

Volume 9
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Spoken'Word

Cycling: The Perfect Synthesis of Mind, Machine and Body

Expanding the Cycling Community—Buzz from the Prez:

The other day I was talking with someone who wanted to start cycling because other exercise was hurting his knee. I told him he should come out to some of the Fairbanks Cycle Club events and his response was, “No way, those guys are too hard core for me.” For a moment I was flattered. I thought about all of our members who finish high in major races, the former Olympian who leads the women’s rides and all the other riders who come decked out in their lycra-best to weekly rides and local races. While we should all be proud of these accomplishments and not lose sight of that side of FCC, we need to look toward ways to encourage cycling among Fairbanks as a whole.

We have some standard activities we’ve done in the past to encourage cycling throughout Fairbanks, but this season we are going to place extra effort on those activities, and we need the help of all our members to make them successful—yes, that means you! What are those events you ask?

- **April 13-20-27:** Community Bicycling Workshops. Through the FNSB Community School Program, the Club is sponsoring a three-evening class on bicycling basics, maintenance and training. The cost for the class is \$20 and it is open to individuals from 6th grade on up. If you are interested in volunteering to assist the class, contact Kelly (479-9655) or Gail (455-6837) for more information.
- **May 1st:** The Annual Bike Swap at Beaver Sports. Call Kelly or Gail to volunteer.
- **June 18th-20th:** The International Mountain Bike Association Trail Crew will be in Fairbanks to do trail maintenance. This is being organized by John Haas at the Borough. He can be reached at 459-1198.
- **June 26th:** Chena Hot Springs Ride. With the support of CHS we want to reinvigorate this mainstay of the Fairbanks summer. To volunteer for the event or to help organize it, contact Kay Kindt at 488-1687.

With all these events, surely there is one to which you can commit. The remainder of the Club’s calendar is included in the newsletter. We can only keep the club going with your help! *Happy Summer Cycling! Kelly*

Tales From The Susitna 100

On February 14, 2004, Joel Austin and Jessica Groshek, two members of the Fairbanks Cycling Club, participated in the Susitna 100. Starting in Big Lake, AK, the Susitna 100 is a 100 mile race on snow-packed trails through the Susitna River Valley. The following are Joel’s personal reflections on the race, in a checkpoint to checkpoint fashion.

So we got to Anchorage and went to the pre-race meeting (this was all happening Thursday, February 12) and gear check. Required gear: -20 sleeping bags, stove, 8oz. fuel, sleeping pad, tent or bivy sack, fire starter (we took lighters), flashlight or headlamp, 3000 calories of food (we took butter and some sort of breakfast grain stuff). We also took other food but the rules state that you have to leave the last checkpoint with 3000 calories of food and we found that butter had a lot a calories and was light (vegetable oil is lighter but can you imagine the mess it could make?). Ditto with the grain stuff.

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Articles or items for the Spoke'n'Word are welcomed. FCC members receive their copy in the mail or from the website. We go to press several times per season.

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Fairbanks Cycle Club
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Shorts are still available!
Call Sue Stewart at 474-3931 to place your order

Find us online at:
www.fairbnakscycleclub.org

Tales From The Susitna 100...

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The forecast for the race was not good, especially for us coming from Fairbanks where we had been riding in below zero temps for three months. The forecast called for highs in the 30's and possibly some precip. It didn't call for temps dropping down to zero at night (more on this later). Sure enough, we pulled up the starting line and it was snowing hard. It was a wet heavy snow too. We checked in and got our gear ready (most of the gear readying had taken place the previous day) and made use of the port-a-potty which is all customary pre-race activity. The start was very non-exciting. Everyone lined up willy-nilly and they counted down and started. The reason it was so boring (or would be for a spectator) was because everyone knew they had 100 miles to go and were starting slowly.

Big Lake to Flathorn Lake: 25 miles

The race started on an ice road going across a lake (Big Lake). The ice was glare ice with a small amount to wet snow on top of it so it was very slippery (and I crashed 3 times before I decided that I didn't care if it was faster to ride on the ice, I was going to ride off to the side in the packed down snow so I didn't fall and break my [insert any bone here] which would finish my race almost before it started). The race continued across Big Lake for a couple of miles before moving onto another couple of lakes. Luckily these lakes weren't so damn slippery and I was able to ride them with little fear of death. By now it was so warm it was raining and I was overheating. Even worse than me overheating were the trails overheating which were soft and getting softer all the time which made it hard to ride and at times riding was impossible. Immediately after riding across the lake we rode through a swamp for a while and then twisted through an upland wooded section the it was back into the swamp the upland along a seismic line (long, wide, straight path cut by a bulldozer) which were full of moguls from snowmachines. This was a long haul to the first checkpoint. At one point I had to push through miles of trails in a swamp that were too soft to be rideable. Obviously I would bore you if I tried to recount the whole distance. Suffice it to say that the transition from biking to running (or walking) was VERY frustrating. It was here, also, that I had my nearest near death experience. I almost choked on a candy bar while running through a swamp! It took four

hours and 15 minutes to get to the first checkpoint. I was expecting it to take a little more than two.

Flathorn Lake to EagleSong Lodge: 21 miles

More of the same. A lot of pushing through soft snow. After we crossed the Susitna River the trail is along the old Iditarod Trail (it's so twisty and tight that the mushers complained and their trail was diverted to the Yentna River, which we would be on later) and would have been a helluva lot of fun if we had been able to ride our bikes for any appreciable amount to time. But we couldn't. It was here that skiers started to pass the bikers (when you have to push a bike through soft snow you become a lot slower than a skier). I thought that I was never going to get to the next checkpoint. When I finally got there I met up with Jess (she was kicking ass and was 3 or 4 minutes ahead of me) and we decided to ride together the rest of the race since we were going almost the exact same speed. After staying there (Jess ate half of a cheesecake that she had been carrying) for 15 or 20 minutes we left. As it happened we were starting the worst part of the trail and it was almost dark but we didn't know that yet. Actually we thought it was going to be good since the trails had been firming up since sunset (cooler temps).

EagleSong Lodge to Luce's Lodge: 9 miles

Except about ½ mile we had to push the whole way to Luce's. The snow was too soft to even think of riding. It had been (and still was, at this point) so warm that I would overheat even if I was just wearing an earband so I was bareheaded. Along this stretch we were passed by four skiers and one biker who was pushing faster than us. Most of the time we pushed with our headlamps off, which was lucky (more on this later). At one point after we had been pushing for well over 2 hours we met some snowmachiners that were roving the course to make sure all the racers were all right. We talked to them a bit and asked how far is was to Luce's. They said "four miles" we smiled and nodded but were thinking "we've been out here for 2 ½ hours already and we've come barely halfway? This sucks." They were mistaken (in about an hour we were sitting inside Luce's; this was the first time we had sat since 8:30 in the morning) but we had no way of knowing that then. We couldn't really do anything except keep on keeping on. Luce's Lodge is on the Yentna River and we had to cross the river to get to

it. When we dropped into the Yentna River valley the temp dropped about 20 degrees and my rear derailleur froze up from all the wet snow that had gotten on it in the first 50 miles. I didn't think that it was really a big deal. Luce's was close and I had a can of deicer along. I used up the deicer but didn't get the derailleur moving which was sort of a big deal since I now had a single speed bike and almost 50 miles to go. I shrugged my shoulders and we went in to the lodge and ate and rested a bit. It was good to sit for a while because our feet hurt quite a bit from walking (which we weren't expecting and weren't prepared for) so did most everything else by this point but just not as bad as the feet. It was here while we were eating M&M's and sour worms that we got word that the first skier had finished! Finished! and we had almost half of the race to go!

Luce's Lodge to Flathorn Lake: 21 miles

We had an uneventful trip down the Yentna River (we were going the opposite way that the Iditarod mushers would be going in about a month) though it was 9 miles and we had a headwind at this point and the temp was dropping which made Jess's derailleur freeze too. Then we intersected the Susitna River and biked for 3 more miles on it before turning left off of the river and heading back to Big Lake. After we turned left off of the river we were going the opposite way on the trail were had used on the way out to EagleSong (are you looking at a map of the course? I would recommend it). Going through the "dismal swamp" (the name of which you'll only recognize if you're familiar with the course description) we saw an amazing display of the aurora but by then the temp. had dropped and we couldn't stop to enjoy much because we'd get cold fast (keep in mind that we were still dressed for 35 degrees and it was nearly 0 by this point). We could ride virtually everything now that it had frozen but we had only one gear and that the runners who were behind us on this trail on their way out to EagleSong this morning had left deep footprints in the then-soft snow. Their footprints had then frozen and now we were getting the crap pounded out of nearly everything. But the points that were getting it the worst were the points that contact the actual bike. We got to Flathorn Lake soon enough. The checker there was awesome she had soup ready for us and cookies and chairs in her warm house to sit on. The guy who had won the race last year was there and we

chatted with him (he's from Fairbanks too). The guy who got second place last year was zonked out on the couch. It seems we weren't the only ones who had the wind taken out of our sails by all the hiking. While we were there the first runner came through. He checked in only long enough to fill his water and take off. Kind of humbling. Here is a guy who had run 75 miles and still had 25 miles left and was still going, still running, he wasn't walking. We put on a few more layers and pedaled away after 30 minutes or so. Only 25 miles to go!

Flathorn Lake to Little Su: 12.5 miles

Not much exciting happened here. We continued to get pounded by the trail when we could ride. Some of the hills were steep and we could barely walk up them they were so icy. Others weren't so steep but we couldn't ride them because we didn't have low enough gears. We passed the "Nome, 1049" sign and two miles later (distance was very relative to us at this point) we came to the checkpoint to the Little Susitna River. This checkpoint was a wall tent with a snow floor. We stayed for a bit but didn't warm up. We were both shivering when we left.

Little Su to Big Lake finish: 12.5 miles

The frozen footprints in the trail continued. And so we continued to get pounded. The trail here was twisty and bumpy until we were spit back out onto the chain of lakes that we started on and were about to finish on. Now is when Jess's headlamp went out with mine to follow soon. But it was starting to get light by this time and the trail was now wide and flat so we didn't need them. Good timing. Now, I had been thinking about the finishing stretch for the last couple of hours (remember how it was so slippery when we started?) but luckily it was all rideable. By this time a significant portion of my body was in pain but my hands hurt the worst. All the pounding had pinched a nerve in my wrist and my hands went numb. When they were numb from the pinched nerve they got cold and I had to get off and walk several times across the lake in sight of the finishing line so I could get feeling back in my hands. We were on a lake and could see the finishing line from a long ways off. Think desert oasis. It was a very long section to say the least. We crossed the line in a tie at 23 hours and 38 minutes!

Editor's note: Jess & Joel are now back in Fairbanks and gearing up for the summer riding season.

FCC Sounding Board

Bike Trip to White Mountains

Join FCC members for a trip to the White Mountains April 1st through 3rd.

*April 1st: Lee's Cabin 7 miles from Mile 28 Elliot Highway.

*April 2nd: Eleazar's Cabin, 12 miles from parking area.

*April 3rd: Moose Creek Cabin, 16 miles from parking lot.

For more information contact Rocky at 455-6837



Ride With Our Southern Neighbors

We've always shared a rivalry/comradarie with our cycling neighbors in Whitehorse, Canada. If you are interested in learning about their cycling schedule for the Summer of 2004, check out the website for the VeloNorth Cycling Club: www.velonorth.ca

Ultra Rider Racks Up Another Win!

If you are really inspired to do Ultra-Cycling races get in touch with Rocky. He finished first again in the 300 mile Arctic Ultra race on the Yukon Quest Trail. If you want to read more about the race and see the finishing times you can find them at www.arcticultra.de.

**FCC Bike Swap
Saturday, May 1st
Beaver Sports**

IMBA Trail Days in Fairbanks

Join the International Mountain Bike Association in doing trail maintenance when they come to Fairbanks June 18, 19 & 20. For more information contact John Haas with the Fairbanks North Star Borough at 459-1198.

**Volunteer for the Chena Hot Springs Ride
Call Kay Kindt at 488-1687**

BIKE AID 2004

Are you looking for a way to help create a more peaceful and just world?

Are you looking for an opportunity to travel across the United States using a form of environmentally sustainable transportation?

Are you looking to make yourself more politically aware and educated about the issues that are affecting people and communities in this country and throughout the world?

Are you looking to dialogue with people across the country about ways to create positive change?

Are you looking for a life-changing summer experience?

Sign up for Bike-Aid 2004!

This summer, Bike-Aid's 19th annual cross-country ride will traverse 3600 miles and stay with 60 different communities on a route from San Francisco to Washington DC. This will be the 3rd year of Bike-Aid's two-week California ride from San Francisco to the Mexico border.

This year there are two new Bike-Aid rides within California this summer - a one-week central coast valley agriculture ride, and a 3-5 day San Francisco Bay Area environmental justice and food security ride.

The dates for Bike-Aid 2004 are:

Cross-country - San Francisco-Washington DC: June 13 — August 17

SF-Mexico border ride: July 26 — August 8

CA Central Valley Coast ride: June 28—July 3

For more information on Bike Aid visit their website www.globalexchange.org

Juliana Dapice, a cyclist new to Fairbanks, did Bike Aid in the summer of 2001. She still thinks frequently about the incredible experience she and her group had and would be happy to talk to anyone in the area about Bike Aide. She can be reached at 374-9257.



2004 Women's Rides

Where: UAF Patty Center Parking lot (unless otherwise indicated)

When: 6:00 pm training rides

Helmets are mandatory

Fairbanks Cycle Club Membership is required

Please call 459-8126 for weekly updates

May 5: Tour de University—get used to your bike again. Rolling terrain. 5-10 miles

May 12: Ride out Sheep Creek Road to Gold Hill, to Parks Hwy, Cripple Creek, up Isberg. Back on Chena Ridge. 20 miles.

May 19: Ride out Sheep Creek to Murphy Dome Road and back. Option of riding along Murphy Dome Road. 13-20 miles.

May 26: Ride out Sheep Creek to Goldstream, Ballaine Road to Farmer's Loop and Back to UAF. Option of extending ride to Yankovich to Miller Hill and back to UAF 17-22 miles.

June 2: Ride Farmer's Loop to Summit. Up Summit and down Skyview to Farmer's Loop. Option of climbing back up Skyview and down Summit to Farmer's Loop and back to UAF. 16-22 miles.

June 9: Meet in Fox at the Road House. Ride north on the Steese Highway to Cleary Summit. This ride ascends a four-mile hill. Spectacular views, great company!

***June 12:** Meet at Sally's house on Rosie Creek Rd. for shuttle to Denali. Ride into the park for overnight on mountain bikes. Take park shuttle bus back. Great scenery. Lots of fun!

June 16: Ride Chena Ridge to Chena Pump and back to UAF. Option of extending ride to include Gold Hill. Back to UAF. 23-30 miles.

June 23: Meet in Ester at weigh station. Ride the Old Nenana to Park's Hwy and back to weigh station. Option of meeting at UAF at 5:30pm and riding from there. 16-30 miles.

***June 26:** Chena Hot Springs Bike Classic. Ride from town or from Valley Center to Chena Hot Springs Resort for barbecue and soak. Shuttle transportation back to town.

2004 Women's Rides

June 30: Ride Farmer's Loop to McGrath Rd. Follow Old Steese north to Fox. Turn onto Goldstream Rd. and ride Sheep Creek back to UAF. 29 miles.

July 7: TBA—call 459-8126 for update

***July 10:** Meet at UAF for van ride south on Richardson Hwy. Begin ride at Salcha Elementary School toward Endestad cabin located 30 miles from Delta Junction. Ride as much or as little as you want on your way there. Call 459-8126 for more details.

****July 14:** Mountain bike ride meeting at the turnout on Sheep Creek Rd. at Ester Dome Road (3.5 miles from UAF). Ride up Ester Dome Road to St. Patrick's to the Equinox Marathon Trail. Ride up the Alder Chute (or more than likely, push it up!) and back to Sheep Creek and UAF. Option of starting at UAF at 5:30pm. 16-23 miles.

****July 21:** Mountain bike ride meets at the Fox Road House. We ride up the Elliot Highway to Silver Fox Rd. Ride up to Pedro Dome. Blueberries should be ripe. Ride down the Steese back to Fox. 18 miles.

***July 25:** Meet at UAF for car pooling to Chris Broda or Christine Matson's house. Mountain bike up Amanita Road to Gilmore Trail and back to their house for a barbeque. Start ride at 1:00pm.

July 28: Ride out Sheep Creek Road to Gold Hill, to Parks Hwy, Cripple Creek, up Isberg. Back on Chena Ridge. 20 miles.

August 4: Meet at Superior Hardwoods on the Old Steese, a few blocks before Currey's Corner. Ride out the Old Steese to Fox, up the Elliot to Hill Top (4 miles) and back on the New Steese. Option of extending the ride on Chena Hot Springs Road. 18-? Miles.

August 11: Ride old Nenana loop again (because it is fun and beautiful scenery too!). 23-30 miles. End of the season potluck at Sally's house on Rosie Creek following the ride.

*Indicates not a Wednesday night ride, but a great ride you will not want to miss.

**Indicates a mountain bike ride

For more information email xcskiers@gci.net

Fairbanks Cycle Club

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