



# The Spokin' Word



Newsletter of the Lompoc Valley Bicycle Club

March 2007

## San Diego or Bust

By Gene Pritchett

Spring is the time to make new plans and come up with challenges for the next year. A few years ago Mike Mann talked me into riding my first double century, (don't believe him when he tells you something else), the next year I went for the Triple Crown Finisher jersey by riding three double centuries in a year. (Bruce completed a Triple Crown also!) Last year Dana convinced me that it would be a once in a lifetime achievement to ride coast to coast across the US and we completed that challenge in 26 days of riding. (Don't believe any stories that Dana might tell either). This year I thought it would be really cool to see how far south we could ride in one day. What could we do? 100, 200, maybe even 300 miles? When I looked it up on the computer Topo software it turned out to be 295 miles to San Diego. The plan is to ride south as far as possible then stay overnight and catch the train back the next day. My wonderful wife has agreed to drive down in the truck to bring back the recumbents and all the bikes that can fit. (Then there will be no worries for those who are the train about their bikes). Interestingly, the highest point on the whole route is just south of Lompoc where highway 1 drops down to 101 at Las Cruces. We have several riders who are up for the challenge including me, Mike Mann, Bruce Massey, Dana Manchester, Scott Shaw, possibly Rick Campbell and Brian Rollins, though we want him to complete a century ride first.



For those who are interested in giving this a try, please let me know. We'll open this up the Village DirtBags and see if any of them are up for the challenge.

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## Percent Grade?

*I have decided to include an article in each month's edition outlining some historical fact or other interesting tidbit about cycling. This month we explore "Percent Grade"*

On a recent ride with Dana we were discussing percent grade versus degrees or the angle of the climb. He was on a trip to Hawaii where they flew over "the steepest road in the world" which he recalled was at 45°. I was curious if it was 45° or 45%. Dana didn't realize there is a difference and I thanked him profusely for the great suggestion for an article for the newsletter.

In researching the title of "Steepest Roads in the World" I came across this great article written by Rob Ainsley about Baldwin Street in New Zealand which is listed by the Guinness Book of Records as the Steepest paved Road in the World. The road Dana saw was the steepest non-paved road.

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### Dunedin's learning curve

...Such as the steepest road in the world. In Dunedin New Zealand, Baldwin St looks unremarkable: quarter of a mile of straight suburban side-street, perpendicular to the main south road out of the city. Unfortunately the people planning it were in Britain -- 12,000 miles away -- and their maps weren't quite contoured up to OS standards. That main road ran along the bottom of a steep valley, and the side road, laid faithfully according to the plans, ran straight up a hillside. It resulted in Baldwin St being the steepest paved road in the world.

I was in Dunedin. I had a bike. I couldn't resist it.

Baldwin St is easy to find. Just cycle south from Dunedin and turn right after the Steepest Street gift shop. The vertiginous monster's beige concrete strip rises above you like a take-off ramp. You can cycle the gentle grade of the first quarter or so, and then it simply becomes impossible to pedal. You walk, and curse your hearty kiwi breakfast, which is rising to the top faster than you are. (The annual foot-race here is called the 'Gutbuster' for a reason.) By tilting your camera so that the precipitous road aligns flat with the bottom of the frame, the flat-roofed houses on the way up appear to subside like foundering ships or deconstructionist architecture.



Near the top, a tourist asked me to pretend to cycle, for a photo. With the bike stationary and the brakes full on, I started to slide backwards down the hill to the sound of slipping rubber. I pushed on the pedals, but only succeeded in dislocating the back wheel.



I drank from the water fountain thoughtfully provided at the top, and friendly residents in the well-to-do villa-style houses lent me a spanner to unjam my back wheel. From the top you have the queasy view back down, which gives the appearance of a prestige housing development strung by some freak clerical mixup along either side of a ski-slope.

Baldwin Street's monumental mapping error has given it a gradient of 1 in 2.66, or 38%. Its cycling satisfaction is pretty thin. Riding back down is just as impossible as riding up unless you want your brakes to outflame the Mir splashdown. But it's nice to say you've ridden the world's steepest. Or not.

So what is Percent Grade?

In simple terms it is Rise over Run times 100"

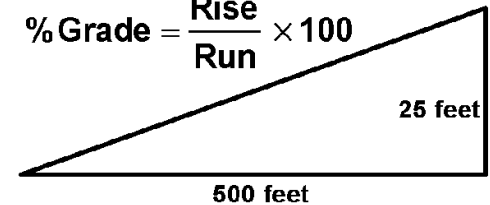
or

$(\text{rise/run}) \times 100 = \text{percent grade}$

Where both the rise and the run must be in the same units - typically feet. So, for a rise of 120 ft over a distance traveled of 0.9 miles, it would be  $(100 * 120) / (0.9 * 5280) = 2.52 \%$

$$\text{Grade} = \frac{\text{Rise}}{\text{Run}}$$

$$\% \text{Grade} = \frac{\text{Rise}}{\text{Run}} \times 100$$



The above formula is absolutely correct. However, for most roads you can estimate (run) by just using the measured distance ridden up the slope because the distance will be only slightly longer than (run).

For example, let's say there's a 15% hill. If you simply use rise/measured distance, you'll get 14.8% or so. If there's a 20% hill, you'll get 19.6%. You'll consistently underestimate the slope, but it's not too far off.

Of course the steeper the hill, the more your estimation will deviate from the correct one, but for anything less than 20%, you can just use rise/measured distance.

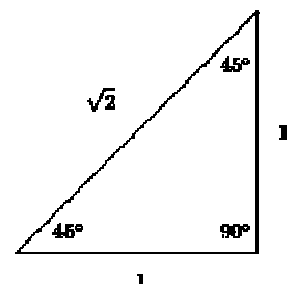
So again we get the question of what is the difference between percent grade and degrees?

Suppose we had a 45 degree slope versus 45%.

To get a 45 degree angle the rise and the run would have to be the same i.e. 100 feet of elevation gain per 100 feet of run. This would be a 100% climb. A 45% slope would be 45 feet of climbing per 100 feet of run.

This still seems a bit confusing, so here is an online calculator to help with figuring percent grade if you know the feet of elevation and distance ridden.

<http://www.csgnetwork.com/inclinedeclinegradecalc.html>



### Frazz Comics

Here are a few of my Favorite Frazz comics to share. There is a great collection of his comics available at Amazon.com

**FRAZZ**

**BY JEF MALLETT**



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### Ride Calendar

- Nojoqui Loop from Lompoc Saturday March 17<sup>th</sup>. Southside Coffee Company at 8:00.

Dana and Gene will lead a loop over to Nojoqui park. We'll head down highway 1 to 101 and climb up to the turnoff for Alisal road past the park. In Solvang we'll return to Lompoc via 246 and Santa Rosa roads. Should be somewhere around 50 miles. We're not planning on a lunch stop. RL Gene

❑ **Los Alamos Loop Sunday March 18, 8:30 am at Flagpole downtown Los Alamos.**

Ray is going to lead us on a beautiful 50 mile loop around Los Alamos. We'll go up Alisos Canyon to Foxen Canyon to Orcutt and return to Los Alamos via Highway 135. Ride leader is Ray Harris

❑ **Arroyo Grande Lunch Saturday March 24th at Southside at 8:00.**

Dana and Gene have found a great sandwich place in the Village of Arroyo Grande. We'll head up from Lompoc over Harris Grade around Santa Maria on the east side to Bull Canyon. After lunch we'll return on highway 1 through Nipomo and Guadalupe with one more time over Harris Grade the easy way. Should be around 95 miles. RL Gene

❑ **We're Crazy for Quackenbush! – Sunday March 25th 8:30 at Starbucks, 8:45 Burton Mesa.**

Scott Shaw wants to lead us over to the Quackenbush café in Los Alamos for breakfast. Harris Grade on the way over and Drum Canyon on the way back. Should be around 45 miles. RL Scott Shaw

❑ **No Foolin' its Mother Hubbards for Breakfast. – Sunday April 1<sup>st</sup>, 8:30 Home Depot.**

Bob wants to lead us into temptation on a day for Fools. Or at least to a great seafood omelet. Over on Santa Rosa road and riders choice on the return leg of 246 or Santa Rosa. Ride leader is Bob Grant

❑ **Thick Coffee at the Coffee Pot in Morro Bay – Sunday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am at Laguna Middle School on Los Osos Valley Road. (8:00 Starbucks for Carpool)**

This is a great easy ride out to Morro Bay over Turri Road for breakfast at the Coffee Pot Restaurant. Usually we return via Cuesta College (just like the Amgen riders). It is around a 40 mile loop. The ride leader position is open.

❑ **Ride for Diabetes – Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup> 9:00 Miguelito School**

Cabrillo High School senior Spencer Reed will be hosting a fund raising ride for Juvenile Diabetes. Entry fee is \$20 and includes a T-shirt and entry for raffle prizes. Spencer can be contacted [spencerreed@hotmail.com](mailto:spencerreed@hotmail.com).

**Standing Club Rides**

- ❑ Wednesday Night Mountain Bike Ride. Meet behind City Hall at the corner of C and Cypress at 6:00pm. Generally an up to 2 hour ride of the hills and dales behind La Purisma Mission and around the village. This time of year lights are a necessity.
- ❑ Friday Morning Mother Hubbards Breakfast Ride meets in the Home Depot Parking lot at 8:30. They generally head out Santa Rosa road and return via 246 after breakfast. Watch out for Bob and the seafood omelet. About 40 miles.
- ❑ Saturday Morning – 8 am Meet at Southside Coffee Company 105 South H street. Easy road ride to Surf as a group and a quicker return to town
- ❑ Sunday Morning Show and Go (Unless pre-empted by a scheduled ride above) – 8am Meet at Southside Coffee Company 105 South H street  
Road or Mountain Bike Ride  
Easy or Epic – you decide

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The next meeting of the Lompoc Valley Bicycle Club is 7pm Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at Baker's Square. Come early if you want to eat dinner. See you there!

Check us out on the web at [www.bikelompoc.com](http://www.bikelompoc.com)

If anyone has ride proposals, stories, articles, comments, jokes, or cartoons they would like to share or bicycle things they would like to sell, please contact me (Gene Pritchett) at 735-7763 or 733-2684 or e-mail at [Dr.Gene@gte.net](mailto:Dr.Gene@gte.net) for entry into next month's newsletter.

