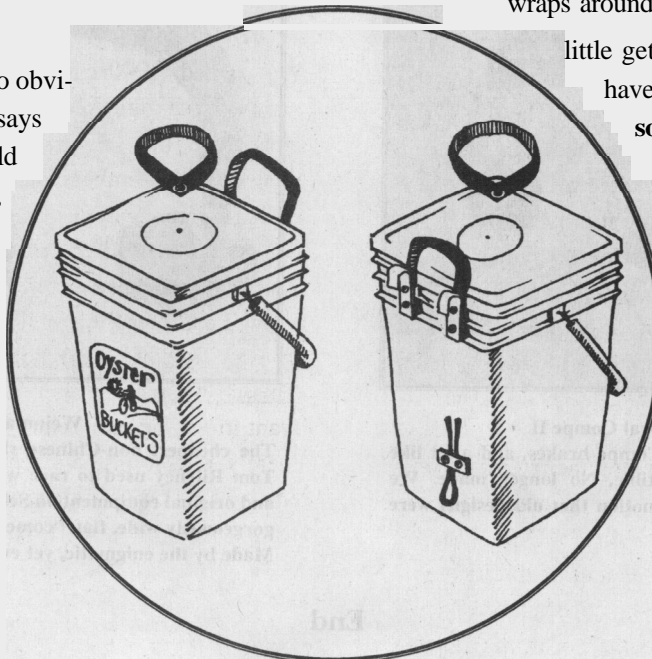
es, ice, water, ice water, dry ice, dirt, glop, books, shoes, clothing, a tent, fine pottery packed in bubble wrap, or massive quantities of cyalume sticks and fake Power Bars, these are a good deal. In some situations they might not be as nifty as regular soft panniers; in other ones, they're quicker, more practical, and a better choice. They unhook easily and you can sit on them for hours at a time. Even if you never even used them as panniers, you'd eventually get your moneysworth out of these, because at

least you'll have two good buckets with handles. They cost about \$45 per pair.

## TUMLINES!

If you want to carry these on your back and neck like a sherpa or a northwoods canoe person, Cobbworks also supplies a tumpline—a strap that attaches to the bucket and wraps around your head. Sounds awkward, takes a

little getting used to, but thousands of people have carried weight like this for centuries, so it does work. That small loop you see on the illustration to the left is not the tumpline. It's an integral small strap that makes taking the lid off easier.



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ph (360) 352-7168

[www.olywa.net/leveen/cobbworks.html](http://www.olywa.net/leveen/cobbworks.html)



# CATALOGUE FIXES AND INVENTORY UPDATES

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING, AND IN OUR CASE, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS. MANY OF YOU HAVE CAUGHT THE \$27 PHIL BOTTOM BRACKETS AND \$17 GREASE GUARDS, BUT HERE ARE SOME MORE WE CAUGHT.

## Fixes

p.10 middle call-out is missing an arrow, and accompanying caption is missing the word "to."

p.15 "Thick cowhide" was a leftover caption for the Acme Leather Saddlepocket, which used to be on p.15 before the final layout.

p. 17. wallet illustration is of the checkbook wallet, not the Normal.

p.26. space between drop- and bar.

p. 27. Moustache H'bars are \$50 for members, **\$55** for others.

p. 42. Capacity of Ultegra triple rear derailleur: The claimed 38t was taken from a supplier's catalogue, and it seemed rather high, but these guys have fewer flubs than most, *so* a) we believed it; and b) we forgive it. Shimano lists the rear cog capacity at 27t, which warrants some discussion, **or** at least reflection. And here it comes: The short cage Ultegra rear is listed as 28t--meaning it can shift up to a 28t rear cog. But the triple one is listed as 27t. Does that sound wacky? Touring derailleurs have always gone up to at least 32t, and many have shifted up to 34t, so what's with the 27t capacity the Ultegra? What's up, is that it's not a touring derailleur. It's Shimano's answer to Campy's racing triple rear derailleur. Campy racing triples go up to 26t these days, so Shimano probably figured there was no need to make it go much higher. The thing that determines maximum cog size is how low the upper pulley is at the end of its inward travel. That's determined by where it starts out (how high it is) and the angle it moves through, as it moves inward. and that in turn is determined by design and chain length. Blah blah blah...so how high will the Ultegra rear derailleur really shift? I/Grant **am** riding it on a 32t, but I had to use some tricks to do it. Probably, it's best to stick to 28t.

p.57. Nuevo Kerin illustration is of Sylvan Track. The NK looks similar, but less symmetrical.

p. 67 Phil Wood bottom brackets, including the retaining rings (stainless steel, English, unless you specify otherwise) are \$135, not \$27. But the tools are **\$9** each, or TWO for \$18, not \$18 each. The price circles are independent of the item pictures and copy, and during the rough layout stages, as items move from one place on the page to another, or from one page

to another, sometimes we forget to move the prices, too. In this case, the \$27 was supposed to be for the Mongrel bottom bracket, which at one time was up there in Phil's space. In time we gave it a new price circle, and lowered it from \$27 to \$25. We're out of SunTour Cyclone brake levers. We had maybe ten pair when the catalogue was printed.

p. 64. indexable, not indexale.. Also, cost should be costs, come should be comes, and existing *cups/* should be existing cups (no slashmark).

p. 65. the center-to-center bolt distance for a 144mm bcd crank should be 84.6mm, not 86.4. If you have an 86.4, it's a collector's item. If it's gold-plated, even more so.

p. 86. the wooly shirts: we have s-m-l-xl in each model.

## Things We're Out Of

p. 37. Old-style SunTour Power Ratchet bar-end shifters.

p. 54. Cyclone brake levers.

p. 60. Ritchey 170mm triple. It has an uncertain future. We're investigating TA as an alternative. More later.

76.:Bstone Sheep posters.

## Other

We printed 8,000 catalogues at a cost of \$1.10 each. They barely (by a page) squeaked in at the first class rate of \$1.47. How close? If we add a staple, it shoots up to \$1.70. We mailed them bulk to members, at \$0.52 each, but when someone calls up for a free catalogue, it goes first class. John Segal did the art, as you know if you read the back inside cover. He's a subscriber-member-Rivendell owner, and a freelance illustrator, with at least three children's books under his belt:

The Musicians of Bremen, Little Mouse and Elephant, and This is Maine. He also did some artwork for—well, I don't want to get the particulars wrong, but at the end of Spin City, there's a flash on the screen for Lottery Hill, which I think is Michael J. Fox's production company, and he did the picture for it. MJF rides a Merlin. How often, we can't say, but he is a busy guy.

# PHYLLIS HARMON

## AND THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WHEELMEN

*by Gabe Conrad*

**I**n the late 1800s, while bicycle technology was rapidly advancing, the bicycle's real future was being built by enthusiast-advocates who organized clubs to share camaraderie and to create political clout. Clubs were microcosms of society, and there were many clubs. One, The Socialist Wheelmen's Club of New York, founded by the Socialist Labor Party in 1898, distributed literature while on club runs. Another, England's Lady Cyclists' Association, established in 1892, found the billowing dresses required of female cyclists absurd and pushed the topic into the public spotlight, quickly finding overwhelming support of "rational dress."

Clubs were the most effective way to effect positive changes for all cyclists. These early bicycle clubs built the cycle into a sport, pastime, and a way of life for generations to come.

Their good work increased their **tribe** to the point where, by the late 1870s, cyclists were indiscriminately banned from many parks and city streets. And most rural roads of the time were scarcely rideable. Cyclists were senselessly harassed by the police and were even run down and attacked by malicious carriage drivers and horseback riders.

An early champion of cyclists's rights was a guy named Charles Pratt. Based on what he knew of England's Cyclists' Touring Club, and at his experiences in the Boston Bicycle Club, he knew cyclists needed national organization to protect their rights. The League of American Wheelmen was to be that organization.

Here's how it happened. A meet and parade, held in conjunction with Boston's Declaration Day activities on May 31st 1880, was attended by 133 cyclists representing 31 clubs and many unaffiliated riders. A constitution was hammered out and adopted by the assembled cyclists. C. Kirk Munroe, the editor of Harper's Young People and New York Cycle Club president, gave a speech about the purpose of the meeting—the formation of a national bicycling organization—and introduced Charles Pratt. Through tremendous cheers and applause, Pratt laid out the L.A.W. - "We have adopted today the name **of** the League of American Wheelmen, and are banded together for the purposes expressed in the constitution; for promoting good wheelmanship; for defending the rights of American wheelmen; and for the encouragement of touring. We are entitled to the privilege of riding in the parks or public highways of the United States as much as the owners of other carriages,

and we will not rest until we and our brother wheelmen have the freedom of travel on our choice of wheels anywhere from Penobscot Bay to the Golden Gate."

Munroe was the League's first commander, and Pratt its first president. Charged by Pratt's words, the new League paraded in military precision along the streets of Boston to the cheers of the throngs of spectators. A new dawn in American cycling had risen.

Among other things, the L.A.W. was responsible for getting trains and boats to accept bikes as personal baggage; and in 1883 an Ohio legislator tried to outlaw bicycles in his state, the League made sure that didn't happen. State divisions had their own councils, usually organizing their own races, newsletter, tours, and ensuring discounted prices at local hotels and bike shops for L.A.W. members. State divisions would convince local authorities to erect road signs and used stencils to warn cyclists of upcoming road hazards, like steep hills and crossroads. The League also published a generous number of road books that included maps, bike shops, and points of interest for touring cyclists.

But the League was more than advocacy and legislation. The first love of most members was touring, and while bicycle advocacy is hard work, riding bicycles is fun, and the League always found a balance between the two.

Since the League's early days, its membership numbers have ebbed and flowed. There was a tiny burst of growth just after World War II, when adults once again were being lured to the sport by lightweight cycles after years of the cycling industry focusing on children's balloon tire bikes. But by the 1960s the League was essentially dead. In 1964, however, the League of American Wheelmen was reborn, and one of the most instrumental figures behind this lasting reorganization was Phyllis Harmon. Ms. Harmon, along with Joe and Dorothy Hart and Keith Kingbay, once again built the League into a powerful voice for cyclists, and an organization dedicated to the enjoyment of our great sport.

Phyllis was the editor of the Chicago Council League of American Wheelmen Bulletin from 1939 to '43, and she once again took up this role editing the national League publication until July of 1979. She also held the positions of treasurer, executive vice president, historian and office manager, and has been a constant source of inspiration within the League. She

reorganized Illinois's Evanston Bicycle Club in 1966, founded the Wheeling Wheelmen, and has led five cyclo-tours of New Zealand. Her home in Wheeling, Illinois has been a resting place and haven for tourists and world travelers, and she has worked tirelessly to promote cycling.

Phyllis Harmon has come a long way from her first kiddy car with the carved horse head that her father gave her in 1917, to become the backbone of a national cycling organization. The League, now called the League of American Bicyclists, has come a long way too - though some argue that it hasn't been for the best. What was once a balanced concern for cyclo-touring and road rights has now been replaced entirely by road rights and legislation. More and more members have become disenfranchised by the League's overwhelmingly legislative role, and its lack of coverage of recreational riding.

No one has noticed these changes more than Phyllis Harmon. Phyllis has long been considered the League's golden girl - she's an honorary director of the league, editor emeritus of the League's magazine, and has received the League's highest honor, the Dr. Paul Dudley White Award - but she is also one of the league's most outspoken critics. She would like to see the League take a step backward to become once again that well-balanced organization that inspires new and seasoned cyclists to keep wheeling, while still working for our rights on the road.

I recently had a chance to interview Phyllis Harmon, and she gave me a peek at her passion for cycling, her first experiences with bicycles, and where she thinks the League needs to go from here. I'd like to thank Phyllis for all her valuable time that she so generously gave for this interview. Phyllis talks fast and animated. Try to read it that way.—Gabe.

**Gabe Konrad: What were your earliest bike experiences?**

**Phyllis Harmon:** At first I had a scooter, then a little sidewalk bike - a little tiny thing. I didn't really know any cyclists, but my sidewalk bike didn't seem to fly like the big boys' bikes, and I wanted to fly. So my mother told me that if I saved up \$28 from my Christmas, birthday and baby sitting money, I could get a bicycle. When my birthday came in October, I finally had enough money and my dad took me down to MacKay's Bike Shop on Clark Street in Chicago. I picked out

a red diamond-frame bike with 28" wheels. My father was sure that the bike was too big for me, but he said if I could ride it to the end of the block and back it was mine. It was Saturday night and I had to pedal around a lot of pedestrians, and to turn the bike around I had to hold onto the awning rod of a store. But I made it back and the bike was mine. That was in 1928.

I didn't know anyone who rode a bike, aside from the girl who lived next door and she wasn't allowed off the block - and that's no fun. So my grandfather lived seven miles away and I would bike out there and they would give me a piece of cake and a glass of milk or lemonade, and I'd bike home. I even started to time myself to see how fast I could do it. In 1932 we moved further into Chicago, and that made it an 18-mile round trip. That was pretty nice. Then, one day, my

mother introduced me to her friend's son who was a year younger than me, and he had a bike. So we packed a picnic lunch and biked out to Des Plaines, Illinois which was 18 miles from my house. 36 miles out and back - and my imagination ran wild!

My aunt was renting a cottage at Fox Lake, Illinois, and we had friends that lived in Tichigan, about twelve miles from Burlington, Wisconsin. So I wrote to both of them asking that if I biked up, could I stay at their houses overnight. Meanwhile I took a map, ruler and a pencil and I notched out the distance - it was eighty miles one way. Now how to get permission? Both their response letters arrived the same day, so I tackled my mom and told her my plans. She listened to me and read the letters over, and said that if my dad said it was okay, it was all right with her. So then I went to my dad and asked him, and he said it was fine with him as long as my mother said it was okay - with the condition that for each hour of riding I would stop and rest for half an hour. So at 6 a.m., before they changed their minds, I was off.

In those days they didn't have any biking clothes, bike gear, pannier bags or anything, so I left with a paper bag strapped to the back seat of my bike. After an hour of riding I was up at Milwaukee and Dempster in Niles, and I sat on the viaduct wall to rest for a half hour. After the next hour I was in Wheeling eating roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, and apple pie and coffee - that was my breakfast. By ten or eleven o'clock I was swimming in Fox Lake. My relatives were all off fishing, so we had a big fish fry that evening. I was in bed by 9 p.m., up at six, and by 9 a.m. I was in Burlington, Wisconsin having my breakfast of roast beef, mashed potatoes,



*This is Phyllis. She still rides more miles per year than most cyclists, and recently lead a bicycle tour of New Zealand.*

apple pie and coffee. Everybody in the restaurant was looking at me a bit oddly as they ate their eggs and bacon. I reached Tichigan by ten! I stayed there for a few days before making the trip home. This was in 1932, I was fifteen.

I did all this on a one-speed, and it had the kind of tires that you shot rubber bands into to fix a flat. I would take it to this little old white-haired man on the block who repaired bikes in his garage. and have him fix it up for me. Of course, we didn't get as many flats then because the tires were thicker. Anyway, this bike had an 88 gear. I had completely missed the balloon-tire bikes, so when my bike broke around 1938, Schwinn had just come out with the light-weights. The New World was \$32. the Superior was \$50. and the Paramount was \$75. And I wanted the Duerkopp bicycle that Kilian and Vopel had ridden in the 6-day bikes races - and that was \$232. I was earning \$18 a week. so that took care of that. I bought a New World. That had gears in the forties. sixties and a ninety-two high, and because I was used to riding an 88, I'm a pumper not a spinner. if I would use a forty or sixty I felt like I would shoot right up into the air. So I rode in the 92 high gear all the time. In 1941 I led a hostel trip down to the Ozarks, and I was going up and down all those hills in a 92 - with a food box and pannier bag on the bike. I would stand on the pedals and push, counting 1... 2... 3... 4.... and at one hundred pumps I would look up and see that I still wasn't anywhere near the top. I led several hostel trips back then.

**GK:** *When did the bike trains begin?*

**PH:** That's how I got into the League. In October of 1936 the newspapers and radio were all talking about this bicycle train that was going to Kankakee. Illinois. Friends and family were calling to tell me about the train and saying I should go. Well, I still didn't know any cyclists, and I hemmed and hawed... I didn't want to go alone. So my family went to a friend's 80th birthday party. and one of the attendees was Toivo Kaitila, an Associated Press photographer. who had a bag full of 6-day race photos. I about flipped. All my favorites were there. Kilian and Vopel and all the rest. So Toivo was going to be taking pictures on the bicycle train, and now that I knew someone that was going to be there. I decided to go.

When the big day arrived. I biked the seven miles down to the train. They had the engine, enough passenger cars for 425 cyclists. and baggage cars for the bicycles. They also had one empty baggage car for entertainment. A man played the accordion for Virginia Reels and folk dancing, and there was singing from car to car. When we arrived in Kankakee, we rode to a park and had a sack lunch. gave door prizes, and chose a bicycle queen. Later we biked to a country club on the Kankakee River and had dinner before returning to the train and home. The train was put together by Jack Hansen, who owned Chicago Cycle Supply. and his cousin Carl Stockholm,

in an attempt to get the League of American Wheelmen going again. Jack and Carl were both old-time cyclists who had raced high-wheelers in the past.

I found that there was to be another bicycle train the very next weekend to Walworth, Wisconsin. And you got the train ride, sack lunch, dinner, the whole thing for \$3.25! Most of the people that were on the Kankakee train, went on the Walworth trip, and we had a great time biking and swimming and so forth. On the way back, Clarence Wanderscheid, who owned the Maple Cycle Shop in Evanston, told everyone that he was going to have regular Tuesday night rides from his shop. So folks were coming from all over to take part in these rides - and nobody drove to them. We would never drive to ride our bikes, we would always ride to the shop, then do the ride. I would pedal 26 miles before I would even start the ride. So I was averaging about 200 miles a week then.

**GK:** *And this was all on a three-speed ...*

**PH:** Oh yes. And it kind of irks me when people say you can't do that sort of thing on a three-speed, because I've done it all on a single-speed! It's all in what you're used to riding, and if you're used to a 92 gear you can go on all these rides and nothing's going to stop you. So when I got a three-speed, I never shifted gears.

**GK:** *Most bikes today have 21 to 27 speeds, and people just don't believe you can get by with just three speeds. But if they paid attention, many folks only use three or four of the eighteen anyway.*

**PH:** That's right, why do you need those extra gears?

**GK:** *How did you become interested in 6-day racing?*

**PH:** They were held in Chicago before the war. My dad wanted to go, but I wasn't interested. I wanted to ride my bike. not watch other people ride. But when I finally went, I found it really fascinating and exciting. They had two men to a team. one was always riding, and one was resting. Or they were both on relieving each other. Torchy Peden, who was a big six foot red-head, was teamed up with the platinum-blond Audy who was much smaller, and Peden would reach back taking Audy's hand and whip him around, and Audy would go half way around the track! The German team of Kilian and Vopel were my favorite because when they tried to gain a lap on the field. they're chins were about an inch from their front wheel. They had so much power. Every so many miles they had a sprint. and they would have a pair of tires or something little like that for the winner. It was really exciting, these guys would go at it 24 hours a day. six days a week. It was wonderful to see, and I became hooked on 6-day bike racing.

**GK:** *Ted Harper, who was a great Canadian 6-day racer in the '30s passed away recently. But I don't think he ever raced in Chicago.*

**PH:** Keith Kingbay kept up with all the racers. Any time one

of them would come to town, Keith would let me know so I could attend the dinner they were having for them, and I could take photos and write something for the League magazine. When Sir Hubert Opperman came to town I got to meet him. And then there was Torchy Peden, Jerry Rodman, Norman Hill, and eight or ten other racers came around and they all talked bike talk - and I was lapping it up.

**GK:** *It's your passion for all sorts of cycling that made the League magazine so interesting. When I was going through the issues of The League of American Wheelmen Newsletter that you edited, I was struck by how technology took a back seat...*

**PH:** That's how the riders wanted it.

**GK:** *Exactly. Most cycling magazines, especially today, are heavy on product reviews and bike tests, yet ignore what cycling is all about - people touring, racing and having fun.*

**PH:** People say to me "who's that guy on the green Peugeot?" I don't even see a Peugeot, I see a person on a bicycle. People are what counts. All bicycles look the same to me - except nowadays they have all these freaky things. But that's what bicycling is all about, the people you ride with, the camaraderie. All this physical fitness stuff - rpm's and cadence, - I couldn't care less about it. I had a pace of 25 mph, but that didn't keep me from the camaraderie. I could ride at any pace with a group. sings songs and have a great time. They *dare cover shots of African Americans.*

**PH:** It was really fun putting those covers together. Do you recall the one with the swallows on the handlebars? (The August '78 issue pictured two swallows on the handlebars of a well used 10-speed. -Gabe) Five people wrote in complaining that the bikes were rusty! Rusty?

It's not like I could tell the birds which bike to sit on. But it was fun. Tracy Borland in California would send me dozens of photos and slides that I could pick and choose from, or I would use my own photographs.

**GK:** *The issue just before that (July 1978) has a stunning shot of that chap who was traveling the Sahara, with the water cans strapped to his bike, and the turban wrapped around his head...*

**PH:** Ian Hibell. He had some amazing experiences riding from Norway's North Cape to the Cape of Good Hope in South

Africa. He said that the sand in the Sahara was like a crust. Once you got going, you could ride on it. But once the crust broke through you couldn't ride on it at all because it was too soft. Also, the September 1975 issue covered his ride from Tierra del Fuego - the tip of South America - to Alaska and his "nightmare ride through the Darien Gap. Ian stayed at my home and showed his slides to the Wheeling Wheelmen.

Then there was Bernard Magnouloux from Lyon, France, who pedaled 48,000 miles around the world from May of 1981 to December of '86. He pedaled all the way to Johannesburg, South Africa, where he worked for three months hanging paper to pay the fare to get him across to Rio de Janeiro. From there he biked to Acapulco. It was there he was cooking some rice for his noon meal, and a man comes out of the bushes with a gun. There's a struggle over the gun, and Bernard overpowers the man. The man apologizes, and says how he shouldn't treat people like that and so on, so Bernard sits down and shares his lunch with the guy. A half hour after that, the guy comes out of the bushes with another man. They had a big battle, and they ran off with his handlebar bag and panniers. Bernard was beaten up quite badly, luckily the \$300 he had was stuffed in the top tube of his bike. A policeman told him that he should go home and kiss his mother, meaning that he was lucky to be alive. So he took a bus to Mexico City and stored his bike there. Then he took another bus to New York and flew People's Express to London. He took a bus into France, then hitch-hiked the rest of the way to his home where he took a year to recover and recoup his resources. After a year, he flew back to Mexico City and biked the Gulf of Mexico to Florida. then up

to Canada, down to New York, and then across to my house in Wheeling, Illinois. He stayed here for a week and a half, and left for California in October. So he was cycling across the United States in November and December, and we had some really severe weather that year. At times he had an inch and a half of ice on his bike frame. I actually flew out to meet him when he was doing a slide presentation for the San Diego Cyclists.

**GK:** *So what ever happened to him?*

**PH:** It took two months to get his French passport updated.



1931. Phyllis, her sister and her first bike, an Ernie MacKay Special, bought in 1928.

and then he went to China, Tibet and India. At the time the bicyclist was trash in India. and it was really dangerous because people would throw rocks and whatnot at him, so he stored his bike and did that part like a normal tourist. Then he biked Pakistan and Turkey. and flew home to France where they had a big reception for him.

**GK: In Lyon?**

**PH:** Yes, even the Mayor was there to meet him.

**GK: After World War II, the League was basically inactive. How did you get the hall rolling again in the '60s?**

**PH:** Right. the League was inactive in that period because all the men were coming home from the war, getting married, and were scattered all over the country. Meanwhile. the cars were getting bigger, and the roads were still narrow two-lane streets with no shoulder. There was no place to ride a hike. If a car was coming, you either had to get off the road or block a whole line of traffic. It was miserable and more and more people decided that it just wasn't worth the risk.

In 1964. Joe Hart had gotten word that the League funds were to be frozen because of inactivity. So Joe planned a big dinner party for October with the money, and invited all the League members he could track down. Everyone was surprised with the great turnout, 250 people, and it inspired the reorganization of the League. Joe and Dorothy Hart, Keith Kingbay and I formed the nucleus of the reorganization. and Frank Schwinn offered his company's conference room for us to hold our meetings until we could find a regular place. Once again. the Chicago Council began to grow. In 1965 the Columbus Park Wheelmen were having their 25th anniversary in Chicago. Old members were coming in from California. Tennessee, Oregon, all over the place - so we used that as the basis of a national rally to get the League going again. Right then and there we were able to appoint national officers like Fred DeLong and Harry Coe. We had the national rally in Chicago again in '66, then in '67 we had it in Turkey Run. Indiana. I was the chairman of the event, and I ended up getting bit by a dog and wasn't able to attend - it was the only rally I ever missed. Because it was such a serious bite, it was four years before I could ride a century again.

Meanwhile. we had a few different presidents, and the League office moved with them all over the country. It was a mess because the addresses kept changing and it was hard to keep up with membership dues and whatnot. So that's when

the cycle industry - Schwinn, Huffy, AMF, Columbia and Sears - came up with \$57,000 to help us get a national office running and we found a nice space in Palantine, Illinois. Incidentally, the League put me on salary in 1971. Before that I was doing it part-time, publishing a 32-page magazine, along with working a full-time job and raising a family - it was fun. It was in '79 when the national offices moved to the East Coast, and the L.A.W. hasn't been the same since.

**GK: How do you feel about the way the League is run now?**

**PH:** I don't like it. You see, they've had these activists come on board that have turned the focus of the League to Effective Cycling and legislation, and have dropped what most cyclists joined the League for - bicycling.

**GK: They've almost completely dropped touring...**

**PH:** Because it's not important or glamorous enough. I've seen statistics, from the League's own questionnaires. that show that only two out of ten members care at all about the legislative stuff. But here we have 450 or so bike clubs, and 23,000 members, and when the League was in trouble with the IRS, their members gave them \$100,000 - and their opinions don't count?

**GK: At the same time, road rights are an important issue.**

**PH:** Yes, it's important, and I've worked on it here. I got the city to allow riding two abreast in light traffic, you can make a vehicle left turn, you can carry a baby on a baby seat, and you can use a bugger. It's important. but it shouldn't be the main focus of the League and the League magazine. That's why people are dropping their

memberships, because there just isn't anything of interest for them. But the board of directors just keep doing what they want to do.

**GK: What kind of changes would you like to see within the League of American Bicyclists?**

**PH:** I'd like to see it go back to being a full-time membership run organization, by and for bicyclists. And take all the healthy activism, Effective Cycling and what not, and make them benefits of joining the League, not the main reason for its existence.

**GK: You started the Wheeling Wheelmen?**

**PH:** I was a charter member of the Evanston Cycle Touring Club in '37, and reorganized the club in 1966. So when I moved to Wheeling in 1969, one of the first things I did was go

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down to the park district and talk to some folks about starting a bicycle club. Some people were interested, *so* we got the club going and held **our** first century in September of that year - **198** people turned out. We've held that ride every year since, **usu-**ally with around 1,300 or 1,400 riders. It was originally called the Wheeling 100, but when my husband Willard died in 1975 they changed the name *to* the Harmon 100 and it's been called that ever since.

**GK:** *When did you start riding a bike?*

**PH:** In 1928.

**GK:** *Can you pare down all those miles to a favorite ride?*

**PH:** As far as tours go, I've loved my five trips to New Zealand - all of which have been wonderful. But before that, my favorite tour had to be the Pacific Northwest in **1972**. It was **537** miles in nine days, starting in Seattle and ending at the National Rally in Salem, Oregon. Talk about beautiful scenery and a beautiful trip - it was just great.

**GK:** *How many people rode with you?*

**PH:** A hundred and twenty. Carol Quimby planned the whole thing, he was the League's president at the time. Sixty were camping, and sixty were moteling.

**GK:** *Any bad memories?*

**PH:** (After a long pause) I don't have any. I know one ride that was pretty miserable though. Some friends and I **were** on a ride to Highland Park, and while we were eating at a drugstore counter, a blizzard started - and it was **15** miles back to Evanston! We go out and ride, and by the time we made it back the slush was three inches deep. We were all sopping wet and it was bitterly cold - that was not fun.

**GK:** *Any last thoughts?*

**PH:** The main thing to me about the whole world of bicycling is the people who take part in it. All this stuff about different seats, pedals and parts doesn't mean a thing to me. It's the people I meet on the bikes that matter.

**GK:** *I wish it was more like that today.*

**PH:** Well, **you** have the camaraderie group and the physical fitness group. **All** the physical fitness **group** thinks about *is* cadence and rpm's and getting from A to B as fast as they can. In the camaraderie group we go out for a ride and spend time eating and seeing the sights. Sometimes I'd get home from a ride at twelve or one o'clock in the morning - and have to get **up** at 7 a.m. to go to work. Every time we had a rest stop we would gather around and sing Daisy Daisy and what not. I've come up with a lot of parody songs to sing with my children when biking. Have you heard the first and second verses of Daisy Daisy? It goes:

Daisy, Daisy.  
Give me your answer true.  
I'm half crazy  
Just for the love of you.

It won't be a stylish marriage,  
I can't afford a carriage,  
But you'll **look** sweet  
Upon the seat  
Of a bicycle built for two.

Michael, Michael,  
Here is your answer true.  
I won't cycle  
Just for the love of you.  
If you can't afford a carriage,  
There won't be any marriage,  
**For** I'll be damned  
If I'll be crammed  
On a bicycle built for two.

I didn't like that second verse because it wasn't like any of the people I biked with, *so* I made up a parody where Michael joined the **L.A.W.**, and enjoyed many tours and club rides, and he met Susie and they went biking together. **So** Susie answers Michael's proposal with:

Michael, Michael,  
Here is my answer true.  
I will cycle  
Just for the love of you.  
If you can't afford a carriage,  
There still will be a mamage,  
**For** I'll be proud  
To ride with the crowd  
On a bicycle built for two.

**GK.** *The camaraderie group rides for the beauty of cycling.*

**PH:** Yes, exactly.

# A Short Report On The Mid-September Interbike Show

(THE INDUSTRY'S BIG TRADE SHOW, IN LAS VEGAS, FROM WHICH WE RECENTLY GOT BACK)

*Some of the things that looked interesting or at least worth mentioning.  
The big magazines will have a more thorough report.*

**SHIMANO.** The **RX100** dual pivot sidepull in standard reach will continue for at least another year. And, we found out that if you know the tricks, you can make "officially incompatible" combinations of Shimano derailleurs and shifters (usually 7/8/9 speeders) work with freewheels and cassettes that they're not supposed to work with. Usually the modification is nothing more than pinching the cable on the opposite side of the pinch bolt. We'll try to get more details. We heard the details, just didn't write them down.

**SUGINO** is suffering financially, and future production may go to China. It's not clear yet whether this will include Ritchey cranks, but we're looking at backups anyway, and TA may be one.

**SMARTWOOL** is now doing thin wool undershirts. They're all wool, made in Australia, and go for \$70+ each. Too bad so expensive. I like our Nova Scotian ones for way less than half that, but the SmartWools are still very nice.

**FIR**, the not-all-that-well-known Italian rim maker, has a rim that's pretty much identical to the Mavic MA2, and if Mavic quits that rim, we'll get the FIR. Samples are coming, and we'll test them.

**SRAM**, the gripshift people who are challenging Shimano and recently bought Sachs, have officially discontinued 6-speed freewheels, and didn't display any freewheels at all at the show. *So* in case we needed some kind of show of SRAM's commitment to freewheels, we got it.

**MARCHISIO**, an Italian company comprised of former Everest (late '70s Italian pro-quality freewheel and chain maker) employees showed cassettes, but said freewheels were still in production, with no plan to stop. We're getting samples soon, and they've said they'll do any ratios we want in 5-6-7-8-9 speeds. We'll focus on the 6s and 7s, and see how it goes. If

all goes well, we'll have some by November. All never goes well!

**SUNRACE** was there also, and they have freewheels. Not a good selection, but it's time to start playing with all options. They're Taiwan. I'll put one on a tandem and climb Martino with Pal Jeff. We'll do it 10 times, and if it doesn't break, we'll see about carrying them.

**NORTHWAVE** showed its new shoe, called the (I forget). It's all black, with holes, and laces up. It looks good (which is to say plain), and we're getting a sample to check the fit and anything else that matters. It will come with a real cleat, for non-clip-less pedals.

**SIDI** doesn't import its Touring Shoe, but I saw it in its European catalogue and asked Uncle Al (you may have seen him in Vredstein ads) if they had plans to import it. Uncle Al is Sales Manager of SIDI, also. No, he said, but we could get some and be the exclusive source in the **U.S.** Peter liked it, too, and when Peter likes a touring shoe, you'd best hold onto your hat, baby. *So* we'll get some samples. I rode with these for years, years ago; they're great. They'll cost about \$130, and that's a little scary, but I know they're good for at least **5** years of near-daily use. It could be a cash-flow killer, though. We'll see. SIDI also has some toe-clip-compatible cleated shoes, with regular cleats. "Toe-clip-compatible" just means they don't have a strap of velcro over the forefoot to make it hard to get into the clip. As much as we dread the idea of shoes-by-mail and all the returns there'll be, we're really tempted to get involved.

**PAUL COMPONENTS.** Paul has a really great utility rack for one-speed types. Clever and good-looking, and actually big enough for two grocery bags. If you or your bike can't handle a regular old basket, or you want something slicker, this is a good way to go. Pictures in a future issue.



**NITTO.** They're working on our racks. They have a new bottle cage, same as the one in **our** catalogue but tubular—which is kind of showing off. We showed them Kelly Takeoffs (with Chris Kelly's permission) with the idea that they might be able to make them, since Chris would like to spend less time building and more designing. And Nitto had some other small widgets which we may bring up later. Little things.

**PANASONIC** and what a difference a decade makes. About that long ago Panasonic was selling 100 thousand bikes in the U.S.—two and a half to three times what Bstone averaged at its biggest, and about 40 percent of what Specialized was doing at the time. Anyway, now they showed one style of bike, which they said was intended to teach balance to old people and children, and neither I nor Peter nor anybody else who med could ride it. It's a dinky-wheeled bike with a super shallow head tube angle and way too much trail. I want to get one. If I succeed, look for the test report.

**XTRA BICYCLES** converts regular bikes to huge luggage carriers. **You** remove the back wheel and bolt on a cart-with-frame, and they ride great and can carry tons. I think you need the lifestyle for it, and space to store it in, but it's a smart design with lots of potential, and I liked it. Also, riding it around the demo area was the only time I got to ride a bike during the show, so it felt extra good. Someday I'll own one. It'll carry two weekworth of shopping, easy.

**BRUNSWICK** the bowling ball company bought Mongoose the bicycle company, and the new businessman-owners say they plan to spend **\$5** million over the next year **or so** trying to build and sell 8,000 titanium bicycle frames, at about **\$1,145** each. I'd sure like to save them several million dollars by advising them of that project's hopelessness, and I'd charge them only enough to get us rolling with Match and some tooling and maybe **our** own brand of crank, and \$80,000 would do that. But they probably think we're nuts for trying to sell leather saddles and lugged steel frames.

**FOXONALL'S** Paul de Lange is a raconteur-kind-of-guy. In **1981** or **so** he started Lyon Tires, which later became Vittoria. And he sold Vittoria, and last year was making Clement tires in Thailand. Then he and Clement had it out, and to make a long and fascinating story short and boring (since I can't remember it all or tell it like he did), he now finds himself with the rights to the Clement model names—

Paris Roubaix, Campionato del Mondo, Strada **66**, Criterium Seta, and **so** forth—but unable to sell them under the Clement name. They're the same tires, though. I asked "Why 'Foxonal'?" and he says "because it sounds like \_\_\_\_\_them all," and laughed. We may get a tire from him. We have the Paris-Roubaix tubulars, anyway.

**MAVIC** has electronic shifting again. It is extremely non-traditional in appearance. It must have a certain appeal. I think the new owners know what they're doing, and I think it is way over my head. It will be news in *Bicycling* and *VeloNews* and I'll find out more about it in there. — *Grant*

**FOR SEVERAL YEARS,** SHIMANO has been working on its own magic shifting, probably electronic and cable-less. It's a **good** bet that it'll show up no later than **2000**, and after past flops by both SunTour and Mavic, you can bet Shimano won't release it until it is perfect. Campy **will** follow. Then new component reviews will talk about "the old days, when shifting was a complicated affair, with cables, pulleys, pinch bolts, and what have you," as though we should all be glad we're past that stage, and as though it was dreadful.

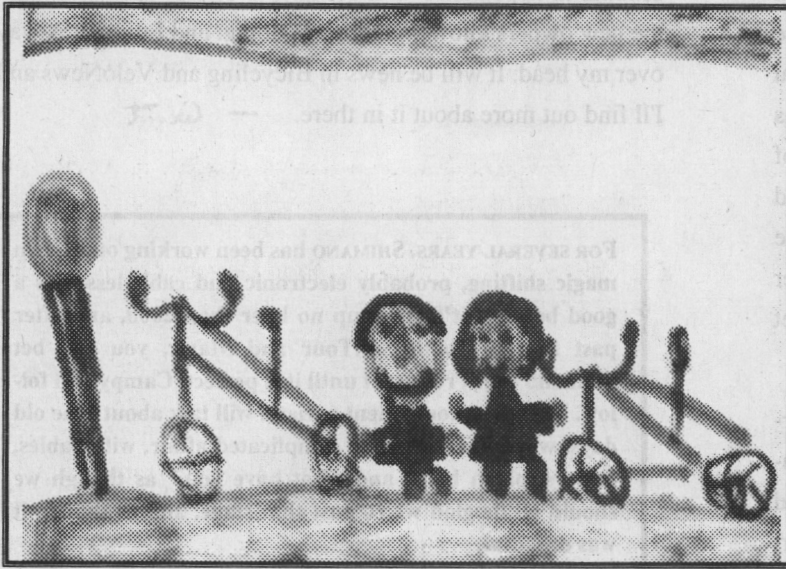
Shifting is secondary to bicycle riding, and the benefits of frequent shifting are overrated. Yesterday there was a charity hillclimb with around **800** participants. It was a **10.8** mile, **3600'** climb. Peter (who does not fit the profile of a "retro-grouch," and **is** fascinated by computers, **so** don't call him a luddite) told me, "Almost the whole way up, there was a **guy** about ten feet behind me. I'd be pedaling along in one gear, and **I** could hear him clicking away almost the whole time, but he never actually got wheel-to-wheel with me." I/Grant rode the same climb in a **36x18**, not because **I** wanted a handicap (**I** was trying to break an hour), but because **I** ride that hill a lot, with different bikes, and my best times consistently come on the one-speeder. It's not a featherweight, either. Although it saves weight by not having derailleurs and stuff, it has the heaviest rims and tires of any of my bikes, and I've made **no** effort to make it race-light.

Gears help, but the emphasis on **so** many gears and such frequent shifting, shifts the focus from muscles to equipment. You come to a slight grade increase, and instead of digging a little deeper, you grab **for** an easier gear. It's defeatist right from the start, and after a while, you start to think *shift!* whenever you **see** the road rise a little. Get over it. If more gears and more frequent shifts make your rides more fun, that's great, there's **no** shame. But just don't think being a **good** cyclist is knowing when **to** shift. The best time to shift is when you can't stand the **gear** you're in any longer.—*GP*

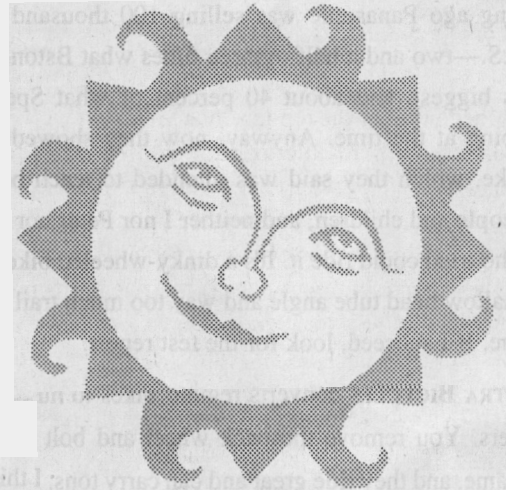

# CHILDREN'S PAGE

This is the third "children's page" in a row. It's not as popular as I thought it would be. The idea is to feature children's art or writing. The author/artists should be between 6 and 12, and parents can't help.

We can't print all submissions, but we will acknowledge them all.

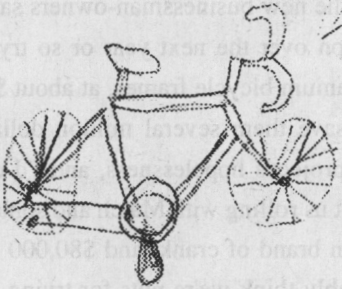


Ellen Barbour, 6, from Boston

Me and my dad went on a picnic with our bikes. We watched the ducks swim by. We fed them the extra crumbs of bread. We read a book after we ate. It was the Secret Garden. Ellen

Dear Grant, a picture of Daddy's Rivendell

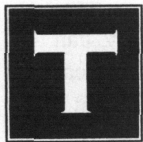


Love Maddy

Madeline Brooks, 8, from Rochester, NY

# THE Z FACTOR

THIS IS AN ARTICLE I WROTE FOR BICYCLE GUIDE (JULY '89).—G



he dimension **Z** is related to the length of the top tube. Many riders purchase frames with an eye **on** the top tube as well as the length of the seat tube. **A** long top tube usually gives more reach to the handlebars, for riders with long torsos.

But the length of the top tube has less to do with reach than you think: If you divide the top tube into two portions and look at them separately, as we have done in Figure 1, you'll see why. Call the point **on** the top tube directly above the center of the bottom bracket **X** (find this point by leveling the bike and dropping a plumb bob through the centerline of the bottom bracket). The distance from the center of the seat lug to **X** is called 'setback.' Some framebuilders, especially European builders, work with setback rather than seat tube angle to fix the rider's position over the pedals. The portion of the top tube forward of **X** to the center of the head lug is what I call **Z**.

It makes sense to think about setback and **Z** separately because they have different functions. Setback, combined with the position of the saddle on its rails, determines the position of the saddle relative to the pedals. **Z** is the complement of setback; it determines the distance to the headset and, combined with the stem, the distance to the handlebars. Both dimensions are part of the top tube, but their relative sizes depend **on** the seat tube angle. Shallow seat tube angles shift more of the top tube behind **X**, giving more setback and less **Z**. Steep seat angles do the opposite. Therefore, when considering how top tube length affects fit, comfort, and weight distribution, you should also think about the size of **Z**.

**A** simple example using two imaginary 20-inch mountain bike frames, which we'll call **A** and **B**, illustrates the meaning of **Z** (see Figure 2). Bike **A** has a 74-degree seat angle and a 22.5-

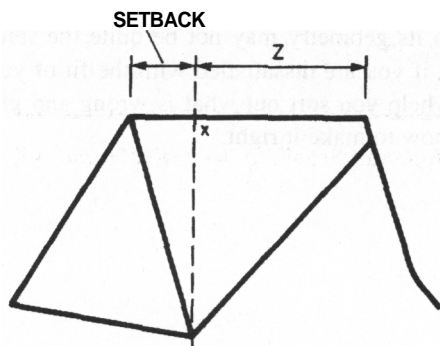


FIGURE 1

inch top tube. Bike **B** has a 71-degree seat angle and a 23-inch top tube. Someone in search of a lot of reach would probably go for Bike **B**. But the **Z** of Bike **A** is almost an inch longer than that of Bike **B**. **So** if **you** want more reach to the bars, the bike with the shorter top tube, in this case, would actually serve you better.

**To** apply **Z**, you need to know how to calculate it. **A** scientific calculator makes it easy:

**Z** = Top Tube length (measured from the center of the seat lug to the center of the head tube lug) minus Setback

Setback = Cosine (Seat Tube angle) x Seat Tube length (measured center to center)

Try this as an example: **A** bike has a 73-degree seat angle, a 58-cm seat tube, and a 57-cm top tube. Punch in 73 and then hit cosine. The calculator will display 0.2924. Multiply that figure by the seat tube length to get setback, which comes to 17 cm. Subtract that value from top tube length, 57 — 17 = 40 cm. For most bikes, **Z** falls between 38 and 46 centimeters, **or** 15 and 18 inches.

**Z** is useful in comparing bikes with the same length top tubes but different seat tube angles. It can help you shop for a new bike, **or** help you design a better one. **For** example, my friend Chris, a kayak racer turned criterium racer, has short legs and a long, powerful torso and arms. Chris' current 53-cm road frame has a 74.5-degree seat tube angle, 72-degree head tube, and a 53-cm top tube. He fits his bike best set up with a 13.5-cm stem and his Turbo saddle shoved fully back **on** its rails.

Chris is uncomfortable with this setup; he doesn't like using a long stem, and he doesn't like pushing his saddle all the way back. He'd rather have some adjustability in his saddle and a shorter stem, say 12-cm long. **Z** can help. First, work on the saddle problem. He needs more setback, which indicates a shallower seat tube angle. His 53-cm frame (measured center to top) measures 51.6 cm center to center. **So** his setback is  $\cos(74.5) \times 51.6 = 13.8$  cm. Changing his seat tube angle to 73.5 degrees changes the setback to 14.65 cm, a difference of 0.85 cm. If Chris maintains his current saddle position, then this larger setback means that he can move the saddle forward **on** its rails by 0.85 cm, **or** almost 3/8-inch.

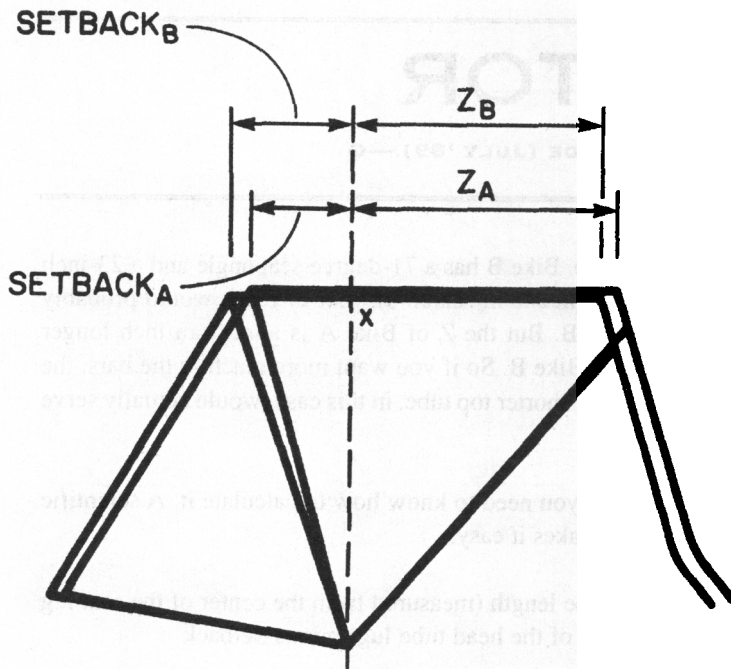


FIGURE 2

Chris also wants to shorten his stem by 1.5 cm, so he needs a Z that is 1.5 cm longer. First, find Z on his current frame:  $53 - 13.8 = 39.2$  cm. For the same reach with a shorter stem, Chris needs a  $Z = 39.2 + 1.5 = 40.7$  cm.

Finally, what kind of top tube does Chris need? Well, with an extra 0.85 cm of setback and an extra 1.5 cm of Z, Chris' new frame should have a top tube of  $53 + 0.85 + 1.5 = 55.35$  cm.

But we're not quite done yet. By increasing Z by 1.5 cm, we've also increased the front center dimension (the distance from the bottom bracket spindle to the front axle) of the bike by the same amount. In this case, it went from 58.7 cm to 60.2 cm, too long for a 53-cm frame. We can fix this, and improve upon the bike's handling at the same time. Chris' original frame has a head tube angle of 72 degrees. That's a common angle on small frames, even racing frames. But it isn't the best choice for Chris because he has a heavy torso, and a heavy torso mated with a long stem places too much weight over the front axle. If we steepen the head angle to 73.5 degrees, we bring the front wheel in by about a centimeter and, by fine-tuning the fork rake, we can give the bike a BICYCLE GUIDE-approved trail figure as well.

Chris definitely needs a custom frame to get such a long top tube on a 53-cm frame. A good framebuilder would reach the same conclusion, even though it's likely he doesn't deal with Z. Richard Sachs, a framebuilder based in Chester, Connecticut, has never heard of Z, but he outlined a similar list of fixes — more setback, steeper head angle, longer top tube,

shorter stem — for Chris' hypothetical frame. "There are just certain rules you follow in frame design for good fit and balance," he says. These rules are not always hard and fast. Like most builders, Sachs starts with saddle position when he designs a frame and then works forward, relying as much upon his years of experience as upon dimensions from the customer's body and favorite bike.

For those lacking the experience of a Richard Sachs, Z can tell us a lot about frame design. First of all, Z does not increase in proportion to frame size. That's because as the seat tube lengthens, it draws more of the top tube behind the bottom bracket. And in well-designed frames, the seat angle decreases with increasing frame size, which also increases setback at the expense of Z. For instance, a 51-cm and a 58-cm road frame might have almost the same Z, somewhere in the high 39s. This is okay because while the taller rider has a longer torso, chances are a greater proportion of his height is in his legs, so a longer stem is all that's needed to make up the difference. Also, tall riders usually have more seatpost showing, so their reach to the bars is effectively lengthened compared to a rider who has his saddle and bars at nearly the same height.

Remember a few years ago (it came to a head in the early 1980s) when women riders began to complain about riding small men's frames with long top tubes? Shorter top tubes, a obvious solution, didn't always make things better. Georgena Terry came up with a frame design using a 24-inch front wheel that allowed a top tube less than 50 cm long and a small Z. But with so much emphasis on top tube length, several other manufacturers jumped into the women's bike market by offering bikes with top tubes as short as Terry, but still with 700C wheels. These bikes didn't fit as well as a Terry. To shorten the top tube, the manufacturers simply increased the seat tube angle to 76, 77 and even 78 degrees, but their Zs were as long as some mid-sized men's bikes. Women bought these bikes and found that they were no better off.

Z sheds light on the relationship between seat angle and top tube length, but it is best applied when comparing one bike to another. If you need to replace your favorite frame, Z can help you find a new bike that will fit the same as your old reliable, even though its geometry may not be quite the same. By the same token, if you are dissatisfied with the fit of your current bike, Z can help you sort out what is wrong and give you an idea about how to make it right.

# SLOPES, TRIANGLES, CONTACT POINTS, AND THE GEOMETRY OF COMFORT

**NINE YEARS LATER I STILL AGREE** with **this** as far as it goes, but these days we downplay the role of frame tube lengths in the fit of the bike. That's because you don't sit on the top of the seat tube, and you don't rest your hands on the end of the top tube. What really matters **are** the location and orientation of your body's contact points with the bicycle: the saddle, the pedal, the bars.

The importance of the location of those contact points becomes clear if you think of them **as** points forming the corners of a triangle. As you can see in Figures 1 and 2 (turn the page later), the position triangle encloses the actual frame tubes, **so** that the forward-most point of the top tube, for example, becomes almost inconsequential to fitting. After all, you don't grab the bike by the end of the top tube. Its only significance is that of a launching point for the stem, which itself is a launching point for the handlebar.

The top of the seat tube is equally insignificant. Since you don't sit on the end of the seat tube, it becomes only a launching point for the seat post/saddle. I'm not saying you can get a good fit on any size frame. Obviously, the frame's too small if you need 300mm of seat post extension to get your saddle up in the right zone. **So**, for our purposes here, the right frame size **is** the one which lets you use normal seat post extensions, stem lengths, and handlebars to get the correct positioning triangle.

For most people, regardless of athletic ability, experience, strength, the flatter the top side of that triangle is, the more comfortable their position. A triangle with a flattish top side is comfortable because 1) It reduces stress on your lower back; 2) It takes weight off your **arms** and hands; 3) As a result of **#2**, your **arms** will be able to function like shock absorbers, smoothing any ride. 4) Your neck won't get sore from holding your head up, and it'll be easier to look around. We've said this a lot in the past couple of years, but it's really important to understand, **so** one more time is okay.

A slight downward slope is fine, and it comes from having the top of the bars within a few centimeters of the top of the saddle. I'm 5-10, and my saddle is 1.7cm higher than my handlebar. I put the brake levers where I can get at them easy, and it happens to be about 35.4-inches (90cm) from where I sit on the saddle to the middle-top of the brake lever hood. I never knew that until just now. If I feel like complicating matters with gratuitous arithmetic, I can say my slope is 1:53 (or is it 53:1?).

Based on my experience with other bikes, I think I'd be happier with a 1:70 slope, which means getting the

bars up a little higher. That's about as much math as I can stand to put into it. The farther away the brake levers are; the shallower the slope, even with the same amount of vertical drop, and it's usually better to flatten the slope by raising the bar, not sticking the bars way out of reach.

**Look** at your own bike and figure out what kind of triangle it has. Get a piece of paper and something to write with and figure out math with, then:

1. Measure the distance from the floor to the saddle. If you want to measure to a point rearward of the saddle, where your sit bones actually rest, do it. Write the figure down.
2. Measure from the top of the lever hoods to the floor. Write the figure down.
3. Subtract the low figure from the high one to get the horizontal distance between the two. Write the figure down.
4. Assuming you don't want to work in a 1:1 scale and you're open to suggestions, divide all the numbers by **5**. Then draw a horizontal line across the paper.
5. **On** the left end of this line, draw a vertical line representing the results of step 3.
6. Connect the top of this line, representing your butt-contact point, to the horizontal line, by drawing a line from the figure you got in step 2..
7. There's your triangle. Divide the hypoten—divide the long side by the short side to get your degree of slope.

**If** you have several bikes and one is more comfortable than the others, compare slopes and maybe you'll find out something. If your goal is comfort and a good position, and why shouldn't it be?, then flatten out the slope

When we size you for a Rivendell or Heron, we take all this into account, even though the word "triangle" may never come up in our discussions. Both frames are designed to let you achieve a good position triangle, without resorting to rocket-to-the-moon stems.

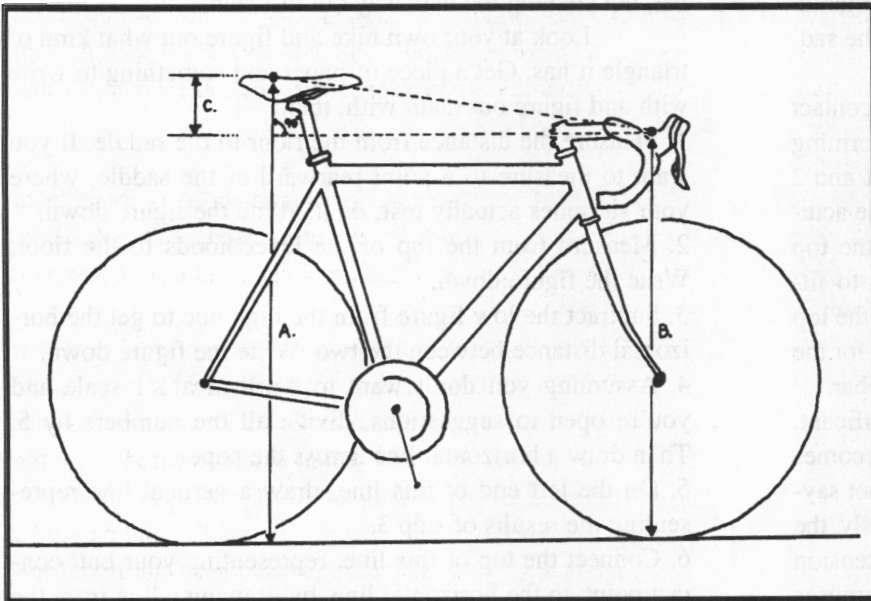
When you shop for a bike in a bike shop, there are two things you can do to achieve the best possible triangle (and the most comfort). The following advice may contradict local expert advice, but we're sticking to it:

- 1) Buy the biggest frame you can comfortably straddle. This is the bike that'll let you get the bars highest, relative to the saddle.
- 2) If the stem doesn't allow you to get the bars within a few centimeters of the saddle height, prepare to buy another stem. Don't expect the shop to switch stems for free. It's a pain, especially with cork tape and aero cable routing.

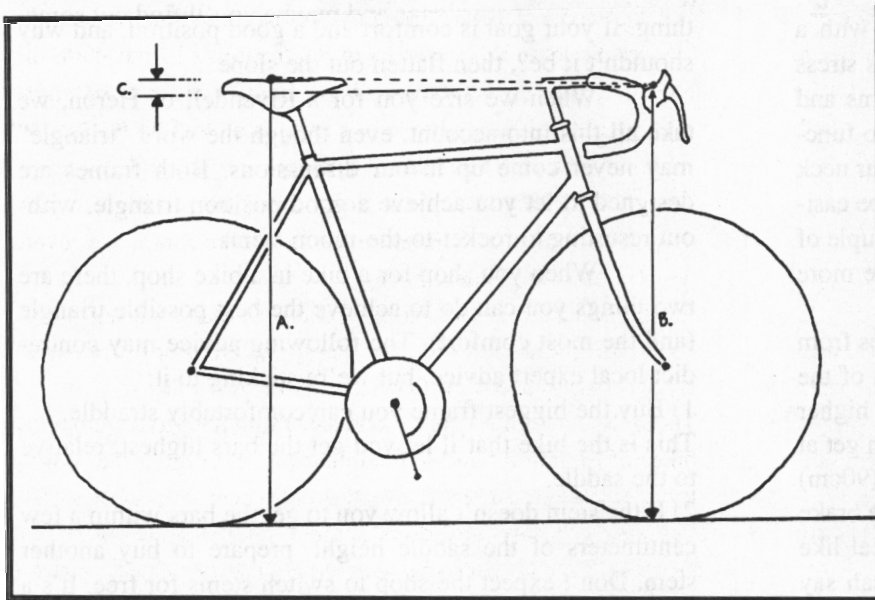
**Pictures on the next page.**

## TRIANGLES, SLOPES, COMFORT (A BAD EXAMPLE AND A GOOD ONE)

see text on page 21



**Fig. 1.** This is a sketch of a modern road bike, with small frame, high saddle, low bars, and resulting steeply sloped triangle. Drawn from an actual catalogue photo, *so* the proportions are accurate. Notice how your weight will fall onto your hands and **arms**. It forces you into a low-back position, and the only way around it is to lock your **arms** out straight. The drops are way too far below the saddle, and rather than offering another useful riding position, when they're that low, all they're good for is a hand-perch for when you need to get the brakes. Stems which allow little **or** no vertical adjustment exacerbate the problem. This **is** what's wrong with the modern road bike.



**Fig. 2** This is an improvement. The contact point triangle has a flatter top, and on this bike you'll be more relaxed, with less weight on your hands and **arms**.

How far below the saddle should the top of the bars **be**? It depends on a lot of things, but as a general rule, we like to see the bars level with the saddle on sub-55cm frames. From 55 to 58cm, get them within a centimeter (and level here is okay, too). On larger frames, the difference can be more, since taller male riders have longer **arms**. If you're a woman with either short arms or a short torsoe, try to get the bars within a centimeter of the saddle on any frame.

 WIDGET REVIEW I 

# CHRIS KELLY'S TAKEOFFS

**M**ANY OF YOU-ALL ARE RELUCTANTLY DRAWN to Ergo and STI, even though you know the drawbacks—high cost, lack of versatility, weak 8-9 speed wheels, and to a certain extent, you want the convenience of shifters-near-brakes. Chris Kelly, an Oakland, Ca. framebuilder and tinkerer, invented gizmos (Takeoffs) that are 90 to 120 percent as convenient as either Ergo or STI and have **NONE** of the drawbacks. They're smart and clever, and rely heavily on existing technology (downtube shifters!) to achieve a unique, yet instantly familiar function. I sincerely wish I'd invented them, and I sincerely think these are cycling's best-kept secret. (I am a sincere man from the Land of the Palm Trees. <—Name that tune.) Takeoffs are curved hollow steel tubes welded on one end to a tube that slips around the handlebar, and on the other end to a downtube shifter bosses, a lot like the ones that go on a frame. There's a left and a right. And there are a couple stainless steel tunnels that guide the cables in nice, kinkless arcs on their way to the cable-stop adapters, which they also come with, that fit over your frame's downtube shifter bosses.

I first saw these about six years ago when Chris brought them by Bstone. I med them on his bike and found them awkward. He said he was still trying to nail the position. I didn't give them much thought for a few years, and then a couple months ago a friend stopped by with his bike, a cyclo-cross Rivendell, and he had the latest version on, and he said "try these." This time, not awkward. **Damn!** I found myself liking something that was actually sort of new. My world shook, my legs quivered, I coughed a lot, and gazed up at the cosmos.

Takeoffs slide up under the loosened brake lever body, then you tighten them in place. A blob of welding rod keeps them from slipping out from behind the lever.

They work with any downtube shifters, and even Shimano bar-end shifters.

You can shift from any of at least three hand positions: There are at least two convenient ways to make any shift. Knock the lever with your knuckle, lift it with your pointer or middle finger, use your thumb, whatever. In shifting with Takeoffs, you'll discover fingers you never knew you had. I have aver-

age sized hands, and had no problem accessing the levers, ever, in any position. Big handed people will find them even easier. Small handed people will find them easy enough. And for one-armed riders (we have at least one), Kelly makes a special model. **Go, Chris!**

**UPSHIFTING** to the top to gears mid-sprint is easier with **ERGO**, but not by much. On the other hand, double-up-shifts are a common problem with Ergo levers, and it won't happen with these.

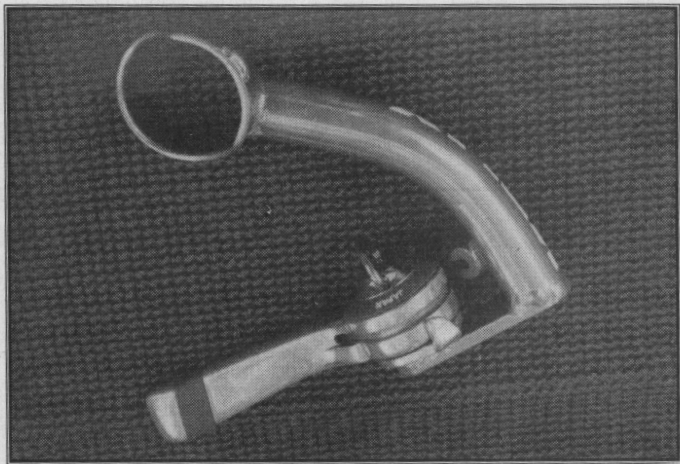
The mounts sort of get in the way of your normal climbing grip. You just have to modify your grip, that's all. It plain doesn't feel as good as a regular brake lever (which in this case includes STI/Ergo), but it's a small deal compared to all the other good things. I can't find any fault with these.

They make most shifts easier. Like downtubes and bar-ends, they give you a visual indication of what gear you're in (neither STI nor Ergo does that). Because they use downtube shifters, they offer a friction option and all the control and versatility that comes with that. Compared to **STI** and Ergo, they're much cheaper, and may even use shifters you already have.

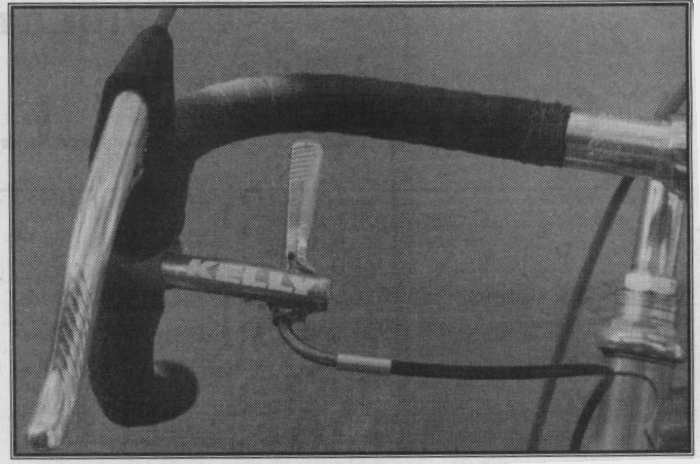
If I were the least bit tempted by STI/Ergo, I'd put on these. I am not the least bit interested in STI/Ergo, and I put them on one bike, anyway. For me and the riding I do and the stubbornness than I have, they don't replace downtube shifters or bar-ends. But they're right in the same league, and if you've got a couple bikes and want to **try** these, be prepared to like them. You can see them at [www.kellybike.com](http://www.kellybike.com), and even more photos on the next page.

To the horrors of some and the relief of others, we sell them. They fit right in, make tons of sense, and are proof that something doesn't have to be 20 years old for us to like it.

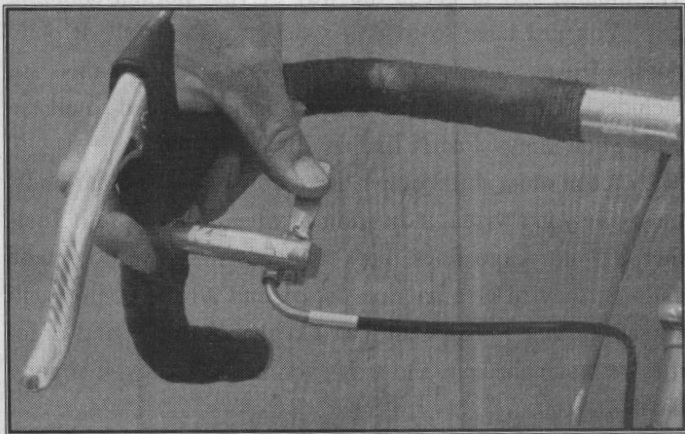
These days, the big parts makers are trying hard to develop the bikes of the future, and the emphasis is on purging the industry of existing technology. **So**, it is really neat to see a small fry like **Chris** Kelley introduce something that's **so** smart, so affordable, **so** pro-user, that uses existing parts in such an intelligent way. If you want the convenience of Ergo or STI, but don't want the drawbacks, get Takeoffs. (See the Flyer.)



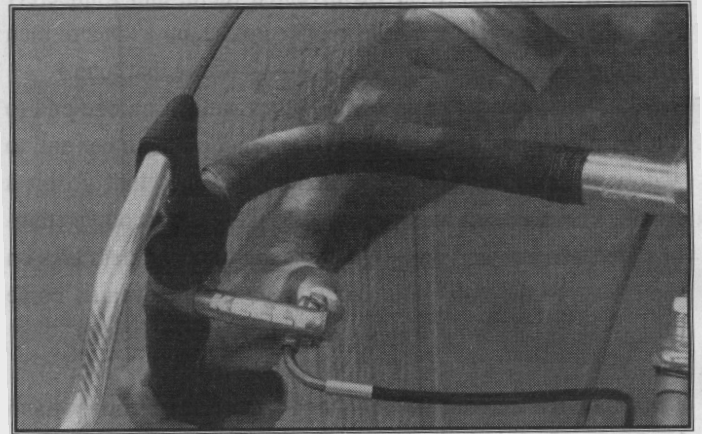
Mounted with a SunTour Superbe **Pro No LAT** shifter. Takeoffs weigh 4.5oz (128g) per pair.



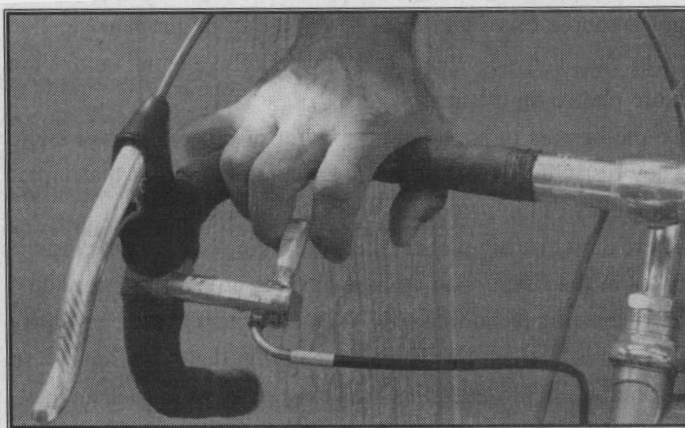
Front view of SunTour **Sprint/TakeOff**, Lever is in the full up (small cog/high gear) position.



Downshifting is easy. The picture makes it look harder than it is. From this hand position, you can get all but the upper **two** cogs.

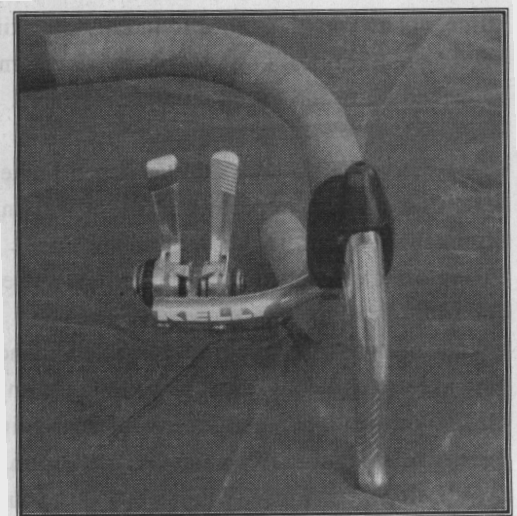


To reach the two largest cogs, drop down here and push with your thumb. **Or** you can just grab it like a regular downtuber, and push down. Simple!



Pulling the lever **UP** to upshift. Hand relaxed, all the time in the world to shift. This is one of five-to-ten ways to upshift with Takeoffs.

One of our customers is left handed only, and currently **uses** a bar-end shifter and a stem shifter. He's testing these. Report in the next RR.





# STRINGING BARS

BY LARRY BAUER

MANY MOONS AGO I SPOKE TO LARRY BAUER OF FT. WORTH, TEXAS, AND SINCE I'D HEARD HE'S BEEN STRING-WRAPPING BARS FOR TWENTY YEARS PLUS, I ASKED HIM TO WRITE A SHORT PIECE ABOUT THAT. HE ASKED "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?" AND I SAID "HOW IT ALL HAPPENED, AND SO FORTH." HERE IT IS, ALONG WITH SOME COMPARATIVE TESTING. —*LB*

**T**he first bicycle I ever saw with string-wrapped handlebars was Wade Halabi's track bike, when Wade and I raced for Yale in 1969. As he had bought his road bike in Milan, I assume Wade got the C.N.C. in France. Wherever he got it, it's kraft-color string on his piste bars looked great against its silver frame. I promised myself then that I would string my own handlebars.

Having made that promise, with my usual alacrity, I first strung my own handlebars in 1976 when I found a spool of 1/8-inch nylon rope. It was white but looked good on my blue road and black track bikes. Dirty and scuffed, the string lasted a 'dozen years.

More recently I discovered a stash of 1940's lockstitch—waxed, kraft-color twine which was used to bundle telephone wires before those little plastic cable-ties were invented. The lockstitch looks good on my lavender Paramount and brown Super Sport rain bike.

For color, though, I use mason's line in hot pink and bright yellow, from Home Depot. Nylon, it wipes kind of clean with a damp cloth, and falls scuff it, but it doesn't tear. The lockstitch is durable, too, Although each side of the bar takes me almost an hour, my five bikes won't need new string for a long time.

AND NOW...ONLY FROM RIVENDELL...THE WORLD'S FIRST

## STRING-WRAP SHOOTOUT

FEW THINGS FEEL AS GOOD IN YOUR HAND AS ROPE, FEW THINGS ARE AS FUN TO RIDE AS A BICYCLE, AND YOU CAN COMBINE THESE TWO HEAVEN-SENT THINGS ON YOUR OWN PERSONAL BICYCLE. HERE'S HOW, AND WITH WHAT, AND HOW IT WORKS. IF YOU DISCOVER ANOTHER WRAP THAT WORKS AS WELL OR BETTER,

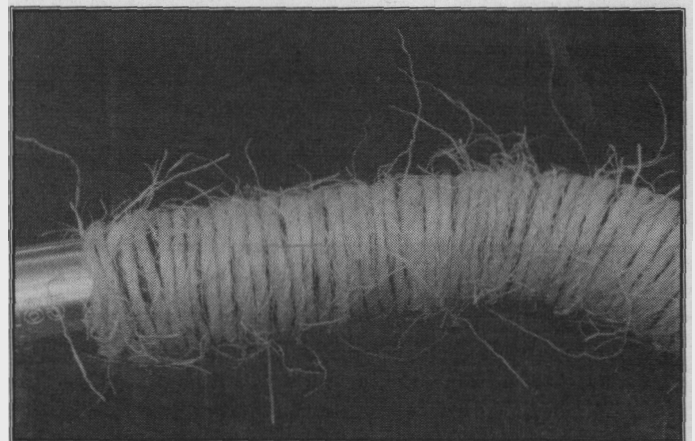
PLEASE SEND A PHOTO AND AN EXPLANATION OF WHY YOU LIKE IT. *Please keep it brief!*

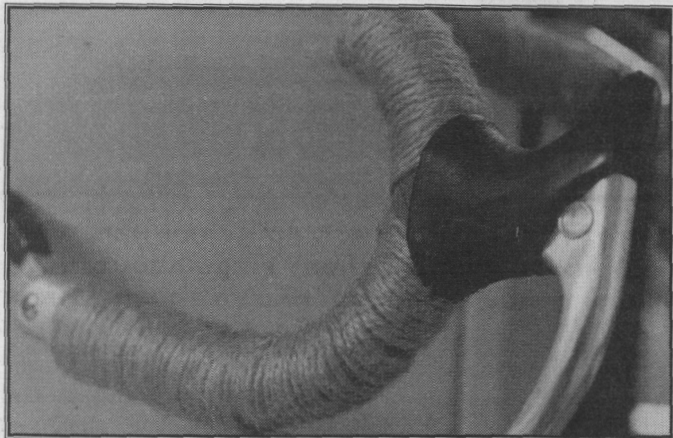
**1. SISAL TWINE.** This is the frizzy cheap stuff we've all seen a thousand places doing a thousand things. Every hardware store has large spools of it, and it's cheap—I paid \$7.70 for a 2500 ft spool. That's *so* cheap, I'm buying another one.

**Pro:** Feels great—bristly, masculine, grippy, and just thick enough to help out a little. You can ride it on a hot day with sweaty, gloveless hands and it doesn't get slimy.

**Con:** Look how nasty it looks. I rode this up the mountain and hoped I didn't run into any cheerleaders. It would be great, though, wrapped over an inner tube (see p. 26, 27), as a substitute for rubber grips on mtn bikes and three speeds.

**Color:** A light. tusky vanilla.



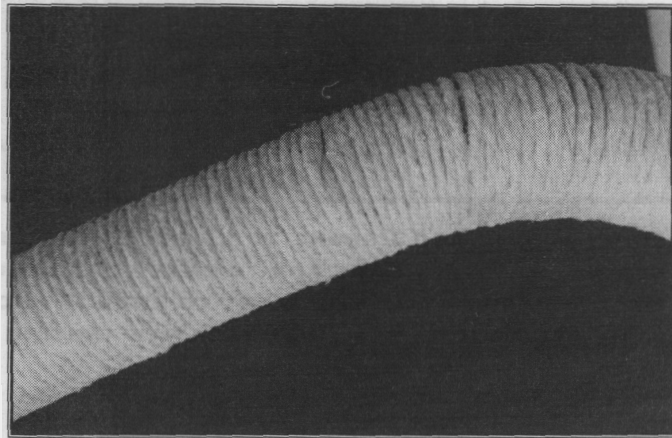


**2. JUTE.** The thin, cheap, furry-brown string also known as “common household jute.” Available at hardware, grocery, and stationery stores. About **140** feet per bar.

**Pro:** Easy to wrap, **fills** spaces nicely, available in different diameters; get the big, two-plyjute if you can.

**Con:** It gets wet with sweat easily. That’s not a good look.

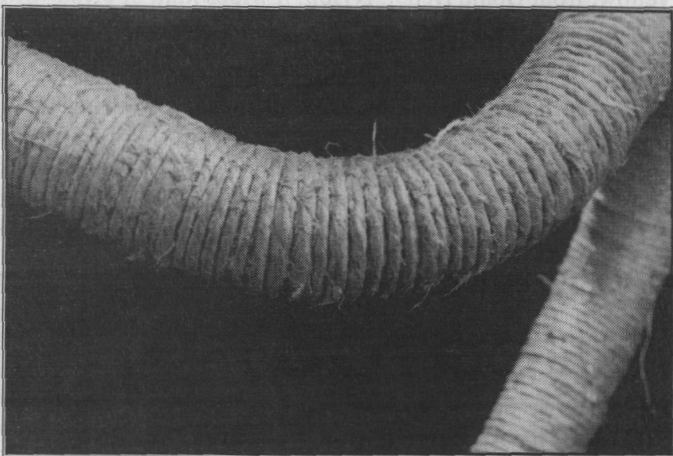
**Color:** Buffy brown.



**4. BUTCHER’S TWINE.** Soft, white, and all cotton. Strong enough to satisfy the most demanding butcher.

**Pro:** It’s a good diameter, wraps easy, forgives flubs, **fills** gaps well. A good beginner’s wrap.

**Con:** It shows dirt sooner than anything, *so* it needs shellac right off the bat. Not to imply that “needing shellac” is a drawback. The “showing dirt” part is.

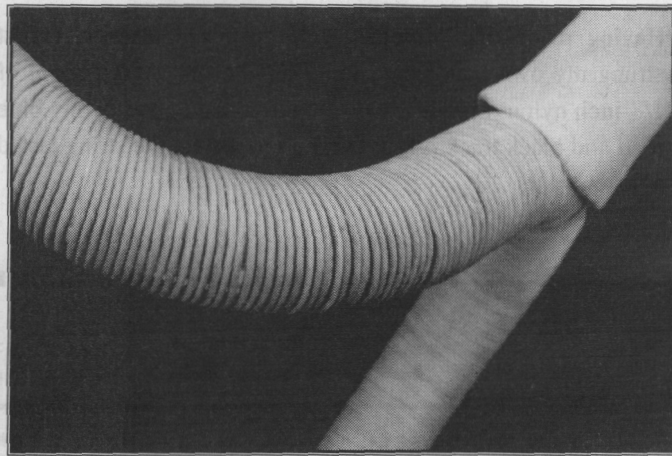


**3. HEMP.** Made from the marijuana plant, and illegal to grow in the U.S., so this is imported from Hungary. 130 feet **per** bar.

**Pro:** Feels good, and it’s kind of neat to think you’re grabbing something that was once growing in some field **in** Hungary. Available in various widths.

**Con:** Dusty, greyish brown, sort of a cross between wet rolled newspaper and dreadlocks. Shellac improves it.

**Color:** Dull greyish brown. Shellac improves it immensely.



**5. STITCH-LOCK.** Telephone linemen in the 1950s used this, and Larry Bauer still does. I don’t know whether or not it’s still available. Surely one of you is a telephone co. employee and can tell us. About 150 feet per bar.

**Pro:** It **looks** terrific and feels fine. It’s waxy, so you get a good grip. They don’t make cord like this anymore—it’s just the finest, neatest, strongest cord I’ve seen. Tidy.

**Con:** None unless you’d rather grab something that feels ropey. **This** feels waxy.

#### TIPS

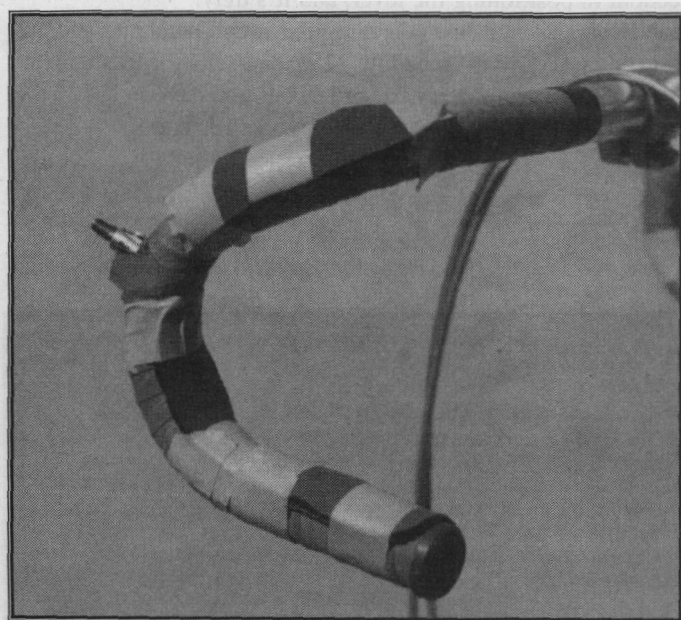
String doesn’t wrap well over the brake lever bar clamp, and spreads **out** in the curve, *so* tape that area with cotton bar tape. That way, you won’t have shiny metal showing through.

Other idea, just thought of, not tried, but how can it not work?: String your bars, then wrap cotton bar tape over the string. The diameter will increase (not a terrible thing), and the texture might be interesting. If **you** try this, let us know how it works.

# HANDLEBAR HELPER III

## THE BAD OBSESSION CONTINUES

In the old days, bikes were shipped to bike shops with bare bars, and it was up to the shop to wrap them with the adhesive-backed cotton. European bikes got Tressostar or Chimiplast, Japanese bikes got Cat-Eye, the Japanese cloth. Wrapping the bars was the most time-consuming single operation in the whole build, and half the guys in the shop couldn't do a decent job. So dealers begged bike makers to wrap the bars themselves, at which point they jettisoned the hard-to-wrap cloth tape and went to easy-to-wrap, padded and tapered, foamy leatherette types. These are quick and easy to wrap, they absorb shock and sweat, and they can be had in any unnatural color and combo you like or don't. That's why we don't like them! (A feeble joke, there, not without some basis in truth.) Anyway, you, on your bike, have more time to spend on your bars. What's 45 minutes if it lasts for months-to-years? Besides, with all the various cotton colors, and weaving, and so many tinted shellacs, and so many natural twines, there are at least eight hundred variations, all of which can turn an otherwise off-the-floor clone into a one-of-a-kind. If you like the feel of cotton or twine, but want some of the cushion of the modern wraps, you can make that happen, too.



### ADD PADS

Cut up a Spenco insole, or buy a square foot of 5mm neoprene from Rivendell (woven coconut husks were out of stock). Padding the outside of the bar above the brake lever makes a good platform and doesn't look terrible. Padding behind the brake lever makes it more comfortable on steep, off-road descents.

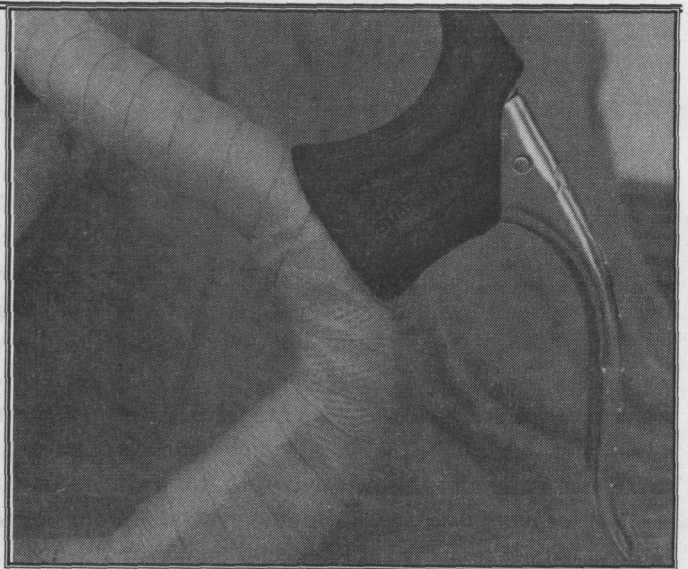
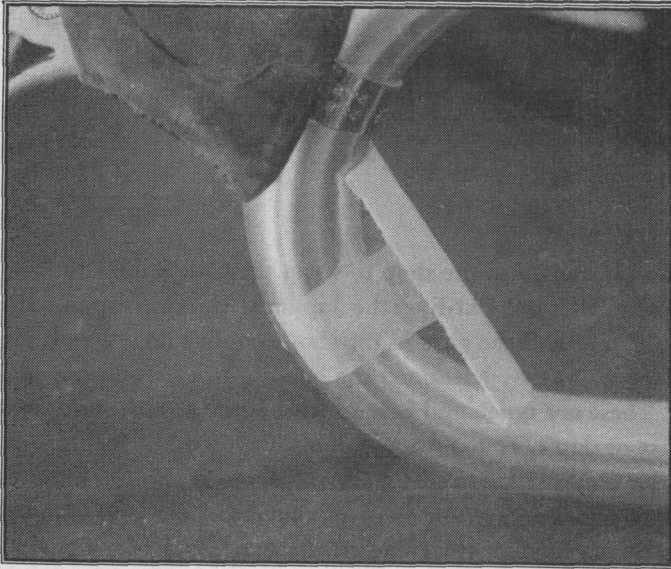
### Warning

Don't take all these suggestions to mean that we think an unmodified bar with a single wrap of tape is somehow lacking. No! Sometimes, especially during the winter, it's just fun to play around with your bike, and if you play around with these and find one that works for you, good.



### RECYCLE POPPED INNER TUBES

Wrap an old inner tube over a bare bar, then wrap cloth tape over it. You get a fatter wrap that's more cushy than two rolls of cloth, a little heavier, cheaper, and faster to unwrap when that day comes. This is not a new trick. It's not a trick at all!

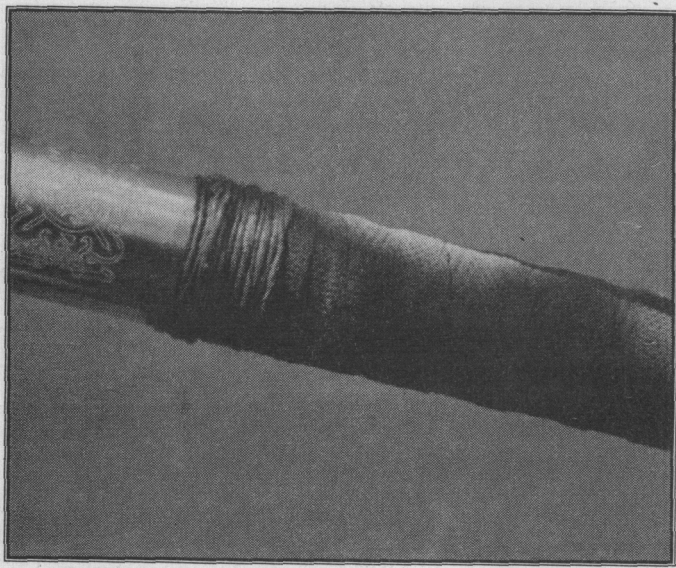


#### MODOLO, SCHMODOLO

The ubiquitous Modolo-style bar, invented by Modolo and copied by others, has good and bad points.

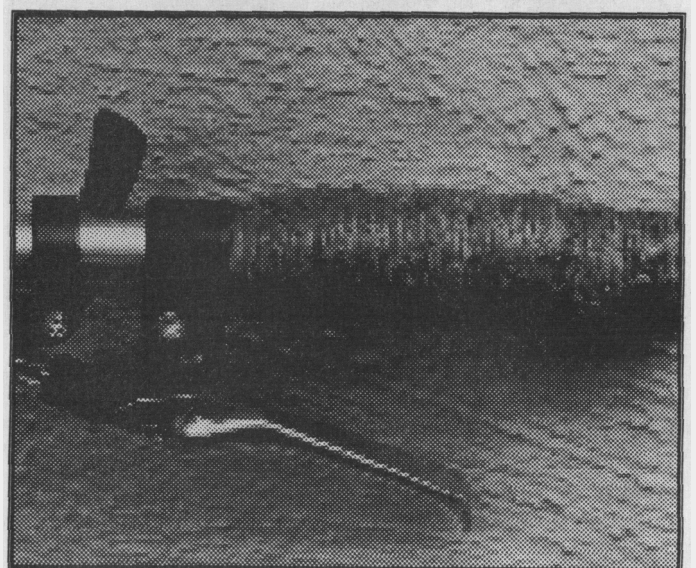
Good: More contact. Bad : You don't have as much freedom in positioning the lever, and it's ugly.

Home-made offers all the good without the bad, and works on Moustache H'bars as well. Just take a regular round bend and add a 2 to 2 1/4-inch half-round cut from plastic (pvc) or metal tubing. The best (thinnest) pvc is "schedule 125," and sells for less than a dime a foot, and as long as we have some, we'll give you a free 3-inch or so section with every bar order, but you have to ask. In the two photos above, the insert is positioned differently. Experiment before wrapping, see what works for you.



#### ELECTRICAL TAPE, SCHMELECTRICAL TAPE

The most savoir faire way to finish off your bar wrap is with fine twine, and the hemp we sell is the best we've seen. Of course, if you string your bars, finish the ends with cloth tape, instead.



#### RUBBER GRIPS, SCHMUBBER GRIPS

Maybe this is going too far, but it works. Fashion a cigar-shaped grip by wrapping twine over a bar bar or an inner tube wrapped on the grip. Scares off thieves.

# LETTERS

WE CAN'T PRINT ALL LETTERS OR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS, AND BUT IF YOU SEND IN A STORY AND IT DOESN'T FIT IN THE READER TEMPLATE, WE MAY RUN IT IN THE LETTERS COLUMN. I WANT OUR LETTERS COLUMN TO BE INTERESTING AND VARIED, AND THE LETTERS DON'T HAVE TO PERTAIN TO ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR. — GRANT

## SEPARATING THE MEN FROM THE BOYS, RUSSIAN STYLE

Dear Mr. Petersen

We would like to offer you pure natural beeswax. Beeswax specification is given below. If you are interested in our offer we would appreciate an answer from you. Please inform your price idea. We offer it in sacks of 30kg slabs.

Best regards,  
Nadir Zagidullin  
Mari El Republic, Russia

**(He must have looked up Beeswax on the web, and found our site). To which I replied that I'd take one sackworth—30kg—and could I pay by Visa or Mastercard or foreign draft, and could they ship to me on my UPS account, or by how? And got back this reply:**

Dear Mr. Petersen.

Thank you for your fax. Unfortunately we can't send you the 30kg of beeswax. The volume is too small. The minimum amount we send is 16 tons. But: We would really appreciate if you help us to find companies that may need beeswax. We offer you to be our partner and get some percent of a deal.

Best regards,  
Nadir Zagidullin.

Dear Mr. Zagidullin,

*Your beeswax costs the same as American beeswax. I was interested in it for the novelty value of having Russian beeswax. In America, if a beeswax supplier had minimums of 16 tons, nobody would buy. I would like to get a percent of a deal, but I am pretty sure that nobody in this country will want to buy 16 tons at one time.*

**BEEN HERE, HEARD THAT, ONWARD HO!**

Editor:

I am a recently lapsed subscriber. I'm not replying right now because I think I've pretty much heard what Rivendell (or Grant) has to say — so I don't need a catalogue. Rivendell literature (and my one time test rides of Bstones) has succeeded in getting me to think I want to mail order a frame (Heron Touring or Long Low). Buying a frame unriden is what you do when you trust a custom builder to deliver a bike you really want, mail order is

not so different. A lugged steel frame is such a known quantity, compared to the Un-iron, that if you trust the producer you can be confident of the result. You either already know, or not, how a low BB, etc. rides.

Up to a point Anti-Marketing generates trust, though afterwards, confusion. I think I get what you are after in the bicycle, however, I think the goodness of your proposition is getting a bit lost in the Retro-Jive. It isn't truly defensible to build up a new bike with parts the buyer isn't likely to find compatible replacements for. Though it's OK for you to opine that these parts are so virtuous that they are worth the trouble and to use those old parts as emblems for classic virtues.

I think you erred in both practical terms and marketing message in associating good bikes with old parts. While you have gone into a business of finding and selling retro parts, and it may have seemed reasonable to send bikes to magazines built-up to represent the Rivendell gestalt, It amazes me that you would send those reviewers bicycles that they do not know how to ride! Knowing you are forcing them to waste ink and their meager attention spans on Simplex or large flanges or god knows.

So here's tip, when you send Herons to the magazines and bike shops, forget about HALF-STEPPING etc. for goodness sake — send those Herons out with 27 Speed Campy 98 <Ergo! ofcourse, no DT or bar-ends!> Veloce. so the reviewers can focus on the bikes and say what great rides and values they are. (Triples for Idiots? sorry, count me in. I can't futz around finding derailleurs that don't exist and w/o Ergo/STI don't want 'em.)

In general I think Rivendell should refocus on the Virtues and Values and not the Retro per se. As an example: I wore out a Brooks Pro. but I would never consider going back to Brooks from my Regal Sospensione (Full saddle not a cut-away, with Pirelli "engine mount" bumpers — it even has Rivets!) or Turbomatic. The Regal and Turbo are staples of the Euro peloton but can't be seen today in bike stores — dunno why. If seats are really such matter of individual preference why do all those Pro butts agree with mine? Could it just be that a full saddle with a nose of reasonable width is a "correct" design that can't be improved on for the sake of "new" models? I have 3 sets of sew-up wheels — their ain't no single source that I know of

for a wide selection of sew-up tires (especially Fat ones; Cross, Utmost, CDM)— for the first time in my life, I'm actually considering that my next sew-up rebuild convert to clinchers. My point is that there are parts that are neither old nor old-fashioned that deserve and need Rivendell evangelism — and might make a better business to catalog and market.

Another place where Retro is hurting Rivendell is the Web site. I'm sure you've been told what an opportunity the Web is for a company like Rivendell — but the web site seems to be a republishing afterthought.

Obviously it costs next to nothing to publish frequently on the Web. The Readers should be a consolidation and synthesis of what appears on the Web not the reverse. The Web solves the 4-color publishing problem: you can do all you want — every lug, every day, whatever I'd set up a standard and attractive way of photographing every built-up bike you ship and put images of each bike on your site so people can SEE Rivendells and how people buy them. In your parts business you seem to be dealing in small and opportunistic purchases. How are your potential buyers supposed to find out about your finds? Call you up? On your web site you can even talk about things you are thinking of buying: Would we be interested? And get a timely answer. For that matter for people who are insane about Record Cobalto, you could auction the 3 pair you find in granny's attic. I suppose your Web expertise is a bit remote from the company judging by the site. Take baby-steps. Start with those pictures. Make it instantaneous publishing from the shop floor. You've got a great package for the Web. An Editorial concept, a voice, a publication, a product, a service, a community of grouches spread all over the world — The Web is the place to make it flourish.

gottapo.

M. Michael Burruss

Dear Michael,

*Thank you for taking the time to write that nice and long letter. When we send a bike to the magazines, we generally ask them what they want on it. And, generally, they're tired of the same old new stuff, and most are familiar with the stuff we have, and they think that would represent what Rivendell is about more than the new stuff, so they say, in almost these exact words, SEND THE OLD STUFF. I don't fault you for not knowing*

that, since you aren't in a position to know. Adventure Cycling is testing a Heron Touring frame. The reviewer, John Schubert, specifically asked for half-step, and non-aero cables. Anyway, that's the story on that.

I think you may have been referring to the Bicycle Guide bike, where they routed the toe straps wrong and showed that photo. The mechanic who built it goofed, and the young rider who rode it didn't know, but those were the parts requested. I can't recall any other incidents of riders not knowing how to operate our bikes. Another point perhaps worth making is that on some level it makes sense for us to equip bikes with the parts we like and sell. Importers who distribute Italian frames and parts don't send them to the magazines with Japanese or French parts. We, at least, offer to equip the bikes with contemporary parts, and are routinely resoundly rejected—for the reasons stated above.

You think we should focus on the "virtues and values, and not retro per se." I agree, and Z think we're doing that. In the stuff Z write, you can count on it. The "retro" label is not one I'm comfortable with, personally, and if you're familiar with our catalogue and Reader, you know we don't carry a hot and heavy torch for "retro-ness." People sometimes grasp things more quickly when they come with a label, but I've always tried to 'splain the "virtues and values" in sufficient detail to drown out the label. Zf Buddy Holly were alive today and still wearing the same thick, black-frame glasses we know him for, he'd surely be labeled "retro," and he'd feel weird about the label. That's how I feel when the name is applied to either me or Rivendell. Except for a brief fling with Shimano Dynadrive pedals, I've never ridden any other stuff. I know it works, Z prefer selling the stuff I (and others here) feel passionate about. Peter here feels the same way. He worked for a big bike company for a long time before landing here, all the while riding an early '80s Tomassini with Nuovo Record. His dropout broke ten years ago and he got it rewelded. He's not "retro," but he fits in here just great, and his enthusiasm for the bicycle business has been revived. The point I'm trying to make is that all of us here are here because we like the things we're selling. Maybe we could do better as a business if we expanded our offerings, but as a small company, we can't do everything, so we stick with what we know and like.

About selling/promoting parts that, in a few years, you won't be able to get replacements for: I am a little baffled by your comment, but I think I probably misread or misinterpreted it. We like parts with longevity, and have made every effort to carry them. Paging through our catalogue will reinforce that.

Saddles. Everyone gravitates to what works

for them. Peter here rides a Turbo and loves it, but is also comfortable on a B.17. I can't ride a Turbo two miles without wondering why they ever let it out of the factory. We sell heavy leather saddles to ultralight fanatics who have finally found something comfy. Most bike shops and mail order places carry an array of saddles, but no Brooks. So we carry no array and only Brooks. As far as what the pros ride—I think it's been many moons since any pro has purchased his or her own saddle, and pros are lightweights who sit very lightly on saddles, anyway. I'm not saying they hate their saddles, just that a 150 lb rider in a flat-back position and pushing hard on the pedals exerts little pressure on the penile artery.

The web site needs recharging, I agree. Steven S. has done a terrific job of it, with little time and materials to work with, but now he's working full time again, and we need to get it here so we keep it updated every few weeks. We have been working on it, and as soon as the new catalogue is out, we'll put that up there, with more pix, too. It's [www.rivendellbicycles.com](http://www.rivendellbicycles.com), and if you look at it now, you'll see it's different.

We're lucky that you care enough about Rivendell to write. The business is what it is, and we try to do good work, and we always try to do better. We may not make every move you'd make, but we make the ones we're comfortable with. —GP

Searching for the Shoes of Dreams  
In RR12 we complained about the shortage of good uncleaned cycling shoes, and asked you to tell us what you use and like. Here are some responses.

Editor:

The shoes I use which are no longer made (in Taiwan) are Avocet Cross M40. They have a hard rubber molded in "cleat" that is at sole level (doesn't protrude) and is therefore fabulously walkable but still grabs the pedal cage. They are well made having lasted me for 6 years so far. The sole is stiff with a boxy toe section, the upper is airy purple mesh and grey suede leather (smooth black leather would be better). Lace up. Overall, a great commuting and touring shoe. Resurrect them! Between Avocet and the factory that made them, somebody must have the design specs and tooling. If I could find these NOS somewhere in size 11 (they run a size big), I'd buy 10 pair to last me until I reach the big peloton in the sky.

Wayne Pein

Editor:

I'm still riding in Nike touring shoes, the ones with the little yellow (*le petite livre*—ed) circle on the bottom, with slots to grab the pedals. I bought two pair of these four or five years ago on a close-out from Nashbar. I wish I'd purchased ten pair. They are so comfortable; like wearing slippers, yet stiff enough to not cause pain on the balls of my feet after 50+ miles. I'd wear regular tennis shoes or walking

shoes if I didn't have that problem. I used to love the blue Cannondale touring shoes. Specialized made some nice touring shoes about eleven years ago. Of course, I had a pair of leather Detto shoes in the '60s, with a leather cleat. After that it was the Bata Bikers, Avocets—you name it. I've tried it. I have a pair of Shimanos, but the way the sole is configured makes it difficult to enter toe clips. I'll not give up my clips and straps at this point. I don't know what I'll do once my Nikes give out.

—Cathy Dion, Calistoga, CA

Editor:

After reading your bit in the Reader about Jeffery traditional English touring shoes I called and spoke to Mr Jeffery and then decided to order a pair. The price is 45 GBP plus 15 GBP shipping. I got an international draft from my bank, traced around my feet onto two pieces of paper, and sent the whole works off to England. I was surprised when the shoes arrived less than two weeks later. They are just as you said they would be, black waxed leather, thin leather sole, small heel, and nice roomy toe box. They fit my wide feet nicely and they are very light weight. I wore them to ride my bike just a couple of blocks but the slippery leather sole felt odd (kinda insecure) so they are now at the shoe shop having a thin layer of rubber glued onto the soles. The man said I could have them back in two days and then I'll go riding in them. They come only in whole sizes and it seems that you just need to order one size smaller than your American size. Since I wear a half-size mine were a hit loose until I put a pair of foam insoles into them. Thus far they seem ideal for my purposes but I need to ride with them awhile and then I'll know. —Name lost in e-space!

Editor, here are some cleatless shoes I like:

**1. Adidas Samba, c.\$60?** This is the soccer version of a shoe Adidas has made for years, for various activities: basketball, tennis, coaching, hemp awareness, etc. It is simply-made, has lots of room for toes, and, compared to most sneakers, is not gaudy. I will walk a mile in them, but not five miles. For rides of 10-20 miles, any lack of "stiffness" is not a problem.

**2. LL Bean Maine hunting shoe, from \$69** This practical boot for wet or cold conditions fits into my medium-toe-clips easily.

Do you notice that as society grows more sedentary, sneakers become more specialized and over-engineered? When I was little, in the late Fifties and early Sixties, whole families wore pretty much the same kind of simple, lace-up canvas oxfords, the kind Sperry still makes for men (the CVO), and Keds for women. One wore either these, or a haskethall sneaker, but where I lived, they all were called tennis shoes, even though nobody played tennis. The same kind of shoe mowed lawns, raked leaves, ran the bases, chased toddlers, pedaled bikes, caught dripping paint, pattered down the aisles of Craftsman tools, slipped into the ditch your mother told you to steer

clear of, and ran to fish the wayward child out of the ditch. They foretold the coming of liberation when they replaced "hard shoes" during the last weeks at school. The smell of rubber and canvas, new in the box, conjurs spring for me. I still wear that kind of lace-up canvas oxfords, and my six-year-old daughter does, too, but my son is eight, and boys that old are too jaded for such simple shoes, preferring the high-tech wares hawked by NBA stars. Bring on the platform pedals, and let's keep the Mr. Rogers look alive and pedalling.—Chris Barbour

*Rivendell note: I've contacted three former makers of these shoes, and none wants to resurrect them. We'll plug away. In the meantime, try the combination of a platform pedal with any sneaker with a flattish sole. On the issue of sole stiffness, I think it's more a comfort issue than it is an efficiency one. A pedal designed for cleated/hard soled shoes will poke your foot if you ride in beach thongs or Chuck Taylors, but if you wear the same shoes and ride platform pedals, there's no problem whatsoever. The rear-shoe flexibility can't make pedaling inefficient, since your foot won't follow the shoe, and fore-shoe flexibility can't matter, because the pedal itself provides support. So it all boils down to how much the pedal hugs you through the shoe, and platform pedals, because of their design, are almost barefootable. On the other hand, the all-leather English touring shoes from Reynolds and T. Jeffrey are practically as comfortable as sneakers, and you can use them on any pedals. Reynolds shoes take forever to get. My T. Jeffreys arrived in two weeks.—Grant*

#### ARE SMOOTH TIRES SLICK?

I am enjoying the new catalog, but I need to point something out that's bugging me.

The descriptions of the Avocet tires emphasize that they are the "best dry-road cornering" tires. I don't disagree, but the implication in the repeated use of "dry" is that they are poor in the wet because of their smooth tread, which is completely untrue. It's a myth that won't die.

Patterned tread does absolutely nothing for a tire ridden on the road in the wet — smooth tread is superior in both wet and dry.

The following is a FAQ entry about smooth-treaded tires which I would like you to read. It is written by Johst Brandt, who can explain it better than I can.

Karl

SUBJECT: **8.70 TIRES WITH SMOOTH TREAD**  
Johst Brandt

Drag racers first recognized the traction benefits of slick tires, whose benefit they could readily verify by elapsed times for the standing start quarter mile. In spite of compelling evidence of improved traction, more than twenty years passed before slicks were commonly used for racing cars, and another twenty before they reached racing motorcycles. Today, slicks are used in all weather by most

street motorcycles. In spite of this, here at the end of the millennium, 100 years after John Dunlop invented the pneumatic tire for his own bicycle, bicyclists have not yet accepted smooth tread.

Commercial aircraft, and especially motorcycles, demonstrate that a round cross section tire, like the bicycle tire, has an ideal shape to prevent hydroplaning. The contact patch, a pointed canoe shape, displaces water exceptionally well. In spite of this, hydroplaning seems to be a primary concern for riders who are afraid to use smooth tires. After assurances from motorcycle and aircraft examples, slipperiness on wet pavement appears as the next hurdle.

Benefits of smooth tread are not easily demonstrated because most bicycle riders seldom ride near the limit of traction in either curves or braking. There is no simple measure of elapsed time or lean angle that clearly demonstrates any advantage, partly because skill among riders varies greatly. However, machines that measure traction show that smooth tires come better on both wet and dry pavement. In such tests, other things being equal, smooth tires achieve greater lean angles while having lower rolling resistance.

Tread patterns have no effect on surfaces in which they leave no impression. That is to say, if the road is harder than the tire, a tread pattern does not improve traction. That smooth tires have better dry traction is probably accepted by most bicyclists, but wet pavement still appears to raise doubts even though motorcycles have shown that tread patterns do not improve wet traction.

A window-cleaning squeegee demonstrates this effect well. Even with a new sharp edge, it glides effortlessly over wet glass leaving a microscopic layer of water behind to evaporate. On a second swipe, the squeegee sticks to the dry glass. This example should make apparent that the lubricating water layer cannot be removed by tire tread, and that only the micro-grit of the road surface can penetrate this layer to give traction. For this reason, metal plates, paint stripes, and railway tracks are incorrigibly slippery.

Besides having better wet and dry traction, smooth tread also has lower rolling resistance, because its rubber does not deform into tread voids. Rubber being essentially incompressible, deforms like a water filled balloon, changing shape, but not volume. For a tire with tread voids, its rubber bulges under load and rebounds with less force than the deforming force. This internal damping causes the energy losses of rolling resistance. In contrast the smooth tread transmits the load to the loss-free pneumatic compliance of the tire.

In curves, tread features squirm to allow walking and ultimately, early breakout. This is best demonstrated on knobby MTB tires, some of which track so poorly that they are difficult to ride no-hands.

Although knobby wheelbarrow tires serves only to trap dirt, smooth tires may

yet be accepted there sooner than for bicycles.

Dear Karl:

Thanks for liking the catalogue, and if you sensed a less than thousand percent endorsement of smooth-treaded tires on wet surfaces, your radar's in ship shape. I've ridden smooth tires in all conditions--dry, wet, on and off road--ever since they became available. I read the explanations when they first appeared in Avocet ads, with Jobst himself wearing that blue Avocet jersey and leaning that yellow Tom Ritchey bicycle; and later with Dave MacLaughlin tearing down the wet roads somewhere up in the mountains, leaning over what appeared to be dangerously far. Forty degrees, if I remember right (but I figure the turns were well-banked.) I'm an Avocet evangelist. Also, I think Jobst is ten times smarter than me, and as much as I've ridden, he's ridden more. When Z suggest or outright say that slicks are slick on wet roads in my area, I'm just reporting my findings. It's troubling. It's like God appearing and telling me I can dive off a cliff into a rock and it'll feel like water. Z wanna believe? But going up Pinehurst or Wildcat after a rain, the rear slips. Z switch to a treaded tire the next day, and it doesn't. I go back to slick, and it does. Coming down Mt. Diablo on a wet road, I slip on slicks on turns I don't slip on with treads. These experiences frustrate me threaten my faith. It would be much more tidy if the theory matched my reality, and it's especially troubling that the pro-slick arguments continue to make sense to me. Also, I understand the unreliability of these subjective tests, and how impossible it is to control the variables in the real world. If the water is different, if I weigh more or less one day, if the rubber's not rolling over the exact same patch of asphalt, and if the bike isn't leaned exactly the same way, and with the power applied identically, then the test isn't a test at all. That's why I say "Experiment yourself; maybe your roads are different..."

On the other hand, slick road tires do surprisingly well on dirt trails. This, too, defies the theory, but I think I have an explanation. The skinnier tire doesn't float as much as a fat one. It penetrates and reaches less loose stuff underneath the fluffy topsoil. Tom Ritchey has ridden thousands of miles on 700x28 slicks (Avocet and his own), and I've ridden at least a thousand on 700x32s. I don't recommend those tires, although I know half a dozen riders who would. Jobst himself rides 700x28 Avocet slicks.

Thanks for sending the Jobst explanation. I like slicks even more now?—Grant

END



# EDWARD BERRY LIVES



## AND REPLIES TO MAYNARD

**IN RR12 MAYNARD HERSHON WROTE A COLUMN ABOUT HOW HE WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE BY READING A STORY ("HOW MANY PITS TO PITTSBURG?") WRITTEN BY EDWARD BERRY, IN AN EARLY BICYCLING. ALONG WITH MAYNARD'S COLUMN, WE ALSO REPRINTED "HOW MANY PITS TO PITTSBURG?". THE GIST OF MAYNARD'S COLUMN (TITLED "WHERE ARE YOU, EDWARD BERRY?") IS THAT HE WANTED TO THANK EDWARD FOR THE INSPIRATION. AND, SINCE MAYNARD HAD TRIED AND FAILED TO LOCATE EDWARD BERRY, WE OFFERED A \$100 RIVENDOLLAR REWARD FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO THE FINDING OF ED BERRY. AS TESTIMONY TO THE INTERGALACTED CONNECTEDNESS OF US ALL AND THE POWER OF FREE RIVENDOLLARS, IT SO HAPPENED THAT ONE OF OUR MEMBERS KNOWS MR. BERRY, AND EVEN BOUGHT HIM A SUBSCRIPTION. I HAD A NICE CONVERSATION WITH EDWARD BERRY, AND HERE IS HIS OPEN LETTER BACK TO MAYNARD. -- GRANT**

**BICYCLING HAS BROUGHT ME ENDLESS CURSES, OBSCENE gestures, vehicular and weapon assaults and all the other myriad niceties reserved for the outcast but, alas, never a bounty on my head. Thank you for completing my resume.**

Sure there were other stories. I just never managed to get them down on paper. How about the time Jim Day and I cycled five countries in one day? It was summer 1990 and the European border crossings were being dismantled. It was July 4th, and we felt it would be great to have the five stamps on our passport. The German guard didn't want to stamp them saying it was no longer necessary. Finally, he agreed. It wasn't until that evening I noticed his stamp hadn't been changed from July 3rd. Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France.... Look it up, just over 100 miles. Jim and I recrossed the border back into Luxembourg to spend the evening in a hotel. World Cup soccer was on; Germany was playing England. Everyone was rooting for England. Me too. I was going to call this story "If It's Ten O'clock, In Must be Belgium."

March 17, 1978.... Richmond, Indiana.... I'm half Irish and living between Dublin, Indiana and Dublin Ohio. Do you need a map? I've cycled up Mt. Cadillac in Maine (the place the sun first shines on in the United States each morning), across the Golden Gate Bridge, around Mackinac Island, been bitten by a Pit Bull in a 180 mile ride and organized the First Tour of the Rio Grand which attracted 1500 riders in its best years, and was finally discontinued over 20 years later when the Rotary Club couldn't grasp the concept that bicycle rides are first and foremost bicycle rides.

During the many years I lived in Albuquerque, on Christmas Eve I would find two riders to cycle to Belen, NM with me. Located 35 miles south of Albuquerque, Belen is Bethlehem in Spanish. I called it the Wise Men Ride. One year there were four of us. The

three Wise Men and Al. You would have had to ride with Al a few times to get the idea.

In 1989 I founded the Sandia Crest Bicycle Club. I'm the only member, although over the years I've had loyal support from riders such as Mike Hawver and Dave Cleland. Sandia Crest is situated a mile above already mile-high Albuquerque. Access is gained by a 13-mile paved road up the eastern side of the mountain.

By 1992 the ride to the Crest was becoming obsessive. It was a 35 mile one-way ride from my house or a 20 mile ride from the Tijeras Canyon Post Office. The area at the start of the 13 mile climb is known as The Triangle. I made up my mind I would climb the crest at least 100 times during the year. Although I made the climb as late as December 14th and as early as January 20th, it was not unusual for the snow drifts alongside the road to be 6 feet high in early April. It became evident multiple rides would be necessary. I decided the ride from The Triangle to the top would constitute one ride no matter where I started. I added double climbs in the Spring and by the summer a couple of triplets. On August 30th I was able to ride up the mountain four times in one day. I finished the year with 106 climbs.

Then I founded The Sisyphus Climbing Club. I'm the only member. As you know from Greek Mythology, Sisyphus was a greedy king doomed to roll a heavy stone uphill only to have it roll down again. By 1994 it was the only bicycle riding I was doing. Maybe subconsciously I was fighting bicycle technologies that were changing faster than Saturday morning T.V. channels controlled by a sugar-crazed kid with a remote and a box of Fruit Loops. No matter how many wondrous gadgets Shimano put on a bicycle, this was one hill they weren't going to flatten. Perhaps familiarity does breed contempt. One summer day I found myself flying down the mounting passing a tourist on a switch back. confronted by a car approaching from the opposite direction.



As I sped between the two card I realized I was in a zone ... The Stupid Zone. Before I became the ultimate dysfunctional bicyclist. I needed to find the quintessential ride. The fifth element, the perfect manifestation of a quality or thing. Fair

Pre-dawn August 25, 1994. I drive to the top of Sandia Crest. I wanted to end with a climb rather than a descent. Riding down in the chilly morning. A glorious sunset is getting its act together to the East. Later in the day, with the temperatures five degrees higher, I'm still at it. Last trip up is almost as dark as the first. I've got to tell you, about the only pure, concentrated essence of anything that was revealed to me on that ride was a can of instant Gatorade crystals.

Like my wife and friends, I'm sure you're hoping you have heard the last of Sandia Crest. The next few years found me riding up a few times, but I was developing a serious case of rider's block. In the last year, I haven't been on a bicycle. Then a friend sent me a copy of the Riverdell Reader. Where am I? I'll tell you where I am; I'm at the dictionary stand looking up irony. And I've got to tell you Maynard, the firehouse just burned down. In 1472, Bicycling magazine published my story of a transcontinental bicycle trip I made on a high wheel bicycle. I replicated Thomas Stevens' 1884 first across-America ride. I've always felt Stevens was one of America's unsung heroes. So who does Bicycling put on the cover of this issue? Some damsel coasting through the woods. So in the spirit of "I'll teach these clowns," I decided to write a parody of their stories. At the time, an innocuous little tome called How Many Hills to Hillsboro? was circulating in bicycle literary circles. Need I say more?

Over the years, I would go to the bike shop with the ruse of buying a tube, only to read your articles in Winning, or perhaps down to the newstand to open the back page of VeloNews. After reading your "Where's Ed Berry?" my quandary was what to do about my non-existent bicycle ride. Then it became clear—ride one for Maynard. I checked my frequent flyer miles, got out the map, waxed my chain and oiled my mustache. Nanty-Glo here we come. Then I opened my 1997 Rand McNally Deluxe Motor Carriers Road Atlas. There it was—not so much an epiphany: more like one of Kramer's "You'd better believe it!"s. Just southeast of Nanty Glo, a circular loop. The old-snake-swallowing-its-tail trick. How could I have missed it? A seventy-mile ride that goes through Riddlesburg and Puzzletown. Surely along that road I will find enlightenment or at least a Starbucks.

RIDE. Whether it be a noun or a verb, it is the one word the real bicyclist must heed. Thanks for reminding me. We're even. Maynard.

—Ed Berry • Corvallis, OR



### ATTENTION WEB-TYPES

We have a new and still maturing website:

[www.rivendellbicycles.com](http://www.rivendellbicycles.com)

The old one was good for us, and until recently, was largely the labor of Steven Sheffield. Thank you, Steven. We're doing it ourselves now, mainly because Steven has a full-time job AND we want to update it regularly without bugging him. So Peter's been learning how to lay out pages, and eventually I'll learn how, too. We expect to be finished with it by Halloween, but you can check out the progress (and see some pictures) right now. There's a shopping cart and as you pop stuff into it, the order form gets magically filled out, and then you can print it and mail or fax it in. Soon, the whole catalogue will be there, and we'll have twice-a-month blowouts of things we don't have enough of to list in the catalogue or even the Reader flyers.

There's also a Heron page: [www.heronbicycles.com](http://www.heronbicycles.com).

It duplicates the Heron information from RRI 1, but there are color pictures now, and more will follow.

THE WEBTHING IS NOT ANTI-THETICAL TO OUR approach to bicycles. I saves us thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars in printing and mailing costs, and lets us many more people than—well, you know the web story... Anyway, it is now and will continue to be good for our health.

We welcome any suggestions on how to improve either the website, or the catalogue, or the Readers. You can pass on your suggestions by:

mail: 1561-B Third Ave. Walnut Creek, CA 94596

attn: this is not an order department

or fax: (925) 933-7305

or

email: [Rivbici@earthlink.net](mailto:Rivbici@earthlink.net) or [Rivgp@earthlink.net](mailto:Rivgp@earthlink.net)

# PROGRESS REPORT

IF YOU HAVEN'T READ THIS BEFORE: THE PROGRESS REPORT IS MY PERSONAL JOURNAL OF STARTING AND MAINTAINING THIS BUSINESS. I'M NOT A GOOD BUSINESSMAN, I GET FRUSTRATED, THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK OUT THE WAY I'D LIKE THEM TO, THERE ARE UGLY SURPRISES, AND SOMETIMES I JUST NEED TO VENT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO READ IT, BUT I HAVE TO WRITE IT, AND ENOUGH OF YOU HAVE TOLD ME YOU ENJOY READING IT (MANY OF YOU HAVE SMALL BUSINESSES OF YOUR OWN, AND CAN RELATE), THAT I'VE DECIDED TO KEEP IT PUBLIC. THIS ONE IS SHORTER THAN USUAL. NO TIME TO WRITE.—GRANT

June 15

The RR12 has been mailed and finally we're seeing some more orders. But today's mail was pretty small—just six, but we got more on the phone, so that's okay. I regret the headline already, just the part in parentheses. People won't read it as I intended it. It's too subtle and makes us (or me) sound like an idiot if it's not read just right, and who can do that? The internal consensus is "it's time to back off on the headlines," so the next one will be easier. Anyway, the catalogue is coming up in the next two weeks, and the frame brochure (which at this point will not be a poster, but we'll do that, too).

Stem lugs are actually being finalized, the details, and they're looking good. Match will build them, and with any luck we'll have them by September. Tim I. is giving good advice on matters related to production, and we're hoping the price will be low enough to sell maybe a couple hundred a year. I'm concerned about the plating.

I'm starting to get fit again. I'm riding more often now that it's not pouring, and Jeff and I are riding together and encouraging each other. I'm really looking forward to my new frame, and I wish I could have it for my birthday, but I'll just have to wait. I want my first ride on it to be a sub-34 minute climb to the ranger station. My fastest this year is 35:16, my fastest last year was 34:15. Work seems more relaxed than it has, ever before, and I'm wondering if that's good or bad. The yen is falling, and that's good for us, bad for Japan in general.

June 19. Our best day ever, maybe. Not in sales, although we did good there, but in emotional triumphs. The fellow who wrote the "bullshit, bullshit, bullshit" letter, well, we made peace with him, and he was so gracious. He even said "I've been reluctant to ask this, but...do you still have that frame you made for me? If you do (and we did), I want it. I'll send you the money." Ya Hoo! It feels so good to put nut those festering embers. I get so hummed when someone gets mad. It hangs on for weeks. I've got to be able to deal with it better. Anyway, it's a good day. Everyone was feeling good, and we get along well. Allen's been doing some illustrations for the catalogue. Joe's been shipping lots.

We also found a good deal on Clement Paris-Rouhaix tubulars, so they'll go in the catalogue. Probably we can offer them for \$40 or so. We sold three frames today, and people seem willing to wait forever for them. We're booked through the first week of December now. Peter gets his in three weeks. R.N. came by today, it was good to meet him, finally, but I was on the phone most of the time. I had a good talk with Richard Sachs today. The Columbus tubes we ordered forever ago were shipped, finally. The STEM LUGS are completely designed, we finished that today. Match will build the stem, and Tim I. has been great to work with on it. We're hoping Reynolds will do the special tubing. They'll do it, but we're hoping we don't have to order two miles of it. The stem will be everything I've wanted, for about three

years now. We also got lots of pictures back, for our frame brochure. And Carradice came in, and Nitto's been quite communicative lately, and I'm starting to lose some bellyfat. The catalogue is keeping me up till 1:30 a.m. every night, but it's fun. I need to fill up a page about brakes, and rear derailleurs, and I think I know what I want to say, but it might be dumb. This week we needed \$14K to pay the bills and make payroll. I think we did about \$12,500, but we'll have a good Monday, and next week's bills aren't so bad. I'm hoping I can go fishing sometime in July. I just want to get out. I don't need to get away, I just need to feel some trout.

July 28. Nitto came in yesterday and we checked off the 42mm Dream Bars and now can't find them, and why's that? Everything is organized, they couldn't have just walked out etc., and we can't find them. We'll have to check. The bottle cages are here and lovely. The boxy racks are here, for the front boxy bags that aren't, but they've been ordered. Tensions have been oddly high in the office lately. Some mis-shipments and expensive fixes, combined with general nervousness about slow orders and no catalogue yet. Our line of credit is back up to \$29k, which means we've dipped into \$8K of it to make payroll or bills or both. The stem tooling is actually paid for and is actually being made and after four years it actually looks like it actually will happen, maybe in the winter. Frames trickle in, never fast enough, and every other week it seems we've maxed out yet another customer's patience. Joe says he expects to be caught up by November, so we'll see.

Joe and some of his friends down there have invited any of us to a hillclimb race on October 18. It's a handicap race where, if you're youthful and unmarried and featherweight and a cat, 2 racer (as is Tony, a paint prepper), then you have to carry weight to even it up. In Tony's case, it's 35lb, which would bring him up to about 175, which is still less than I weigh. Joe's losing weight and riding a lot and feeling confident. All the riders put in \$50 or so, and the winner wins maybe \$250, but it's not Winner Take All. I'll go. Pal Jeff will go. He's 5-10 x 180 x 4 children x 50 hours a week. I'm 5-10 x 183 (175 by race day?) x 2 children x 50 hours. So we have our handicaps. The hill is only 2.5 miles long, and Jeff and Peter and I have been riding a lot lately. I'm in decent shape, but I don't care who wins. SM sent some nice photos of her bike and a nice letter, which made the day. The catalogue cover is at the printer. It's sort of a different cover. It'll be printed Friday. The cover costs \$3K to print 8,000, and the insides will be another \$4K, and we have to hope it pays off, since it's wiping us out. It's been too long coming, though. More than a year without a catalogue. Suicide for a mail order company, and that won't happen again.

We're going to purge the website and start fresh. It's been a good one, but needs weekly updating and more maintenance, and it's time we did that here. The guy on

the corner has a website business and can help us. He's a host, or a server, or whatever the heck that is. So the plan is to redo it completely between now and mid September, and eventually get to the point where you can order from it. I don't know how all that works, but we'll figure it out.

July 31. After waiting four and a half months, (three months late), the new Tecnociclo dropouts arrived, and they're the wrong ones. We paid \$1400 for a mold change, and all they did was machine a plug off a carb-van Heron. It's a nice dropout, but not what I ordered, or paid for, or corresponded with them about for three months, or was told I'd get. Kind of frustrating. They're far from useless, but I wish at least they'd sent both the angles. We got the 69s, and no 74s. Joe says the upper tab makes the 69s useful even for big frames, and he likes them a lot, so I should be happy when screw-ups work out well.

Last week we sold four frames. The catalogue goes to the printer tomorrow, Monday, for sure. I hope it's clean enough by now. We have to get it out, that's for sure. Yesterday the whole gang went up to Match. Peter and I'd been there before, but it was a first for Joe and Allen, and they all came in on a Saturday, and were just so hospitable and patient as they showed us every step, and we talked about materials and costs and options and minimums and how it's all going to work out. The stem's rolling by now—they castings are being made, we're told. Maybe December for that. These new All-Rounders, maybe Spring. We've settled on five sizes, 51-53-55-57-59, and we'll settle on tubes soon, then dig deep and send Match 5 tubesets for each size, total 125 tubesets, and they'll miter them all, to save time and money, and maybe build sub-assemblies. We'll buy four of each size plus a master, right off, so we'll stock some and sell from stock and take orders for what we don't have. I hope the price can be around \$1100, but I'm not sure that's possible. Anyway, I feel like we're sticking our necks out there. The bikes can't cost what the Joe-builts cost, since those have individually selected tubes, and a choice of 9 colors and 15 sizes, with other no-cost options thrown in. But they take so long to get, and we need this to work for us. Match sure builds beautiful frames, but they're unknown and fairly unheralded, so we'll have to just let people know what we know of them, I think.

August 4. We're down to 8 A/R seat lugs, and that's a drag because it takes 2 months to get them. Bad planning. I ordered 500 of them, and we sure haven't build that many frames with them, but they sure aren't here.

The catalogue's at the printer now. I hope it comes out okay. Now we have to redo our web site and do our frame brochure and I've got to start plugging at RR13 if that's coming out in August.

I go on vacation next week, to Yosemite and Mammoth.

and I hope the kids have fun, and I'd also like to get in a little fishing.

We're getting low on the SunTour barcons, so today or tomorrow we'll send a pair off to Taiwan and see if anybody there (even SunTour) is interested in making them. Also, I'm looking into Chris Kelly's Take Offs, which I tried a month or so ago on a customer's bike, and they're pretty good.

The power went off today, all around town, and we didn't do much shipping. Peter shipped some near the end of the day after it went back on (Joe and Allen had gone home), and we ended the day with \$400 or so, not so good. It's roasting hot here. The air dries your eyes, and your crotch sweats like mad, and they keep the water in the local pool up around 86 degrees, so it's hard to tell the difference when you're sticking halfway out. I hope I can see a catalogue before going on vacation. Maybe they'll have some by Friday, and can get one out to me so I can get it Saturday. The order forms aren't as easily faxable as they have been, and that's too bad and a worry, but we'll include better ones with orders we ship out.

August 5. The catalogue is too faint to print, so we need to do lino on it, and that's another \$300. The design bill and cover and guts and lino and all will cost us more than \$8,000 total, yikes. Where will that come from? We get 30 day terms for the printing, and probably the design too, so maybe if we have a couple whopping weeks immediately following the catalogue, we'll make up for it. Or cover it, or something. All I know is it seems just like pushing the ball up hill forever.

I found a longsleeve seersucker last night, in a Lands End catalogue. Too late to change that title in the catalogue.

I'm working on RRI3 now, trying to get that together, and all the art. I can't find some of the art, like for the ball bearing story. I hope Mephan has it. The Heron web site is almost up. Our new one will be ready in a month. I think.

Aug 20. I got back from vacation yesterday, the first in five years, just four and a half days in Mammoth and Yosemite. Peter said we got a call from a frame customer's lawyer, implying that we'd better get him his frame in time for "a big ride in September," and that kind of thing makes me want to scream and quit. What's wrong here? Crap, these are slow frames, hand-built, and we're stressing enough over the slowness and the effect it's having on everything, and then this call. Peter told the lawyer we could give him his deposit back today, but we couldn't guarantee delivery, and he said the lawyer seemed sort of embarrassed at having to make the call, and said "look, just get him his frame on time, alright?" I think our order form should say, in huge letters at the top: The World's Slowest Frames. Guaranteed NOT To Be Delivered In Time For The Ride Of Your Life.

Joe can only build so fast, and we're not going to start cracking the whip. That takes the fun out of it for everybody. What we need to do is get Match up and running, but that takes time and lots of money we don't have. Maybe if Joe just had to build 100 per year, and Match could build 300 to 500 per year, and we could stock frame from Match or deliver them in a month or two at most. I told Tim at Match that we might be able to sell 500 a year, divided among three models, and both Peter and I think that's possible, but the prospect of having to do it blurs the line between releasing and forcing growth, and that's not a fun thing. Maybe we'd have to have dealers, but that changes the whole price issue and the nature of our business entirely. We want the Match-builts to be around \$1,100, then Joe's could be around \$1,500, which is lots of money for a frame in general, but still very little for a frame like this, and if we had the Match-builts for a few hundred less, it might work out

okay.

In catalogue No. 3 I used the expression (about lugged frames becoming) "as scarce as arrowheads in a Yosemite campground," and three days ago, right by the table in our campground, I found one. In Tuolumne Meadows. One of the base corners was chipped off, but the rest was perfect, about 15mm long, black obsidian. I know you're not supposed to remove or keep stuff like that, but I've had a thing for arrowheads my whole life. Still, as we were leaving, I handed it to the ranger and told him where I found it and asked "what are you going to do with it?" He said "I'll put it back where you found it," and I said "Someone will step on it and break it, or they'll find it and NOT turn it in. If I'd known you were going to do that, I'd have kept it myself. Can you put it somewhere else?" And he said he would. I think I should have done that. Then I'd always know where it was. But on some dumb level, I think I wanted to brag to someone about having found it, and on another naive level, I wanted him to say "just keep it."

Sept 11.

Rough day in the office. A frame customer's angry because his frame is late, and he's making demands—free Phil bb and headset, lower price, and we say no to all. It's a custom cyclo-cross frame. His sister is due to come by to pick it up Monday, because he lives out of the country. We overnight it, so it gets here on Friday. He says "it better not have the cable stops on the side," but it does. Cyclo-cross frames should have them on top, for painless shouldering. But it's not that big a deal, and there's so much care in this frame already, to think any less of it for a 7:00 cable stop is, well, it shows a lack of appreciation for all the good, and there is so much good. We tell him the bad news. He faxes back an insulting letter (one of many), calling us incompetent and swearing lots. He says "I'll take it if you lower the price to \$900. Your other option is to fix it pronto, then I'll pay full price, but you air freight it to Germany and pay freight and customs. It better be a 51 like I said in my last email." Well, we never got that email. It's a 53. It should be a 53, and we'd spoken about that earlier and he was on board with it. It's a good thing the cable stops were at 7:00. Otherwise he'd have gotten the frame and yelled about the size, and who knows what we'd have to do then. It makes me never want to do another cyclo-x frame, or a custom. You just never know how someone will react. We made peace with him by giving him his \$500 deposit back, plus \$100 as a peace offering, and now we have a 53 cyclo-x frame in pearl orange, and no customer, and we have more than \$900 into it. It has a 70 drop, so that means a lower bb than lots of regular road frames, so it'll make a good LongLowish that's not as low as a LongLow. Good for anybody with a saddle height of 68 to 69.

Orders have been good, but only one in today's mail. I am convinced that the post office plays psycho with us, holding mail on some days. The phones have been busy. The Heron page is up. Our page is still in limbo, badly in need of some newness soon. Peter's learning how to do it. I'm going to take a class, and he will, too. We have about 60 orders in the works, ready to fill and ship. There are so many good, worthwhile projects we need to hop on, but they all cost money and we're trying to save for the Match project. We need \$2300 to buy some Dura-Ace single-pivot sidepulls we located in Italy. We need \$23,000 to start up with Match. We need \$2,800 to buy some Deore DX long cage rear derailleurs that index 7 and friction great. We're going to refinance the house, and maybe we can get some cash out of that deal, and I can buy more Rivendell stock, and that'll help.

The stem lug samples arrived Friday. Good, but they could be a little nicer here and there. I sent them to Tim.

with some suggestions, and let's see if he agrees. Reynolds is working on the tubing, and Tim'll have samples of that soon.

I missed Wford at the trade show. I spoke to Shoe, and I went by the booth and saw Richard talking to someone, so I didn't interrupt. I wanted to see Marc, but didn't. I hope they don't take my non-meeting as a bad thing. I could've spent another day there. Next year I'll go the last three days, because I heard the last day was quiet.

Dream bars are selling fast, and we'll be out soon, so we've got to order more. The Boxy bags still aren't in, and Carradice doesn't return the faxes or emails, so I'm not sure what's up there. Joe's back from vacation and building full time again, and I hope the frames start coming in regularly. We so desperately need faster turnaround, and Match will be great. Joe's frames are beautiful, and they're worth the wait, but he's only one guy, so we need a boost with Match.

Sept 23. We have to get the RR out, and the frame catalogue/brochure, and get the Rivendell website up and full and running and refurbished. It's happening slowly. We need a digital camera, that would help lots with the readers and the website. The Mavica FD71 or the Olympus DL-324 or 340? I hate not knowing this stuff. We need it for the website, so every frame that comes through we can shoot and put up there. Frame orders are trickling in, but we're booked through mid March 99 already, and that's at 3 a week. We've been getting about 1.2 per week for the last month and a half, but Joe was on vacation. The frames are slow and excellent. Some customers seem okay with it. They've ordered handbuilt bikes before, or guitars, and they're used to waiting. Others sit at home thinking "I could have a \_\_\_\_\_ by now and be riding!" and that's all true, and those tend to be the cancellations. We're going to have to raise prices soon. The frames cost us too much and if someone orders a frame and no parts, which sometimes happens, we barely break even. Richard's frames are \$2,000 and worth it. Peter W's are \$1,600 and worth more. So at \$1,375, ours are underpriced. When I look at a \$1,200 to \$1,600 Ti or aluminum frame, it makes me want to scream. I think, maybe, it'll be good to have the Joe-builts go up to \$1,500 or \$1,600, and they'll still be "below market value" at that. We'll scare off customers, but there's no sense in selling the frame so cheap if we can't afford to do it. We'll try to get the Match-builts in at around \$1,200, and they'll take some of the pressure off, and will be good deals at that. In another two weeks max, Tim will be finished with the lug drawings based on my sketches and our talks. Tim says "I'm on a Rivendell marathon" these days, meaning he's spending a lot of time on the blueprints. They're building up a stem, and we'll have it tested at Nitto, and Ross at Salsa says he'll test it, and we'll see how it goes. Wouldn't it be a hoot if after all this time (thinking of it for four years) and money \$4,500 so far in tooling alone), it broke? Yowza, that makes me nervous, but not as nervous as knowing having a few hundred of them out there, knowing one of them might. The number one rule around here has always been "Create no parapalegics," and that's a good one to live by.

I don't think we'll make RR14 this year. It's about two-thirds full, so there's a chance, but it'll be close. We're still paying off the catalogue printing, a huge bill. I don't see how all those big companies spend so much on those all-color catalogues, or why. Even at Bstone, our catalogue budgets were microscopic compared to what Schwinn and Others must spend. I wonder how many people are on their catalogue staffs, or whether they just farm it all out to an agency and say "try to keep it under half a mil." Money for projects is all we think about, these days. They're good projects, though. END

# FALL FLYER

NEW, NORMAL, AND LTD. QTY

## Kelly Takeoffs. Two Ways

**1. TakeOff Kit—\$75.** Has all you need to do up your bike, except the downtube shifters. You get cables and housing and the downtube shifter boss adapters. It comes ready to use with any Shimano downtube, so you can get indexing if you like.

**2. TakeOffs NO KIT—\$40**

As above, minus the cables and downtube shifter boss adapters.

**Special Deal on SunTour Sprint Downtube Shifters—\$15—  
When You Buy Either #1 or #2 Above**

**Sachs SC40 chains— \$10**

These are from a couple years ago. At the time, we believed it to be equivalent to the Sedisport, but for some reason these had a habit of breaking when we pedaled them up super steep hills. But I mean SUPER steep ones, and you don't have any of those where you live, do you? If you do, stay away. If you don't, and you just need a decent cheap chain for flat-to-rolling hills riding, here you go.

**Tess Lights— \$10**

Artsy front lights from Denmark via Chicago. Neither high-powered nor high-priced, but reliable enough, and easy enough to mount, and cheap enough to make them a good deal for \$10.

**Ritchey Rock 450 Rims (36H, 700c, semi-touring)— \$14**

At 21.7mm wide, they're between the MA2 and CR18 in width, and are not just suitable, but actually excellent for all-purpose road riding. We bought a lot, cheap. 36H only, 440g. Not many left.

**Ritchey Chainrings — 46t, 36t, and 24t; \$10 ea.**

Sometimes, a lot of the time, when someone buys a Ritchey crank, he or she wants custom chainrings. So we take these off, and that's why we have a bunch of them. Greyish in color, made by Sugino, with some kind of hi-tech finish that's supposed to reduce friction. Whatever—they're good, they're cheap, and if they're the sizes you're looking for, jump on them.

**Huret Half-Step front derailleurs— \$20**

For half-step triples. In the French tradition (Francophiles, take no offense), they're a little clunky, but they shift great and are a throwback to the days when French stuff actually stood a chance. NOS.

**Huret Jubilee downtube shifters— \$30**

Braze-on style. This was Huret's best downtube shifter, and I rode them for years. Super-fine satin silver finish, better than anything outside of Nitto. Pure friction, left and right, and They Don't Slip. Good enough for any frame. New old stock, about 10 pair left, limit one pair per person per order.

**SunTour XC9000 front hubs, 32H— \$23**

We have many. They're SunTour's best quality, better even than some versions of the Superbe Pro. Sealed cartridge bearings protected even further by a dustcap. For everyday use, most riders will get 5 to 10 years from these, at which point the bearings can be replaced with the common 28/12 sealed bearing, same as Phil Bullseye, and others.

**Zeus Tubular Tyre Carrier— \$5**

The neat thing about this is that nobody ever would have bothered to make it if they weren't extremely dedicated to cycling and really into what they were doing. It's a piece of stamped, chromed steel with a couple bolts to attach it to the rails of a Brooks saddle (usually); and a thick round rubber ring. And there's a release mechanism. And the instructions are in Spanish. And you have to figure it out yourself, and you will.

**Nitto Mod 185 x 44cm SPECIAL HEAT TREATED— \$45**

About a year ago we ordered these for off-road riding, tandems, touring, and just as all-around Big Boy bars. They duplicate the function of the heat-treated DirtDrops, but in the shorter-reach, not-so-flared 185 bend. Slightly heavier and thicker-walled AND made with a heat-treatable alloy (2014-T6).

**Fork Crown Paperweights— \$12 or 3/\$20**

The first casting of the Rivendell road crown missed the mark by five iotas, and so we ended up with 500 investment cast, CrMo, fork-crown-like paperweights. Also useful for opening boxes. Do not build a fork with them. Makes a puzzling gift for any cyclist.

**Shimano Deore front hubs, 36H— \$15**

Just below Xt in quality, but good enough for real life riding, and so cheap that you've got to at least consider them.

**Campy Toe Clips, aluminum, Med. \$8**

For shoes up to 42 or so. About a 9. We have a zillion of these, and if for any reason you're interested in ten pair, we'll make a deal. Good toe clips, and the best aluminum ones ever.

**Nitto Young III stems— \$20**

Gravity cast, so they aren't as good as the Pearl or Technomic Deluxe, but I/Grant have been riding around with one for the last couple of months, and I can state categorically that they look good enough and work great. They have a 160mm quill, so if you need to raise your bars an inch higher than they are now with a 135mm quill Cinelli or 3ttt, here they are. Clamp diameter is 26mm. 9-10-11-12cm extensions.

### **Aero Chainrings— \$10**

Mistakes, made too thin. They work fine but can't last as long. We either recycle them or sell them cheap, so we're selling them cheap. Either silver or apple juice color, no choice at this price. In the following bolt circle diameters and sizes:

130 bcd: 49, 50, 51 and triplizer 46

135 bcd (new campy): 51

### **RONA T-shirts— \$14**

A parody of the old Campy logo, but instead of "prodotti speciali," it reads "prodotti ol' stuffi", and the colors are different. Tom Ritchey was shown wearing one in Cat. No. 3. RONA is an acronym for Retro-Grouches of North America, and originally these shirts were made in response to the article that coined the RG term. Eventually we're going to reprint these shirts, but right now we're just trying to save up some money to throw at our frame program, so we're selling off our remaining stock. State M-L-XL-XXL and take whatever color (white or grey) and sleeve length (short or long) we have. Limited quantities.

### **NEW Rivendell Short-Sleeved T-Shirts—\$15**

Short-sleeve, all cotton, with a simple logo and slogan on the front and back. Greyish green. We have a few cute slogans up our sleeves and want to use them all, so the plan is to do a limited run of one of them (maybe 50 shirts), then do the other, then the next. Right this instant we haven't decided which one to use first, so for now, we'll call this one Slogan A/Greyish green, and you'll have to trust our taste. Next will be Slogan B/Bluish grey, in RR14. S-M-L-XK-ML.

### **ACME Gloves— \$13**

The same gloves you see on p.87 of Cat. No. 4. Refreshingly plain, and they do all a glove's supposed to, too. S-M-L-XL

### **SMARTWOOL sox — \$0**

Once in a rare while a perfect product emerges from the mound of crud out there, and these socks are proof. White, ankle-high, cushy, and they won't ever wear out.

### **Thin Woolies**

Now that Fall is coming or here, even you humid-state cyclists have a good reason to slap one of these on underneath whatever it is else you're wearing. 90 percent wool; 10 percent nylon. just as useful off the bike, too, and since they're undershirts, you can wear them until they're downright ratty, and who cares? (Not to imply that that will happen anytime soon.) S-M-L-XL in each of three styles:

**Sleeveless— \$16**

**Shortsleeve— \$24**

**Longsleeve— \$29**

### **ACME Ankle Reflector— \$5**

Original Rivendell design, with at least twice, and usually three and a half times more surface area than any other similar widget. Attachable to various body parts, racks, bikes, and bike luggage. Ugly poison color, but it sure shows up well.

### **Carradice Boxy Bag— \$60**

These are just in. The prototype (which by now has had a thorough workout) is on p. 15 of Cat No 4. The real one, which you'll get, has

minor improvements. Keep this under your hat, but we actually have these in **SITDOWN!** two colors: Black and dark green. If you already have some Carradice luggage and you care about this one matching, get the black. If you prefer the traditional Carradice black, get black again. If you've always considered yourself more of a woody elf-type and you associate black with the Oakland Raiders, pirates in general, or witchcraft, and all those things give you the creeps, or if you just like green OR if you already have front and rear Carradice bags and are specifically trying to avoid the "my grandmother bought me this matching luggage" look, get the green. Third choice: If all you want is the bag and the color doesn't matter, let us pick it out for you. **WARNING!**: This bag needs but does not come with the Nitto rack on p. 20 of Cat. No. 4.

### **FENDERS— \$40**

We've sold these for years, just never told anybody we had them until they asked. That's because supply has always been, and remains, uncertain. But now we're well-stocked with ESGE brand German fenders made of recycled plastic (silver with thin black stripes) and stainless hardware. You can lust over hammered aluminum fenders from France and Japan, and wooden ones from Finland and Denmark and America, but when the show's over and you want some good-looking, reliable, easy to mount, quiet, and durable-as-all-get-out fenders for your 45-minute ride home or your 4-hour train in the rain ride, these are un-beatable. Four sizes: 700x35, 700x45, 26x1.5, and 26x65. If you don't know which size you need, tell us your bike and tires, and we'll get you good ones.

### **Touring Bikes (the book)— \$40**

If you're interested in bicycle frame design, you will get \$40 worth out of this book in the first 40 pages. A great gift for anybody who has more than 2 bikes (which suggests a certain commitment to bikes). Hardcover, a couple hundred pages, tons of detailed photos and sharp line drawings, and typical English text (not a bad thing).

### **Hemp Bar wrap— \$6**

This is fatter than the hemp finishing twine on p. 29 of CN4. It's a good size to wrap bars with, or to fashion into mountain bike grips (see p. something in this RR). Other than that, six bucks for a few hundred feet of thick hemp string such a bad deal. You can tie up brown paper packages with it. We are not dope fiends.

### **SunTour XC Comp cantilevers— \$17 per bikesworth**

Cold-forged and black. SunTour's second best cantilevers. If they were silver, they'd be long gone by now and you wouldn't be reading this. Perfect for a bike project that you don't want to throw lots of money at, but still care about.

### **Shimano XTR cantilevers— \$70**

The FIRST YEAR of XTR was maybe the best. Before it got all weird. Remember cantilevers—those brakes that all mtn bikes had until the dual-suspension designs started dictating brake styles, and V-brakes allowed easier cable routing, which isn't a benefit except on a weirdo frame? Remember? These are Shimano's top-of-the-line cantilevers. No longer made, and we bought all we could. Pewter in color. Priced per bike. Yes, they're expensive, but they're cheaper than most fancy V-brakes, and ten times better, from where we sit.

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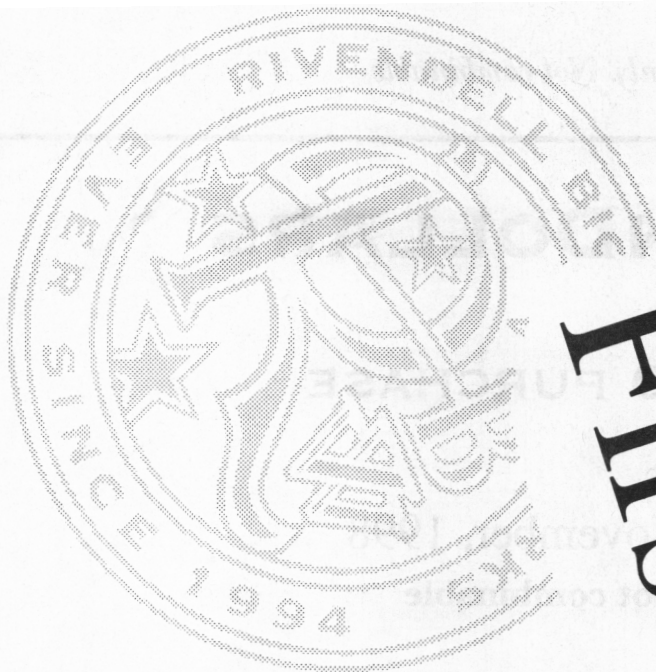


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