

Spokelore

The Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition

A member of The B.C. Cycling Coalition

*Congratulations Nanaimo! **Number One in Canada** in this year's
Commuter Challenge!*



*Debby Keith attacks and is victorious over Mount Constitution
on Orcas Island!*

AGM
2004

An important meeting you won't want to miss! Our speaker is John Luton, the Executive Director of the Capital Bike and Walk Society (www.capitalbikeandwalk.org) and the Coordinator of the Vancouver Island Tourism Alliance. Join us **Wednesday, October 20 at 7:00 pm Activity Room One, Bowen Park**. John has developed a fabulous website for the Tourism Alliance at www.cyclevancouverisland.ca you need to check out, then come and listen to John's vision in person.

AGM 2004

The Board has decided to ask the approval of the membership that the GNCC take the necessary steps to attain Charitable Status.

Apparently this has been quite successfully done by other groups like ours.

We can then issue receipts for income tax purposes to our donors.

This special meeting will coincide with the AGM where the pros and cons will be discussed.

John Van Beek

Restore the Kinsol Trestle

Times Colonist

Friday, September 03, 2004

The Kinsol trestle is, depending on the source, the highest and longest wooden railway trestle in the Commonwealth, or maybe in the world, and some say it's the largest wooden structure of any sort. Ultimately, though, its precise standing doesn't matter -- because there is no argument that it's a striking historic structure that must be restored.

The 83-year-old trestle is 70 metres high, 300 metres long, and spans the Koksilah River valley near Shawnigan Lake. Built as part of a rail line that served a copper mine, it was decommissioned in 1979. A study in 1999 found that it was still in relatively good shape, and with a bit of work could be put back into use.

The old rail line has become a vital part of the Trans Canada Trail, the recreational corridor designed to link Canada from sea to sea to sea.

With the trestle off limits, cyclists and hikers must make their way down to the bottom of the steep canyon, then back up to the other side.

In the next six months, a total of \$595,000 will be spent on trail improvements between Shawnigan Lake and Lake Cowichan. The Cowichan Valley Regional District will create a new trailhead staging area in Glenora near Duncan's wineries, pay for renovations

to the old forest ranger station which has been moved to Lake Cowichan Village, and do some general trail improvements around Shawnigan Lake, including a bypass around the trestle.

There is no money, though, for the Kinsol trestle itself, which should be a top priority. Part of the problem, of course, is the high cost -- it's estimated that a full restoration would cost as much as \$3 million.

The money for the trail system in the CVRD is part of \$4.2 million announced last week by Premier Gordon Campbell for improvements to four trails. The other three are in the southern Interior.

A \$13.5-million fund, with 90 per cent of the money coming from the federal government, has also been set up to pay for the reconstruction of the famed Myra Canyon trestles near Kelowna that were destroyed by wildfires in 2003. We welcome the Myra Canyon work -- it shows that the government recognizes that tourism and historic value of old rail trestles. And since the Kinsol trestle is more significant than any of the Myra Canyon ones, let's hope it's only a matter of time before we get the word that it, too will be restored.

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What do you think of this idea!?

Think inside the box

George Monbiot

Tuesday July 27, 2004

The Guardian

Every year the figures inch downwards, and every year they are greeted as a triumph. Britain now has the best record for road safety in Europe. Only 3,508 people were killed on our roads last year, and only 171 of them were children. Only 33,707 were gravely injured. Rejoice, just bloody well rejoice.

Among the dead, this year, was a friend of mine. He was cycling home from a meeting about making the roads safer for cyclists. He was run down by a young man who had just passed his test. Those of us who refuse to drive are among the most likely to be killed by a car.

The comparisons have been made before, but I'll test your patience by repeating them. The people who die on our roads every year would fill 30 commercial airliners. The deaths caused by cars in Britain since 1945 outnumber the deaths of British soldiers during the second world war. Since March 2003, 61 British servicemen have died in Iraq; as many people die in just one week of carnage (was there ever an apter word?) on the roads. One in 17 of us will be killed or seriously injured in a road crash.

So why do we put up with it? Partly, of course, because we think there's not much more that can be done. More speed cameras, more humps, stiffer penalties for bad drivers will all save lives, but we appear to accept that some people will always drive like lunatics. It is after all what driving, for many people - especially young men - is all about: the freedom to behave like an idiot.

But there is something that can be done. There is a technological solution to what is essentially a technological problem. It could start to be deployed immediately. Indeed, with the minimum of political pressure, it

Submitted by John Van Beek

could become an almost cost-free product of quite another scheme.

Last week, the government published its plan for dealing with congestion. Within 10 years, it proposes, every car should be fitted with a communications box. With the help of a global positioning satellite, the box will send a signal to the toll collectors showing where it is and how far it travels. Cars can then be charged according to where they are. The Department for Transport hopes that, by costing roads according to their use, it can discourage people from crowding the choke points.

It may well be a necessary means of preventing gridlock. But there is another, more powerful argument in favour of the scheme, which almost everyone seems to have missed. With just a little modification, it could also be used to cut fatal accidents by nearly 60%.

The communications box will contain a digital map of the road network. To turn it into a road safety device, you need only add the local speed limits and connect it to the engine management system. When the box detects that the speed limit has dropped, it warns the driver, blocks the accelerator and applies the brakes. Local sensors can tell the digital map when weather conditions are bad, and bring the car's speed down to match them.

The system - called Intelligent Speed Adaptation - has been tested by Leeds University's Institute For Transport Studies. When the system is mandatory (in other words, when the driver can't override it) and can take account of the weather, it could reduce serious accidents by 48% and deaths by 59%. This isn't just because you are more likely to hit someone if you are speeding; you are also more likely to kill them once you have made contact. The energy dissipated in a collision rises with the square of its speed. A person hit by a car at 35mph is twice as likely to die as a person hit by a car moving at 30.

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SpokeLore

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

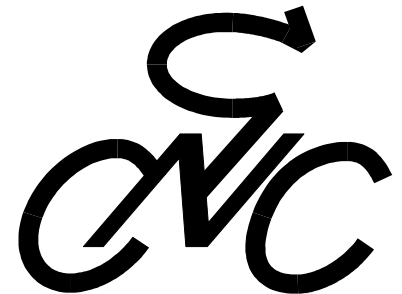
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Questions regarding content or advertising may be directed to the publisher, Gay Cunningham, at the above address.

If you would like to contribute to *SpokeLore*, please call Gay Cunningham at 722-7320, or email "guardian@myexcel.ca".

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



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Interested in Volunteering?

Please check your interests below.

- Deliver SpokeLore by bike (9 times/year)
- Contribute to SpokeLore (articles, photos, artwork, editing/layout)
- Help with a GNCC special event
- Provide a talk, demo, or display at a GNCC meeting
- Lead road or trail rides with Chain Gang
- Join a specific committee
- Help with GNCC office & resource center

Chain Gang Ride Schedule

Rides are always happening! Visit our ride calendar at: www.calsnet.net/GNCC for updated information.

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Ride Report

May long weekend, the San Juan Islands were teeming with cyclists. Nine GNCC Chain Gang riders headed for the Wayfarers Inn hostel at Friday Harbor. Along the way we met many groups of cyclists: bicycling Baptists who camp at Lake Dale every year, Cross-Canada Cycle Tourists from the lower mainland BC, and an energetic group of mature women from Kamloops who have cycled this weekend together for four years.

On the ferry, we met a cycling couple from Victoria who were headed to the same hostel with glowing reviews. As we converged on our lodgings we realized their recommendation was well deserved. We were soon joined by another cycling couple from Victoria and yet another from Nanaimo. Altogether there were fifteen cyclist staying there. We rounded out our first evening with massages by Jim C and some late-night singing by young Dutch and German travellers. We survived the next day of chilly, rainy weather by swapping fantastical stories of cycling adventures. We rolled into the evening sharing an abundant array of snack foods and cheap wine, and playing raucous games of Yatzee and Scrabble. Is "vog" really a word? Has anybody got a dictionary?

Sunday was warm and beautiful and we spread out to islands of interests, some tackling Mount Constitution, others preferring marinas and beaches. In all, the islands of Shaw, Orcas, and San Juan were explored. The San Juans are characterized by pastoral quietness and unique history. This particular long-weekend is especially favoured by Canadian cyclists as it is not a holiday for the Americans and therefore there is virtually no tourist or car traffic. I am sure this ride will continue to be an annual Chain Gang ritual organized by Gay.

submitted by Debby Lee Keith



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Think inside the box

from Page 3

Needless to say, this proposal, like almost every attempt to save lives, is anathema to those who claim to speak on motorists' behalf. The Daily Mail (they must have thought long and hard about this one) calls the idea "Big Brother in the boot". The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders claims it will prevent motorists from "accelerating out of danger". Their spokesman is plainly in need of driving lessons: he seems to have confused the pedal on the right with the one in the middle. The Automobile Association warns that the system will "restrict freedom", which is, of course, precisely the point. The website pistonheads.com is already urging motorists to find ways of sabotaging it.

So what do these people want? They say they want to get rid of speed humps and speed cameras. They say they want the government to stop snooping on them and fining them. They say they want the police to concentrate on catching muggers. Well, this system permits all these things to happen. It prevents speeding without policing or punishment. So why aren't they demand-

ing that it is adopted immediately? Because what they really want, of course, is to allow people to continue driving without social restraint.

There's nothing new in all of this. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, the aristocrats in pre-revolutionary Paris exhibit their disdain for the rest of humanity by driving their carriages as fast as they can. "The complaint had sometimes made itself audible," Dickens wrote, "that, in the narrow streets without footways, the fierce patrician custom of hard driving endangered and maimed the mere vulgar in a barbarous manner. But ... in this matter, as in all others, the common wretches were left to get out of their difficulties as they could." The kings of the road still insist on their right to dispose of the lives of their subject peoples.

Happily, these morons belong to a minority. A Mori poll in 2002 suggested that 51% of drivers would welcome compulsory speed limiters in all new cars. And so they should. As soon as it becomes impossible to break the speed limit, the entire culture of driving changes. The other fool might

remain a fool, but there isn't much he can do about it. He can't tailgate you, he can't overtake you on a blind bend (the satellite system could produce a different speed limit for every metre of road), he can't play Jenson Button after closing time. The fact that the high-performance car becomes redundant in these circumstances may help to explain why the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders isn't too keen on the idea.

Unlike the road charging scheme, there are no implications for civil liberties: the car receives signals from the satellite, but does not transmit. The only freedom the system restricts is the freedom to endanger other people's lives. If cars are going to be fitted with communications boxes anyway, the cost of incorporating speed controls will be minimal. The savings, the Leeds study suggests, run into tens of billions of pounds.

So we don't have to call for very much. Just the tweaking of a scheme that the government plans to introduce anyway. And the prevention of only a couple of thousand deaths a year.

Regarding fenders for winter conditions: The SUPERFLAP.

With the early onset of the monsoon season, this may be a good time to talk about rain protection. If you ride in the rain your bike should be equipped with fenders. If you ride in the rain together with others, the rear fender should include a mudflap. The fenders that you can get from your Local Bike Shop are simply not good enough for riding any distance in typical BC conditions. I recently rode a 200 km brevet on the mainland, the first four hours of which were under a steady rainfall. Over the course of the day I rode several pace lines and had the opportunity to observe many different attempts at preventing water and road grit from splashing onto riders following behind.

The only practical solution was to mount a very long, flexible mudflap onto the bottom end of the rear fender. And I do mean l-o-n-g, down to about 4" (10 cm)

above the surface of the road. Anything else will result in dirty water being sprayed into the face of any rider following closer than 15' (5m). Such mudflaps are not available commercially. You may find flaps at your LBS, but they will be shorter and wider than the one I'm recommending, and their usefulness is minimal. You will have to improvise one from materials available in your shop or your local hardware store.

I made one from some thin, flexible plastic originally used as a stiffener inside an old pannier bag. You may find other materials equally suitable. In the past I've used rubber floor matting and once even part of an old water bottle. I trimmed my plastic about 2" (5 cm) wider than my existing fender, making very sure it would be LONG enough to perform its function, then carefully measured and drilled two

holes through both fender and mudflap, then affixed it using short 4 mm allen head (water bottle cage) bolts backed up by "nylock" nuts. Be sure that those bolts don't end up near your tyre or you may get scraping, punctures, or worse. You can use just one bolt, but my experience has been that the flap is forever getting knocked off centre. You might try pop rivets if you have the tool. The resulting new addition has to be flexible enough to allow rear wheel removal, yet just stiff enough so as not to be forced into a horizontal position by the slipstream of air

Now any GNCC member can draft me without ending up with a face full of dirty water. How about doing the same for me? Try some experiments and let me know your results. Address questions, comments, or suggestions to me, Tom Hocking at

randoman@shaw.ca

Cycling Cuba

Last February, 2004 I took a group seasoned cyclists, as well as my fifteen year old son, on a two week cycling holiday/adventure to the tropical island of Cuba. There were nine of us in total, plus a Cuban guide and driver. We all packed our bikes for the flight to the eastern region of the island, know as the Oriente and arrived there after a seven and a half hour journey, including a short stop in Calgary.

Our Skyservice charter landed outside of the city of Holguin and we were met by Eduardo the guide and Angel the driver and transferred to hotel Mirado de Mayabe, a small, recently renovated property perched on a hill overlooking a picturesque valley. Our arrival time left us with plenty of time to assemble bikes, have a welcome cocktail and enjoy a relaxing meal in the covered open air restaurant. How wonderful to languish in the warm night air in February.

The morning broke with a blue sky and a gentle breeze and after a leisurely breakfast, the filling of water bottles from a supply on the bus, we headed down from the hotel to the valley below and for all, a taste of Cuba's quiet countryside. The gritty paved road from the hotel gave way to a pot holed "short cut" which undulated past small palm wood houses with thatched or corrugated fibre roofs. We passed people walking, cycling on old Chinese bikes modi-

fied to carry a family of three, plus supplies and an assortment of animal drawn buggies. Cuban's all over the island seem to be in constant motion and doing it in a variety of ways. Hands were constantly waving and smiling faces on turned heads watched as this strange looking group of cyclists passed them by.



When we arrived at the main highway leading to the city of Mayari, where we would head south up a grueling, unpaved hill to our destination, the traffic, which was sparse, changed to old trucks and older American cars spewing clouds of black smoke. It is amazing to see these late forties and early fifties classics from that era, still bombing, or more appropriately, labouring, along the highway. Often they are parked square in the middle of the road, broken down, with a group of relaxed and smiling Cubans waiting patiently for the journey to continue.

After two nights in the mountains of Pinares de Mayari in a recently renovated rustic lodge we headed down a gravel road to the flat lands below and followed more paved

roads through several large towns with curious onlookers. On the edge of one town we stopped to indulge ourselves in some guarapo, a drink made by squeezing raw sugar cane through a steel roller gadget similar to an old ringer washing machine. The nectar is indeed sweet and drunk by Cuban men as an aphrodisiac. It is for sure a boost of energy and had most cyclists thirsting for more.

The roads in this part of Cuba are never boring and offer a variety of hills, curves and flatlands. Royal palms dot the hills everywhere you look and small farm houses with chickens, goats and pigs wandering freely are spread out or occasionally grouped together to form a small village. Stores are infrequent and most only carry products designated for the Cubans and sold in Cuban pesos. It is most important to have a support vehicle in some areas of Cuba as food and drink can be difficult to obtain.

The longest distance traveled in a day was just over a hundred kilometers and each day was spent doing some cycling. In the city of Santiago de Cuba, Cuba's second largest city, we had a guided city tour in which Eduardo, our guide, took us to all the most important attractions in the city and explained the rich history of the area. There was time to wander around and get acquainted or just hang out at the Casa Grande hotel overlooking the main square of Cespedes park. This city has incredible nightly entertainment to satisfy anyone's taste.

After touring around the countryside of Santiago we headed east into the province of Guantanamo, which hosts both the driest and wettest areas of Cuba. It also is home to the American military base of Guantanamo Bay. Because the distance between Santiago and our destination, Baracoa, the oldest settlement in Cuba, was many kilometers, we transferred to the best area for cycling, which included a traffic free ride along the Caribbean and a magnificent ride up and over the mountainous Farola viaduct. This road

Tom Robertson

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2004 Bike Week Wrap-up

Bike Week/Commuter Challenge 2004 took place from May 30 to June 6. Tony MacGregor, our intrepid Bike Week Coordinator this year, did a great job and should be heartily commended for his effort as should the volunteers, who were fantastic! Several innovative approaches were tried that resulted in *Nanaimo winning the national Commuter Challenge competition for the first time and achieving a participation rate that was not matched by any other community in Canada.*

To recognize Nanaimo's achievement, Environment Minister David Anderson on June 15 presented to Nanaimo Mayor Gary Korpan and other members of Nanaimo City Council a trophy topped by a cyclist that will be displayed at Nanaimo city hall.

Nanaimo's participation rate rose from 451 participants in 2003 to 4,893 participants in 2004, an increase of more than 1,000 per cent.

This increase resulted in the main from participation by students and teachers as a result of a strategy developed by Jim Alix, Tony MacGregor and teachers Don Hampton and David Grey. In previous years, Don Hampton, a teacher at Woodlands Secondary School, had generated a high participation rate using a system of promotions and rewards.

We took some of Don's ideas and developed them into a program for all schools. We decided to focus on one day - Bike to School Day - rather than asking the coordinators to drum up enthusiasm for the whole week.

Congratulations Don. You've done it again - put Woodlands Secondary on the map in the Bike to School Program. Woodlands won the "Secondary School" trophy for the highest participation rate in the Commuter Challenge.

Woodlands Secondary achieved the highest participation of all the secondary schools at 66% while South Wellington Elementary achieved a 89% participation rate, the highest among the elementary school participants.

Encouraging workplace participation was difficult this year. In large part this was due to finding people willing to volunteer as workplace coordinators as most employees are overworked and unable to commit to volunteer work,

For the first time ever, the Bike Week/Commuter Challenge Committee enlisted the help of an honorary chair, city councilor Ron Cantelon, a cyclist. Ron was a great help in opening doors at city hall and the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), and a great source of ideas and advice. It was through his efforts that Bike Week events were featured on the front pages of the websites of the City of Nanaimo and the RDN. He was also a sought-after speaker at Rotary Clubs, VI News, radio shows etc.

Events

A full slate of Bike Week related events were held, including two events held for the first-time: a launch of Bike Week/Commuter Challenge and an Awards Night preceding Bike Week. Both the launch of Bike Week/Commuter Challenge and the Awards Night were great successes. More than 40 persons attended the Awards Night May 19, which saw 14 recipients receive awards. Both local newspapers covered the event. The Awards Night helped set the stage for Bike Week/Commuter Challenge.

The launch of Bike Week/Commuter Challenge took place Friday, May 28. It featured a "ride past city hall" by members of the GNCC and the BMX

Association. About 30 people attended. Speeches were delivered by school board chair Ms. Terry Lynn Saunders and city councilor Larry McNabb.

Appy hours - This event was successful and should be repeated.

Bicycle Maintenance Workshops - These were not well attended. Could they be combined with the Bike Fair or the "appy hours"? Would they have succeeded with more publicity?

Trails for Ales - A good turnout to ride to our local pubs. Some went to the Windward, and some went to the Crow and Gate but we all had fun.

Fifth Nanaimo Bicycle Film Festival A good venue up at the college this year, and some really good films. Despite some technical glitches, the event was well received. Thanks to Lyse once again for her hard work putting this event on. Due to the length of the films, and it's popularity, it was felt that this could perhaps be a "stand-alone" event held at some other time of the year.

Bike Fair: Although it attracted a lot of young people, the music at Bike Fair was too loud and inappropriate. Jeremy Stewart will make recommendations. We could hold a bike rodeo at the same time as the fair. Taryn Langford and the RCMP drill team could be asked to organize it.

Volunteers

We should provide the volunteers with free tickets to a cultural event and enable them to participate in a draw for a significant prize such as a trip. They should be publicly recognized and thanked in SpokeLore. There were complaints of two many emails to Bike Week Committee members. Emails should be few and summarize information.

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Congratulations Nanaimo for winning the national Commuter Challenge 2004

Tony MacGregor

The Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition would like to thank the thousands of Nanaimo volunteers and participants who earned Nanaimo's first-place standing in the Commuter Challenge.

Congratulations especially to three outstanding trophy-winning participants: Woodlands Secondary School, South Wellington Elementary School and Lanarc Consulting Ltd.

In this Canada-wide competition designed to encourage healthy, non-polluting ways of commuting to work and school, Nanaimo not only placed first in its population category, it achieved a higher participation rate than any other community of any size across the country.

Our warm thanks to the financial sponsors of this Nanaimo success: The City of Nanaimo, BC Hydro, BC Transit, TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Coastal Community Credit Union.

Thanks to the teachers, staff and parents of the 36 Nanaimo schools who coordinated efforts at their schools and to the thousands of Nanaimo students who participated. Thanks to the board of School District 68 for its support. Thanks also to the hundreds of workplace coordinators and participants who have helped put Nanaimo on the "healthy commuter" map.

We very much appreciate the efforts of City Counsellor Ron Cantelon, chair

of the Bike Week/Commuter Challenge Committee, and of the support of all city council members who voted unanimously to support Nanaimo's participation in the Commuter Challenge. Support also came from the Regional District of Nanaimo and the area's MLAs, Mike Hunter and Judith Reid, and MPs James Lunny and Reed Elley.

The ultimate purpose of engaging in the competition is to have healthy, active residents, clean air and uncongested streets. The GNCC encourages those who experimented with healthy transportation alternatives during BikeWeek/Commuter Challenge 2004 to keep it up. For support in using healthy ways to commuter, feel free to email energysolve@pacificcoast.net.

Bike Week Wrap Up

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Promotions and publicity.

We received generally good coverage from the media, and we were also able to place information on the city and RDN websites. The actions listed in the section dealing with promotions and publicity should be repeated if possible.

Projects to be looked at with initial plans developed in 2004:

(1) A newspaper supplement with one or both local newspapers.

(2) Celebrity riders during Bike Week. Commuters who spot the celebrities receive a prize given out by the WOLF and WAVE radio stations.

(3) An event – perhaps a rodeo at the Bike Fair – with the RCMP drill team.

Cycling Cuba

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twists and winds into lush vegetation and finally pine forests before coasting down to the city of Baracoa. Baracoa is built around a gorgeous bay and surrounded by tropical mountains with rivers running down to the ocean. This is truly the most beautiful area in all of Cuba. The city itself is lively and full of people willing to share their time with you. We spent several days in this area exploring the beauty and cycling to different locations. Leaving Baracoa we headed west by bus to the city of Moa, a nickel producing area and probably the least attractive place in ancon cattle, water buffalo, camels, etc. and ringed with white sand beaches with no one on them. We were the only guests at the lodge and we were treated like royalty.

Our final ride was to the resort area of Guardalevaca and to a beach resort called Maritim Costa Verde, an all inclusive four

star hotel with all the amenities. Although all the hotels and lodges we stayed at were good, with private bathrooms, air conditioning, clean, most with swimming pools, the Costa Verde was elegant in comparison. It was strange being in such a touristy place, but I didn't hear any complaints and I know that everyone appreciated a bit of luxury to end the tour.

Tom Robertson has been designing and guiding tours to Cuba since 1992.. All his tours are unique and run through the best tour operators in Cuba. Complete tour programs can be seen by going to www.cuba1tours.com You can also call Tom toll free at 1-800-856-4777 to ask any questions you may have. Look for Tom to present a slideshow of his travels to the GNCC in the future