

Chain Reaction

Fall 2025

A Quarterly Publication of



Orange County Wheelmen

OCW CLUB LINKS

HOME PAGE: www.ocwheelmen.org

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

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

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

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

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Check website for location, day and time. All Officers and Directors are expected to attend. Other interested members may also attend.

AMTRAK METRIC AND CENTURY

Thank you to all riders and volunteers for making this event a success. More info and pictures: <https://www.ocwheelmen.org/amtraksitemap>

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. Our website constantly updates new and different ways of maintaining privacy for our members from email skimmers and other nefarious internet hacking. The website continually upgrades to protect your personal information along with having it available for our members to connect to each other.

Thank you for your continued support and membership to OCW!

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Editors Musings



Michelle Vester

Happy Fall!

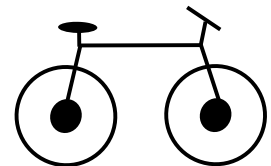
After a long hiatus OCW was able to bring back the Amtrak Century, and what a success! Read all about it and its sponsors in Dan's President's Message on the next page, with more pictures and updates in Rob's VP Message on page 6.

Try your hand at the Word Search on page 5, and check your success with the solved version on page 21.

Don't forget to count the stick bikes throughout. The full number of stick bikes is located at the bottom of page 28.

I'd like to thank all our article contributors that make Chain Reaction so fun to read! Please consider becoming a contributor for the next edition.

Michelle Vester
Editor, Chain Reaction





President's Dan Ignosci Message

The past three months have been super busy for our Board members and cycling members.

We hosted the Amtrak Century on September 6 and WOW, that was some endeavor. Many of our members rode toward San Diego or volunteered along the route, both of which were critically important to our successful event. After the ride being on hiatus for six years, the Amtrak Committee met for at least 1.5 hours each week starting in January, trying as much as possible to replicate our epic annual event. I would like to thank each of the Board members for stepping forward to make the event happen. Lastly, I would like to thank our Vice President

Rob Crawford, who spent many, many hours handling an exceptionally large portion of the Amtrak Century event coordination.

Our Board secured several Amtrak Century sponsors that softened the financial blow of putting on an event for more than three hundred cyclists. I would like to ask that each OCW member keep these event sponsors in mind, you can even click the business name to be taken to their website, as you choose to spend your hard-earned dollars.

[Bike Legal Cycling Accident Lawyers](#)
[Hollywood Bike Racks](#)
[Pure Ride Cycles - Lake Forest](#)
[REI Co-Op - Laguna Hills](#)
[BrewHouse Tap Room - San Juan Capistrano](#)
[DAM Injury Attorneys](#)
[Studio Two Black Diamond Printing \(Dori Lewis\) - Irvine](#)
[Extra Storage - San Clemente](#)
[Matt Lancaster - Mobile Bike Mechanic](#)
[Pacific Auto Sales & Leasing - Upland](#)
[Loco Canopies](#)



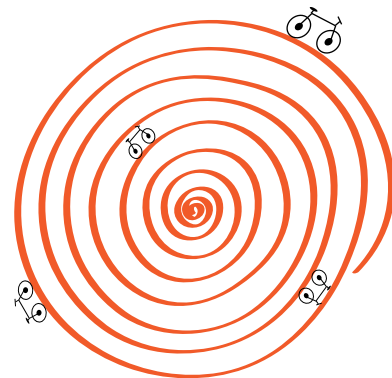
On Saturday, September 20, OCW hosted a member appreciation ride at BrewHouse in San Juan Capistrano. There were about sixty cyclists in attendance, who chose one of three routes and after the ride were offered free tacos, beer/soda, and a frozen dessert. For those that wore their OCW jersey and/or shorts, there was a raffle with several winners of cycling gear or gift cards.



At the Member Appreciation Event, we unveiled a new club kit which will soon be able for our members to purchase. If you look closely, you will see a bicycle chain pattern in the blue body of the jersey. We are working on the final touches, including accessories, as this newsletter is being finalized.

Please be on the lookout for a member email announcing the opening of the Voler store to purchase your new kit. Our hope is that those of you that want to purchase a new kit piece(s) will have them under your trees for Christmas. If you are someone that likes our existing white, blue, and green kit, no worries, as that kit will also be able to be purchased going forward.

Safe riding and as always, feel free to reach out to me regarding any OCW matter at President@OCWwheelmen.org



WORD SEARCH

WORDS CAN BE FOUND FORWARD, BACKWARD AND DIAGONAL

A	Z	W	R	T	G	Y	F	O	L	P	M	Z	F	X
Q	M	W	G	O	U	R	D	S	E	R	T	J	O	V
B	A	T	N	M	N	L	A	U	T	U	M	N	L	M
L	P	R	H	H	E	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	I	L
L	L	V	Y	A	C	O	R	N	P	H	Y	J	A	K
A	E	Q	V	L	N	W	E	R	U	Y	L	U	G	I
B	J	E	K	L	H	K	J	K	M	L	L	P	E	O
T	S	L	M	O	N	B	S	C	P	W	I	N	D	Y
O	C	U	I	W	O	P	M	G	K	N	H	B	V	C
O	A	T	S	E	V	R	A	H	I	E	C	F	G	H
F	R	Y	T	E	R	E	W	Q	N	V	R	N	H	J
Z	F	X	V	N	S	P	I	C	E	C	I	D	E	R
Q	W	H	A	Y	R	I	D	E	E	R	S	N	T	Y
L	K	J	H	P	O	I	S	E	L	P	P	A	G	U
Z	S	D	F	Y	B	U	Q	Z	X	L	K	F	S	U

Acorn	Chilly	Maple	Windy
Pumpkin	Scarf	Thanksgiving	Gourds
Leaves	Sweater	Apples	Foliage
Harvest	Cider	Halloween	Football
Crisp	Spice	Hayride	Autumn



Find the solved puzzle on page 21



Vice President's Rob Crawford Message

It's been a busy Summer this year for the Orange County Wheelmen. As we've talked about before, this year we've been working hard to revitalize the club and improve engagement with our members. Our efforts seem to be paying off as we've seen a significant jump in membership and better participation in group rides all summer.

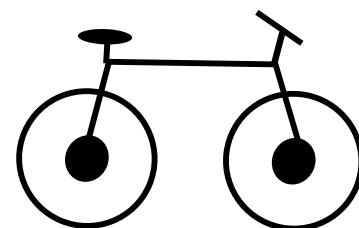
One of the significant steps we agreed to take in this effort was to bring back the Amtrak Century ride this year. As we all know, the Amtrak Century has been the cornerstone of our bike club for decades but after 6 years of not doing the ride, we had a lot of work to do to bring it back. We also had to recognize that it wasn't going to be exactly the same as it was in the past. For starters, Amtrak has changed their policies for large group rides and no longer offers a full train charter like we've had in the past. As a result, the ride was going to be smaller. And with fewer riders, the budget became tighter, so we had to downsize the spending. We also had to deal with increased scrutiny on city permits that caused us to have to change the route to align with city restrictions on bicycle event traffic. All told, we ended up having a lot of work to do and there were times along the way when we weren't sure it was all going to come together.

The good news is that the 2025 Amtrak Century ended up being a tremendous success. We were worried about participation, but with the help of Tony Perez, our website ran smoothly and registrations for the ride exceeded our expectations with over 320 riders, more than half of them coming from outside our membership. We were worried about volunteers, but with the help of Terry Kessler, we had over 75 volunteer positions filled almost immediately. We were worried about the route, but with the help of

Larry Locken and Lee Stebbins, we were able to get the route updated and tested to make sure it was ready. We were worried about getting people fed, but with the help of Dan Ignosci we were able to secure donations and build alignment with local restaurants to supply plenty of food and drinks. When it was all said and done, we were able to breathe a collective sigh of relief that we had actually pulled it off.

We also realize that it wasn't perfect, but our feedback from participants in the ride was overwhelmingly positive. Our post-ride survey indicated that over 95% of our respondents rated their ride experience as favorable, with 3 out of 4 participants giving the highest rating. A lot of the feedback also included several comments from riders who are thrilled to have the Amtrak Century back. In some cases, we had multiple generations of families who have enjoyed the ride together. Our youngest rider was only 12 years old, and she and her family were thrilled to celebrate this as her first century ride. The survey also provided some great feedback on areas we can improve for next year, including better route guidance, smoother train boarding procedure, better finish area logistics, and some additional choices on nutrition. We will take all of this into account as we start to outline our plans for next year.

For now, it feels good to have the club rolling with some momentum and we can all look forward to carrying this forward through the rest of the year.



Amtrak Century





Remembering The Ride Around The Bear

By Greg Hayman

It was a unique experience for me to do the Ride Around the Bear in June of 1995. I had never done a ride like that before, and I may not have ever done that ride or any other century if it hadn't been for a riding partner I had in 1994 and 1995. We both lived in Grand Terrace and happened to bump into each other while riding back from Redlands and Loma Linda. We rode at about the same pace, and he invited me to do some longer rides together, starting with a 56-mile out to Beaumont (and Banning?) via Gilman Springs Road and Jack Rabbit Canyon Road. That Summer of '94 we did a ride that remains the longest one I ever rode, though not the hardest. That would be the Ride Around the Bear of '95. On a Sunday in June or July of

'94 we rode from my house in Grand Terrace to Huntington Beach, eating a late breakfast at a restaurant there before returning home to complete the 126-mile ride. We left at 6 am and were back at my house at 3:45. Only 1000 feet of climb involved (in both directions?).

My riding partner talked me into doing the Ride Around the Bear in 1995. Telling me it was one of the 10 most difficult centuries in the US at the time. I rode my Nishiki Prestige on that ride, originally a 12-speed that had been converted by an old high school friend to an 18-speed with an added climbing chainring. For that initial Ride Around the Bear I was wearing low-topped tennis or aged running shoes with my pedals that had metal toe clips. Between that ride and the Ride of 1996, my

riding partner gave me some used Looz cleats and I started riding with cleats from then on. On that first 1995 ride, I got a flat about 1/3 mile from the initial rest stop. I walked the bike to that stop about a mile past the 4000-foot sign and replaced my tube there before continuing on. It was kind of a dramatic day for me.

I went on to do the Ride Around the Bear 10 years in a row from 1995 through 2004. Rode it again in 2006, 2008, 2012, 2013 and 2016. The only ride I did not finish was 2006, when I had my first and last serious hamstring cramp on a bicycle about 1/4 mile after the Snow Valley rest stop. I worked out the hamstring cramp and stopped briefly at Lakeview Point, where you get that first view of Big Bear Lake, which from that point looks like a little baby bathtub. I decided to turn around, thinking the hamstring could cramp up again on the way up to Onyx Summit. I had plans to see German friends in Chino who had just flown here from Germany for a dinner/birthday party late that afternoon. I probably would have been able to finish the ride, but I chickened out on that one.

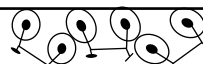
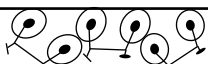


My worst ride ever? Either the first ride where I had to walk the bike to the first rest stop. Or maybe my last ride in 2016. That one included a saddle time of around 8 hours and 37 minutes. My best ride of Around the Bear? That would be the 2003 ride we did out of Texonia Park. That saddle time was 7 hours and 20 minutes. I had just bought my last bike the previous month, a Specialized Allez Sport, a 27-speed bike, my first aluminum bike with a carbon seat-post and carbon front forks.

I rode that 27-speed bike through 2013, which included my next-to-last Ride Around the Bear. In January of 2014 I got my first all composite-carbon bike, a 20-speed Giant Defy that I've put more miles on than on any other of my previous bikes. I rode it for the 2016 Ride Around the Bear and did a couple of Spring Metrics from Yorba Linda Park, though I haven't done any organized rides since the Spring of 2019 Metric, if I remember correctly.

Once the pandemic was proclaimed, I decided to ride closer to home. After riding to Redlands and climbing up to Sunset for a decade or two, I developed local routes that didn't go further away from home than the campus of UC Riverside, where I got my M.A. in German in the late '80s. That year of the pandemic I decided to stop working as a part-time adjunct German instructor at the University of Redlands. The classroom I taught in my last 3 years there faced University Avenue and Sylvan Park, where we all started many of those Rides Around the Bear. My gym in Loma Linda closed for 13 months and I decided to ride my bike a lot more, and I accumulated 23,009 miles between mid-May of 2020 and Mother's Day this year. The last couple of years my rides have averaged 17-20 miles, though I do a few rides between 20 and 25 miles from time to time.

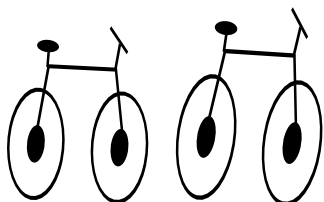
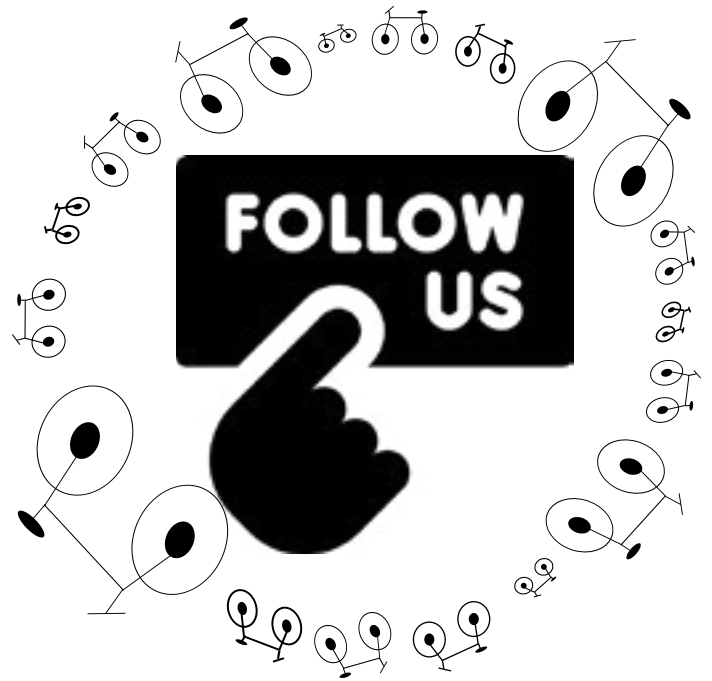
In summary, I believe all those Ride Around the Bear rides inspired me to continue cycling, something I've done since the late '70s, when I was in my mid-20s. I guess we've all aged a little bit since those days, but cycling has remained a passion for many of us. Lastly, I would like to thank all those volunteers who made the Ride Around the Bear a real possibility. It was a very smooth and welcoming operation. You guys made



the support of the ride possible and enhanced the experience for everybody. That fresh vegetable soup at Onyx Summit was a summit experience!

OCW is an elite group for me! Keep on keeping on, and maybe I'll get my butt out there on a longer ride one of these days.

Yours in a cycling way -
G.D Hayman





Hey OCW Members!

We all know cycling builds endurance and cardio strength – but without targeted strength training, many riders hit a plateau or battle those nagging aches and pains (hello, hip flexors and low back!).

That's why I've designed a brand-new **6-Week Strength and Mobility Training Program for Cyclists** – called **Fit to Fast**. It's built to help you:

Boost pedal power by strengthening your glutes and core

Climb with confidence (no more burning quads holding you back)

Prevent injuries with mobility and stability routines

Finish rides stronger without adding more miles to your training

This program is designed with cyclists in mind – just **two strength sessions per week (under 45 minutes)**, plus short mobility routines you can fit in around your rides.

I'm currently inviting a small group of cyclists to **beta test the program**. That means you'll be among the very first to try it, and your feedback will help me fine-tune it for maximum results.

Interested?

Send an email to michele@mfitnessforlife.com with the subject Beta Test or text me at 610.308.0189 to reserve your spot. Spaces are limited, so don't wait! I'm accepting 5 beta testers. I am beta testing this program for \$47 to cover the fee for each person on my app. In the future the fee will be \$197 and will include nutrition for cyclists.

Let's get **Fit to Fast** – because stronger riders ride for longer...years.

See you on the road,
Michele

Michele Meinville
CPT, Certified Nutrition Coach
MFitness for Life

Voxer:coachmichelemfitness
FB Michele Meinville
IG @coachmichelemfitness



KEVIN AND XIMENA'S BIKE TOUR UPDATE

KATY TRAIL AND ROUTE 66

We're just outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma having covered almost 550 miles. Thankfully the weather has been pretty good. We did take a day off in Sedalia, Missouri due to heavy rain, but temperatures have generally been in the high 80s.

We really enjoyed riding the 240-mile KATY Trail. The lush canopy of trees that covered most of the trail helped keep the temperatures comfortable. The quaint small towns were a treat to stay in.

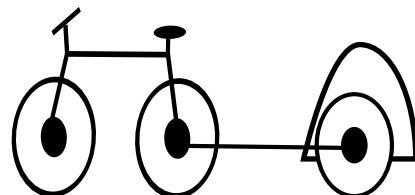
After leaving the trail we rode 130 miles through quiet and scenic backcountry roads with very few resources. Once we got to Joplin, Missouri we started following Route 66. We have already seen a lot of cool memorabilia, old shops and restaurants, and historic places.

The people we have met along the way have been a huge highlight. There are so many kind and caring folks in this country.

We still have about 1,700 miles to go until we reach home. We are looking forward to more iconic stops along the way.

Until next time...

Kevin and Ximena







By Peter Gerrard

It's the final stage and swan song of the Tour of California, an ambitious pro-level bike race that lasted for 14 editions. I've brought a guest, my friend James, to share a VIP experience offered by one of my bike shop's cycling industry suppliers. We're in Pasadena, at the Rose Bowl, the San Gabriel Mountains looming to the East.

The race is being shown on big screens throughout the grounds surrounding the stadium. We hear it's "Gruppo Compatto" on the road leading into the finish: Euro jargon telling us the riders who'd escaped miles ago in Simi Valley, with the slim hope they'd break away until the finish line, had been swept up by the peloton. "Peloton" refers to the main cadre of racers: it has nothing to do with the indoor cycling trainer.

The PA announcer tells everyone that the peloton is within sight of the day's final climb and will shortly be blazing around an oval circuit around the Rose Bowl. Not once, but five

times, jostling with each other, ten or more abreast. If you manage to squeeze into a spot right on the course barrier you'll hear a murmur of derailleurs and chains being strained to the max before the racers come into view, the sound becomes the roar of jets that envelops and washes over you and just as suddenly they're past, leaving a momentary vacuum of silence and a piece of candy wrapper floating in the slipstream or a lone paper cup rolling in a helpless circle.

The sprinters with any chance at the win will accelerate beyond 40 miles per hour. The victory is often from the rider who's able to thrust his bike forward at the perfect time to cross the line by the width of a front tire. And stay upright.

James and I take the announcer's cue and head over to our VIP tent.

My interest in all the “normal” sports started to wane when American cyclists started winning the iconic European events known as “Grand Tours,” not mere races. The Tour de France, Giro d-Italia, and Vuelta a España last for three weeks, and there’s endless drama, strategizing, and a dash of luck and misfortune that every one of the 180 or more riders might encounter. It borders on the heroic and insane, often in tandem.

By happenstance I saw the Tour de France in person. I was in Europe with my friend Dave, a not very original post-high school graduation destination but it seemed like the perfect, parent-free adventure. I don’t know why we took a train to Tours. We flirted with the Tourist Office agent who’d helped us find a hotel and succumbed to our light badgering and, even though she wasn’t supposed to, directed us to a gourmet restaurant for dinner. We ate strange things.

In the morning, we went for coffee and croissants at the bakery next to our hotel. The town had been magically transformed: every lamp post, every shop, had bright yellow signs and banners that brought life and a contagious energy to what the day before had been a sea of grey. People were handing out flyers to everyone on the sidewalks and streets, excitedly shouting, “Le Tour e’st ici! Le Tour e’st ici!”

I knew it translated to “The Tour is here,” but neither Dave nor I understood what it meant. We enjoyed our breakfast from one of the tables fronting the bakery and watched. A block down, a yellow banner stretched from the top of lamp posts transecting the cobbled street, a matching yellow stripe on the pavement below.

A cherry-red convertible Citroen lumbered up the road, stopping just past the banner. “Le Tour” was painted on the hood in yellow. Behind the driver, a man holding a bullhorn and yellow flag stood and turned around, drumming the seat’s top almost impatiently. Maybe he was just excited.

The sidewalks were packed. Then people on

bikes started ambling up to the banner. Racers. They were all in colorful team jerseys, except for the rider in the center of the first row who sported a bright yellow one.

The crowd quieted as “La Marseillaise” sounded. Before the last notes faded the cheering resumed, sweeping them aside. The scene became even more raucous. Now the man in the car began a countdown and waved his flag at “Un!”

The car started rolling slowly, and the racers matched the pace.

It was a parade. And then they were gone.

I began to take it seriously when we moved from Mammoth to Irvine. We found that the newer communities in Orange County were designed by city planners who’d been educated about cycling’s importance to the transportation infrastructure.

Part of my passion came from watching bike racing. I’d lined up to compete exactly once. Any illusions I had about my possibilities were dashed quickly: at my first race I was so far behind my fellow competitors that a spectator called out, “Hey! It’s a race!”

I’m also a bit of a tech weenie, and bikes are a technology I understand. And I always manage to afford any bit of performance improvement offered by the seductive call of the latest components.

Then Americans started doing well in Europe. Television coverage expanded every year, eventually offering the race live. I was hooked. What was the history of Le Tour? I dove into finding out and quickly found one rider who stood out. A Belgian, Eddy Merckx. He won the Tour five times, and often all the Tour’s secondary competitions aside from the winner’s Yellow Jersey. He even had a sinister but grudgingly well-earned nickname. The Cannibal.

I thought about my one time seeing the Tour in person. I researched that year's race. Sure enough, Merckx was the rider in yellow leading out the stage start. I wished I'd known what I was seeing.

Now, in Pasadena, I realize the attention of us VIPs has been drawn away from the race and to the booth's entrance. Riders who'd been part of a charity fundraiser that started at the L.A. Coliseum are arriving, sweaty, happy, and a bit tired. Except for one. He's complaining about the prototype drivetrain he'd been asked to use, and he has everyone's attention. He's a big guy, almost larger than life. It's Eddy Merckx.

I don't gravitate to celebrities as I usually don't think I have anything interesting to say to them. But this situation is different.

I stride right up to Eddy and say, "This is the

second time we've met." He has no idea what I'm talking about.

"In France," I continue, "1970. Stage 22 of the Tour de France. In the town of Tours. I was at the start line. You were in Yellow."

Merckx pauses. Is he lost in a memory?

Eddy looks at me, then past me, and calls out over my shoulder to someone I can't see, "Where's the food?"

And he brushes past me as if I wasn't there, or maybe it's just his habit of letting nothing get in the way of what he wants.

I'm aware the announcer is yelling it's the last lap.

James and I work our way outside to the VIP booth's waist-high barrier fence along the finishing straight. We hear the peloton approaching. The view is spectacular.



JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP



CLICK HERE

VISIT THE **OCW** STORE!



[HTTPS://PEDALINDUSTRIES.COM/COLLECTIONS/OCW-ORANGE-COUNTY-WHEELMEN-STORE](https://pedalindustries.com/collections/ocw-orange-county-wheelmen-store)

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

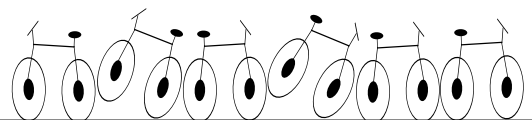
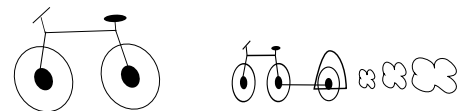


Click Here

Find all the bikes!

There are SEVERAL "stick figure" bikes, including the ones below, all throughout this issue. Can you find them?

The answer is on the bottom of page 28





Mountain Bike Dude

By Alan Vester

**Mountain and Gravel
Bike Riding
Geared Toward
the 60+ Rider**

A Better Solution to Presta Valves

Hello OCW mountain bike riders. I maintain four mountain bikes, two pedal-assist and two non-pedal assist acoustic mountain bikes. All four bikes run a tubeless tire setup. I have my pre-flight inspection that I perform before every ride including checking and adjusting the tire air pressure. I can't tell you how many times I have set the air pressure on a tire only to find it has lost air 30 minutes later. The root cause is almost always a poorly seated presta valve core stem that leaks due to tubeless sealant causing the valve core not to seat properly.

Keep in mind, presta valves were never designed for tubeless tires using sealant. Presta valves are very small and easily plug up with sealant as it ages. Anyone who runs sealant in their tires, knows this firsthand that whenever it's time to check and add new sealant how annoying it is to remove the hardened sealant from the tire. I set out to find a solution to this problem because it was driving me nuts dealing with constantly replacing presta valve core stems.

The solution I came up with is a product called "Fillmore Valves" produced by Reserve Wheels, a high-end carbon wheel company. What makes these valves different you may ask? Well, the valves do not have a removable valve core. The design is quite simple. Air pressure in the tire forces the valve stem closed. It's like a one-way valve, when you put in air with a pump or a compressor, it will allow the air to fill the tire.

The air pressure in the tire forces the valve stem closed and it will not leak.

I installed 4 sets of Fillmore valves on all four of our bikes and I have not had any problems with them leaking. The valves just flat out work and it's one less thing I have to worry about when it comes to maintenance. I used to constantly think about this problem when we would go for a ride. Load the bikes up on my Ford Explorer, set the tire pressure to the exact psi and hope it would hold by the time we arrived to start our ride. I used to carry spare valve cores and a special wrench just in case I had to change one out before the ride. I had to do this more times than I care to think about. Since installing the Fillmore valves, I never worry anymore.

There are two slight drawbacks to the Fillmore valves. It is difficult to release a small amount of air when depressing the stem. There are riders who like to release one or two pounds of air pressure during a ride to adjust to the terrain. It is difficult to release a small amount of air pressure with the Fillmore Valves, but personally, I never release air from a tire during a ride. I always stay with the psi I set before the ride. I don't consider this a negative, because I don't mess with air pressure during a ride. The other small negative is you can not install tire sealant through a Fillmore Valve. I don't consider this an issue because I never fill a tire with sealant through the valve stem, I always break the bead of the tire with the bike on a bike work-stand,

and I can visually inspect how much sealant is in the tire and judge how much sealant to add.

I am not sponsored by Reserve Wheels or Fillmore Valves, and I purchased the Fillmore Valves with my own money. I give this product 5 stars. I like everything about Fillmore Valves and it's one more thing to make mountain biking more enjoyable.

Fillmore Valves: <https://reservewheels.com/products/fillmore-tubeless-valves>

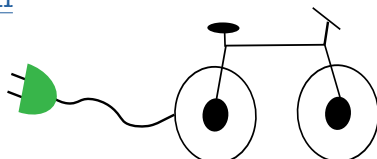


Rules of the Trail

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

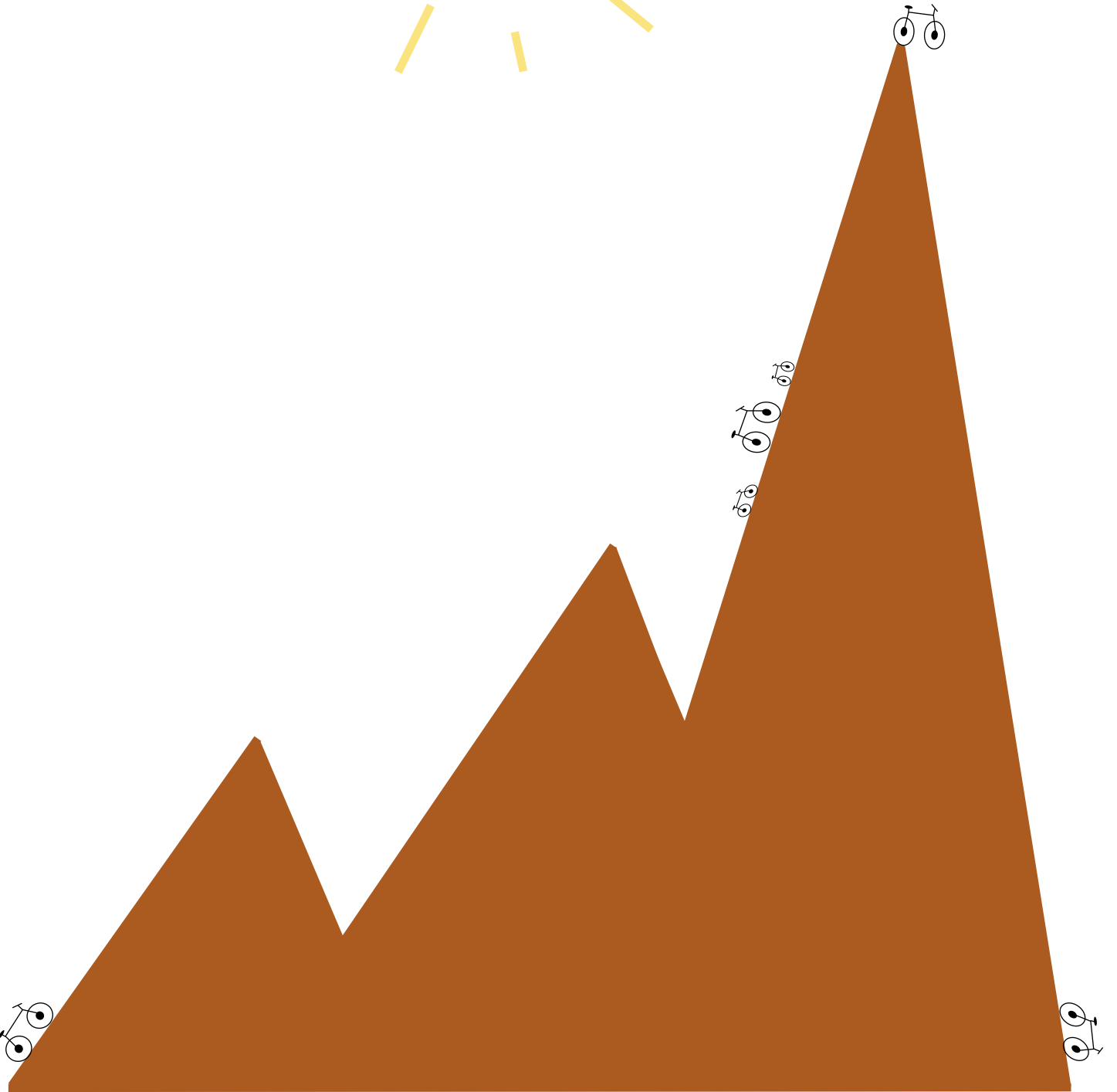
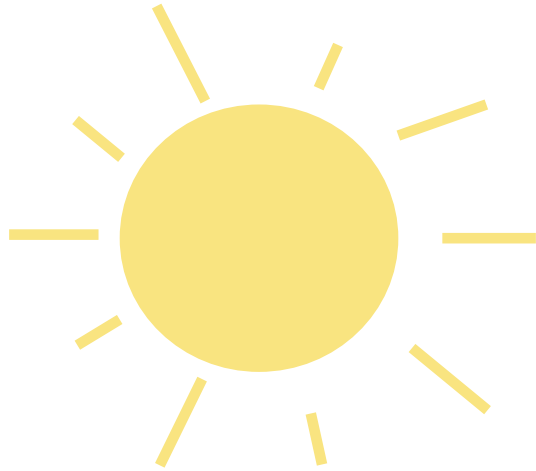
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THE MOST DIVERSE BICYCLE CLUB IN ORANGE COUNTY



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WITH US!**



WORD SEARCH

SOLVED

A	Z	W	R	T	G	Y	F	O	L	P	M	Z	F	X
Q	M	W	G	O	U	R	D	S	E	R	T	J	O	V
B	A	T	N	M	N	L	A	U	T	U	M	N	L	M
L	P	R	H	H	E	S	W	E	A	T	E	R	I	L
L	L	V	Y	A	C	O	R	N	P	H	Y	J	A	K
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B	J	E	K	L	H	K	J	K	M	L	L	P	E	O
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Z	F	X	V	N	S	P	I	C	E	C	I	D	E	R
Q	W	H	A	Y	R	I	D	E	E	R	S	N	T	Y
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Z	S	D	F	Y	B	U	Q	Z	X	L	K	F	S	U



Watching one of the mountain stages in the Tour de France, perhaps you have wondered what it would be like to climb those spectacular hills on narrow roads with little traffic? The good news is you don't have to travel to France - or ride as fast as Tadej Pogacar - to find out. California has its own majestic mountains and a ride to match. I know: I completed such a ride this summer.

The "Tour of the California Alps" is a well-organized ride in the gorgeous country 30 miles south of Lake Tahoe. With 14,500 feet of climbing over a little more than 100 miles, this makes for a long but satisfying day. If you are so inclined, you can look up the website and register for the official ride, held annually in July. Or you can do your own version of the ride, which is what I did and recommend.

First, a few more details on the ride itself: departing from the tiny town of Markleeville at an elevation of 5500 feet, the ride first ascends Monitor Pass (elevation 8314), descends to 5000 feet on the far side ... then turns around to climb Monitor once more. The climbs are long (9 to 10 miles) but the grade is not severe; the descents are long and delightfully fast. The ride next climbs Ebbets Pass (8730), dips down some, then goes over Pacific Grade Summit (8050). After a gentle descent, you turn around and reascend the same passes, ending with 18 miles of descent to the starting point. It's a day of going up or going down with very little flat.

The roads over the passes are very lightly travelled - we passed perhaps 75 cars all day long. In fact, for half the route, the roads are so narrow that the cars are obliged to go quite slowly. On the descents, we usually went faster than the cars!

Now, why complete this ride on your own rather than the official version? The major reason is temperature: if it's hot on the official ride, this ride truly earns its nickname of "the Death Ride." On the ride this year, the temperature soared into the low 90s. That would have destroyed me. By contrast, we picked a day when the high was about 80 degrees - much more suitable.

Doing the ride on your own also means starting when you want. We left at 4 AM, which meant we had the roads to ourselves for two hours (one car passed us). Finally, you can easily get accommodations right in Markleeville when you pick your own date - which is emphatically not true for the official ride.

The downside of doing it on your own is that you have to slightly alter the route to provide opportunities to refuel. After climbing Monitor Pass, we added 8 miles to reach a general store located at the Topaz Lake Casino (sounds odd, but this ensured it was open at 6 AM!) We left food and water at the halfway point before the ride. And we added a few miles after Pacific Summit Grade to reach the very nice

Lake Alpine resort with a fine store. Three stops worked well for us.

As for suggestions, I have a few. Most obvious, make sure you have the gears to do this. I have a compact front chain ring and a 32-tooth gear in my cassette; I would have gladly had a "toothier" gear in the back! Drink as much water as you can: I downed a gallon over the day and still felt parched. Most importantly, train for the ride. I started six months in advance and completed seven century rides before doing this ride, including one ride of 105 miles and 12,000 feet of climbing. Look for long, long hills (like the climb to Mount Baldy). Speed is less important than endurance.

You can find a number of enticing videos about this ride online. You can also look at this montage of shots from our ride, which my riding partner took with his Google-glasses: <https://youtu.be/ZyqMCPsBnyM?si=lsUCX-YWzeVsZs88>

The one note I add is that on the long downhill sections captured here, we were often going 30 to 35 mph for long, long stretches - exhilarating.

At the end of this, I realized one thing about those guys riding the Tour de France: they are in ridiculously great shape. They would have done this ride in less than half the time it took me - and ridden again the next day!





The Hungry EyeList



Baked Cinnamon-Apple Butter French Toast

By [Half Baked Harvest](#)

INGREDIENTS

1 loaf challah bread sliced into 1 1/2 inch thick slices
1 cup apple butter
6 large eggs
2 cups whole milk
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
6 tablespoons salted butter, melted and browned
2 honeycrisp apples, thinly sliced
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons cinnamon

MAPLE WHIPPED CREAM

1/2 cup maple syrup
2 cinnamon sticks
2 tablespoons bourbon (or 1 tablespoon vanilla)
1 cup heavy whipping cream
sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Butter a 9×13-inch baking dish.
2. Slice each piece of bread in half, cutting almost all the way through, but leaving a 1/4 inch at the bottom. Spread the inside of the bread with apple butter (see photo above).
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, vanilla, butter, and salt. Submerge each piece of bread into the egg mix, allowing the bread to sit for at least a minute to soak up the eggs. Arrange the bread in the baking dish.
4. Toss the apples with brown sugar and cinnamon. Stuff the apples in between each piece of bread. Pour the remaining egg mix over the dish. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes or overnight.
5. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 375° F. Cover with foil and bake for 25 minutes. Remove the foil and bake another 20-25 minutes, until golden.
6. Top with maple cream and cinnamon syrup. Enjoy!

CINNAMON SYRUP AND MAPLE CREAM

1. In a pot combine the maple and cinnamon. Simmer/boil for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the bourbon or vanilla.
2. Using an electric mixer, whip the cream and 1-2 tablespoons cinnamon syrup + sea salt until soft peaks form.

2025 OCW MEMBER CHALLENGE

OCW Member Challenge Update

The OCW Member Challenge has now been running since February and all active members have been accumulating points based upon their riding statistics and participating in activities to support the club. This includes participating or leading club rides, participating or volunteering at the Winter Metric, by referring new members to the club, or by contributing to the Spring edition of Chain Reaction. For full details of how you can score points, refer to the announcement on the OCW website.

Some quick Challenge statistics:

More than half of our members have scored at least one Challenge point. Around a third of our members participate in an official club ride each month. Members have cumulatively ridden over 90,000 miles, climbing almost 3.8 million feet - that's the equivalent of riding around the world 3.7 times while climbing Mount Everest 140 times!

14 members have already achieved the Challenge annual miles target of 2025 miles, with several others right behind.

Two-thirds of active members use Strava to log their rides, but only about half of our members have connected to the OCW Club in Strava (<https://www.strava.com/clubs/orange-county-wheelmen>)

After crunching all of the numbers, the leading members in the 2025 OCW Member Challenge through April are (drum roll please...)

Rob Crawford 59 points	Art Pressel 49 points	Bob Aguilar 44 points
Dan Ignosci 59 points	Hai Huynh 48 points	Mark Denny 44 points
Miguel Perea 59 points	Larry Fletcher 47 pts	Mark Dobbs 44 points
Marc Maher 49 points	Larry Locken 47 pts	Max Hayter 44 points

For your riding statistics to be counted for the Challenge, your rides must be uploaded to Strava and your profile set to public so that the administrator can view your data (miles ridden, feet climbed). We respect the right to privacy of all our members and participation in the Challenge is voluntary.





Craggy Peaks, Condors and Talus Caves Make Up This National Park

By Theresa Nelson

Did you know at the age of 62 you can purchase a senior lifetime US National Parks Pass? In my early growing-up years my father always purchased an annual National Park Pass. As we were a military family, we did a lot of moving around and he wanted to support the National Parks and we had ample opportunity to visit them. Once we settled in Southern California, our access to National Parks was more limited – closest is Joshua Tree.

Once I got married and had a family of my own, we did do some travel to visit National Parks, but not often enough that it was worth the purchase of an annual pass. However, when my husband Steve turned 62 and we retired, it was one of our first purchases. For \$80 you can get your Lifetime Pass which provides entrance (for you and a car of 3 more people) to most National Parks and discounts on many of the National Park amenities and services.

Retirement freedom has allowed us to take more trips and we often seek out close-by National Parks and National Monuments while we are traveling. Before we cycled the Katy Trail in Missouri, we took the opportunity to visit the Gateway Arch. While we were camping in Moab, we rode the easy bike trail to the visitor center for Arches. After riding bikes in Everglades National Park, we drove out the Florida Keys and took a ferry to visit Dry Tortugas. These were just a few of our excursions.

In June we did a trip to the California wine county in Napa and Sonoma with friends and decided it was the perfect time to stop for a few days on the drive home to visit Pinnacles National Park.

Pinnacles National Park is one of the country's newest National Parks. It was established as a National Monument in 1908 and designated as a National Park in 2013 by Barrack Obama. It is a little off the beaten path to drive to and so many people skip it when driving from the northern part of California to the south. It seems like a lot of people in the Bay Area come for weekends but it certainly is a lot less crowded than close-by Yosemite.

The campground in Pinnacles has a seasonal swimming pool, RV and tent sites as well as rentable tent cabins. We were able to simplify our camping excursion by renting a tent cabin which included Adirondack chairs and a picnic table. Sitting out on our little deck in the evening allowed us to view a ridge full of soaring endangered condors that have found a home in the park. Bunnies hopped around the campground plateau and the other animals I saw included fox, deer, quail, bats, raccoons, a cave rat and a coyote.

Pinnacles is considered a dark sky park (rules about exposed light bulbs after sunset) and at night the sky was lit with so many stars

that I forgot how much light pollution our cities have.

We did an early morning hike (to beat the heat) to the Balcony Caves. The caves at Pinnacles are Talus caves which were created by broken and or fallen boulders and rocks as opposed to a cave caused by wind or erosion. The trail was easy and we got great glimpses along the way of the elevated rock formations for which Pinnacles gets its name. The park is also known for great birding and rock climbing.

To document my National Park visits, I have a National Park journal (<https://a.co/d/5w5wNLY>) The journal has a spot for stamping the rubber stamp available from the visitor's center as well as prompts and questions to answer about your visit. I also have a very small Bluetooth printer with stickered printer paper I can print off pictures from my phone to include in the journal.

What National Parks are on your wish to visit list?

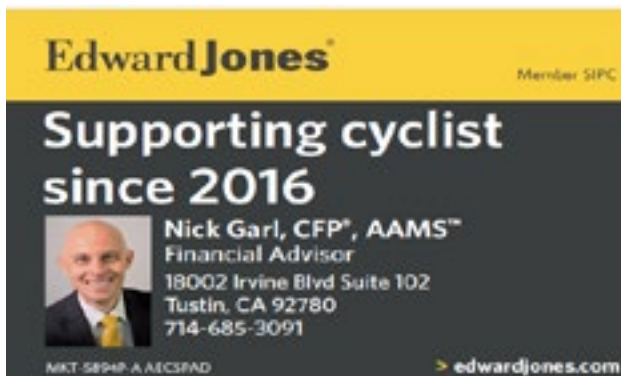


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tony.perez@ocwheelmen.org

We obviously welcome support from Cycling businesses; others may be
subject to approval by the Board



✦ Number of stick figure bikes is 64