

BRIDGESTONE

The BOB Gazette

OWNERS EST 1993 BUNCH

- Velolution in Cuba (see below)
- A full page of good advice (p. 4)
- 6 vs. 8: The great cog debate
- The best poem you'll ever read

A TIME AND A PLACE FOR BOBBERS

Want a calendar? Plus, another Sell-A-BOB contest.

We won't go ahead with making the calendars unless we get orders for at least 100, so please order this—the only calendar in the world that celebrates rare, practical, beautiful, endangered or extinct bike parts and accessories. The calendar will cost about \$10 when it comes out this fall (\$7 if you pay before Sept. 1). If you send in your money and we don't have it made, we'll send your money back, of course. You knew that.

BOB update: As of June 15 we have 980 BOBs, about 29 percent of our end-of-the-year goal. There are BOBs from Japan, Italy, France, Brazil, and Puerto Rico.

More BOBs means more stuff and better deals for all BOBs. We want to make wool knickers, wool undershirts, hats, a mug, a daypack—lots of things. Once we

are up to 3000 steady BOBs, we can do it.

So we're running another Sell-A-BOB contest until Sept. 30. Just photocopy the membership form on page 4 of this newsletter, sign your name and BOB number (we prefer red ink), hand it to your buddies, have them include it with their dues, and you'll get credit. The prizes: 1st Place, an XO-1; 2nd Place, 4 wool jerseys; 3rd Place, 2 wool jerseys; 4th Place-8th Place, a book; 9th Place, a pair of Pulstar threaded hubs; 10th Place, a subscription to *National Geographic*; 11th Place, another book. Winners notified by postcard.

If our first Sell-A-BOB contest is any indication, selling 15 memberships should place you way up there.

Think about this for a few minutes, with a calculator in hand.

A VISIT TO CUBA: SEVERAL ATMOSPHERES REMOVED

Story & photos by Ariadne Delon Scott

It begins with stepping down onto the runway tarmac (thankfully) at Havana's



Si! Velolution. "I no longer feel alone, 'cause I have my bicycle." Havana, a city of two million, has more than 750,000 cyclists.

Jose Marti Airport, being engulfed by the tropics that calypso your internal barometer cock-eyed. "A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination," you think.

Alongside the runway, donkey carts taxi about and later merge onto the roadway with bicycle traffic. The island's lighter blue sky presses hard to the ground.

Inside the terminal you are surprised to slip quickly through customs while some passengers remain, detained, toting clear plastic baggies full of over-the-counter medication brought for ailing relatives. Aspirin and allergy pills are still hard to find since the imposed U.S.

(continued on page 5)

Product review: Silca Article No. 73 floor pump

"I've had mine 18 years." "I've had mine 14." "I've had mine for 20, and I'm only on my second hose."

These are the stories you hear about Silca's original, all-steel floor pump, Article No. 73. What's the secret? Why, it's that magic material again—steel. The shaft and foot are made entirely of it, so the normal pump-life shorteners, sunlight and accidental whacks, don't bother this pump one whit.

Silca (Societa Italiana Lavorazione Celluloidi Accessori) has been around since 1917 and has been making this pump since 1973 (Art. 73, do you think...?). Except for the bad judgment to make it in colors other than the original orange, the Article No. 73 has remained almost unchanged since its inception. It still won't win the speed races, but this is good. Cyclists have notoriously weak upper bodies, so it probably does you good to pump 20 to 30 times, rather than 10 to 20.

Another fine thing about this Silca is that unlike most other pumps, it need never be landfill, because it is designed to be rebuilt forever—with replacement parts always available. Few items in or out of the bicycle kingdom can make such a claim, and the list shrinks daily. Take a stance for quality and repairability—and against cheapness and planned obsolescence. Get a Silca.

For a photo of the Silca Art. No. 73—and to order one for yourself—see the newest BobCat in this issue.

WHAT'S NEW

THERE'S NO DEBATE ABOUT EIGHT

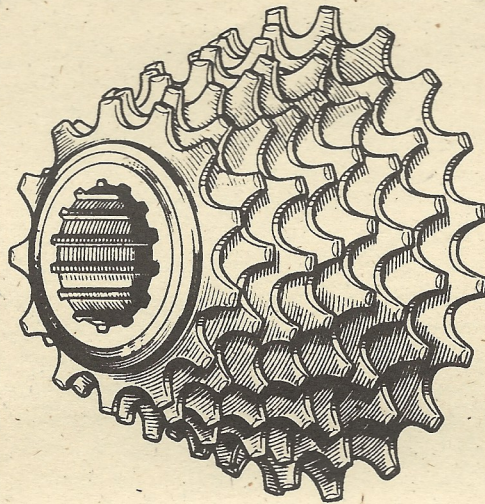
If six was eight, then BOB Sr. might have a point. But it's not close.

by BOB Jr.

In ten years, maybe less, we won't have to deal with distinct gears at all: Bicycles will have stepless transmissions, like automatic automobile transmissions, and this will be a good thing. You'll see.

But right now the closest we can come to that is eight cogs, and I can't see why anyone wouldn't want eight. Eight cogs let you have a wide range of gears with small increments, something you can't get (as much) with seven, or that caveman-ish six that Bob Sr. espouses.

The whole and sole purpose of gearing is to let you maintain pedaling cadence over a variety of terrain, and when the jumps between gears are more than a tooth or two, you lose your rhythm every time you shift. In a race, this is a catastrophe, which is why virtually all racers ride with eight. This loss of rhythm obviously is less catastrophic on a pleasure ride, but



Short shift: With an eight-speed cluster, the jumps between gears can be smaller. Shifts are smoother.

it is no less disconcerting: Why shouldn't non-racers get the same benefits from racing technology as racers?

Speaking of non-competitive riding, eight cogs are especially good for tourists. Tourists need a wide range of gears, but before the advent of eight-speed clusters, they had to put up with three-to-five-tooth jumps between gears. Now those inefficient jumps can be reduced to two to four teeth.

Those are the undeniable benefits. In almost every discussion like this, though, someone will bring up the fact that eight-speed rear wheels are dished more—offset more and less symmetrical than five- or six- or seven-speed wheels and therefore less strong. That's true, but this is not an unsolvable problem by any means. Simply spreading the rear dropouts farther apart and re-dishing the wheel can get things back to normal. Pros have figured this out, and many of them are riding with 132mm rear dropout spacing instead of the old 126mm. Chainline be damned—just shift and go!

Every bicycle rider benefits from eight-speed rear clusters. Eight really is great, and I'm sticking with it until stepless, infinitely variable transmissions become reality. With any luck, that'll be within five years, and I can't wait.

THE BOB WIRE: NAMES AND PLACES

Skip if you hate trivia: The '92 and '93 Bridgestones, built with **Ishiwata** tubing, say "Croston" on the labels. Ishiwata used to name its tubesets for their metric weights: 024, 022, 019, 017, etc. (2.4 kg per tubeset, 2.2 kg, etc.). Then, two years ago, Ishiwata contacted us and told us that rather than continue naming its tubing after metric weights, its new decals would say "Tee Croston." We reacted to that the same way you're reacting to it right now, and asked "What's that?" To make a long story short, "tee" should have been, and eventually became, "the," and "croston" is an abbreviated transposed translation of Ishiwata: "Ishi" means "stone," "wata" means "crossing," and so—Croston. Now, how many nonBOBs in the world know that? How many BOBs care?

News flash: Because of problems with a major creditor, Ishiwata's future is in doubt. We'll keep you posted.

Did any of you try to find **Stephen Wiltshire's** book, *Floating Cities*? (See *Gazette* #2 if you don't know about this.) If you tried, you may have run out of luck, as it's scarce here in the U.S. We bought 22 copies, but they came from as far away as New York and Fort Worth. We by no means scoured the country, though. The extras we bought will go as catalogue drawing prizes, but if you really want one, call up and we'll make arrangements. Cost: \$25 plus shipping. That's what we paid. . . More on the Stephen Wiltshire front: We're trying to contact him to do art for

us. No, he won't put **George** out of work, but his style is unique, and we'd love to see him draw bikes for posters, T-shirts, postcards, other things. His fascination is cars, though, so we kind of expect some really rough sketches. That's fine.

Our next **Castelli** wool jersey will have Cuban colors: green with red and yellow bands. This jersey may be short-sleeve, just so we don't run into any sleeve-length problems (see *Gazette* #1 for more on the arm-length afflictions of our first run of Castelli jerseys). And maybe buttons up both sides to make it fine in really hot weather, too: But first jerseys first. . . The new, BOB-only short-sleeve wool jerseys just arrived—too late to go into this issue's

BRIDGESTONE

WHAT'S OLD

I HATE EIGHT. THE FIX IS SIX.

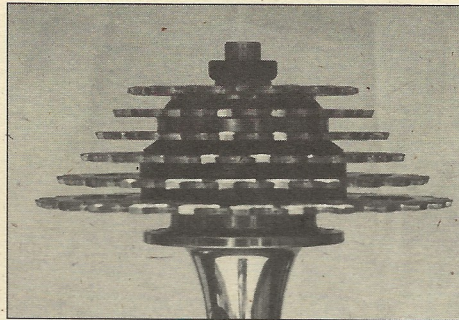
Not only are six cogs better, but eight just make things worse.

by BOB Sr.

There is no room for eight gears on the rear hub of a bicycle. The extra gear compromises chainlines so that on road bikes with short chainstays, there is no net gain in usable gears.

In some cases the chainline gets so skewed that the bike is prone to dropping the chain in a front downshift. It is so likely that one major bike builder equips its top-end eight-speed bikes with stainless steel chainsuck protectors on the right chainstay and behind the right bottom bracket cup.

When you're using friction shifting, you can mix and match six-speed freewheels with different shift levers to tailor the amount of lever travel needed to shift between gears. You can use a lever with a very small barrel (such as the Simplex/Mavic retro-friction lever) for a long lever throw and easy fine-tuning. You can use a



The best shifting possible on a multi-speed bicycle is with a six-speed cluster and the old Simplex levers.

lever with a large cable barrel (such as a SunTour Sprint or Superbe Pro) for faster shifts but hair-trigger trimming. Seven- and eight-speed sets, with their closer cog spacing, don't have enough space between the gears for this kind of fine tuning.

Having the perfect gear for every situation discourages a rider from developing cadence flexibility—the ability to ride

efficiently in a wide range of cadences. We are not yet robots; I don't know a whole lot of riders who can or want to ride all day at a metronomic perfect 104 rpm, for example. I also don't know many who can really use the 12-tooth high gear that is almost universal on eight-blocks.

Eight-speed systems add to and accelerate unnecessary parts consumption. In the most popular brand of shifting system, the largest six of eight cogs are riveted together and can't be replaced individually. This goes hand in hand with the attendant shorter chain life. One manufacturer of eight-speed indexed shifting recommends chain replacement after 800 miles!

With friction shifting and six gears, however, chain performance will not severely deteriorate in fewer than 4000 to 5000 miles. Added gears and shifting conveniences only encourage you to shift under load, which shortens parts' life.

So here's what you get for eight speeds: Shorter parts life by design, which forces more frequent replacements to maintain performance; the extra baggage of a useless 12-tooth cog; more noise and chain-dropping. Like P.T. Barnum said: There's an eight-speed buyer born every minute.

BobCat. Next issue for sure, along with a description. Save your money, should be about \$40. . .

The BOB fanny pack is rearing its expensive head again. We've found the right people to sew it, and it will be the best fanny pack in the world. A lifetime purchase. This is the kind of fanny pack that strangers will stop you on the street or trails to ask you about.

The most sought-after rear derailleur of semi-modern times is the Mavic 801 or its hard-anodized twin, the 851. These are drop-parallelogram rear derailleurs, very light (175g), and the last of the great non-indexing derailleurs. If you find a source, contact us. We're hoarding them for personal use well into the next century.

The yen is at an all-time high against the dollar—HANG IN THERE, THIS IS NOT BORING—at 107 yen to the dollar. To refresh your memory, it was 370:1 in 1972, 250:1 in 1984, 125:1 in 1986, and this is the lowest of all-time. Dang—that means last February's \$80 melons will now cost about \$91. It also means more expensive cheap stuff, too.

The '94 catalogue is almost finished. We're trying to use a new paper made half from hemp, half from wheat stalks. This paper makes the printer nervous, but it has everything going for it. If we can get samples made to spec in time, we'll go with it. . . About the catalogue: The hardest part of writing it are the bike blurbs. After about five, they all start to sound alike. Next year's descriptions will be lower-key than ever before.

BOB Chris Kostman just completed a Triple Ironman in France—a 7.2-mile swim (4:25), 336-mile ride (25 hours), and on an XO-1), 78.6-mile run (24-hours). Total time: 53:28:40, and with a sprint finish. That is crazy, and typical Chris.

New saddle manufacturer in Taiwan, with another classic Taiwan name: Lead Since. Look for 3/4-page ads in your favorite mountain bike magazines. . . Related story: Japan and Taiwan are having a hard time attracting people to factory work, especially bike-factory work. This is a key factor in the industry's emphasis on new designs that can be made without human labor, and the shifting of manufacturing from Japan and Taiwan to mainland China—where a typical worker puts in 200 hours per month for the equivalent of \$60 (yes, the cost of living is lower, but. . .).

ASK PINEAPPLE BOB

Dear P.B.,

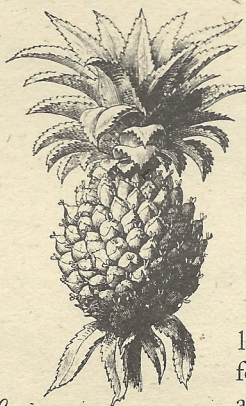
I want to start cyclocross racing this fall, but I need some tech advice. Should I build a 'cross bike out of my old road bike, or should I ride my mtn. bike? I've noticed that the mtn. bikes are winning the local races, but many pros still ride 'cross bikes. Any cool set-up tips?

Dave

Dear Dave,

I prefer a road bike. A mountain bike usually has a super-low top tube, and it's tough to hoist it up on your shoulder, and you can't reach the straight bars to hold the wheel steady while you run.

The road bike also adds the thrill of being on the edge of disaster on some downhills.



My set-up isn't that unusual. I ride a double chainring with a Third-Eye chain watcher to keep the chain from dropping off the inner ring during rough downshifts. I usually race on Barum cyclocross sew-ups, but it depends on the conditions. I sometimes race on a Tri-Cross or Michelin clincher, but there's just no comparison with the ride of the Barums.

Dear P.B.,

My helmet whistles something fierce, especially on fast rides. I like the fit, and I don't have the \$\$ for another brand. I'm going deaf and crazy at the same time. What can I do?

Psychotically yours,
Bob

Dear Bob,

Whistle along? I don't really know about this one, but you could try taping over areas that you suspect are the cause of the noise. That, or you could try those flaps that fasten onto the strap and partially cover your ears, but I would rather hear the whistle than have to listen to my friends singing, "M-I-C, see you real soon. . ." to me.

Wanted: Your questions, especially those relating to personal riding tips. Write to Ask Pineapple Bob, c/o BOB, 15021 Wicks Blvd., San Leandro, CA 94577.

BE A BOB

Memberships cost \$20 for Bridgestone owners, \$15 for B-owners whose name is a derivative of Robert (proof req'd), and \$30 for non-owners. Clip this form and send it to the address below. Questions? Call 800-328-2453 x232.

Bridgestone Owners Bunch
15021 Wicks Blvd.
San Leandro, CA 94577

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

DATE OF BIRTH

MODEL/SERIAL #/DATE OF PURCHASE/PLACE OF PURCH

MILES PER MONTH/T-SHIRT SIZE/OTHER INFO

CARD # (INDICATE VISA/MASTERCARD AND EXP DATE)

SIGNATURE

PAY BY CHECK OR CREDIT CARD
CA RESIDENTS ADD APPLICABLE SALES TAX

DOCTOR BOB'S MECHANICAL ADVICE

Dear Dr. BOB:

I have an '89 MB-3. Yesterday was my first flat tire. When checking the inside, I noticed the area where the rim is joined (brazed?) was cracked all the way across—a messy-looking break. The area had also been rough-filed about 1 1/2 inches across. The tires were changed once to Avocet Cross K and have only been ridden lightly off-road (between 1500-2000 miles). Am I being a worrywart? Also, what upgrades would you suggest? (I love my bike.) Thanks for your help.

Rims can be welded or pinned together at the seam, but most are pinned, which is why they often have a small bump at the joint. If your rim is cracked, don't ride it. It is hard to diagnose something like this without actually seeing it. The file marks probably come from the grinding down of the weld at the time of manufacture. Have this looked at by a shop. And no, you are not a worrywart.

Upgrades? It depends what you want. Consider a light handlebar, bar ends, Kevlar-bead tires, a set of superlight road wheels, and a Moustache Handlebar set-up (a la the current XO-1).

Dear Dr. BOB:

My question is about nicks and scratches on the frame where paint is chipped off. To keep it from rusting, should I get auto touch-up paint or primer and paint? Does Bridgestone have touch-up paint?

Also, I put a third chainring on my '93 XO-1. The catalogue said I would need a longer spindle and chain and a long-cage front derailleur. I had to get a new rear derailleur too. The bike rides great!

Bridgestone has touch-up paint, and any dealer can order it for you. Or, nail polish works well and is readily available.

You don't need a new rear derailleur for your XO-1, as long as you don't use the small-smaller combinations. The bike is great. It's the perfect second bike.

Dear Dr. BOB:

I'm planning a trip on my MB-1. I have a rear rack and panniers, but I need a rack for the front. What do you recommend?

Anything by Blackburn. For panniers, I like Lone Peak—made in the U.S., signed by the person who sewed it, and not too expensive. A drop-bar or Moustache-Handlebar set-up, with bar-end shifters,

is a good idea too. Use the Bridgestone DirtDrop stem (short, with a high rise) with either set-up. Rumor has it BOBs may be able to buy DirtDrops direct soon.

Send questions to Dr. BOB at BOB, 15021 Wicks Blvd., San Leandro, CA 94577.

BRIDGESTONE

CUBA: WHERE BIKES ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION

continued from page 1

embargo. The neighborhood grocery, the Diplomatique, sells only to those with entry cards or foreign passports. The locals cannot buy there.

With the collapse of Soviet-style communism comes tourism. And bicycles. A withered economy has prompted the Cuban government to import tens of thousands of Chinese Flying Pigeons, 50-pound beasts that nonetheless free the masses from the caprices of unreliable transit by bus. At bus stops, hundreds wait, never knowing when or if their bus will come. It's a hitchhiker's paradise.

Government vehicles, meanwhile, are mandated to pick up and pack as many passengers as possible and drive them to destinations wherever they may be. Schedules are flexible in Cuba. With the flow is the only way to go.



Designated bicycle bridges restrict cars during the day. The cyclists are extremely courteous, and they benefit from less stress, cleaner air, no more waiting for buses, and independence to move under their own power.

Signs all over Havana say "Révolution, Si," with Fidel looking out of the frame at an island half the size of California with one-third the population. I am here, a representative of the manufacturing sector of bike culture, to bear witness to

"Ciclos: Options for the 21st Century," a bicycle conference. I see an integration of non-motorized vehicular traffic into the mainstream of commerce and transportation.

Riders carry heavy and awkward items deftly without benefits of racks or backpacks. In a sense, they carry the hopes of a nation besieged by boycott. Sealed off from its mainland neighbor for more than 30 years, Cuba, the agrarian nation, struggles to become a manufacturer.

Already two years past the pulling of the Soviet plug, five bicycle factories are up and operating, building 2,000 bikes a day, carrying on a tradition embarked on by Che Guevara in 1964.

Some parts and materials are imported from Mexico, Canada, Brazil, and Venezuela, but the Cuban factories machine their own brake levers and cantilevers, fabricate tubes, and produce tires. Although their mission is to make bikes to move the

masses, there are some interesting prototypes. One design has a large top tube that can hold gasoline and adjustable dropouts that enable motorcycle conversion—just in case gas rationing declines.

A revolution is dying to be born.

Depending on who's doing the talking, Cuba is teetering on the brink of counter-revolution or entering a new era of hunting and gathering. The week of my visit coincided with the Cuban government's

Cuban cyclists carry the hopes of an embargo-ravaged nation.

announcement that seeds and plant roots have health benefits matching or surpassing those of store-bought goods that no longer can be found. Today, vegetarian, non-elite cyclists in Cuba have something to teach the First World. Manana, post-Castro Cuba may be able to restart those ghostly chrome-finned rusting jalopies and drive themselves to extinction.

"He not busy being born is busy dying."
—Original BOB

Ariadne manages special projects and promotions for Bridgestone.



The Cyclopalma: This man-powered tree climber (for picking palm-nuts) gets a flat tire every time up. Other than that, it works great.

EDITORIAL

DOES RACING SELL BIKES?

According to our 1992 catalogue questionnaire, it doesn't. Most people, maybe even you, are more influenced by the recommendation of a respected friend than by how many victories a particular bike has racked up under the legs and lungs of the sponsored elite. And isn't that just how it should be?

We sponsor a few riders, but not because it sells more bikes. We sponsor people for other reasons, most (not all) of them personal.

And we believe deep in our bones

What happens when the famous racer switches brands?

that when you give somebody a bike on sponsorship, that person will never again pay retail.

The best argument for sponsoring riders is that they provide good feedback, which can lead to better bikes. "Can" is the key word here, because by the time you get the feedback from a long year of racing, most of next year's decisions are already made.

Do we have any doubts that Shimano's new shifting will perform as claimed? No. Do we have any doubts that our RB-1 frame handles well? Of course not. Do we personally know of anybody who idolizes racers so much that he or she will buy a bike because his or her hero or heroine happened to be riding that brand this year? No, not personally. And what happens when the famous rider gets a better deal with another company next year? Do all the hero-worshippers buy new bikes?

We are not against sponsoring racers, and we'll continue to do it. But not because we think sponsoring riders sells bikes, directly or otherwise.

LETTERS

Poster child

I just received my BOB membership kit. What a truly cool collection of goodies. While looking through the '93 catalogue I came across the poster on page 44 and knew instantly that I had found that piece of cycle art that my room was lacking.

I also want to thank you for the down-to-earth and very human direction you have headed with your company. I bought my first MB-3 back in '87. Being a dyed-in-the-wool retro-grouch, a former racer (too much pain for too little fun), and a tourist who prefers the "lonely" deserts of the Southwest, your bikes make a lot of sense by not being too "techy." Keep up the good work!

Tumbleweed Tommy
BOB #268

Thanks. Another poster is coming—read about it in the 1994 catalogue (which, as an early BOB member, you'll receive first).

We are the one

Attention all those involved in the ridiculous road bike vs. mountain bike debate! You are all riding bicycles. Road riders, mountain bikers, tourists, track riders, messengers, record attempters, tri-geeks, commuters, or cyclocrossers: You ride a vehicle derived from the same basic design. A human-powered, two-wheeled vehicle better known to us as a bicycle.

I know this sounds a bit cynical, but I am amazed by the number of letters in magazines by folks all upset because there weren't enough reviews of road bikes last month or too many articles on mountain bike accessories in last six issues. If you really don't like what the 'zines are talking about, stop reading them! No one is forcing you to read that column on long-slide hydraulic suspension forks. Nor are you required to read LeMond's Crit Tip of the

Week. All of you: Save your breath for your next Sunday ride.

If you go out and ride, no matter what type of cycling you're engaged in, remember that you are riding *your* bicycle and you're riding the terrain *you* like. Not what some guy a thousand miles away likes to do.

Be a Bicyclist, not a label.

Chip Atkins
BOB #204

Questions of threads

I'm married, one child (future BOBette), own my house, own two mountain bikes: a Scott I beat on in the winter, and a Fat Chance I race on.

But I spend most of my training time on my RB-2. I love the bike. (But I was getting too many flats, so I replaced the Ritchey tires with Kevlar-belted Hutchinson Super Us. Problem solved.)

Two questions: 1) How or where can I get a Bridgestone jersey like the one I saw [mountain bike racer] Gene Oberpriller wearing, and 2) Are the headset and bottom bracket of my 1992 RB-2 Italian or English thread?

Tony Valletti
BOB #280

1) Jerseys are available from a Bridgestone dealer. Gene's jersey is made by Top Performance of 100-percent Coolmax. It sells for \$50 (\$60 for long-sleeve). You can also get a Bridgestone jersey made by Pearl Izumi of FieldSensor fabric, with a full front zipper. Prices are \$90 (short-sleeve) or \$130 (long-sleeve). 2) English threads.

THE BOB GAZETTE

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OP-ED

WOOD IS GOOD, AND AS GOOD AS GONE

by Keith Mills

I bought a wood baseball bat the other day. A 30-inch Louisville Slugger signed by Kirby Puckett. The bat I've wanted since I first saw it last year. I can tell there are a lot of base hits in that bat, and even if there aren't, it'll make me feel better when I'm up at the plate.

What's this got to do with cycling, you ask. Plenty, I think, and not just because my Sunday afternoons are often torn between a bike ride and a ballgame. Wood bats, with their tradition, craftsmanship, and virtual extinction in the marketplace, remind me of a lot of certain venerable objects in cycling.

The store where I first spotted the Puckett model stopped carrying wood bats shortly thereafter. I looked in other shops, but no wood. All I saw were aluminum bats—in all sizes, shapes, and colors.

Let's consider aluminum bats for a minute. From purely a performance standpoint, they work. They can be shaped to optimum lengths, weights and diameters. They don't break. And it's true, they do connect with more authority than wood. It's hardly a surprise that everyone from T-ball to college ball—everyone who's not mandated to use wood, basically—takes his cuts with a metal bat.

Not me. Aluminum bats have no soul. They have a rubber grip, as though you were operating a power tool. They make an unsatisfying metallic sound—*ping!*—when they hit the ball, and the ear can't detect whether it's a line shot or a pop-up, much less a broken-bat blooper. They come in garish colors (orange, gold) with silly names like "Ball Buster" painted or anodized on. As my favorite, now-retired baseball announcer used to say, "Mercy."

Give me wood. Not for nostalgia reasons—wood bats do not remind me of my father or any of those other done-to-death baseball metaphors. Not for "performance" reasons. But just because wood feels good.

There's something very important in sports about that incontrovertible supremacy of feeling. It means that we can prefer wood bats and say, friction shifters, with no apologies. And if we acknowledge that some things matter more than someone else's idea of performance and convenience, then maybe we can keep worthy, tried-and-true equipment alive. Otherwise, we can watch all the wood bats disappear from

shops—along with steel frames, wool jerseys, and anything else sacrificed to the mythic superiority of new materials.

But it doesn't look good. My new bat was closeout-priced at \$11, and I doubt that store will bother with the indignity of stocking such outmoded merchandise ever again. Damn—I shoulda bought two.

Keith plays left field in an informal league in San Francisco and helps edit the Gazette.

A REBUTTAL TO CLOSE-MINDED MOUNTAIN BIKERS

by Chris Kostman

America has a sacred cow and it is the mountain bike. And its worshippers angrily proclaimed "Don't tread on me" after reading my recent article in *Bicycle Guide* ("Mountain Bikes: Who Needs Them?" Feb. 1993).

My premise is that road bikes are more ideal for most of the riding done on mountain bikes and that much can be gained from venturing into the dirt on skinny tires. It was a simple "Hey, try this!" article, not a personal attack on fat tires. I was just telling it like it is: "I routinely dust every mountain biker I encounter on the trail. And I ride a road bike." My road bike has forced me to develop superior skills and strength when used in terrain where a mountain bike is superior. I'm a stronger and more skillful rider because of using my road bike in the dirt. And you can do the same.

But America missed the point. It was the biggest letter and phone-in campaign in the history of the magazine. The readers' almost unanimous reply? "F*** you, as***e!" And I'm not paraphrasing.

What happened to our wild-frontier, try-anything, land-of-the-free, speak-your-mind-and-be-respected-for-it attitudes? Guess those days are gone like friction shifting. Instead, at least among one segment of Americana, we're breeding knee-jerk egocentric xenophobia. Too bad.

It's been said for some time that some bicycle technology further separates the

rider from the natural element and makes you more dependent on equipment than talent. Likewise, it's been said that powerful marketing hype has duped the public into believing it cannot possibly ride without all of the latest whizbang gizmos.

I guess the readers' reaction to my piece proves that a number of America's cyclists are led like cows with rings through their noses: "Think this way, America. Believe this, America. Don't try anything unusual, America, especially something that might liberate you from your enslavement and allow the kind of to-heck-with-the-establishment free-thinking that Henry Ford and the Wright Brothers utilized."

But one reader took my advice and ventured off-pavement on skinny tires. "After testing your seemingly bizarre road-bike-in-the-dirt theory," writes D.W. of San Jose, "I can concur with your observations and recommendations. There is a very tough dirt climb near my office that my office mates and I use for time trials. On my first attempt I lowered my P.R. from 22:43 to 19:47 (a course record). I could hardly believe it. I plan to use a road bike for the hillclimb competition in the first round of the Sizzler off-road series."

This guy has balls. What's wrong with the rest of America?

Chris is one of the first to admit that some courses beg for a conventional mountain bike. So please—don't overreact to this column!

A BOB POEM

by BOB #450

We received this poetry submission from a BOB member and were immediately taken with its graceful recollection of the old days. Read the poem and see how many references you can identify. If you're stumped, we've added a list of footnotes at the bottom.

*Would I like the old days back?
Will I ride my inch-pitch back?¹
Till they bring the Yardbirds back?
Do I love my Pletscher rack?
And do I want the old days back?
By Bianchi green—I do.

Do I like my Dettos² black?
Am I tattooed (twice) "Mafac"?
Will I ride my early Sachs³*

*till the paneled down tube cracks?
So do I want the old days back?
By Kelly's clips—I do.

Am I put off by Kestrel's act?
Do I take the Coni⁴ book as fact?
Will I ride 40⁵ holes in back
Till proper wooden rims come back?
Do I want the old days back?
On Gino's health I do.

Do I defend, face-to-face,
Merckx's "real-bike" Hour pace?
Do my shifters clamp⁶ in place?
Do I forget I never raced, just
Ground along at tourist pace
But passed by women, always chased?
But do I want Dura-Ace erased?
Trust me; yes I do.*

*In my world shorts would all be black,
All young guys would ride the track,
And fix my silks⁷ at a buck a crack.
See, I speak Campy but my voice is cracked,
I'm clipped and strapped but I'm off the back,
I learned the lingo but forgot the knack,
I'm retro-suffering in the laughing pack.
Getting dropped is what I do.

Enough already with the sordid facts;
I've admitted I want the old days back:
Like a red Bob Jackson⁸ in Santa's pack,
Beige-box⁹ pieces, front to back.
Cinelli, Bindas, S.L. blacks,
Each thread lubed with warm beeswax.
We love our dreams but we live by facts;
I'd settle for a BOB-club fanny pack.*

Footnotes

① Old track chains and cogs had one-inch pitch.
② Italian cycling shoes, popular in the '70s.
③ Richard Sachs, traditional framebuilder.
④ Campagnolo N. Record parts came in beige boxes.
⑤ 40-hole rear wheels used to be popular.
⑥ Shifters used to clamp onto the down tube.
⑦ 70s bible-of cycle training.
⑧ English framebuilder. Just went out of business.
⑨ Silk tubular tires.



Bridgestone Owners Bunch
15021 Wicks Blvd.
San Leandro, CA 94577



BOB#717



The BOB Cat

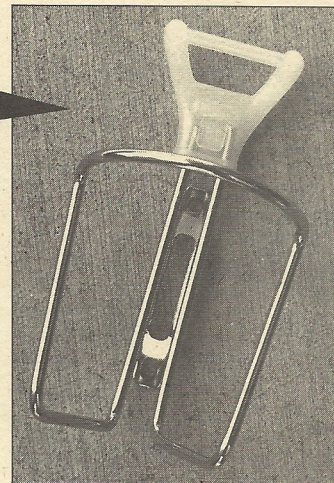
BRIDGESTONE
OWNERS EST 1993 BUNCH

TA WATER-BOTTLE CAGE

We wrote about this in *Gazette* #2, and we forgot to include it in the last BobCat. This is the best bottle cage—it's strong, elegant, and durable. For BOBs, it's also available and affordable. Where else can you buy the best of anything for \$8.00 (especially if it's French)?

Silver

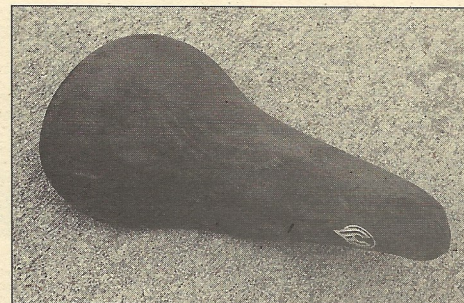
\$8.00



CINELLI UNICANITOR NO. 3 SADDLE

A relic from cycling's golden age, and the saddle virtually every pro rider rode in the '70s. If this saddle came out now, it would bomb—it weighs a manly 415 grams, the kiss of death in this is the age of the flyweight. Colors range from white to grey to mustard to black with a bunch of Cinelli "Flying Cs" all over, but these are the last of them. No color choice, and no whining if you get one in mustard. Very comfortable, and a steal at only...

\$13.00

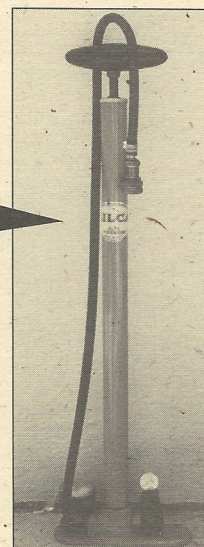


SILCA ARTICLE NO. 73 FLOOR PUMP

This is the pump we're pushing on page one of this *Gazette*. Bear in mind that this pump is Article No. 73 (as in model #73), which is the Presta-only version. (Article 74 has a head that can be used with Presta or Schrader valves.) We opted for the Article No. 73, because compared to the du-all head on the Article No. 74, the Presta-only head is easier to push on and pull off, lasts longer, and seals better. Each pump comes with complete maintenance instructions. Follow them, and this pump will last indefinitely.

Orange. Presta Valve only.

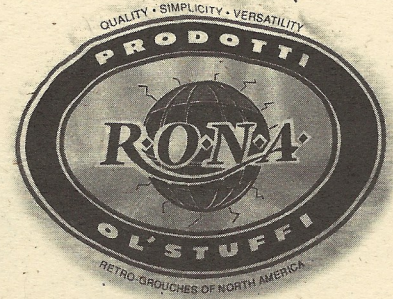
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T-SHIRTS

Choose from three styles in 100-percent cotton. The RONA shirt (top right) celebrates your kinship with the Retro Grouches of North America. The "Crazy" shirt (middle) shows off a Pineapple Bob-drawn mosaic of Bridgestone-isms. The BOB shirt (bottom right) is the official club T (like the one you got when you joined).

- RONA: Grey or white, depending on stock.
 M L XL XXL \$8.95
- CRAZY: White with red and black.
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- BOB: Grey with BOB logo.
 S M L XL XXL \$8.00



BEESWAX

You need your very own hunk (see *Gazette* 1). Not pictured.
 2 ounces \$2.00

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ITEM	SIZE	COLOR	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL

SEND A FRIEND A BOB APPLICATION

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NAME 2 _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT: CHECK MASTERCARD VISA

CARD # _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

NAME OF BANK _____ SIGNATURE _____

*SALES TAX	
SHIPPING/HANDLING	3.25
TOTAL	

*CA RESIDENTS ADD APPLICABLE SALES TAX

