

CHAIN REACTiON



A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ORANGE COUNTY WHEELMEN



OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

CALENDAR: www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418357-calendar

OFFICERS: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418687-officers-directors-2020>

EVENTS: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/418365-events-site-map>

SUPPORTING MEMBERS: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/424483-support-members>

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Held the first Sunday of each month starting 11am at Carl's Jr., Newport Beach. Take the 405 Freeway to the MacArthur exit. Go south 0.8 miles and turn left on Campus. Go 0.3 miles and turn right into Carl's Jr. (at Von Karman). All Officers and Directors are expected to attend to conduct business. Other interested members may also attend.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Held typically the first Thursday every other month at Irvine Ranch Water District, Sand Canyon Ave. in the city of Irvine. Light dinner starting at 6:30pm with meeting starting at 7pm. Different speaker each meeting.

REGISTRATION FOR OCW EVENTS

All Registration for OCW events require the registrant to be logged in. Be sure to always check for discount codes. You will only see the discount code if you are a current member of OCW. The discount code if applicable will be located on a separate page in the specific event area. To confirm if you are current, check the membership data base. If you do not see the link for the membership data base, your membership has expired by at least a month or more.

The new website, registration code, and discount codes are only visible to current members. The website functions are different and I have learned new ways within this site logic, to apply new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. I am continually upgrading the website when there are better ways to protect your personal information, but have it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW.

events@ocwheelmen.org

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Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

I really didn't think we would be watching the Tour de France this year due to COVID, but even though it was moved to September we got to watch it on TV and it was a fantastic Tour! One bright spot during all the chaos of 2020.

2020 has proven to be more than unusual for me. Sure the quarantine was bad enough but Alan and I were still able to hit the trails and I was still able to take my dog Cooper on long walks. But, unfortunately my body had other things in mind. In February I woke up to excruciating pain in my lower back and down my left leg. Mind you, I've suffered from sciatica since 2005. It's what stopped me from riding double centuries and then eventually took me off road cycling altogether. Mountain bikes are much more forgiving and I missed riding trail anyway. It took 8 weeks to see my doctor because of COVID lockdowns. I finally got in and was referred to an orthopedic surgeon. I learned I had spondylolisthesis, and on August 13th I underwent L4-5, L5-S1 anterior discectomy fusion with posterior laminectomy with fusion instrumentation at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange. I had a really nice private room on the ortho floor with an awesome 24/7 nursing staff and ortho recovery staff. Fortunately the food was very good because I had to stay there 3 days. Now I'm on the road to recovery, BUT, it will be a LONG 6 months until I can ride my bike. Once I start physical therapy and then eventually starting back onto my mountain bike I'll be writing articles on recovery after major back surgery. Look for them next Chain Reaction.

See you on the trail! (Eventually)



Steve Loughran

The President

First off, I hope everyone is staying healthy and active during the current pandemic. The year 2020 will certainly go down in history as a very challenging year. Recently, an article was published in *Bicycling Magazine*, August 24, 2020, that was about exercise after contracting COVID-19 may have very serious consequences for the athlete. I did share this article to the Friends of OCW Facebook page and it garnered much attention and comment. Clearly this is a frightening possibility. So, I thought I might take some time to write a piece discussing the various topics discussed in this article.

Unfortunately, the more I researched, the more papers and studies I found and trying to generate something for this newsletter was much more difficult than I had anticipated. Because the virus is new, more and more research is being generated at a dizzying pace. Much of the “research” is observational and anecdotal, but those observations are what leads to more refined and controlled research. However, these controlled studies take time, months and years in many cases. The *Bicycling Magazine* article primarily addressed the cardiac complications now being seen during the recovery and convalescent phase of COVID infection. Also addressed were the respiratory complications and the possibility of blood clots. Each of the single cases used to illustrate the possible complications ended in tragic outcomes; death or amputation of limbs. While these are clearly a possibility, the incidence is low and some of this writing bordered on the extreme to make a point; **listen to your body**. So, what is reality?

First off, how does a virus (SARS-COV-2, or COVID, for example) work and how do they cause disease? There have been long discussions in the biological world about whether viruses are living or non-living entities. Viruses have no way of reproducing themselves, therefore they cannot survive outside of a host (living organism). They rely on living cells to perform the work of replication. Think of the virus as the blueprint but no machinery to manufacture the end product (the virus itself). A virus is made up of a single strand of RNA or DNA (Ribonucleic Acid or Deoxyribonucleic Acid) that lists all the parts needed to manufacture a copy of the virus. Other living organisms contain 2 strands of DNA. RNA and DNA are essentially a string of code to manufacture proteins, the building blocks of cells. In living organisms, our cells each contain the machinery to decode the DNA, collect the needed parts and produce an outcome. Viruses lack that machinery, instead they invade a living cell, insert its RNA/DNA into the machinery (they hijack our machines) and make copies of themselves. They also manufacture other products that allow them to survive within our body, but can have devastating effects on our body as a result. Also, during the manufacturing process, our own cells are damaged, causing inflammation and cell death. When viruses cause cell damage, we have symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, etc. All the symptoms we are all too familiar with today.

So, let's focus on the cardiovascular issues addressed in the *Bicycling Magazine* article. It

has been found that people with COVID infection, even asymptomatic individuals, are having an increased risk of cardiac complications. This is primarily due to inflammation of the heart muscles, known as myocarditis. First off, COVID is not the only virus known to cause myocarditis. In fact there are dozens of viruses humans are exposed to regularly that may result in cardiac muscle inflammation. This phenomenon has been known for decades. While it is thankfully uncommon, it may result in symptoms including a slightly irregular heartbeat to full-blown shock. Typically, myocarditis affects younger individuals who have no history of cardiac disease, many of whom never recall even having the original viral illness. For example, the coxsackie virus, the virus that causes hand-foot-and-mouth disease, is typically seen in school-aged children and may be related to myocarditis. It seems to be related to some unknown predisposing genetic factors and an exaggerated immune system response that inflames and weakens the heart muscles. Myocarditis also can lead to grossly irregular heart rhythms that can prove fatal.

In general, it is recognized that hospitalized patients that tested positive for COVID, had a significantly higher risk of heart failure and irregular heart rhythms. Irregular heart rhythms were found to be on the order of 17% of hospitalized patients whereas heart failure was found in approximately 33% of hospitalized patients. Because the vast majority of people who have no symptoms are not examined nor tested, the incidence of cardiac involvement is unknown at this time. What is known is that complications can develop several weeks after full recovery, even from asymptomatic infection. The research has shown that persons who developed later symptoms usually fully recover within 2-4 months.

The study cited in the *Bicycling Magazine* article clearly is worrisome, especially for athletes due to the increased workload demand placed on the cardiovascular system during exercise. However, the statement in the article that suggests that intense “physical activity may cause the virus to replicate at a faster rate” is pure

speculation and has not been borne out in any studies. In fact, a recent publication, [Sports Medicine and Health Science. 2020 Jun; 2\(2\): 55-64, published online 2020 May 30. doi: 10.1016/j.smhs.2020.05.006](#), suggests that physically fit individuals have better outcomes due to preconditioning and that physical exercise most likely has a benefit in terms of improved immune response and improved antioxidant response, both of which aid in the fight against viruses of all types. This paper also outlines poorer outcomes due to physical inactivity including worsening depression which has also been implicated in a poor response to viral infection. Additionally, this paper outlines nutritional factors that may benefit individual's response or susceptibility to contracting COVID.

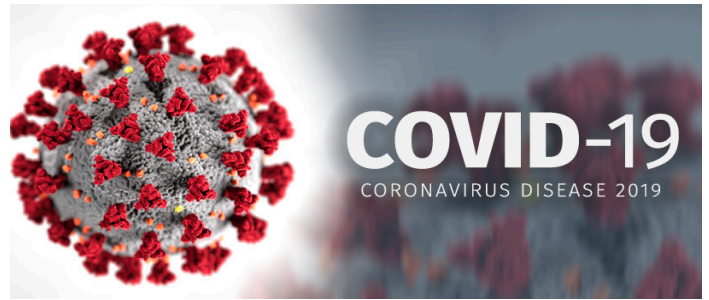
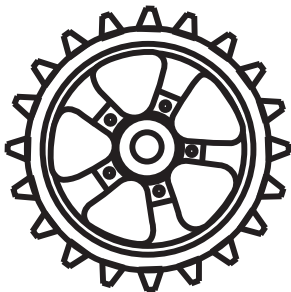
The pre-existing conditions that contribute to individuals having more susceptibility to contracting COVID and having poorer outcomes should they contract COVID are well known. Diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and impaired immune system due to cancer or other medications that decrease immune response. Lately, obesity has been shown to be one of the highest risk factors contributing to poor outcomes if one contracts COVID. Cycling clearly benefits us (as does all exercise, but we are a cycling club after all) in so many ways. Cycling clearly benefits the cardiovascular system and the pulmonary system. We improve both systems such that they are better able to respond should we contract COVID or any other infection. Studies have shown for decades that the conditioning of exercise improves outcomes in almost all situations; following surgery, following injury, etc. Cycling and the social aspect also is clearly beneficial to reducing depression. Cycling clearly reduces our risk factors; diabetics can improve blood sugar control with exercise. Hypertension is better controlled as is reduced risk for obesity.

Clearly, the study cited in the *Bicycling Magazine* article raises concern for us as cyclists as there were structural changes found in the heart as a result of COVID infection. Cardiac biopsies have shown presence of the virus in heart muscle, resulting in muscle damage with

resultant overall cardiac dysfunction. Additionally, if the virus causes inflammation and myocarditis, this leads to irritability of the electrical system of the heart which may lead to very irregular heart rates and rhythms, further altering the ability of the heart to function in a coordinated fashion.

The American College of Cardiology, has published a position paper on [Exercise and athletics in the COVID-19 pandemic era, May 12, 2020](#). It provides a framework for evaluating and testing athletes and highly active people who have COVID exposure. Essentially, it recommends a two-week period of rest after resolution of any symptoms. Further testing, EKG or echocardiogram for example and proceeding to more in-depth testing for any signs of cardiac involvement found in the initial tests. For individuals with symptoms, prolonged rest may be advised. Return to exercise is based on symptom resolution but also slow return over 1-2 months. Typically a return to exercise is advised in a step fashion, after the first two weeks, the individual may begin to exercise at 20% of their previous level for the first week. 30% the next week, then 50% the next. Continued step-up rates are based on symptoms and results of any further testing completed.

The bottom line is, listen to your body. This is not the time to “push on through” as we typically do. Don’t put off medical workup and evaluation. Control your risk factors but stay active. Clearly, the benefits of exercise are clear. Stay active, but take precautions too.



Given the recent Covid-19 virus outbreak and concern for the health of our members, all club rides have been modified so be sure to log into www.ocwheelmen.org for further details.

Given the recent Covid-19 virus outbreak and concern for the health of our members, Pacific Coast 100 has been postponed until 2021





the *VICE* President's Message

By Bruce Campbell, Vice President

We started up General Meetings and granted they are Virtual but at least we are connecting!

Our first General Meeting took place in July and our speaker was Christine Ryan, owner of OC Athletic Massage. Christine spoke and demonstrated a variety of well-thought-out exercises to both maintain and enhance cycling performance. She announced a new Web-based subscription service that allows cyclists to get a semi-personalized coaching experience while participating in the exercises. If you are interested there is a link on the OCW Home page.

The second meeting is planned for August 26th so it will already be “in the books” by the time you read this article. Mark Denney and I are co-presenting on our March 2020 Tucson 5-day Cycling Camp. Hope you attended and enjoyed it.

I do not have any more OCW news to write about and Steve Loughran will write up any important announcements in his President's message. So, I thought it would be beneficial (for me) to write about my plans for a post Labor Day ride that is a little out of the ordinary. This ride will also be “in the books” by the time you read this article which shamelessly I am using to think through my planning process.

The ride is called “Going to the Sun Highway” and it is a 51-mile road that cuts directly thru Glacier National Park. The original thought was to take my wife Jan to both Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks in lieu of limited travel options during the pandemic. Once I started researching what to do in both parks I came across articles about Going to the Sun Highway and got interested immediately. Plus one of my cycling friends and OCW member Bill Bechtel has done this ride twice and encouraged me strongly to do it!



The western ride start point is a small “outpost” called Apgar and continues 51 miles to the easternmost point named St. Mary. The western climb from a point called Avalanche packs in 3,273 feet in elevation gain. We will start before Avalanche so we can get close to the max elevation gain. The eastern ascent from St. Mary is less demanding at 2,185 feet. But either direction crams most of the uphill pedaling into 12 miles at a steady six-percent grade.

I have made reservations for both Glacier and Yellowstone post Labor Day holiday for Jan and me. The plan is to check the weather just before Labor Day and either keep my existing reservations or change them, by a day or so, based on the forecast. OCW member Pat Ritz is also planning on riding Going to the Sun Highway with me, so hoping the weather can accommodate us both.

Our plan is to stay overnight at Lake McDonald Motel which is about 12 miles from the west entrance ride start point, in Apgar, on the Going to the Sun Road. So, based on the weather we will either back track 12 miles and get the full 51 miles in or start from the motel and get 39 miles one

way.

I read that the road throws obstacles at riders like grates, debris, wildlife (hoping no grizzlies), water, and sometimes ice. Although, after Labor Day, I read, bicycling restrictions disappear, and vehicle congestion diminishes. Cycling takes on the “golden season” with cottonwoods and aspens turning yellow - hope this is the case.

I will post actual pic’s of the ride, assuming it happens, in the winter edition of Chain Reaction but for now I include a few images from the web.





The Hungry Eyelist



Butternut Squash-Carrot Soup

[Shared from What's Gaby Cooking](#)

Ingredients For The Soup

- 2 medium butternut squash sliced in half and seeds scooped out
- 2 large carrots chopped into large pieces
- 1 red bell pepper halved and seeds removed
- 1 head garlic
- 1 shallot halved and skin removed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup milk or coconut milk
- 2-4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 teaspoons red pepper flakes

Ingredients For The Garlic Bread

- 1 16- ounce loaf of Italian bread or French bread
- 1 stick unsalted butter softened
- 2 large cloves of garlic smashed and chopped
- 1 heaping tablespoon of freshly chopped basil
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions

For the soup:

1. Preheat oven to 425
2. Place the halves of squash on a large baking sheet with the carrot, bell pepper, garlic and shallot and drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper, roast for for 50-60 minutes until the squash is fork tender.
3. Once cooked, remove the baking sheet from the oven. Scoop out the insides of the butternut squash and discard the skins. Transfer all the vegetables to a high powered blender and add the liquids and red pepper flakes. Start with 2 cups of stock and puree for 2-3 minutes until completely smooth. If you want a thinner soup, add more stock until it reaches the desired consistency. Transfer the liquids back into a pot and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper and serve as needed with a side of garlic bread.

For the garlic bread:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cut the bread in half, horizontally. Mix the butter, garlic, and basil together in a small bowl. Spread butter mixture over the the two bread halves. Place on a sturdy baking pan and heat in the oven for 10 minutes. Remove pan from oven. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over bread if you want. Return to oven on the highest rack. Broil on high heat for 2-3 minutes until the edges of the bread begin to toast and the cheese bubbles. Watch very carefully while broiling.
3. Remove from oven, let cool a minute, slice and serve.



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↑
Just
Click

Finding Money



By Kevin & Ximena Ansel

Do you ever notice coins on the road when you are out on a bike ride? Do you ever stop to pick them up? Well, we do. When Ximena and I first met 24 years ago, we found this was something we had in common. We would pick up a penny here, a nickel there, a dime, or an occasional quarter. We would drop the found money into a jar separate from pocket change. When the jar was full, we would take the coins to the bank and cash them in, making a note of the total on a piece of paper and dropping that back into the jar.

We do have a few rules for picking up money while riding. First, don't stop in an intersection. It's just too dangerous. Second, if you see someone drop the money, you have to give it back to them. Third, if you are riding with a group, don't stop for a coin. You don't want to take someone out by slamming on your brakes

because you saw a quarter.

For me, finding money started when my friend Joe and I were on a bike tour in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We had stopped at a diner for breakfast. A woman was using the pay phone. (Remember those?) After she finished, she hung up and left. A few seconds later the phone returned \$1.50 in quarters. Joe and I retrieved the coins and split them 50% -50%. I have been picking up money ever since. It's not just coins either. We have also found lots of bills. During a bike tour in Arizona we found two \$20 bills blowing through a gas station. There was no one in the area so we added \$40 to our found money collection. When we are on tour and find money, we keep it separate and tally it when the tour is complete. On our 2016 cross country tour we found a total of \$18.63. This included a \$10 winning Lotto ticket that

we found in the street in Newton, Kansas. Whoever lost it must have thought it wasn't a winner so we cashed it in at a liquor store. On our West Coast tour in 2019 we found \$7.09. There were no found bills on that trip, just coins. And we found them in the strangest places. We often thought 'who would lose a quarter out here in the middle of nowhere?' We have even found money while mountain biking too. While riding up Maple Springs in the Santa Ana Mountains we found a dollar bill in a stream. That one probably fell out of a hiker's pocket. Most of the coins we find in the street are in pretty bad shape. They look like they have been run over a number of times. But the bank takes them anyway when we cash them in.

There are several good places to find money. It seems like we always have good luck at campgrounds. I guess people drop coins in the dirt around the campfire and can't find them. Parking lots near fast food restaurants and convenience stores are also good locations. People must be in a hurry or too lazy to pick up their dropped coins when they have a hamburger waiting for them. Don't overlook a bus stop where coins roll under the bus and cannot be retrieved. Our finds aren't limited to coins and bills. While riding on the Peter's Canyon Bike Trail we found a check for \$1100.00. We mailed it back to the owner's address shown on the deposit slip, and he sent us a thank you note with a \$20 gift card to Performance Bike Store. Then we found a woman's wallet in Laguna Canyon. It was a few days before Christmas and all her money and credit cards were

still in the wallet. She didn't have a phone number with her identification but with a little investigating we tracked her down. We ended up driving her wallet to Brea and met her at a Starbucks near the Brea Mall. She bought us a cup of coffee which turned out to be a nice reward. On another occasion we found a gentleman's checkbook in Laguna Beach and we just mailed it back to him. And, once we found a wallet and a cell phone together. Again we had to do some research to find the owner. It turned out that he had left both items on the bumper of his car at his child's sporting event, forgot about it and drove off. He was happy to get both back.



Over the years we have found a total of \$644.45 in bills and coins. Not bad for nickel here and a dime there. People often ask us why we bother to pick up the coins. We have a couple of answers. For one, if you saw \$644.45 on the side of the road would you stop and pick it up? The second is the old saying, "100 pennies still makes a dollar." So, you can rest assured that we have been doing a good job keeping the streets of Orange County clean from all those unsightly coins. There are stranger hobbies..... Right?





OCW Peak Challenge

OCW Peak Challenge 2020!!

How many peaks can you bag?

Choose your own challenge and enjoy the climbs!
Road bike, MTB, ebike? Just do it!!

Platinum – 30 peaks

Gold – 20 peaks

Silver – 15 peaks

Bronze – 10 peaks

Tin – 5 peaks

You may record your peaks in a variety of ways:

- Post on the Friends of OCW Facebook Page (with a picture if possible)
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/253156728156693/>
- Title your OCW Club Strava Ride: My OCW Peak Challenge #4-6
<https://www.strava.com/clubs/orange-county-wheelmen>
- Keep your own record of peaks/dates to be submitted later

This challenge starts June 2020 until the end of the year. Here are a variety of peaks (road and off road) that you may be familiar with, or will be soon! As you bag (and post) other peaks, we will add them to our list.

Alton/Paloma, Bake/Rue De Fortuna, Black Star, Calle del Cerro, Cannon, Carbon Cyn, Casino Ridge, Cove Rd. Crest, Crystal Lake, East Fork, Fernleaf, Glenn Ranch, GMR, GRR, Hidden Hills, Highland, Keller Peak, Kodiak Mtn, La Pata, Live Oak, Marguerite, Meats, Modjeska Grade, Mt. Baldy Ski Lifts, Newport Coast, Nyes, Oak Glen, Onyx Summit, Pacific Island Dr, Palomar, Park, Pelican Hill, Portola/241, Ridgeline, Ridge Park, Robinson Ranch, Saddleback Ranch, San Joaquin, Santiago Peak, Santiago Canyon, Sea Island Dr, Signal Hill, Silverado Cyn, Skyline, Spyglass, Star Crest, Suicide Rock, Tahquitz Peak, Temple Hills, Thomas Mountain, Top of the World, Turnbull Cyn, Vista del Lago, Vista Ridge, ...

Disclaimer: Not all of these are peaks, but they might feel like it to you! Anything 6% or more with a steady, steep or long climb (for you) may count as a peak!!

The OCW Peak Challenge started June 1 and continues through December 31st. It is not too late to start!

Below are the current participants in the Challenge and their level of accomplishment.

KOM/QOM - 100 Peaks

Greg Kibble
Gloria Nafel (Velo Traveler)

Polka dot Jersey - 75 Peaks

Ximena Ansel
Kevin Ansel
Bob Bacin
Rhonda Earick
Stuart Gregg

Mountain Goat - 50 Peaks

Chuck Bramwell
Peter Gerrard
Brad Hontz
Gwen Hontz
Kevin Ivey (Mount Bike)
Danna Kipnis
Lee Painter
Cathy Painter
Bob Waldren



Platinum - 30 Peaks

Larry Black
Joey Gomez
Terry Kessler
Steve Loughran
Ron Vilorio

Gold - 20 Peaks

Earl Kluth

Silver - 15 Peaks

Myra Kuck
Tom Sinclair

Bronze - 10 Peaks

Tin - 5 Peaks

For more information about the OCW Peak Challenge, visit the OCW Home Page <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/page/show/417760-welcome-to-the-orange-county-wheelmen>.



HIKING CORNER

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS
BY DORIS BINGO

PHOTO OF JUERGEN FISHER

HIKE TO CUCAMONGA PEAK

On August 7, 2020, Ye Yu and Juergen Fisher wanted to hike to a peak that they haven't been to yet, so we decided on Cucamonga Peak. Cucamonga Peak is 8859 feet high and is located in the San Gabriel Mountains. It was a Friday, so we mistakenly believed that parking at the Icehouse Canyon Trailhead would not be an issue. The lot was already full at 7:30am so we ended up parking on Mt. Baldy Road. We hiked on the Icehouse Canyon Trail toward Icehouse Saddle. A large amount of water was flowing in the creek by the trail, forming many small waterfalls and cascades. From the saddle, Cucamonga Peak Trail leads to the summit. After several miles, we took an obvious side trail to the peak that diverts from the main trail even though the sign was missing at the junction. This peak has amazing views even though it was a little hazy. Smoke from the APPLE fire near Oak Glen was visible that day. We ate delicious burritos and cookies at the summit that Ye had prepared and brought for everyone. The trails and the summit were crowded with many hikers surprisingly for a weekday. The weather was pleasant with a cool breeze and never got really hot. On the way back, the sole of Juergen's boot came apart. Ye did a temporary fix with some duct tape I had in my pack. The fix held up just until we got back to the car. This hike was 13.7 miles with about 4600' of gain.



PHOTO OF JUERGEN'S BOOTS



PHOTO OF YE YU AND JUERGEN FISHER



11

PEAKS

By Chuck Bramwell

What a perfect morning to climb 11 Peaks in the Pacific Island Drive neighborhood!!

<https://www.strava.com/activities/3849623558>

I like this OCW Peak Challenge a lot because it has forced me out of my comfort zone and taken me on some roads I had never ridden before right in Orange County.

I started the morning climbing Pacific Island Drive from the Crown Valley Parkway Side (12% Max) then Pacific Island Drive from the Alicia Parkway Side (11% Max).

I was surprised to find Flying Cloud to be a 10% Max climb then Club House from Crown Valley which is 11% Max.

Sea Island Drive was a tough 14% Max but the views were out of this world at the top!!

I had never climbed Camino Del Avion from Crown Valley to the end (10% Max) and then from the opposite side (10% Max).

Stonehill from Niguel to Del Obispo wasn't too bad with 9% Max but climbing it from the op-

posite side was brutal with 14% Max. I remember this climb with terror from my Paris-Brest-Paris Brevets in 1998 and 1999 and it's just as horrific 21 years later!!

Niguel from PCH to Alicia was nice with just a 7% Max.

I was shocked to find 11% on Highlands from Alicia to Pacific Island Drive. By that time it was plenty hot and it was time for a Cold Coke!!

Thank you, Terry Kessler and Velo Traveler for organizing this. It is truly amazing how many awesome climbs we have in Orange County that I've been avoiding at all costs.

My spreadsheet is at:

<https://docs.google.com/.../1GjgnHrmd9QfFoyXYoND.../edit...>





MountainBike Dude

By Alan Vester

Mountain and Gravel Bike Riding Geared Toward the 50+ Rider

Which Mountain Bike Should I Buy???

I was not sure if I really wanted to take on this topic, but here goes. I often get the question, “Hey Al, which mountain bike should I buy?”

I will do my best to help you with this fun topic. I'll start with basic categories of mountain bikes and their purpose. I started mountain biking in 1992. I rode a Trek 800 which was made of steel, no suspension, 26” wheels/1.9” tires. It had a 3x7 drive train, mechanical side-pull rim brakes, no seat dropper and no carbon anywhere to be found on this bike. It cost \$600.00 and I rode it everywhere, including up and down the Big Bear ski resort trails in the off-season. Back then, one bike did everything. Single track, downhill, cross-country, dirt jumping and all-around trail riding and even some occasional racing. The bike was fun, however by today's standards, it was terrible. More than once on steep descents at Big Bear it would actually blow the tires off the rims due to heat caused by excessive braking descending a 20% grade down a ski run. Not fun and there was no suspension on the bike. I was the suspension, by bending my arms and legs I could cushion the ride. Fast forward to today, 2020. Here are the basic categories for modern mountain bikes.

Cross Country. The lightest of the group, normally full-suspension, 100 to 110mm of travel front and rear, smaller width tires, either 29 or 27.5 tires. These are very popular with cross country racers because they are light and fast.

The only negative is they tend to be the stiffest of the group and have minimal travel, and sometimes no rear suspension.

Trail. Very popular bike today. It is the type of mountain bike I ride every day and everywhere. Full suspension, 130 to 140 mm travel front and rear. Usually wider tires, 29 x 2.4 tires and are slightly heavier than Cross-Country, but I find them more comfortable and stable due to frame geometry and wider tires and rims. My favorite in the category.

Enduro. Relatively new type of mountain bike and it was designed for Enduro racing, which is a mix of uphill, downhill and shuttling your bike. It has more travel, somewhere in the 150-160mm front and rear and is very close to a downhill bike, only easier to pedal uphill than a heavy dedicated downhill monster.

Downhill. These are bikes that are designed to go downhill fast and nothing else. The type of bike that you put on a ski-lift shuttle to the top and bomb downhill at warp speed. They usually have 1 x 7 drive trains, large tires, 27.5 is the most common tire size, even though we are starting to see 29” wheels on these bikes. Normally they will run 180 to 200 mm of travel with double crown forks, large 220 mm front rotors because it takes a lot of force and heat to stop a heavy bike barreling downhill in the dirt.

Gravel. These are basically road bikes with

larger tires/wheels, beefier frames, disk brakes and are a lot of fun to ride. Think of gravel bikes as road bikes that can go off-road and are more comfortable on asphalt due to larger tires. They will never be as fast as a road bike, but this is a very comfortable bike.

E-Bike. These bikes really belong in their own category. They are not real bicycles; they are a very different vehicle, the E-bikes are electrical assist mountain bikes. This is important to understand because the motor does not drive the bike, it is pedal assist for the rider. The drawback to these bikes is they are expensive, up to \$13,000 and are heavy, normally about 50 lbs. E-bikes are the fastest growing sector in mountain biking. The technology has improved in the last 3 years and riders love them. My prediction is in ten years, 60% of all mountain bikes sold will be E-bikes.

Well I hope this helps. The bottom line is this. Just get a bike and ride. They are all fun and it is so great we live in great times that mountain bikes are so good in design and comfort.

Be careful out there, and see you on the trails.

Rules of the Trail

1. Ride open trails.
2. Leave No Trace.
3. Control your bicycle.
4. Yield appropriately.
5. Never scare animals.
6. Plan ahead.

Alan Vester
Goat Hill Mountain Bike Dude
alanvester7@gmail.com





biking IN THE AGE OF COVID

by d. michael bush

Five years and two helmets ago, in my article “Practically Bohemian,” I wrote:

“(I) grimace when I see signs of oversitting, which has been described as the new smoking. Sitting at work, sitting in the car and sitting in front of the TV are certain to cause health problems.”

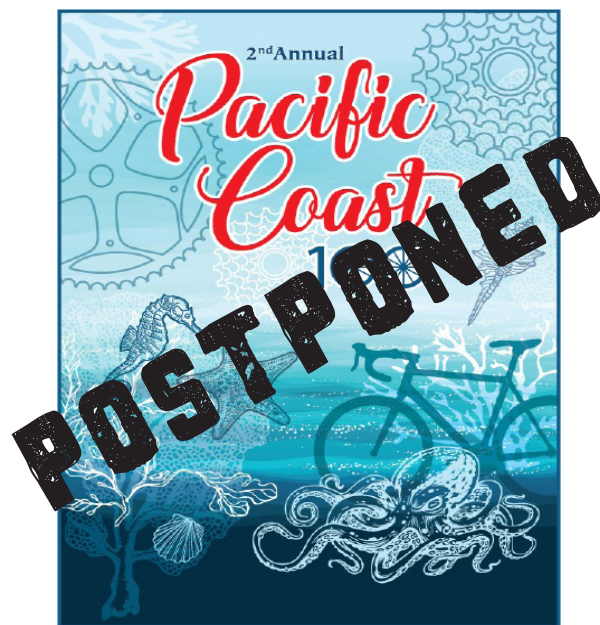
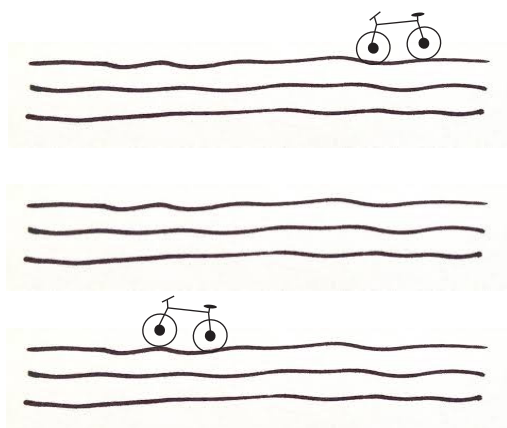
When I saw the early indications of COVID respiratory issues and my law practice effectively shut down, I double downed on mileage and triple downed on elevation. I started reading books for the first time in over 30 years and learned to sew. While grieving for those who have experienced loss and hardship, I’m feeling forever Bohemian.

Some of the bike paths are starting to look like West Texas roads at the beginning of an oil boom, with the sloppy habits of new riders and those confounded eBikes, but it’s good to finally see families together getting fresh air and Vitamin D.

I wear masks, but not while biking, except the “pull up quick” ones when I can’t maintain a proper distance. I’m not a fan of those who insist on singing in church choirs without masks, but if they want to be human guinea pigs, they should be prompt in reporting of the spread of infections. I submit the same should go for us. I’d be surprised if there have been any reports of transmission of COVID-19 by bicyclists, including those riding in packs, but if so, can we make a pact to tell? We all need to engage in societal problem-solving and see what works and what doesn’t. If robust outside exercise is an answer, let’s share it. Who knows, outdoor choirs might be our distant cousins!

One of the books I read was “The Pride of Palomar,” by Peter B. Kyne. While he was a well-known writer in his day, I haven’t found anyone who has heard of him. John Wayne was in a movie based on one of Kyne’s books. It’s a fascinating look at California from a century ago, just after the Great War.

I deemed myself to be an “essential Grandpa” and sewed a heavy-duty mask that got me through three airports. It was worth the trip.



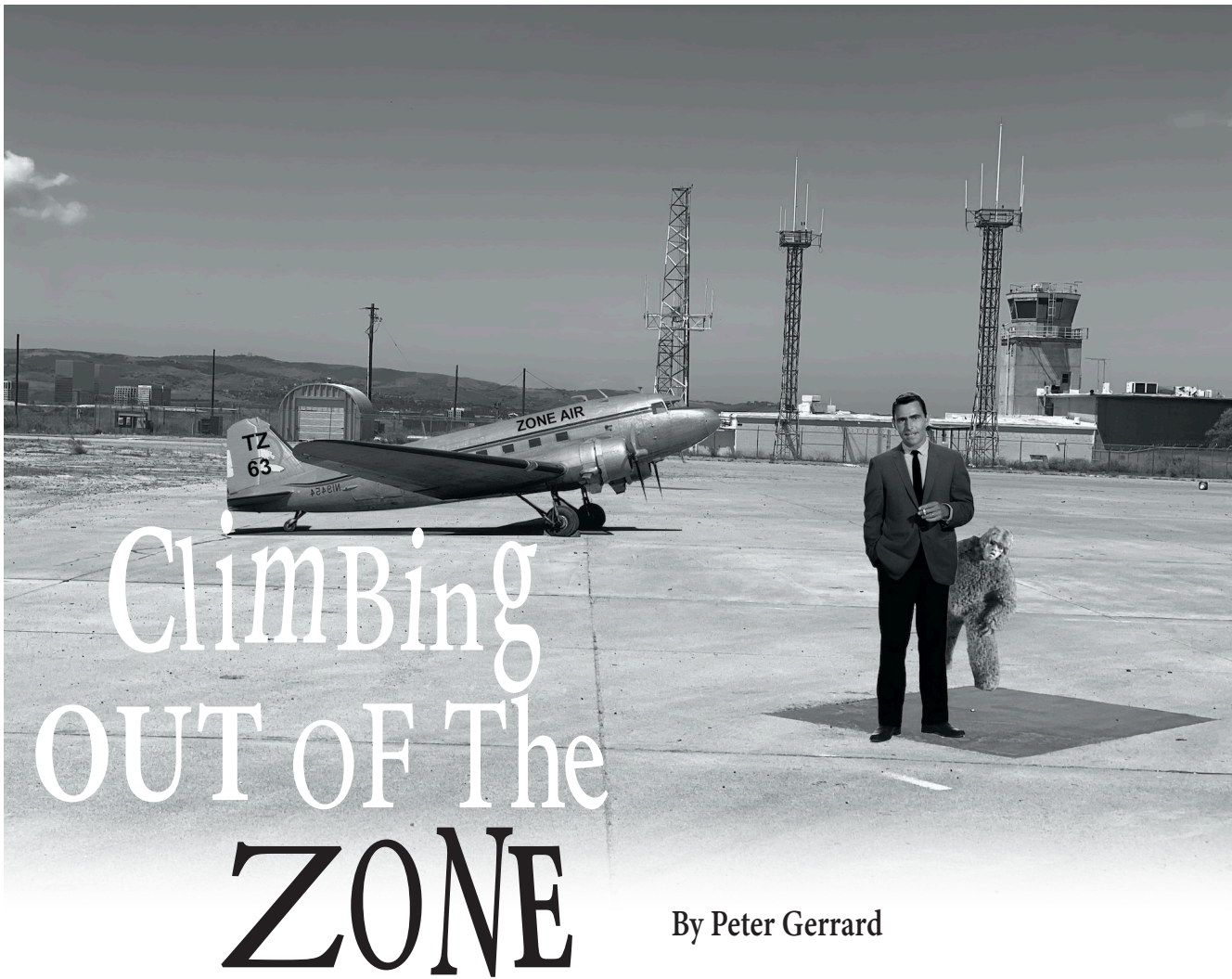
After considering the health and safety of our riders and volunteers and the number of unknowns related to COVID-19, the Orange County Wheelmen has chosen to cancel the 2020 Pacific Coast Century with the hope of returning in 2021.

We hope you are staying well and riding during this time. We continue to stay alert to the current state and local recommendations with the hopes of opening club activities. Please visit our home page at:

<https://www.ocwheelmen.org>

as well as our Facebook pages and Strava club page for interesting and fun activities planned by the membership.

If you have fun ideas, feel free to message any member of the board via the OCW page.



By Peter Gerrard

A week into March, before the Pandemic Normal hasn't settled in for the long haul, we ride our bikes over to the Spectrum to see what a sudden mandated closure looked like.

Imagine, if you will, a luxury shopping mall... empty. No people. Not an emotional support animal in sight. The only sounds are the mall's background music, a siren song with no audience, and the click of our freehubs, echoing off the darkened windows of the shuttered shops.

We coast past empty fountains and a bounty of seating; here a crumpled receipt for something that might never be returned; there a stub for a two o'clock show. Now it's all silent movies.

Near the carousel, a ticket booth. A whisper of a breeze. We surrender to our imaginations.

A tumbleweed swirls past us, coming to rest on the front of the booth. Then a few more roll by.

A man appears: he looks familiar. Clean-cut, black suit, a cigarette in one hand. A shadow passes, maybe from a cloud? Suddenly the scene is black and white. He takes a puff, looks at us, and says, "Welcome to the Twilight Zone."



This is no 30-minute episode. It's been lasting for months. When I ride, invariably I see, or imagine seeing The Man. Rod Serling, I know, but don't know why. I don't think he ever said his name on the show.

Since this all started, we are facing and adapting to what someone is calling The New Abnormal. New habits; in terms of social interactions, or not having them; shopping, eating, visiting; events; travel. It affects us and our dance with trying to adapt and cope with this strange world.



And now, The Man apparates all over the county.

Almost every time I'm cycling, he shows up, takes a picture, and posts it on my Facebook page. At UCI. On the bluffs above Little Corona. At the Irvine Train Station during the first Saturday OCW ride since everything official was paused. The appearances are random and unpredictable.

I have family in the OC, in three households, and we've weathered (like many others) disruptions in employment, school, and childcare. One family is connected to health care, in nursing and epidemiology. The other is in education and the arts. My wife and I see them, then we don't. Are the grandkids safe from us, and we from them? Should we meet? Inside or outside? The answers are, as we all know, constantly morphing.

One of the biggest psychological effects, I think, is how the things we look forward to having been curtailed or canceled. As I write this, we are supposed to be on a cycling trip in Portugal. Pretty much every organized century and Gran Fondo has been scratched with a TBD that might be 2021.

For my reasons, although I miss the camaraderie, group rides with strangers aren't happening. So, the OCW Peaks Challenge comes as a ray of hope.

The OCW Peaks Challenge offers a brilliant, simple and amorphous direction: climb. Secondary to this are goals, benchmarks and a wonderfully malleable "course." And, ultimately, it's up to each rider to find and define what is an ascent, and discover new roads, or ones new to them. Then share their experiences. I embrace this with enthusiasm and a sense of relief.

Yes, it's not monumental as a sense of purpose, but it's a start on a welcome path, up and towards light.

I'm thinking about all this as I ride up Sand Canyon and turn onto Marine Way. Something draws me to explore some of the old areas. A whim? I don't know, but I find a ramp adjacent to a dilapidated hangar and roll down to the tarmac.

I see The Man. He's standing on one of the abandoned runways outside the control tower. An old Douglas D3 sits, waiting for passengers. Next to The Man is a Gremlin. It's the one from the Twilight Zone episode with William Shatner (pre-Captain Kirk), when he's hallucinating the creature ripping off sections of the plane's wing while in-flight.

"Ready to go somewhere?" The Man asks.
"Yeah, I'm ready," I say. "Do I need a reservation?"
"No, it's just you on this flight."



“Then who’s that next to you?”
“No one. You’re seeing things.”

As I go to board, he says, “Safe travels.” I think about this, briefly. Then I get on my bike and ride away. He’s gone when I look back.

A few minutes later, I’m lost in thought. I’m over half-way to the Century Climb target. I need to find a new peak. I know where to go.

I’ve left The Man and the Gremlin behind. Or have I?

I head towards Portola Springs. Towards an old water tower, on a hill above Portola proper, at the edge of a gated community and the 241 Toll Road.

Cars need an access code or transponder to enter this community—but there are open pedestrian pathways between tall, vine-covered stone walls.

They say you can always ask for forgiveness later if you don’t actually have prior permission. I ride on through.

Past this entrance, the street forks. To the left, a dead end. I go right. As the street arcs left and then up, it gets a name— Parson Brown.

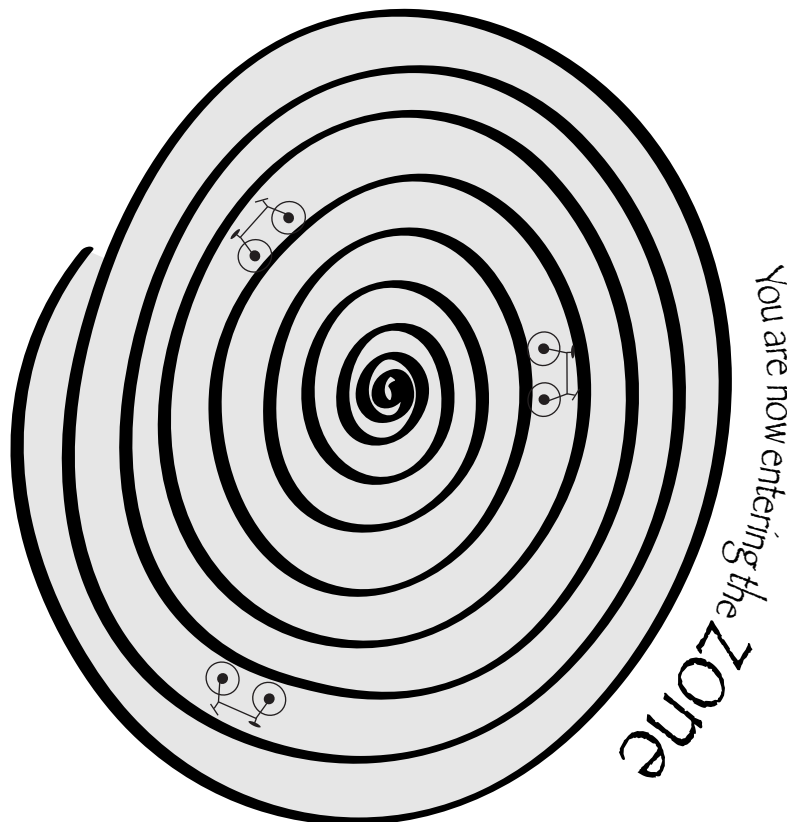
Later, I research Parson Brown. The name is shorthand for a typical 18th Century Anglican pastor. Or the name of the snowman, a ministerial avatar in the “Winter Wonderland” Christmas Carol. Parson Brown is also a variant of orange, our county’s namesake, a strain noted for its sweetness.

Either way, being around a Parson, I figure I’m in good shape for forgiveness if I get challenged for any minor infraction I have made.

I keep climbing. I see 8% on my Wahoo, so I’m good. The road flattens, and ends at a cul de sac. There’s a narrow path to the water tower at one end. The tower looms up a short path, behind its own wooden gate and “No Trespassing” sign. I figure I’ve tempted fate enough for one day.

Opposite the tower, on the rim of the cul de sac, there’s a single tree and a bench facing out towards the coast. In the distance you can see Fashion Island. I sit there for a minute, and think, I’ve bagged Peak 53.

I hear the sound of a plane, and I see one near the Great Park Balloon, ascending as if it has just taken off. I’m curious about this, as I thought flights from the old base had ceased years ago. I watch the plane as it rises, levels, and banks left, heading towards me. As it soars overhead, above me and over the tower, I’m pretty sure it a DC3.

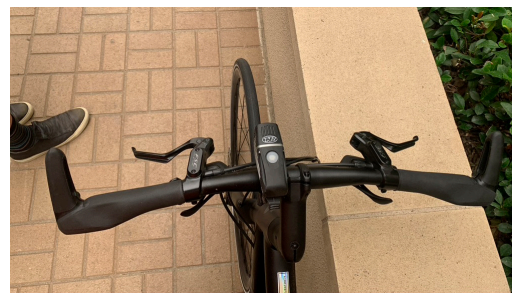




2012 Specialized S-works Tarmac SL4, SRAM Red: 52cm \$2,950.00

Carbon fiber SL4 frame, 10 Speed, 11-28T cassette, 50/34T chainrings, all components are SRAM Red except front derailleur (SRAM Force) and brakes (TRP ultra-light alum/titanium). Upgrades: Quarq Elsa power meter, DuraAce C35 carbon fiber wheels, 3T stem and carbon fiber handlebars, Specialized TTS seat, new bar tape, new shifter/brake cables. Comes with extra new chain and an extra SRAM Red 11-25T cassette. Excellent condition.

Contact Mike McNelly: Call/Text (949) 228-3605, email: msmcnelly@gmail.com



2018 size medium Specialized Sirrus \$800.00

Bottle mounts, pump, lights, and saddle bag. Bike has only been ridden for 20 miles and is in very good condition.

Contact Justin, email: jctragerman@gmail.com



2012 COLNAGO C59 size 50s (54cm)

\$2,900.00

SHIMANO DURA-ACE 7900 10 speed derailleurs and shifters

ROTOR 3D crank 172.5

ROTOR Q-RINGS (oval) 50x34

KOGEL Ceramic BB

CAMPAGNOLO Eurus wheelset

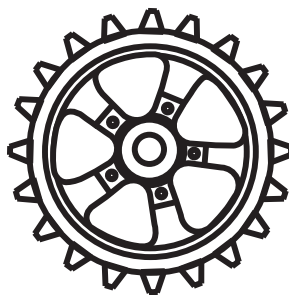
FIZIK bar/stem/saddle

SPEEDPLAY Zero stainless-steel pedals (Tour de France Edition)

Contact Peter

peterg@cox.net

949-294-4116



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