

Spokelore

The Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition

A member of The B.C. Cycling Coalition



Riding in Style!

Clare and Graham Shuley go for a spin...

How does he rate Nanaimo cycling? See page 8!

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Meeting Schedule

All meetings are held at Bowen Park, Act. Room One at 7:00 pm

The next General Meeting is March 19, 2003

Bob Goerzen will be showing slides from his trip to the Kootenays.

Our next Board Meeting is April 16 (Full Moon!)

Everyone is welcome.

How the Universe Expanded

Tom Hocking

My first bike appeared on a brisk autumn Saturday morning of my seventh year. Unannounced, my father had gone out and found a used two wheeler to replace my neglected tricycle. I had quit riding the trike maybe a year or two before, having long outgrown it. It now sat idle in a dark corner of the cellar. I had tried to improve the appearance of that trike by brush painting the frame blue and the rusting spokes that supported its three solid rubber tyres white. But it was still a tricycle, one that had never travelled farther than the paved sidewalk of our own block—the limits of my personal universe. I had, in a childlike way, begun to sense that possession of a two wheeler would define a difference between being a little boy and becoming something greater.

I sat cross-legged in front our black and white television with its tiny screen and perpetually snowy picture while my new bike stood poised at arm's length. While I watched the conclusion of another serial of my favourite western, my attention continued to wander to this unfamiliar and exciting addition to my life. I studied the bike for a long while. It had, I was told, 20-inch wheels. The bike was a bit big for me now, but as with so many things acquired at that age, my parents said that I would "grow into it". It wasn't all shiny and sparkling new like the ones I'd admired in the hardware store. Instead it had a purposeful, almost military, no nonsense look about it with its dull brown two-tone paint marred by a chip here and a scratch there from some earlier adventures. The saddle was covered in faded-to-grey canvas, which had been worn away on the rear so that fuzzy threads grew out of it in all directions. But it was a big kid's bike, it belonged to me now, and it stood ready to take me beyond the confines of our little sidewalk. I remember smiling so much that the muscles in my face be-

gan to ache. I sat there eagerly anticipating Dad's call to wheel the bike outside.

The year was 1951 and the Korean War was in the news. We were living on the outskirts of an older neighbourhood. Behind our house ran the railroad with its clanking steam locomotives that belched black coal smoke and hot clinkers onto the washing that my mother would hang out in the back yard. The tracks marked a physical and cultural border of the neighbourhood.



Exactly what lay in the land beyond was a mystery to me. It appeared industrial in a slightly ominous way and the people over there that I could occasionally glimpse through our fence seemed somehow different from us.

Finally, Dad announced that it was time for me to try out my new bike. I bounced up excitedly and wheeled it carefully out of the living room. The thing was a lot bigger and heavier than I expected and I struggled to get this ungainly monster down the steps from our front porch.

The lesson began on the sidewalk with me seated on the bike and Dad grasping that fuzzy saddle. It was worrisome to me that I couldn't touch the pavement with

both feet while seated. With Dad's encouragement, I eventually began to feel pretty confident about mounting, dismounting, and pedalling. Steering, of course, was another matter. There was no possibility of simply stopping with my feet on the pedals and lounging across the bars, the way I imagined Roy Rogers might have done. This was certainly no horse, nor was it even remotely like my old trike. No, I had to keep on steering or I would begin to list alarmingly first to one side then the other. After a countless number of unsuccessful tries, I began to feel exasperated at this unexpected difficulty. Dad decided that a break would be good for both of us and that, perhaps we'd try again later in the day.

Dad disappeared to do another of the seemingly endless chores that our house demanded of him while I sat on the porch steps, dejectedly considering my reluctant dream machine. Learning to ride was turning out to be a lot harder than I thought it would be. I pondered this for a long time. The bike was awfully big and I felt very small. Maybe I couldn't do it. Perhaps I was one of those kids that had something wrong with them. As my mother called me in for lunch, my smile of the morning was gone.

Saturday was the day that Dad would walk down to the corner store located at the far end of our block to purchase any groceries we might need for the weekend. He came over to the steps where I had returned, now disconsolately eyeing that stupid old bike with its worn out saddle. Dad sat down next to me and spoke quietly. He told me that he knew I would learn to ride if I just kept at it. After a while I began to feel better and the bike was looking okay again. We went down to the store together, me proudly, yet nervously astride my new steed and Dad trot-

continued on page 3

continued from page 2

ting along beside, still grasping the saddle in his strong right hand. We were travelling faster and more smoothly now but still the occasional lurch to certain disaster was saved by that guiding hand. We arrived at the store; Dad made his selections and talked with Mr. Klein, the shopkeeper, while I looked over the trading cards and candied wax lips and moustaches on display. Before we departed, Mr. Klein congratulated me on getting my bike. "Use it well!" he smiled.

The return journey changed drastically in a new and terrifying way. Dad now held a large brown paper grocery bag cradled in his left arm and a carton containing six bottles of Pepsi in his right hand. As we began the homeward leg, Dad grasped the rear of the saddle again, the six-pack swaying from that same huge hand. As we were now on a slight downgrade, our speed began to increase. I recall Dad running along beside me as I wobbled precariously left and right. I knew that Dad was beginning to have some trouble, trying to carry the groceries and Pepsi, control my wobbles, and run all at the same time. I heard him start to breathe harder and say some bad words. Then the panic hit. I began to wail, "Daddy! Daddy! Don't let me go!" And Dad's response, "I...I...can't (huff)...hold...it (puff)...any...more...." I knew I was about to go into the dreaded "death wobble", but then things seemed to get easier. I'd guessed that, somehow, Dad had managed to catch up and was holding onto me tighter than before. We were tracking smooth and straight. Then I heard Dad's voice coming from far behind. "Keep pedalling!" he was yelling. "Just keep pedalling!" Instantly I knew I was doing it. I was riding alone, unassisted. I was on my own, pedalling my own two wheeler!

Maybe I got a little bit of what Chuck Yeager felt when he broke the sound barrier three years earlier. His little rocket

plane nearly shook itself to bits as it approached that threshold then suddenly began to fly smooth and silent. And now I had mastered the art of balancing a bicycle. There could be no going back to the world of trikes.

My next trip was a solo down the block to show Bobby Scott how I could ride. Although he was a year older, poor Bobby hadn't learned how to ride yet but I was too overcome with joy to feel pity. The following day I rode entirely around the block. No more sidewalk riding for me. I rode on the street just like the big boys.

By summer's end I had ridden throughout the neighbourhood. I had become mobile. Dad helped me to install a wire basket on the front so I could ride to the store on my own. Some days Mom would give me an envelope that I would hand to Mr. Klein and he would provide me with the family groceries.

In grade three I rode my bike to school every day.

That was the year I began to meet other kids who rode. We started to hang out together after school. Of course there were crashes, many of those awkward, low speed, embarrassing dismounts and more than a few spectacular wipeouts, but we all survived with just bruises, scrapes, and the occasional stitch. Everyone's bike took on a distinct personality and got named accordingly. My bike came to be affectionately known as Fuzzy Jones, after one of our favourite cowboy sidekicks. Our little biker gang could ride down to the firehouse where they'd let us play on the fire engines. During the year that followed, we began to explore farther afield, to other neighbourhoods and even into that strange world on The Other Side of the Tracks.

My universe was expanding.

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The purpose of the GNCC is to promote and improve conditions for cycling in the Nanaimo area, by:

- providing a unified voice for all cycling interests in the area
- operating as a citizens' advocacy group in cycling-related matters
- promoting more cycle-friendly roads and recreational riding opportunities

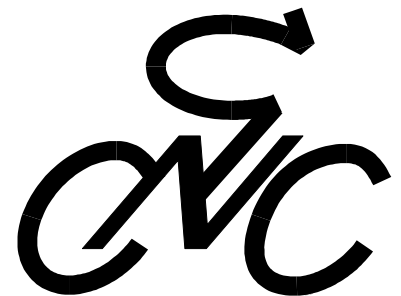
GNCC Board of Directors

Keith Brown, Gay Cunningham, David Grey, Don Oliver, Signy Parkin, Graham Shuttleworth, John van Beek

Questions regarding content or advertising may be directed to the publisher, Gay Cunningham, at the above address.

If you would like to contribute to *SpokeLore*, please call Gay Cunningham at 722-4665, or email "guardian@myexcel.ca".

Views expressed in SpokeLore are not necessarily those of the GNCC.



GREATER NANAIMO
CYCLING
COALITION
Hub City's Cycling Advocates!

4 YES! I WANNABEE

part of the GNCC!

Your contribution will help us (and you) take a pro-active approach to creating a more hospitable cycling environment in Nanaimo.

As a member, you will get:

SpokeLore newsletter nine times a year.
Find out what's going on and who's involved.

Better cycling facilities.

Get involved or support those who are working to make our region more cyclist-friendly.

\$15 per member, \$10 for students & seniors and \$5 for the unemployed.
25% off the total price for two or more members in the same household.

Make cheque or money order payable to the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition and mail to:

GNCC Membership
Unit 130, #34-1150 N. Terminal Ave.
Nanaimo, BC V9S 5L6

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (h) _____

(w) _____

email: _____

Waiver

During GNCC activities, I will be responsible for my own safety and, if cycling, will obey all the rules of the road.

I will participate only in those activities for which I am physically fit enough and for which I have suitable equipment.

I release the GNCC from all claims made by me or my successors regarding death, injury, or loss or damage to my property during any event or activity for which I was a participant or a volunteer.

Signed: _____

Signature of parent or guardian if 18 or under: _____

Contact name/phone in case of emergency: _____

Chain Gang Ride Schedule

Rides are always happening! Visit our ride calendar at: www.calsnet.net/GNCC
Everybody is Welcome, from beginners to hardcore randonneurs.

Sunday, March 30 Ride and Rally Log Train Trail, Port Alberni

Contact: Gay Cunningham 722-7230 for Carpooling info.

May Long Weekend *San Juan Weekend or ?* Call Gay Cunningham for details at 722-7320

It's time to start thinking about summer trips! If you have a trip you're planning this summer, let us know. (And don't forget to write us up a trip report, we like to hear what our members are doing!)

Nanaimo Mountain Bike Club - Ride Schedule is Online!

* Please phone John Thornhill (390-9223), Mike Taugher (754-2294) or Janice McAllan (729-7021) for any information.

Please contact Janet Oxler to receive the ride schedule via e-mail: janet_oxler@hotmail.com Please also contact Janet regarding any phone number or address changes from last year. Thanks.

The rides can also now be found on the website:
www.nanaimomountainbikeclub.com/rides.htm



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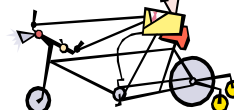
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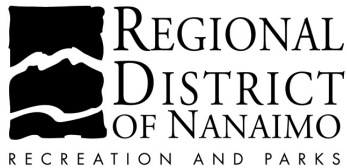
Have you renewed your membership? We depend on membership numbers to continue our advocacy work.

Don't Delay, Renew Today!

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Information

Linda Webb hzy96@shaw.ca
Joan Michel 1-888-828-2069

4th Annual Fundraiser for a
New Bridge at Top Bridge

Poker Walk-Run-Ride

10 km on the Top Bridge Trail or 2 km within Rathtrevor

Sunday March 30th 2003

Rathtrevor Beach Shelter #2 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Adults \$10, Teens \$5, Children FREE

PRIZES ** PRIZES ** PRIZES

Entertainment ** Food ** Information Displays

Let's Put the Bridge Back in Top Bridge!

Attention Groups:

Group Rate: 5 people for \$40

PRIZES for the GROUP that registers the MOST PEOPLE and for the

'BEST DECKED-OUT GROUP' – it's a card thing!

And I thought riding to the Crow and Gate was a major tour.....

Here's a story we heard on CBC. Three intrepid adventurers, Kevin Vallely, Frank Wolf and Andy Sterns are recreating an amazing journey.

In 1900, two remarkable one thousand mile bicycle trips forever shaped Klondike Gold Rush legend. Max Hirschberg, a roadhouse manager, and Ed Jesson, a young miner, had dreams of striking it rich on the "gold-lined" beaches of Nome when they decided to ride a bicycle from Dawson City in the dead of winter. .

We know of their separate journeys thanks to detailed journals which are two of the best personal accounts of gold rush history.

In 1900, rudimentary shelters called "roadhouses" were located along the stam-pede trail at regular intervals. The trip was normally made by dog sled back then and the roadhouses offered the many Gold Rush travelers shelter. Now, there are only

widely scattered native communities along the barren route.

In the winter of 2000, Kevin Vallely and Andy Sterns successfully skied the full length of the famous 1150 mile Iditarod Trail from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. It was out there in that cold, unforgiving landscape that they began to understand the magnitude of suffering and risk that Max Hirshberg, Ed Jesson and others had undertaken. The idea of BIKES ON ICE was born.

ITINERARY:

March 1 -April 15, 2003

Depart Dawson city to Nome. They will head north along the Yukon river up to the town of Circle where will enter the infamous Yukon Flats. This confusing section of jumbled ice stretches for several hundred kilometers and will bring them north of the arctic circle. It will pose the first crux of the trip.

Once through this section they will continue west along the Yukon River through the town of Tanana to the small community of Ruby. Here the Iditarod trail merges with theirs and they will follow it another 250kms along the Yukon until they make the 160km "portage" from Kaltag to Unalakleet on the Bering Sea.

The final 400kms to Nome along the coast will be their second crux where they will be subject to fierce ground storms and shifting sea ice.

Sounds like fun, huh! Where do we sign up?! I think I'll stick to the wilds of Cedar/Yellowpoint, where a little off-road at Yellowpoint Park is a great adventure for me.

You can follow Kevin, Frank and Andy's excellent adventure while you curl up by the fire and sip a hot rum toddy on the web at:

www.bikesonice.com

Ministry of Transportation – Cycling Policy Review

Many of you received this request by MoTH by email, and hopefully you responded. For those that didn't get this in time to respond, it's still worth a look at the policy review and who knows, maybe you can sneak in a comment or two even if it's late!

The Ministry of Transportation adopted a cycling policy in the spring of 2000. The policy was a major shift from the 1992 interim policy, which looked more towards rules for the Ministry to exempt building for cyclists, towards a more positive policy, which looks towards accommodating and encouraging cyclists on new and upgraded ministry infrastructure.

A copy of the policy is available on the Ministry Cycling Website www.th.gov.bc.ca/bchighways/cycling/bicycle.htm (Editor's note: See page 8 for a printout of the policy)

Since the adoption of the policy the Ministry has done several key initiatives to assist in the implementation of the policy.

1. Publish the *Ministry of Transportation and Highways, Cycling Guide 2000*, which provides the policy along with valuable information on how to plan, design and construct safe cycling facilities;

2. Establish a Provincial Cycling Advisory Committee, which provides

advice to the Minister on the policy and provincial cycling issues; a regional cycling committee has also been established in the lower mainland; and

3. Establish a Provincial Cycling Coordinator, whose duties include acting as a liaison between ministry staff and cycling stakeholders, maintain and update the cycling policy, and act as the administrator of the provincial advisory committee.

The cycling policy states that there will be a review of the policy no later than three years from the effective date. The process will include consultation with stakeholders. As part of the con-

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sultation process I would like to provide you this opportunity to comment on the cycling policy and its implementation.

Please e-mail your comments to:
MoTCYCLING@gems1.gov.bc.ca

Subject line:
Cycling Policy Review

I will be compiling the results of this informal survey for discussion at the next Provincial Advisory Cycling Committee meeting in April. Therefore, I would ask that you provide comments by March 7th, 2003.

Alan Callander
Provincial Cycling Coordinator
Ministry of Transportation

BCCC Update

Allan Dunlop

Report from the British Columbia Cycling Coalition—February 19, 2003

We had our latest British Columbia Cycling Coalition (BCCC) board meeting here in Victoria on Sunday, January 26th. Some of the items worked on include the following:

- In response to the Kyoto Accord being ratified, a BCCC committee was formed to lobby the federal government for funding for non-motorised transportation. Plans are underway to contact the key federal decision-makers.

- We are continuing our strong efforts to ensure that rumble strips on provincial highways are only installed according to the guidelines established in consultation with the BCCC. In several areas of BC, these installations have been done incorrectly, and the BCCC has been successful in seeing these corrected. Despite working closely with the Ministry, these improper installations continue. Firm steps are being taken to ensure this does not continue.

- Tactile rain lines are a rumble strip alternative that the BCCC proposed to the Ministry of Transportation. This is now an option the Ministry is considering, and the BCCC is now working on

development of standards for these installations.

- A committee was formed to renew provincial partnering with municipalities on the cost of cycling infrastructure, as was done with the Cycling Network Program (note: the CNP is still technically in place, but funding from the current government is at zero). To facilitate this, a presentation is being developed which will demonstrate proper road treatments and how cost savings can be realised by their being put in place.

- Organisational changes: Allan Dunlop now represents the GVCC, and Richard Campbell is now representing B.E.S.T. (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation).

- Our AGM will be held in Victoria on Saturday, April 5.

Editor's note: Don't forget that GNCC members are more than welcome to attend the AGM. Our representative, John van Beek, will be attending so if anyone wants to carpool, you might contact him.

Happenings

Women's Cycling Training Camp

April 11- 13, 2003

International Cycling Coaches (ICC) will be offering the first annual Women's Cycling Training Camp in Victoria, BC.

To help prepare female athletes for the upcoming mountain bike race season, this camp includes three full days of valuable training information, nutritional guidance, racing tips and basic bike repair instruction with Kappa Cycling Team Pro/Elite level racers with a weekend of practical knowledge in a fun and supportive atmosphere.

The camp is geared towards women of all cycling abilities. Rides will take place throughout the Victoria region.

Maximum of 16 participants. Cost is \$395 including transportation to and from Victoria International Airport or Swartz Bay Ferries and accommodations near the primary camp venue, the Hartland Mountain Bike Park.

For registration, contact ICC at:

(250) 883-1949, or e-mail:
coach1@internationalcyclingcoaches.com

Log Train Trail Rally & Ride

Sunday, March 30, 2003 10:00 am
McLeans Mill, Port Alberni
(off Beaver Creek Road)

Timber West which owns large tracts of timber above the trail has applied to the Ministry of Transportation to convert 4 km of the famous trail (km 16 to km 20) to a logging road so they can haul their logs through there. This widening would of course entail the removal of a whole strip of beautiful trees. The trail is registered with the Regional District and the MOT as a Recreational Trail for non-motorized use. A rally is planned to protest this application

Contact Frank Stini at (250) 723-5589 for more information.

Cycling Policy in British Columbia

Cycling benefits the Province's environment, its economy, the health of its people and society at large. It is the goal of the Ministry to integrate bicycling by providing safe, accessible and convenient bicycle facilities on the Province's highways and to support and encourage cycling. Cycling supports the Ministry's mandate to provide British Columbians with an integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Reference Material - Cycling Policy Brochure

Provisions for cyclists are made on all new and upgraded provincial highways. All exceptions to this Policy will be subject to an evaluation procedure, as described in the reference material.*

Route evaluations that impact cyclists will include consultations with cycling stakeholders. An evaluation can be applied on existing routes to identify measures that will improve cycling conditions.

The Ministry will involve cycling interests and local government officials responsible for cycling in all highway planning consultations. Municipal bicycle advisory committees, the Provincial Cycling Advisory Committee, and/or recognized cycling advocacy organizations can be utilized to provide advice on cycling needs, facilitate issues and to monitor the effectiveness of the Cycling Policy.

To accommodate the safety and travel requirements for different types of cyclists, the Ministry will plan, design and build for the appropriate type of cyclist based on the type of facility.

The cost of meeting the Cycling Policy will be managed within normal business practices and annual budgets. The Ministry encourages the use of alternative funding.

Uniform signing and marking will be provided for cyclists on all provincial highways. (see reference material*)

The Cycling Policy and reference material will be monitored on a regular basis. The first review will be conducted no later than three years from the effective date. The process will include consultation with stakeholders.

NOTE: Reference material is subject to updating & change without formally changing the Ministry Cycling Policy.

Nanaimo Through Fresh Eyes

Graham Shuley

It's been a pleasant surprise, really. Having emigrated fresh from bicycle friendly Victoria (and before that bicycle-even-friendlier Vancouver) I somehow, in my cultural ignorance, imagined Nanaimo to exhibit the stereotypical backwater, small-city traits: ball-cap'd pick-up drivers running cyclists off the road, mid-digit salutes flashed from the rear windows of Camaros and IROC Zs, pit bulls and their owners straining on their leads, and worse.

While Nanaimo does seem to have its share of ball caps and pick-up trucks, I have, during my daily commute to Malaspina College and other Nanaimo locales via bicycle, experienced courteous (albeit often curious) drivers, wide bicycle-safe shoulders and designated lanes, traffic light trip signals made for cyclists, and friendly pedestrians usually willingly moving aside with a smile when I signal them from behind. For all this I am grateful for the advocacy and educational work done by the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition.

Granted, improvements for cycling can always be made in any city. It would be great to see, to name a few examples, better access along the old island highway past Rutherford, covered bike racks at Malaspina, more expensive parking options at Malaspina to discourage car use, improved access on Bowen Road, and bike access along the seawall from end to end). But overall, I and my family feel basically safe and welcome to use my bicycle as a primary means of transport in this, the Hub City.

Hey, not only does Nanaimo appear to be bike-friendly, but its air quality is better than Victoria, and far better than Vancouver, (except, perhaps, on certain days when a certain breeze from the southeast carries certain odouriferous particulates from a certain nearby mill). And this city's sheer traffic volume poses less of a hazard to cyclists than in either Victoria or Vancouver (populations 360,000 and 2.2 million respectively).

This, of course, is great considering the many benefits of cycling. So thanks again GNCC, courteous drivers, friendly pedestrians, and Nanaimo!

A few benefits of bicycling in Nanaimo (and everywhere else!)

- reduces air pollution
- allows cyclist to become better acquainted with neighbours and neighbourhood
- reduces pollution created by the manufacturing of cars
- saves fuel money (big time these days)
- reduces noise pollution
- improves respiratory, muscular, and cardio-vascular fitness
- reduces water pollution (less toxic oil other fluids washed into storm drains, lakes, streams and oceans)
- reduces car maintenance costs
- increases mobility for citizens unable to afford cars and associated costs
- reduces stress
- reduces health club costs (no need for it as a regular cyclist)
- makes parking easier and less expensive
- reduces health care expenses
- it is very definitely cool.