

SpokeLore

The Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition
A member of the BC Cycling Coalition

Our sometimes-annual "What I did on my summer vacation issue"

Cyclists leaving the Blue Grouse winery on a Labour-day weekend Chain Gang ride...see page 8.



Taryn Langford



A quiet campground on Saltspring Island. See page 7 for story.

Jim Alix

A RED-LETTER DAY

As I sit here at my computer on Thursday September the 4th, 2003, I realize that this is a red-letter day for cycling in B.C. To some people in the Kelowna/Penticton area this day may become more infamous than that day two years less one week ago. Many of you may have figured out that I am referring to the burning of the Myra Canyon Kettle Valley trestles. The word at the present time is that 2 have been ruined and 2 more damaged but that *all* of the 16 that are still standing are at risk and could be down by tomorrow. An estimate of the replacement cost for all of the trestles, which I just heard on the CBC, is \$30 Million. It is not clear whether their status as a National Historic Site will aid in their replacement.



BC Forest Service

A threatened trestle in the Myra Canyon.

Later... Now it is Monday the 8th. The latest word is that 14 of the 18 trestles are destroyed. Not good and getting worse.

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S KEYBOARD

Keith Brown

That's right. It's me again. Just one time. I promise.

First, our extreme thanks go out to Gay Cunningham for publishing SpokeLore for the last two years. Right now Gay, husband and dog (you all remember Yelapa, I'm sure you do...) are on a long awaited vacation, so she could not do this issue.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Every summer, cyclist from Nanaimo cycle-tour around the islands, the mainland and further afield. Often they want to share their experiences with readers of SpokeLore. 2003 was no exception. (And

So far, nobody has jumped up to accept the publisher's position, so I agreed to do this and only this issue. For any prospective publishers out there, I did have to cut out a couple of submissions because of space limitations, so the next issue already has a page or so filled!

I hope that there will be even more submissions as some of those riders are still on the road—get the hint James & Marilyn?) So the September issue, often as not, contains those reports.

A SPECIAL THANKS...

To the board of directors of the Nanaimo Employment Opportunity Advocacy Society, and the Executive Director, Carolyn Tatton of the Assessment and Referral

Centre for their donation of a PC to the GNCC. It will enable us to keep our office organized.

CLASSIFIEDS

🚲 Anyone know where an adult trike can be obtained? If so, then Eve at Supportive Apartment Living would like to hear from you: **753-1907** or ereinarz@nisa.net.

🚲 A "Grabar" three-bike trunk-mount bikerack, which is no longer needed (due to a change in car). Keith, asking \$45 obo **390-4005**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

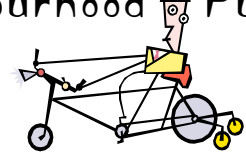
September 17th. GNCC Board meeting. The last of the "season", before the AGM.

September 20th. BCCC Board meeting at Jim Alix's. Topics such as rumble strips, the KVR trestles and the Provincial Advisory Committee will be tabled.

October 15th. GNCC AGM. At the Bowen Park, Activity room #1.

For Wheely Good Food
wheel into the Windward
Neighbourhood Pub

14-1588
Boundary
Crescent



The GNCC has
a new
office & phone
number!

You can find us at #212 in
the Community Services
Building at 285 Prideaux
Our new phone number is
754-4620



- ♥ Open year Round
- ♥ Communal Kitchen
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65 Nicol St., Nanaimo BC
Ph: (250) 753-1188
Fax: (250) 753-1185
Email: nanainsthostel@10hs.net
Website: www.nanainsthostel.com

CHAIN GANG RIDE SCHEDULE

Saturday, September 13th. "Tour de RACK" contact Keith for details <kdbrown@island.net> Riders will split into two teams to cover both ends of the city. Each team will be armed with a digital camera to take photos of the craziest (best and worst) bike racks in public areas around town. Points will be awarded for the quantity of racks and quality of reporting. May the best team win!

Saturday, September 20th. Cowichan Valley Wine Ride, Part II. Contact Taryn for details, <taryn@nisa.net>. Let's go back and finish off the second part of the Cowichan Valley Wine Tour by bike that we didn't get to due to trail closures and our tardiness. This time we really will ride the Trans Canada Trail so bring an appropriate bike. 75% of the ride will be off road on easy rail grade trail. Meet at the GNCC office at 9:30 for carpooling, or at Starbucks in Duncan at 10:30.

Saturday, September 27th. Shawnigan-Cobble Hill Loop. Contact Anna and Kees for details <annandkees@telus.net>. Meet at the GNCC office to carpool to Cobble Hill Thrifty Foods for a 10:30 start.

Sunday, September 28th. The 3rd Yellow Point Pant & Paddle. Beginning at the Crow and Gate, this event includes running, road bike, canoe, kayak and mountain biking sections. Information on this event can be found at: <http://www.pantandpaddle.net> Put together a team or volunteer to assist with the biking activities. For more information on how you can volunteer to help call Bob at 753-5464

Saturday, October 4th. Social Saturday, ride planning, afternoon in town ride, fundraiser. Join us for our first monthly Social Saturday. The GNCC office will be open from 10:00 to noon. The coffee will be on and members will be available to answer questions you might have about cycling, help you fix that flat tire, fit your bike etc. It is also time to plan the next month's worth of rides, so come with your ideas. In the afternoon there will be a ride on Nanaimo's local bike friendly roadways and trail systems lead by Jim Alix. For those interested, the ride will wind up at the Harewood Arms Pub for the beer and burger night fundraiser for Arthritis that Yvonne is organizing (see below). Potential new members stongly encouraged!

For local **mountain bike rides**, visit: <http://www.nanaimomountainbikeclub.com/rides.htm> for the MTB club's rides—they have something listed almost every day!

is published nine times a year by the **Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition**
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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, Keith Brown, at the above address.

If you would like to contribute to *SpokeLore*, please call Keith Brown at 390-4005, or email "spokelore@thegncc.org".

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



The 6th annual Cops for Cancer Tour de Rock ride will start this year on the 22nd of September in Port Hardy. The tour will pass through Nanaimo on the 29th. Go to <http://www.copsforcancer.com/index.htm> for further information.



From Yvonne MacPherson:

I have recently joined the Joints In Motion team for Arthritis. I will be walking a marathon on January 18th 2004 in Bermuda. I have to fund raise \$5,000.00 for the Arthritis Society. Part of my fund raising is having a Beer and Burger Night at the Harewood Arms Pub on Sat. Oct. 4, 2003 at 6:00p.m. The cost of the tickets is \$10.00, of which \$5.00 goes to the Arthritis Society and \$5.00 goes back to the Pub. I will be having a silent auction as well as a meat draw. I will be selling the tickets in advance, including at the next GNCC meeting in September. My phone number is 753-1800. If you want any more information please let me know.

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:

80K FOR 80 YEARS

by Jim & Kathy Alix

We had just moved (back) to Nanaimo at the end of June. On our first social ride with the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition's ChainGang riding group, we learned that John Van Beek, a long-time member of the GNCC (and now their representative to the BC Cycling Coalition) would be celebrating his 80th birthday by riding 80 kilometres.

The 21st of July dawned bright and clear. Eleven cyclists met at Longwood Pub and set off north, up the Island Highway. A pair on a tandem joined us on the way through Lantzville, bringing our numbers up to thirteen.

We decided to stay on the highway through Nanoose and up the hill before Parksville, leaving Northwest Bay Road for the return trip. The highway through this area has nice, wide shoulders (without rumble strips!) and much of it is beside the ocean, with few intersecting roads on the northbound side.

Re-grouping at the Info Centre at the south end of Parksville (water and restrooms ...necessities on social rides) we said goodbye to Stephanie, who would visit a farmer's market in Parksville before returning to Nanaimo.

The rest of us continued north through Parksville, to the southern end of Qualicum Beach, where we went off-road on newly woodchipped trails, coming out in the Qualicum Beach town centre. Here, the group split, those who had carried lunches from Nanaimo relaxing on the lawn of the Town Hall, several others repairing to Lefty's Café.

While at Lefty's, we were approached by a frustrated cyclist, visiting from Alberta and wanting to know where best to do a long-ish road ride. We told her to ride north, up the "old" Island Highway to Courtenay. The shoulder isn't always that great, but the big trucks and RVs are now taking the Inland route, leaving the scenic ocean-side route quite pleasant.

After lunch, our return route kept us off the highway until the Englishman River, at the south end of Parksville, courtesy of a new foot bridge across French Creek.



Bob Goerzen

John leads the group up the Nanoose hill.



Bob Goerzen

A short rest on the way back. Note that John is the only one standing!

After a short stop at the Parksville Info Centre, we continued our ride on Northwest Bay Road, re-joining the highway south of the Nanoose hill for the final stretch back to Nanaimo and the Longwood Brew Pub, where John insisted on treating us to dinner (I didn't hear too many protests!)

The GNCC and the ChainGang host social rides through the summer on Thursday evenings and all year every Sunday.

GULF ISLANDS TOUR

22-25 AUGUST, 2003

PARTICIPANTS: Tom and Janice Hocking, Jim and Kathy Alix, Debby Keith, Jim (aka "Smoky") Kirby

The first noteworthy event of our tour of the Gulf Islands was the incident of The Exploding Baby.

We had departed Nanaimo and driven two vehicles down to Swartz Bay: Smoky's minivan loaded with two riders and four bikes, and our Volvo wagon, faithful tandem and a pod full of gear secured to the roof with four soon-to-be riders contained within.

For expedience sake, and because both vehicles contained more stuff than we could ever hope to carry in panniers, we'd decided that, instead of biking, we would drive onto the ferry to Galiano and carcamp at Montague Harbour Provincial Park.

Upon our arrival at the ferry terminal, I dutifully cruised down the designated lane, there to await our call to board.

As we approached the vehicle stopped ahead, Jim Alix (who readily admits to enjoying small children about as much as did the late W.C. Fields) emitted a terrified sound. "Aaaghhh! Slow down! Don't get too close! STOP!!! Aaaghhhhhh!!!!!!!"

Ahead I could see that we were approaching a minivan at a rate of speed that was apparently uncomfortable for my copilot.

It was then that I noticed a toddling, semi-clothed child standing beside the van. His face was the colour of Bianchi Celeste (for the uninitiated, this is an Italian bike maker's variation on light green). An extremely harried looking mother occupied the back seat and was working furiously at tossing out onto the tarmac a sizeable mound of spent Kleenexes which had taken on that same peculiar Team Bianchi hue mixed haphazardly with other tissues tinged a rather troubling shade of brown.

We screeched to a halt some 15 feet behind this riveting tableau. I sat vaguely amused, recalling the joys of parenthood from an earlier time whilst Jim tried his best to avert his eyes from the drama unfolding in front of our very noses. Mercifully the P.A. system emitted some squawking noises about boarding just as Father appeared. "Yo, Sue. What's up?" he chimed. "Reg!" Mother screamed. "Clean up the baby!!" Alas, Reg's odious task was only half completed when it came time to board.

We had planned our arrival at Montague camp to be early enough to

steal a march on the weekenders.

Alas, 11:00 AM Friday was about two months late to have any hope of finding an empty site and we soon found ourselves assigned to the "overflow camping" in an open field. This was evidently seen by some as a desirable situation, as we found out from a young lad whose camp was obviously tucked away in one of the wooded sites. This seven-year-old came down the dirt road on his bike, accompanied by his father walking the dog. Upon spying our tents he let out a delighted yelp, "Hey Dad, look! FIELD CAMPING! How COOL is THAT?!"

In the event, the laddy was correct—we discovered that our tents were quite close to the beach and to the fresh water tap. Only the outhouses were somewhat less convenient, being perched at the summit of a neighbouring knoll.

With our "field camp" established, we set off (once again in a motorised brigade) in search of the elusive Dionysio Provincial Park, reportedly sited at the extreme north end of the island. About halfway up the island is a very appealing overlook known locally as Lovers' Leap. There is no sign, but a dirt pull-through allows parking and a short walk brought us to a sheer drop, 50 meters from the top of the sandstone cliffs to the water below. After a bit of horsing around and posing for hero shots standing on the brink, we were off again on our search. A bit further on we parked the mechanised transport and mounted our bikes for the trip into terra incognita. We then traversed 5 km of good paving with no other traffic before the road petered out and became double, then single track, and still we pressed on. By and by, we came to the waters' edge on the Strait of Georgia side of the island overlooking Porlier Pass. A stiff breeze was churning whitecaps far out to sea. Inspection of the surrounding forest yielded evidence of a marine park under construction, complete with designated campsites, signage, and the usual trappings of a BC Provincial Park. It appeared to us that this park will contain a road accessible campground, although, mercifully, no pay parking machine was yet in place at the area set aside for a car park.

We returned to camp ready for a well-earned supper.

As darkness fell, we witnessed with some consternation the return of The Exploding Baby. That same minivan had arrived in our field and we soon were watching Mother using an electrical pump to inflate this enormous air mattress the size of a king-sized bed. She would inflate for a while before falling backward onto the mat, presumably to test its firm-

ness. She must have performed this manoeuvre four times—inflate...bounce. Inflate...bounce. When she began rebounding like a gymnast on a trampoline, she seemed satisfied at last. Then, much to the amazement of us all, she managed to drag this Hindenberg to the treeline and disappear up the hill toward the walk-in campsites on the far side of Out-house Knoll, baby in tow. The Exploding Baby's complexion had returned to a normal shade of pink and now, thoroughly purged, refilled, and primed, he was set once again to explode. For the moment however, he seemed content to bound up the hill and into the forest in pursuit of that giant mattress.

Saturday morning saw us determined to carry out a bold plan devised late the previous night, which would enable us to capture Saturna Island at dawn. Several inhabitants of Galiano had informed us that Saturna's 300 odd residents are not at all bicycle friendly and do not welcome visitors. We decided to take on the challenge of taming these wild Pacific islanders and thus our plan was hatched. The plan was complex, since any assault on that far-flung island must take into account quite an arcane ferry schedule. Unravelling which ferry went to what island when turned out to be much akin to figuring out the New York City subway system.

We biked onto the earliest ferry to Mayne in order to catch the only practical Mayne/Saturna run, and make landfall on Saturna at 0900.

If you let your imagination run amok Saturna resembles a sort of reptile, with its head pointing northwest and its long, skinny body snaking southwards to end in its eastward curving tail.

All the Gulf Islands seem to greet the rider with a grunt of a hill up from the ferry, so we disembarked in low gear prepared to climb. Saturna is defended by two such climbs over the serpent's head, the second one steeper and longer than the first. They've even given it a name—Roman Hill, which we quickly re-dubbed "The Roman Wall" after that infamous feature on distant Mt. Baker. Now I don't want readers to be dismayed into imagining Lance climbing L'Alpe du Huez here—Roman Hill is an ascent of only about 300 vertical feet (100m). It's the steepness of the switchbacks and the trepidation that comes with facing the unknown that feels daunting.

Once this second summit was attained, we were treated to a downhill screamer back to sea level on the north-

continued overleaf...

...from page 5

east side.

From there we followed a pleasantly flat(!) road heading all the way to the southeast tip. Saturna is the least developed of the islands with ferry service and the practically non-existent traffic attested to that. This extremely pleasant stage took us past vistas of the open Strait and rocky beaches facing the Mainland. From here, it should be possible to get excellent views of Baker. Unfortunately, the Mainland side was blanketed in a veil of cloud. After about ten very enjoyable island kilometres, we reached the East Point lighthouse. The light itself is sited on a grassy hill where we strolled around the various structures.

As we resumed our exploration of the grassy hills and weathered sandstone formations, our attention was drawn to a baby seal lying forlornly upon a rock shelf close to the surf. Its baleful cries were such that well-meaning beachcombers will often assume that these pups have been abandoned by their mothers and are in need of rescue. I knew from my experiences as a sea kayaker that the drama we had encountered was no crisis at all, just normal seal behaviour. Before long we spotted mother seal fishing for lunch in a kelp bed not far away.

The ferry schedule dictated that all too soon it was time for us to turn around, so we reluctantly bid adieu and turned our backs on this inspiring point. Ten km of flats, then The Roman Wall and its lesser companion and we arrived back at Lyall Harbour in time to board the 3:45 PM ferry to Mayne. As we sailed away, our conversation turned to those dire warnings regarding Saturna residents. One chap was very friendly and gave us some valuable route information. One lady shouted something unpleasant from the cab of her old pickup. We had discovered that, as with most places, our appearance elicited mostly favourable reactions. We would not hesitate to return another time.

Now the next ferry to Galiano was not until 7:45, so we had four hours to kill on Mayne. Since the Village Bay terminal has no worthwhile dining establishments, we agreed that traversing one more hump wouldn't do us any permanent harm, especially if a pub dinner awaits on the other side. We remounted our steeds and climbed over to neighbouring Miners' Bay where we ate a most enjoyable meal on the sundeck of the local watering hole. Just as dusk began to close in we returned over the hill to the ferry terminal. Despite the impending darkness, we needn't have hurried—the ferry was about a half-hour late.

We arrived at home-sweet-field somewhere before ten. We all felt too cranked to sleep and instead remained sitting around the table munching, drinking, and rehashing the events of the day. We had indeed taken Saturna, if not by storm, then by stealth and determination. Overall, we had found the natives friendly. The invasion had required four ferryboat rides. Our total cycling distance for the day was less than 50 km (not taking into account the vertical distance). It had been a long day but now Saturna was in the bag. We fell asleep contented.

Sunday we slept in, then lingered over coffee while we decided on our next plan of action. It turned out that most of us were either resting on our laurels or licking our physical and mechanical wounds from the Saturna campaign. No action figure emerged to lead today's charge. Consequently we eased into the day somewhat aimlessly, a few making an earnest attempt at breakfast whilst others wandered off to explore our little corner of the island on foot. Janice and I followed a lovely trail that meanders around the base of Gray Peninsula. After second breakfast we decided to drive into "town" to "do the shoppes" whilst some of the more ambitious among us decided to actually turn a crank!

As the day wore on, Janice and I decided to drive back to Lovers' Leap with our tandem on the roof, then bike the upper island via a different road. This resulted in a very pleasant ride up the northwest side to the end of the road.

As we were returning to our Volvo, we were greeted by the most melodic strains of an expertly played trumpet wending its way through the trees. We discovered this wonderful music being played by a man perched on the brink of those high cliffs. We drew up quietly, sat spellbound, and allowed these beautiful tones flow over us. A short distance away another car was parked with doors open and a woman dreamily lounging comfortably within. After some time had passed, Janice approached the woman who informed us that her husband was a classically trained professional musician visiting from Vancouver. Because he has disciplined himself to practice every day, he decided to come to this secluded spot rather than his hotel room. We enjoyed his rehearsal through several numbers ranging from Handel to Gershwin. The spell was broken when an SUV noisily skidded to a halt in the gravel. The passenger's door was flung open and a middle-aged woman with bleached blond hair and polyester pantsuit stomped toward us. Still some distance away she yelled, "Hey, is this

public property?" When we assured her it was, she announced, "There's nothing to DO here!" A young man emerged from behind the wheel and hovered solicitously in the background. "What's wrong with this island?" she continued. "It's so boring!" We suggested that she might try Victoria. Or perhaps Las Vegas. Unsatisfied, she approached the musician. After listening critically for about 15 seconds she poked him solidly on the shoulder and demanded, "Play me some Frank Sinatra!" The man placed the trumpet on his lap and spoke slowly and distinctly, "I-don't-play-requests..." to which she snorted and stomped back toward her SUV. It then became evident to us all that she and her young driver shared an intimate relationship. After some overt display of affection, they returned to their vehicle and, with a roar and a spray of gravel they were off the way they had come. The musician returned to his trumpet, his wife returned to her reverie and Janice and I prepared to depart. Again, peace had been restored.

There was nothing for it now but to return to camp where a massive potluck dinner was arranged to use up any food and drink not yet consumed.

On Monday, we split up in the small village that has grown up around the terminal. Jim and I sat over coffee at an outside café, Debbie and Smoky went off in search of what they mysteriously referred to as "buried treasure", and Kathy and Janice went off to investigate some tres chic health spa and art gallery which they had spied earlier from their bikes. Both ladies returned later, bubbling with enthusiasm about paintings and things called "mud packs" that neither could afford. Just as the boarding call was announced, Debby and Smoky returned with their treasures. It seemed they had discovered an old dump where Smoky could indulge one of his more harmless vices—collecting old stuff. He was quite excited with his finds. He showed us a bottle, and two ancient toys: a steam locomotive, and a fire engine.

Around mid-afternoon we returned to Swartz Bay, then home.

In sum, it had been a successful and fun trip for everyone.

Saturna turned out to be my favourite island, contrary to the Galianans' warnings. I can heartily recommend it to any touring cyclists with sufficient perseverance to decipher the inter-island ferry schedule and enough stamina to scale The Roman Wall.

Like Saturna, Galiano is long and skinny with just the one main out-and-

Concluded on page 8...

A TRIP TO SALT SPRING ISLAND

by Jim Alix

Our first bike visit to Salt Spring Island, five or so years ago, was a day-trip, assisted by a car trip to Crofton. On that visit, we learned that riding on Salt Spring is all up- and downhill (although the uphill **seems** to predominate, logic says the two are equal.)

Having heard about the Garlic Festival at the Nanaimo Farmers' Market, we determined to make another trip, this time without the car (perforce—as we no longer own one!) To further complicate things, neither Kathy's bike nor mine were working properly...her front derailleur was allowing only the inner two chainrings, while my rear (indexed) shifter was broken, allowing only the six highest gears. This still left a large enough gear range that we could manage. In fact, I had 18 gears and Kathy had 14, better than '70's-era 10-speeds.

We had originally thought to leave on Friday morning, but postponed to Saturday, so that David and Odette (recently returned from Montreal) could join us. They weren't too interested in the Festival, but wanted a weekend at Ruckle Point Park.

The four of us set out early Saturday morning, on the "no-frills" route (Highway 1 to Coronation Mall, south of Ladysmith.) Just as we passed the northern tip of Ladysmith Harbour, Kathy and I overtook David and Odette and continued up the road for about five minutes, before realizing that they had stopped. Riding back to check, we found that Odette's rear tire had flattened. No problem...lots of spare tubes.

Putting the wheel back on, though, turned into a frustrating task. The chain had a "knot" in it that didn't seem to want to straighten out. Finally, after removing the rear derailleur cage to straighten the chain, we managed to get the wheel on, but the chain still seemed to have a lot of slack. Several minutes of collective head-scratching later, we realized that the spring in the derailleur broken! Not something you can fix on the road! David and Odette decided to ride back to Nanaimo and get another bike (isn't it great to have spares?) In the meantime, Kathy and I would carry on to Ruckle Point and get a campsite.

We had a nice, if uneventful, ride to Chemainus, where we spent about an hour before continuing on to Crofton, arriving just in time to catch the ferry to Vesuvius...a good sign. Salt Spring Island is still all hills, but there has been some

improvement in paved shoulders, so the riding wasn't all that bad. Unfortunately, the condition of both of our bikes was deteriorating. My shifter had completely given up and I was restricted to one rear sprocket—essentially a three-speed. I set the rear sprocket to the lowest (largest) gear and determined to spin if I wanted to go fast. Kathy was having increasing difficult changing gears on her front derailleur.

When we got to Ganges, Kathy wanted to stop and explore, but I insisted on carrying on to Ruckle Point Park and setting up camp. We would be coming back through Ganges on Sunday, anyway! She reluctantly agreed, both of us thinking we might set up camp, then return to Ganges that evening. What we forgot to account for was the hills! And, of course, it's easy to **say** "25 kilometres." **Riding** it—round-trip—is another matter, especially on Salt Spring!

We got to Ruckle by 4:30 and were directed to the overflow camp area. Unfortunately, I misinterpreted the directions, and ended up setting our tent in an area where we were not allowed. Just before the ranger got there to tell us, a friendly neighbour informed me of my error. Kathy and I decided that, rather than move to the **real** overflow area, where we would be surrounded by what seemed to be masses of children (I don't hate children, but they **will not** stay quiet!), we would bundle ourselves up and head towards Ganges, stopping when it got dark and bundling up in any opportune clear spot in the forest. The ground was dry, the night would be warm...no problem!

There are two routes from the south end of Salt Spring Island (Fulford Harbour or Ruckle Point) to Ganges: Fulford-Ganges Road or Stewart Road. Although Stewart is a bit shorter, it has steeper hills and a short section of gravel. Coincidentally, this was the route we had taken on our last trip to Salt Spring. I remembered a small park (Arnell Park) at the top of the hill. If we could make it that far before dark, the rest of the way to Ganges is all downhill.

We made it to Arnell Park just as it was getting dusky. The park straddles Stewart Road, with a small portion on the west side of the road that seems to have been closed, probably due to parties. We had time to set up the tent and make some hot chocolate before we turned in.

In the morning, we decided to ride into Ganges for breakfast. There were a few more uphill sections than I remembered, but nothing terrible. A cup of coffee and breakfast were welcome. We spent about two hours in Ganges, me reading and

watching the boats in the harbour while Kathy explored the stores.

For the ride to Vesuvius, we decided to take Upper Ganges Road. From Ganges, this starts out with some steep uphill, but soon levels out for a pleasant ride. There's much less traffic and it's somewhat shorter, as well.

At Vesuvius, we had only a short wait for the ferry. On the ferry, we talked with the only other cyclist, who had come from Colwood and was making the circle trip via the Mill Bay ferry. During the ferry ride, I managed to adjust Kathy's derailleur so that she could shift between two of her front chainrings a little easier, and tweaked the tension of my rear derailleur cable so that I could shift between the largest two sprockets by adjusting the trim barrel on the cable. With the bikes working a little better, the ride from Crofton to Chemainus felt restful, after the narrow roads and steep hills of Salt Spring Island.

We wandered around Chemainus for a couple of hours, then headed for home, stopping at the market by the Nanaimo Airport for a supper of fruit and carrot cake. We were happy to get home. Later, we found out that David and Odette had, indeed, returned to Nanaimo and again started out for Salt Spring, only to realize that the "second bike" Odette was riding wasn't properly set up for her and riding 150 kilometres in two days, with a load, wasn't going to make for a good weekend. They spent the weekend on Newcastle Island.

Oh, yes! Remember the Garlic Festival? Our original goal? When we got there and saw that there was a fee to enter, we decided we weren't that interested (we're both a little cheap...probably why the bikes aren't fixed yet!) We had a good time, even if we had some bike troubles. In the end, the journey is more important than the destination.

There is a good map of Salt Spring Island, showing Arnell Park, at www.gulfislandsguide.com/maps/saltspring.htm.



Jim Alix

Waiting for the ferry at Vesuvius

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back road. On the whole it's quite a bit more developed (though not nearly so much as Saltspring) and a bit hillier than Saturna.

Mayne seems very nice and there are more possibilities for a loop route.

The Penders remained untouched on this trip, primarily because they require a four-ferry shuffle different from Saturna and, with the number of days available, it was an either/or situation.

Should you decide to visit these islands, do your homework. Remember that Montague Harbour is the only officially designated campground for Galiano, Mayne, and Saturna. Otherwise, accommodation can be found in B&Bs and lodges. Get a ferry schedule and study it thoroughly. You must plan your trip around these comings and goings.

Whichever of these islands you choose to bike, and whatever occurs, you are sure to find adventure here, meet interesting people, and ride a lot of ferries.

WINE TOUR RIDE REPORT AUGUST 29TH, 2003

Taryn Langford

What a fabulous way to end the summer...a wine tour through the beautiful back roads of the Cowichan Valley. It must have been the thought shared by several others, as we had a record sixteen riders turn out. Two members from the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition joined us, as well as two keen new riders. The weather was absolutely perfect...25 degrees and sunny with a breeze. Could we hope for anything else? I don't think any of us could even remember what a rain jacket looks like it has been so long.

We started out at 9:30 am meeting at the downtown office for carpooling to Duncan. It was a good thing that Michael Moynihan brought his truck to carry Jim Alix's bike trailer to tote back all the bottles of wine. We then ditched the cars in front of Starbucks and set off along the gently rolling hills toward Cowichan Bay.

Coming out of Cowichan Bay we met the only real hill of the ride (a 15% grade) causing a few to dismount and walk up. After about 18 km our first stop was Cherry Point Vineyards. We were treated to a group tasting of several of their different white and red varieties. Several bottles of wine were purchased and safely stashed away in panniers and trailers.

By this point several riders were getting hungry so we stopped in at a corner store in Cobble Hill and picked up some lunch items to enjoy at Merridale Cider's new picnic shelter. Merridale had a well organized self guided tour set up that explained all the intricacies of making traditional apple cider. We were again treated to a tasting. My personal favorite had to be the Cyser. Again several bottles were rung through, and since the lunches were no longer taking up space in our panniers, the load wasn't too heavy. My legs sure felt heavy though pedaling up the hills with a stomach full of food and drink!

Our original plan was to ride the Trans Canada Trail from the Kin Sol Trestle to Glenora. Due to extreme fire risk the trail was actually closed and were running short on time, so we decided that taking the short road back to Duncan was the better option. Along the return route we stopped in at the Blue Grouse Winery. Unfortunately they wanted to charge \$5 per person for tastings! This was an unpleasant surprise, as this charge was not advertised. We decided not to take them up on the offer. There was still plenty of room in the trailer for wine, but none was purchased here. It did give us time to metabolize the alcohol before driving back to Nanaimo.

Back at Starbucks we planned out the weekend rides for the next month. It was so much fun, we decided to complete the second part of the wine tour on September 20th. See this issue of SpokeLore for the Chain Gang ride schedule.



all photos: Taryn Langford