

IMBA Affiliated

# Epic Rides

What is an *EPIC RIDE*? When does a ride go from just a group of friends enjoying singletrack, some bitchin' downhill or the technical challenge of your worst trials nightmares to a ride of Epic proportion?

Contrary to popular belief, it's not the distance and length of the ride. It doesn't have to be 35+ miles to be Epic. It's not necessarily the scenery upon which you gaze as you stop to catch your breath. It's not the elevation that one must hammer up in order to earn the right to bomb down like a bat outta Hell. Granted, all of these things contribute to an *EPIC RIDE*. However, I believe it's the experience that makes a ride Epic. To some, probably most of us reading this very newsletter, Mt Biking is more than just that - riding a bike on the mountain. Mt biking is a spiritual experience. I know of only a few other tasks that require the deep and intense concentration that riding my bike requires at times. Yet, I cannot think of another activity that allows me to just go out, without a care in the world and just enjoy the very essence of the earth.

Think back to the first ride you ever went on. Forget the mountain bike. I remember my first wheeled vehicle ever. A little purple trike. Even way back then, I somehow found a way to crash it. (I think my mom still has the teeth I knocked out while discovering what an endo was in the driveway.) Most of us rode our Schwinn Stingrays into the ground. Some of us may have even dabbled into BMX or flatland freestyle.

Then we discover Mountain biking. Thousands of dollars and countless bumps, bruises, scratches and broken bones later we continue with an unexplained passion. It's almost as the Trail calls out to us. Don't believe me? Try *not* riding your bike for a solid 2-3 weeks and tell me how you feel... I bet your spouse, significant other and possibly even your boss can't wait for you to experience the release that this once primitive machine gives.

You see, an *EPIC RIDE* can be as simple as an Urban Assault to the grocery store or as complex as a full on road trip to Moab. So long as the experience was Epic, then you've just experienced a truly *EPIC RIDE*!

# Backcountry Tracks

Volume 1998 Issue Number 4

The Official Newsletter of the Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club

July - August 1998

## Help Wanted

Do you love to Mt bike in your spare time... Escape from your every day hassles... Do you Love the outdoors, love freedom, lust for long climbs, nice descents, rolling trails through woodland, long for the snow free days when you can do the epic rides.

Think that it's a good day when you encounter wildlife on a ride, ride out deep into the forest stop and take in the view of snowy mountain peaks. Appreciate magnificent plant life, old growth forest , banked switchbacks , an occasional jump now and then .

B u t . . . . .

Have you gone riding only to find out that you favorite trail is now hiker only or be turned into a new housing development with the name of the forest it just destroyed or turned into a golf course , baseball field ,etc...

N o t much nature appreciation going on in those kind of places. So, now you are forced onto a smaller and smaller area in which to recreation .

Didn't that really make you mad as hell . Who could do such a thing . Why!?! Don't they have enough hiker only trails , how do they get away with such selfishness ?

Find out the how and why. Join the BBTC!!! Be the new recording secretary. Maria has done her time. Be on the BBTC board. One of the countries oldest and largest IMBA affiliates.

Just show up at the next board meeting or call me at home 425-820-3408 or email MckinCraig@aol.com and find out how it's done.

Without a Mt bike organization like BBTC trails will continue to turn into hiker only trails with pictures of mt bikes with lines going through them and into housing developments.

Wishing and hoping that someone else will do it doesn't work . We need you! You can do it, you can find the time, you can make a difference!!!

Maria did it so can you.

### **Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club**

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*Legal Representation*

BBTC Board meetings are held on the fourth Monday of every month.  
Place: Various locations throughout the Puget Sound area

#### **BBTC Events Hotline (206) 283-2995**

Email listserv: [bbtc@cyclng.org](mailto:bbtc@cyclng.org)

Web Site: <http://www.dirtnw.com/bbtc>

Thanks to DirtNW.com for the web space.

Send Backcountry Tracks submissions to

[jzilly@aol.com](mailto:jzilly@aol.com) (preferred)

Or snail mail:

**PO Box 14059**

**Seattle, WA 98114**

# SMITH CREEK EPIC

by: John Zilly

A dense, lush forest spread out from our campsite at Iron Creek Campground, just south of Randle, Washington near the Cispus River. Morning fog lingered at the top of giant Douglas Firs. Spatula in hand, the Cook stood over the Coleman two-burner and conducted a breakfast of coffee, eggs, and "mountain bacon." We ate and discussed the possibilities for the day's explorations. "Should we try the Smith Creek Epic?" I said. "Sure," Chris replied. Of course we didn't throw around the term "epic" lightly, and unfortunately he didn't yet know that.

Several weeks before, I'd talked to Leonard Francies about riding around St Helens. He'd pointed out the Smith Creek drainage on the map and wondered out loud about creating a loop. By the end of the day I would manage to deflected the blame--which I didn't yet know was coming--toward him. The ranger had said that the Smith Creek Trail was un-maintained. It didn't phase me: "What else is new for a trail that mountain bikes are allowed on," I thought to myself.

Forest Road 25, narrow but paved, heads due south from Randle, winding through alder near the river before climbing, past Iron Creek Campground and then into a fir forest of big trees. We turn west onto FR 99 toward Mt St Helens. When you look up "gawk" in the dictionary, you'll find a photo of a carload of mountain bikers entering the Blast Zone at St Helens. Wow, eighteen years after the mountain blew off a couple thousand feet of dirt and rock, the view on entering the Blast Zone can only be described as awesome. (After nearly driving off the road, the term designated driver took on a whole new meaning.) A few minutes later we arrived at Smith Creek Trailhead. The gourmet breakfast had taken a time toll, and it was nearly noon. I can remember now that we looked down into Smith Creek--winding and grayish with high clouds overhead--with no sense whatsoever as to what lay in store.

The first traverse seemed easy enough, fast and compact, but then the trail dropped down a series of un-maintained, loose-pumice switchbacks. Farther down the precipitous ridge that led into Smith Creek, the trail disappeared altogether in a wave of pumice slopes and low shrubs. For the remainder of the descent we variously surfed the pum, thrashed through the brush, and bushwhacked from one red-flagged wand to the next. Two hours later, we reached Smith Creek. We had anticipated nice riding along the creek, and there was some of that, however the trail seemed to continue playing an inside joke with us: now you see me, now you don't. After several more hours of route-finding and bushwhacking (which included that creepy lost-in-the-jungle feeling) interspersed with zippy downriver singletrack descents, we arrived at the low point of the ride--geographically and spiritually.

*continued page 4*

# SMITH CREEK EPIC

*continued*

The sun had finally come out and the day was beautiful, but our water supply was low. The Cook produced a water filter, so we hunkered down and traded turns pumping water out of the river and feasting on Fig Ne tons like they were M&Ms. Like most water filters, though, this one was partially clogged, and it took most of another hour to fill our water bottles for the 3,000 foot ascent that was our future. At our current 3 MPH rate, riding into the dark was looking like a good possibility. (Now why was it I had listened to Leonard Francies over the ranger?)

The climb out of Smith Creek and up to the Plains of Abraham is long and hectic. There's no difficult route-finding or bushwhacking, just the kind of relentless incline that makes you wonder why you selected mountain biking in the first place. After a long dirt road stretch, the Ape Canyon Trail winds up an old-growth ridge that survived the catastrophic mud flows on eruption day in 1980. We were blown away at the views near the top. On the south end of the Plains of Abe, we stopped for a moment to pop Jolly Ranchers and discuss the impending darkness. But mostly we stopped to soak in the lunar-like scene: the long gray plain, a shoulder on the east side of the mountain, unrolled in front of us. Scorched black rocks seemed to float in the pumice around us. In the distance to the east, Mount Adams reflected the last pink light of the day. It was as if we'd emerged onto another planet.

We pedaled across the zippy, hard-pack trail that crosses the Plains of Abe, vainly chasing the last shreds of light. Darkness finally gripped us just as we started down the knife-edged ridge toward Windy Ridge Viewpoint and the Smith Creek Trailhead beyond. After nine hours of walking and riding and just being Out There, we were punchy and incapable of riding in a straight line. Somebody started giggling because of the dark and the steep slopes on either side, and we were soon all walking because we were laughing so hard.

We finally reached the road, and made our sorry way back to the car, nearly ten hours and 30 miles worst for wear. We hadn't heard much from Chris for the past several hours. Back at the trailhead, his mouth full of Pop Tarts and his helmet still on, he said, "PEFS rating (Post Epic Fatigue Syndrome): High." We nodded in agreement then retreated to Iron Creek Campground, arriving there around 10:30 pm. I could have headed straight to bed, but the Cook immediately picked up the spatula and a pot and said, "start cutting vegetables, start squeezing limes, crank up the Coleman." Mouths cracked, eyes glazed, bodies weary, we obeyed like broken stock animals. Burritos and margaritas followed until 2 am. There would be no epic the following day.



# BBTC Ride and Event List

## July & August 1998

Call the Hotline for updates (206) 283-2995  
 Call Ride Leader 48 hours in advance. Heavy Rain

**IMBA**  
**RULES OF THE TRAIL**  
 RIDE ON OPEN TRAILS ONLY  
 ALWAYS YIELD THE TRAIL  
 LEAVE NO TRACE  
 NEVER SCARE ANIMALS  
 CONTROL YOUR BICYCLE

BBTC rides are free and open to the public. We require that all riders wear an ANSI or SNELL approved helmet. Riders under 18 must have written permission from parent or guardian. All riders must be self supporting and carry with them: Patch kit or extra tube (s), air pump and tools.

If you would like to lead a ride, call Bob Bournique at (425) 788-8686

### Ride Rating System

1- Rolling terrain - no sustained climbs/descents	A - Well graded logging roads and trails	* Leisurely pace - frequent stops
2 - Hilly - lots of ups and downs	B - Technically challenging	** Moderate pace - few stops
3 - Sustained climbs and descents	C - Extremely technical trails	*** Strenuous pace - minimal stops

### May & June 1998 Rides & Events 1. Heavy rain cancels 2. RSVP min. 48 hours in advance

3-Jul Fr	Holiday (3 day weekend)	
3,4,5 -Jul FriSaSu All Levels	<u>Mountain Bike Patriot Weekend</u> - Well known and exploratory rides at all levels. May need bootleg camping sites. Galbraith/Blanchard areas. Couples preferred. Limit 8. Eat, sleep, ride. Repeat. Call by Thursday.	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
4-Jul Sa 2B**	<u>Lord Hill Regional Park</u> - Been here Yet? Another locals ride in bike friendly Snohomish county. Come ride with the beavers. At least 8 working ponds to gaze at as you ride by. 8-10 miles at moderate pace. Work up an appetite for the evening potluck!	Jim McSpadden 481-6420 jwmcsp@worldnet.att.net
5-Jul Su 1B**	<u>Greatest Hits #5: St. Ed's/Big Finn Hill Parks</u> . 8mi. Moderate pace on rolling singletrack. 12 rider limit. Optional \$5 donation to BBTC Trails Fund. Carpool from South Kirkland P&R at 9:15. Start, 10am at the pool parking lot.	Walt Shostak 206-286-2744
7- Jul Tu.	<u>Trailwork Tuesday at St. Ed's</u> - Work some different muscles and give back to the best land managers in our area. Meet near garage or look for map outside garage for the day's project. Learn to drive a motorized wheelbarrow! <b>6-9pm</b>	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212Work
9-Jul Th 5:30-9	<u>Mountain Bike Boot Camp</u> . Targeting the newer trail cyclists with tips on tool kit, maintenance, etiquette, and drills to make the transition to dirt easier to and fun. Balance, riding position, weight distribution, gears, brakes, lines, corners, climbing descending, obstacles. Space is limited. <b>\$15mbr \$20gst What a Deal!!!</b>	Mt. Bike Boot Camp 425 827-4493 Sign Up On Web
11 - Jul Sa 1B**	<u>Ladies only!</u> -Big Finn Hill Ride. Moderate Pace on challenging singletrack. Just for fun!	Nancy McKinnon 425-820-3408
11-Jul Sa 2B**	<u>Armstrong Tract</u> - Rollin' rollin' rollin', keep them hills a rollin' .... Armstrong! Come experience this sweet maze of twisty singletrack. No major climbs but always up or down. Woo hoo! Optional donation to Pilchuck Tree Farm for trail maintenance.	Bob Bournique 425-788-8686 bbtrides@aol.com
11-Jul Sa 3C**	<u>Dalles Ridge/ Ranger Creek</u> - 22 miles and 3000 feet of climbing including a sweet 6 mile descent. Killer views and prime high cascade trails. Meet at trailhead at 10:00.	Benjamin Leung Bikeben@u.washington.edu 206-789-3508
11-Jul Sa 3B**	<u>Epic Cle Elum</u> - 30-40 miles.3000+ feet of climbing and technical singletrack. Will need to be fit. Bring all the water you can carry. This is a Camelback poster ride. Meet at 9:00 at the trailhead	John Chelico 206-633-0142
12-Jul Su 2B**	<u>Vashon Island Ride</u> - Meet at Lincoln park and take the ferry over. Or, drive up to town and save a 5 mile pre-trail grunt. 20 miles at a social pace. Ride back into town for post ride pizza and refreshments.	Dave Kidder 425-271-4255
12 - Jul Su 3C**	<u>Chikamin Creek Loop</u> - This is one of my all time favorites. Top 5 rides anywhere! One of the best descents on banked curves and switchbacks and creek crossings. Shared use trails. Warning: big climbs. Bring lots of water and food. Dress cool.	Craig McKinnon 425-820-3408
14- Jul Tu.	<u>Trailwork Tuesday at St. Ed's</u> - Work some different muscles and give back to the best land managers in our area. Meet near garage or look for map outside garage for the day's project. Learn to drive a motorized wheelbarrow! <b>6-9pm</b>	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
16-Jul Th F.U.N.	<u>Paradise Lake</u> - social pace (For Us Newbies) on trails close to home. 10 miles on rolling old moto trails and jeep roads. Fun,fun,fun! Shaun Palmer wanna be's need not apply. 6 p.m. start.	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
18-Jul Sa 3C***	<u>Gold Creek-Lower Dungeness Loop</u> 20 miles and 2,600 ft elev gain. One of the toughest rides in the Olympics, near Sequim, on singletrack and gravel road. Train for this one and carry lots of fluids and food. Camp out for the weekend or do as a long day trip from Seattle area. Call for more details.	Walt Shostak 206 286-2744
18-Jul Sa 2B**	<u>Ladies Only!</u> - Skookum Flats Ride. 10 mile loop at moderate pace on challenging singletrack. Greenwater area near Mt. Rainier on the way to Crystal Mountain.	Nancy McKinnon 425-820-3408
19-Jul Su 2B*	<u>Victor Falls</u> - 18 Miles of rolling topography in the knuckle dragging region near Bonney Lake. Depart Renton Starbucks (Grady Way) at 8:30AM or meet at Hillside Tree Farm at 9:15. Hit the trail by 9:30!	Peter Partel 425-294-8041 petepartel@aol.com
19-Jul Su 3B**	<u>Suntop Loop</u> - Right out of the Kirkendal South book. Big climb followed by big downhill and Skookum Flats trail to test your weary mind.	Kevin Griggs 425-485-4714
19 -Jul Su 3C**	<u>Plains of Abraham/Ape Canyon</u> - 22 miles. Mt. St. Helens area. Please note that I have not done this ride. No guarantees. If you know it... help me lead it! Ride is in Zilly's new book, pg. 42. Big climbs, huge views. Possible camping near Randle.	Craig McKinnon 425 820-3408

21- Jul Tu. 6-9pm	<u>Trailwork Tuesday at St. Ed's</u> – Work some different muscles and give back to the best land managers in our area. Meet near garage or look for map outside garage for the day's project. Learn to drive a motorized wheelbarrow!	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
25-Jul Sa 10-2	Tentative – may pull this one: <b>Mountain Bike Boot Camp</b> . Targeting the newer trail cyclists with tips on tool kit, maintenance, etiquette, and drills to make the transition to dirt easier to and fun. Balance, riding position, weight distribution, gears, brakes, lines, corners, climbing descending, obstacles. Space is limited. <b>\$15mbr 20gst</b>	Mt. Bike Boot Camp 425 827-4493 Sign Up On Web
26-Jul Su F.U.N.	<u>Tiger Mountain Trails</u> (the only ones we've got) F.U.N. ride! (For Us Newbies) social pace on Preston, Iverson, Northwest Timber trails. We'll decide which ones with the group preride.	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
26-Jul Su 3B**	<u>Roslyn Loop</u> – Sweaty climbs followed by kiddie giggle cool down descents. Stop at the lunch rocks for the view. Spooky fast descent back to the brewery to wash the dust down.	Bob Bournique 425-788-8686 bbtrides@aol.com
28- Jul Tu.	<u>Trailwork Tuesday at St. Ed's</u> – Work some different muscles and give back to the best land managers in our area. Meet near garage or look for map outside garage for the day's project. Learn to drive a motorized wheelbarrow! <b>6-9pm</b>	Leonard Francies 822-4055 Home 889-3212 Work
1-Aug Sa 3B**	<u>Dalles Ridge/Palisades</u> – 2500 ft logging road climb followed by ridge views into Norse Peak Wilderness, then awesome singletrack descent through big timber on the flanks of Mount Rainier. 20 miles. Depart Renton Starbucks at 7:00 or meet at Buck creek at 8:45. On the trail at 9:00. Limit 10	Peter Partel 425-294-8041 petepartel@aol.com
2-Aug Su 3B**	<u>Crystal Mountain</u> – Not the Kirkendal loop. Lift served options. 3000+ climbing with the chair ride! 18-20 miles. Try some new and different routes with the guy that knows it well.	Scott Hageman 425-486-5183
6-Aug Th 5:30-9	<b>Mountain Bike Boot Camp</b> . Targeting the newer trail cyclists with tips on tool kit, maintenance, etiquette, and drills to make the transition to dirt easier to and fun. Balance, riding position, weight distribution, gears, brakes, lines, corners, climbing descending, obstacles. Last 1998 class. <b>\$15mbr \$20gst</b>	Mt. Bike Boot Camp 425 827-4493 Sign Up On Web
8-Aug Sa 3B**	Mad Lake Loop – Dirt road climb followed by Chikamin trail up and over to Mad Lake for a break and then back up and out to Alder ridge and the epic 11 mile downhill. Check your brake pads! If you have the legs for it, optional singletrack last 5 miles to the cars. 35 mile loop. Bring all the water and food you can.	Kevin Griggs 425-485-4714
9-Aug Su	<b>WHY IS THIS DAY EMPTY? CHECK THE HOTLINE FOR LATE ARRIVALS!</b>	206- 283-2995
Aug 13-16 Th Fr Sa Su 1A to 3B	<u>Methow Campout Weekend</u> – Woo hoo! Ride 'til ya drop on four epic days! 3 sites reserved at Derry's Resort. Limit 6 people per site. Dogs \$1 extra per night. Picking rides from Zilly/Kirkendal books each day. Camping \$15 /night/site. Call 4 more info.	Kristi Klee Kkle@chmc.org 206-361-6966
15-Aug Sa 2B**	<u>Cherry Valley</u> – Lokul Yokul ridin' in the east county. Close to your home. Come on out to the waterfall for a spell. There should still be some Huckleberries if Bob hasn't eaten them all! 16 miles?	Stephen Yeager 206-823-8322
15-Aug Sa 1B**	<u>Ladies Only!</u> – Big Finn Hill. Moderate pace on challenging singletrack. Just for fun!	Nancy McKinnon 425-820-3408
16-Aug Su 2B**	<u>Victoria's Secret</u> – Come ride bike friendly country! Good climbs rewarded by Skagit Valley views. From tight and twisty to fast and furious! Optional donation to Pilchuck Tree Farm for trail maintenance.	Bob Bournique 425-788-8686 bbtrides@aol.com
16-Aug Su 3C**	Mad River Epic – 37 Miles. Wow! What a fantastic ride! I did it last summer and was blown away. Start at Maverick Saddle, To Mad lake past wildflowers and ponderosa. Climb to 6,400 feet. Views of Stuart Range. Descend 16! miles through Larch and boulder fields on the upper and lower Chikamin trails. Why go to Winthrop (5hrs), or Colorado? Do it here on some of the best trails in the country.	Craig McKinnon 425 820-3408
22-Aug Sa 2B**	<u>Ladies Only!</u> – Grand Ridge Ride. 6-8 mile loop at moderate pace on challenging up and down terrain.	Nancy McKinnon 425-820-3408
22-Aug Sa Insane!	<u>The Duvall Daze</u> – Is he crazy? 45-55 miles/98% dirt, 25% singletrack. The carrot? A gut bustin' BBQ and full coolers await the finishers. 'smore fest at the fire pit later! Leave from Bob's at 8:00. Out into Cherry Valley then Stossel creek drainage to the Tolt river, Lake Joy. Then back to Bob's for the carrot. Locally epic as possible	Bob Bournique 425-788-8686 bbtrides@aol.com
23-Aug Su 2B**	<u>Greatest Hits#6:</u> Lake Desire County Park – 8 mi. moderate pace on singletrack. Optional \$5 donation to BBTC Trails Fund. Carpool from S. Kirkland P&R at 9am. Start, 10am from Petrovitsky County park.	Walt Shostak 206-286-2744
28-30 Aug FrSaSu	<u>Annual BBTC Mad Lake Weekend</u> . I'll go over and get us a spot on Friday. If you want to join me for a ride we'll try what suits you. After Thursday check hotline for info on how to get there.	Leonard Francies 425 822-4055 After We: Hotline 206 283-2995
29-Aug Sa	I guess everyone's at Mad lake.	206-283-2995
30-Aug Su	Check Hotline for additions.	206-283-2995

# Ride Reports

## *From the Rides Guy...*

Bob Bournique

*May 30<sup>th</sup> Da Slab Baby!*

What happens when the phone is ringing off the hook the night before a ride when the weatherman changes his mind? A big group ride! Eighteen folks for this one. After meeting up at the Preston P&R for gas savings (to afford post ride imbibing no doubt) we were off! Late start made the first climb a hot one and the group spread out. No worries, up on the ridge road we were slowed down by new construction supporting the freshly logged scenery. At least you get a full view from most of the ridge now. Should look better in a few years. But not the rolly whoop de doos from the days of old. Thankfully the carnage ended before the ride out to the slab. While most rested, Art dabbled in Moabesque sandstone techniques for our entertainment pleasure. Killer singletrack descent into the Dingbat creek drainage and back up to the four way. As we were running late, option #2 was the logging road descent into Ronald and a quick road ride into town to wash out the dust. Other than one big bonk and a couple of chain breaks, a real productive ride for such a big crowd. Thank for putting it on Scott!



*June 6 Roslyn Loop – A.k.a. “The Cheshire Loop”*

Two big groups in two weeks! We had 15 for this one and remembering the heat, we got an earlier start this time. Temperatures fell a bit as we climbed and it was greatly appreciated. Still, dogged looks were soon to be replaced by huge smiles so I wasn't worried yet. The ridge road has been re-graded and after a good hard rain, it should be much better. Regrouping for the sandy downhill, I led them down. Perfect conditions! Woo hoo! Either I must be getting older, or Dan Lopes' full boinger has made him better, 'cuz he was on me the whole way and I was really trying to push high big ring. Rain packed sand made for silky smooth descending and it was cool to see everyone smiling from ear to ear when they arrived at the bottom. Off to the lunch rock for a break. I didn't know we could fit thirteen people up there! Another sandy downhill (two endos so far) to the lowest point of the ride. A little slickrock riding after the peaceful ride up the inside passage. Now for the last climb! Thankfully, beating sun was replaced by clouds roiling up and even a little rain in the sunshine. About two thirds of the way up, who comes riding by but Jeff Tanka. Jeff Leons and him were trying to catch us all day. They went ahead to Roslyn as we regrouped for the last descent. I was really worried that the trail had been logged off but as we headed down and out of the operation my spirit was lifted. Yeah! It's still there for now. The upper section needs a little brushing for optimal speed vision so that is on my to do list. (after all the yard work). The last downhill was as smooth as it gets and pine needle curves were made for flat trackin'! Once again, the glum looks at the top of the climbing were replaced by wishing they had brought a helicopter to get back up and do it again. There may not be enough energy to climb it again but there's always enough to go down again. A short cruise down into town and the pack headed for the brewery where the Jeffs had an early start on us. Catchin' up to do! Epic group, epic day!

# More Ride Reports

## Devil's Gulch

[music by INXS "Devil Inside"]

Saturday morning we goofed around dropping off Jenny's check, getting breakfast, pit stopping, getting sunscreen, and calling Bob Bourmique to tell him that I had about 6 rides and three ride leaders with me. Dave "Natural Born" Kidder, Stephen "Chuck" Yeager, Sharon "Rides All" Neill, Hotline Nick, Membership Jenny, and President Lenny we all finally arrived and then we rode on down the road enroute Devil's Gulch. The trail is in mostly primo shape except some blown out downslope areas. I found myself dropping my bike down into what should have been trail but was missing about the exact length of a bike. You have to carry the bikes over about half a dozen creeks and such. We all loved it. It was fast and fun.

Camping was Da'Best. We spread out all over the 7.4 mile mark and BBQ'd the tastiest dinners. I now have a grill in the van for any future trips. Just grill and fire and that pagan devil music. Vegan's humor me: its a primal thing. We tried Smore's and failed. We fell asleep fat and happy.

[music from Mission Impossible]

Sunday it again took forever to get started. Stephen and Dave were up by sunrise, Jenny and I finally got up by 8:30 and Nick and Sharon we're putting on their bike clothes at noon! Dave and I dropped a car at the bottom to ferry the drivers of the other two cars back up after the ride. Then we made the easy 7 mile climb to the trail-head and headed down that incredible great 1st part of the trail (3 miles). At the intersection to Mission Ridge we took a right and climbed to the first "rib". V.P. Craig "Fat Chance" McKinnon rode through and tried to wait for us at the bottom but we were too slow. Thanks for trying. The trail is mostly perfect with only one or two "problems": There is some troughs in the steeps so keep it straight and in the middle and relax. Also, control your speed or take a crash course in flying. This really applies to DG and MR. The Views down both sides of the ribs from MR are to the left of Tronson Ridge and to the right toward Wenatchee. Very beautiful. Even more beautiful is the final switch-backed descent intersecting the DG trail and the parking lot. We retrieved the cars from the camp and left the dirt roads back to the pavement.

We debriefed at Leavenworth Brew Pub. Everyone got home around 10 pm. Mission accomplished. I went to work Monday with a quick step and music in my heart.

## *So long friends of the dirt trail...*

You may or may not have heard yet, but this issue of *Backcountry Tracks* will unfortunately be my last as Editor. The winds of change have swept through my place of employment and they are shipping me down to the sunny skies of Phoenix, Arizona. Thank you for supporting me while I've what I could to support Northwest Mountain Biking by editing this newsletter. I hope you've been amused, entertained and informed as you've read through the pages of trail gospel published by the BBTC. I would also like to publicly thank John Zilly for taking over where I left off as Editor. You're the best John!!!

So in the words of Ozzy Osbourne, I say to you, *"Goodbye to romance, Goodbye to friends... I guess that we'll meet, We'll meet in the end..."* Now how about a killer BBTC road trip to Phoenix?!? Greg the Newsletter Guy

## C I C C E R E C E S E P T E M E R

Singletrack Mind Cycling Club is hosting the annual regional International Mountain Bike Association this year in Tahuya State Forest. Come over to Thursday - Sunday September 10-13 to learn about trail design and maintenance, soil science, alternative trails, the State of the Studies regarding bicycle trail use, bike event organization, go on rides, watch slides from yours and other clubs on the west coast, ride in a poker run, or take (or learn how to teach your own) mountain bike boot camp, listen to live NW rock music, eat meals including a Saturday evening Salmon barbeque. All this for \$75 INCLUDES LODGING for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. WOW!!!

Send \$75 to 1998 IMBA c/o Doug Miller 1648 S. 246th Place Des Moines, WA 98198. If 8 of us go in together we can get our own club cabin. There is a link on the BBTC website to the official conference web address which includes pictures of the facilities. Also those that like to help can pitch in as we will probably take turns with other clubs with meal preparation duties. Other volunteer opportunities will arise as we get closer to the event. Please let Doug or Leonard Francis know you can help and we'll try to match your interest with the programs that are being prepared. Its going to be a fun, encouraging event based on success and learning for our future gains in our advocacy efforts.

### *From the Prez.*

*Leonard Francis*

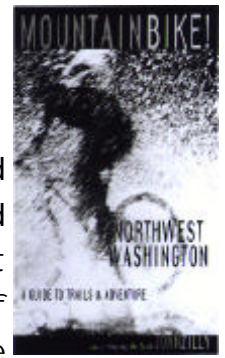
We have come to the best two months of the year for mountain biking. July and August offer the best weather and longest days and the high country is snowfree. This is what we have been waiting for. I hope you haven't been waiting until now to ride! Big rides are something you grow into. As we ride leaders and riders approach this next incredible ride calendar please lets all be honest with each other. Ride leaders, your job is to get everyone back to the car. Interview the riders as they call you and if you don't thing the "customer" will enjoy their "purchase" you may want to send them to another ride - there are plenty to choose from! Riders - you may be new and unsure of yourself. Make sure you at a minimum do your part and get in shape before a big weekend ride. If you aren't up to that look for the less difficult ratings. I've put a couple of F.U.N. (For Us Newbies) in the calendar with the promise that I'll get you back to the car or I'll eat my carbon fiber frame. The key is to be honest leaders and riders with each other. Some of you want to jackhammer up and cruise missile down. I suggest you tell your riders that is what you want to do. I'm leaving those rides off the calendar and doing them privately or coming on your hammerfests. Any ride I lead in July and August will be attempt to take care of the person who wants to try, but may not have the confidence to try it alone.

Five years ago I was a beginner. I didn't know squat. I could barely fix a flat and sometimes forgot to carry my tools. I had no business in the backcountry. Now it is time for me to give back as the Mountaineers nurture and give back to the newcomers to our club. We are grooming the next generation of mountain bike advocates and I would like them to be nurtured and cared for in this development phase as I was when I was asking all the questions and falling back from fatigue. I hope each of you appreciates your responsibility to be as prepared as you can be and to do the best you can because then everything will be mega descents and campfire stories.

See you out there.

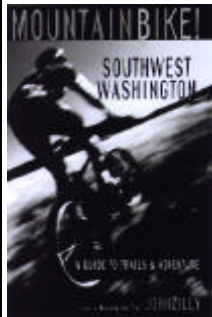
## EPIC GUIDE BOOK REVIEW

Greg E. DiGiovanna



Following up on the success of *Kissing the Trail*, local author and BBTC Board Member, John Zilly has just released, *Mountain Bike! A Guide to Trails and Adventure*. Over 440 pages split between 2 books of where to ride, how to get there and what to expect after you arrive. That's right, over 1,000 miles of pristine singletrack in our very own state of Washington. And you thought there was nothing to do on the weekend...

Not only were the books detailed and informative, but I found myself jonesing for a ride out at The Plains of Abraham or (one of my personal faves) Whistle Lake. As I thumbed through the book checking out the photo's which appear on almost every page it gave me a real feel for what to expect on the trail. The maps in the book were great! A lot more detailed than in his previous book, *Kiss*. I especially like the "elevation box". That's a box that appears on each map literally showing you a picture of what you'll have to ascend and thus descend as you weave your way in and out of lush singletrack. Zilly has even included GPS coordinates for all you techno-geeks out there willing to spend the coin on a Global Positioning System to mount on your bars next to your heart monitor and cyclo-computer (you know who you are...).



In typical Zilly fashion, John makes sure you don't miss a crucial turn or get completely surprised by a technical section of the trail. WHOA! Speaking of technical sections, don't feel that you have to have the advanced skill of Hans Rey to enjoy this book. John has done a great job of balancing the beginner rides like Lake Padden and Ocean Shores with the Epic Adventures of Smith Creek and Foggy Dew.

This would be a great book to add to anyone's library, whether you've just moved to the area and are not sure where to find the killer singletrack or you think you've just about ridden it all. My only regret is that I won't be able to spend the next year trying to ride the Hell out of each trail found between the covers of these 2 books like I'm sure we've all done with *Kiss*.

## EPIC GUIDE BOOK REVIEW

Scott Marlow

Locals Amy & Mark Poffenbarger have also written a mountain bike guidebook: *Mountain Bike America: Washington*, published by Beachway Press. The 245 page book highlights 73 trails around Washington State with beautiful maps and ride elevation profiles. And, like any responsible authors, Amy & Mark include information on trail maintenance, trail etiquette, bike repairs and maintenance, and of course the IMBA rules of the trail. The book retails for \$15.95, and includes a Maptech CD ROM, which can be accessed by paying \$34.50 for a product id key (ISBN 1-882997-09-3).

# Preparing for an Epic Ride

1. Conditioning - You can't buy it and you can't keep it unless you work at it. Everything else in this list is much lower priority than putting in your time in the saddle. The more climbing you do mid-week the easier your week-end "outings" will be. I like to get out to Tiger Mountain once midweek and at least ride up to BBTC's very own Preston RR Trail or go all the way to the top for a little more "sustained" workout.
2. Bike - Your bike should weigh less than 30 lbs and have very low gearing. The standard 22(low chainring)-28(low cog) gears are not adequate for many epic rides. I like to run a 22-32 combo. This will get you up steeper terrain with much less work. I have used 20-32 and love it but the 20-tooth chainring is prone to chainsuck so make sure if you buy this you get a very durable one such as stainless steel. Note the 96 XTR cogs have a 32 tooth lowest gear (12 tooth high). You don't need a suspension fork, but most folks today are convinced they need one. I say learn to ride on a totally rigid bike and you'll be a better rider. I'm quite fond of V-Brakes because they are very strong and I only need to use one finger to activate them. Your results may vary.
3. Tools and bike parts- Extra tools and bike supplies can keep you riding instead of walking down that epic descent. Last year Andy Woods and Dominic Groves pulled out needle nosed pliers, several crescent wrenches, and a spare spoke to get my suddenly skewer-less rear wheel attached to my bike. A small amount of duct or electrical tape, ty-wraps, and a knife are also helpful for those "how do we fix this?" problems that can arise on the trail. I recommend two tubes and a patch kit for long rides. I've helped folks by having a spare brake cable and a spare shifter cable is also a great idea. Look your bike over and think of what you could possibly need trailside to keep rolling on down the trail.
4. Gear - Water (pack), waterproof shell, and map are essential equipment. I also highly recommend a water filter (if water is available along the route) or extra water bottles. Jenny and I walked alongside a river last fall and were parched because we had 5 hours of water on a 9 hour "vacation" day. Next day I bought a filter. A spare jersey is sure nice when you finish that long sweaty climb and want to sit down and enjoy the view. If you have room you may consider some lightweight shell pants. Don't depend on a guidebook for your map. Green Trails sells a mountain bike map set for \$35. I recently used my map to make emergency evacuation plans when we had an injured rider asking the question, "where is the nearest road I can drive to and you can get our rider down to." Try that with a guidebook.
5. Food - Peanut butter and jelly. Put the Peanut butter on both sides of the bread to keep the jelly from soaking through the bread. I bring a loaf of bread and give everyone a couple of sandwiches so everyone hopefully has enough food. It's tastier than powerbars and cheaper too. It also makes you feel like a kid. If you really think you need power bars toss in one or two for an emergency. Hope you never have to eat the powerbar.
6. Gadgets - I love my Casio altimeter watch. It is the one "toy" I miss when I forget it. It is good for the group to know in their mind "how much climbing are we going to do?" and to give them a progress report from the watch. I also highly recommend a bar map holder from CycoActive Products (206) 323-2349. It makes map reading something you do almost while riding your bike translating into less chance of not reading the map in time to save a grave navigational mistake.
7. First Aid Kit: Enough for cuts, lacerations, punctures, and sprains. Aspirin or Advil.

# BBTC Membership Application

Looking for someone to ride with? Want to find new places to ride? Want to learn about backcountry trail ethics? Then join the BBTC. Help keep our trails open!

- \$15 Regular
- \$25 Family
- \$30.00 2 Year
- \$50 Contributing
- Voluntary Trail Fund donation
- \$150 Commercial
- T-Shirt ( \$18 each)  
     Large    XL
- Total**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal    New Member

Make checks payable to BBTC

I would like to volunteer for:

Mail application and check to:

BBTC Membership

P.O. Box 21288

Seattle, WA 98111-3288

Leading Rides

Trail Patrol

.....  Government Affairs

Trail Maintenance

Education Program

Newsletter

**.. Thank You!!**

## Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club Affiliations

*To become a BBTC affiliate, please contact Art Tuftee at (206) 226-4837*

**International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA)** (303) 545-9011, **Washington Wildlife Recreation Coalition, I-90 Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Single Track Mind Cycling Club** (253) 565-5124, **Cascade Bike Club** (206) 522-BIKE, **NOWBike** (206) 224-9252 nowbike@accessone.com

## BBTC Corporate Members

**Gregg's Greenlake Cycle** 7007 Woodlawn NE Seattle, WA 98115 (206) 523-1822

**REI, Inc.** 222 Yale Ave N Seattle, WA 98109 (206) 223-1944

**Wright Brothers Cycle Works** 219 N. 36th Seattle, WA 98103 (206) 633-5132

***Support the shops that support BBTC!***



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