



# The Spokin' Word



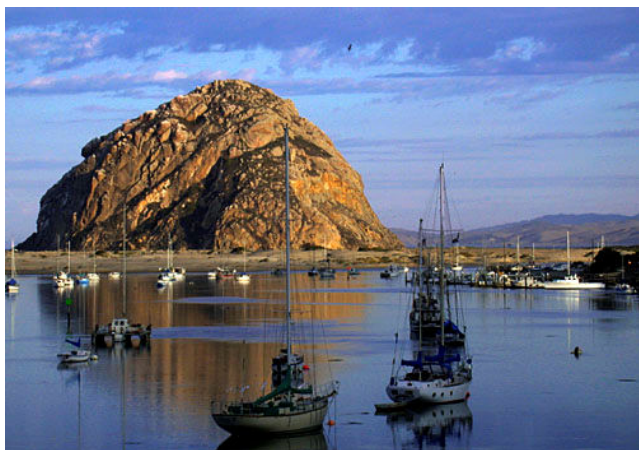
Newsletter of the Lompoc Valley Bicycle Club

September 2006

## Old Creek Canyon Ride

By Bob Geobel

The Sunday July 16<sup>th</sup> morning was warm, bright and blue with no wind as we gathered at Cuesta College in SLO Town. The eleven riders that gathered were Bruce, Gene, Karl and Marylou, Rick and Sheila, James, Chris, Dana, Scott, and me, Bob Geobel. Well, actually ten gathered. Scott had parked somewhere else on the massive expanse of campus parking and ended up chasing us. The rank swelled to eleven when Scott met up with us just the other side of HWY 46.



The weather was in the 70s along the coast and sunny up to the turn on Old Creek Canyon Road. As we went inland and started our gradual climb the temperature increased to 99 degrees as measured at HWY 46. The ride was simply gorgeous and the gradual climb was not that bad. It wasn't until the very end of our climb that we reached a very steep incline. I'm not sure who all made it, but I surrendered at the bottom. When I'm pedaling at 1.9 mph, it's time for this cowboy to get out and push the wagon. At least I can maintain over 3 mph while walking. Several others resorted to the

same tactic due to the heat and the lack of air.

The descent was a rough, swift, white knuckle ride with the thought of Linn's Pies at the end.

While along the creek Dana and I saw a wild turkey with her chicks crossing the road. Then Bruce rode up, and we were confused.

Linn's pies were great. I'm not sure if it was the pies or the chance to sit in the shade? But it was difficult for almost everyone to get back on the saddle. We left the canyon and were soon greeted with cool ocean breezes as we headed for the coast. A few miles south on HWY 1 we passed through Harmony and had a great downhill run towards Cayucos. We stopped in Cayucos by the dolphin statues where some of us got Chile and regular hot dogs and the rest of us rested. It was cool there because we were under the marine layer and jackets and layers were added. But the place was hopping and there were plenty of people on the beach, on the pier, in the streets and in the water!

Off to Morro Bay and all points south, well actually Cuesta College. We were soon in the sunshine again just past Morro Bay. We had the wind at our back and it was an easy finish back to the campus parking lot.

It was a great ride. Together we logged 71.5 miles on that trip with no flats, no falls, and no citations. A ride for the record books and definitely one worth riding again!

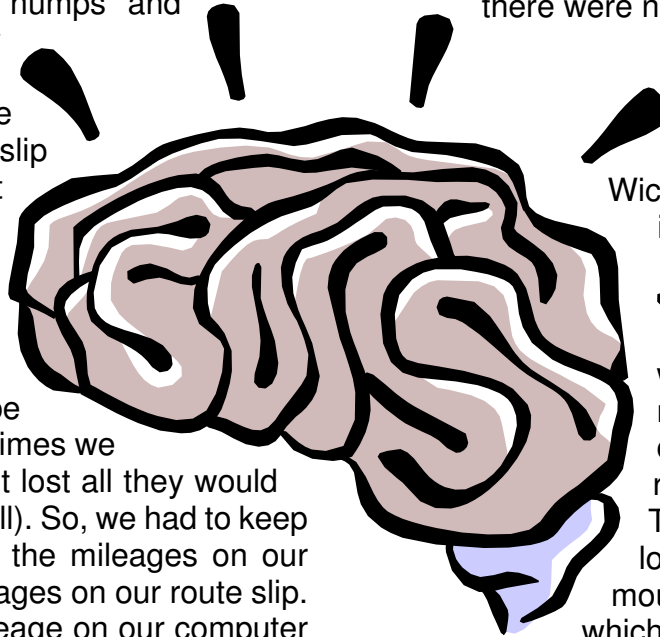
## The Musings of an Incredibly Bored Man

By Gene Pritchett

Wow, what did you think about? That was one of the questions Dana and I were frequently asked after our Cross Country Cycling Adventure. An average day had us on the road for 115 miles and 10 hours. Well, there is not an easy answer to this question. Physically the trip was tough, but I found the mental aspect of the trip to be the most difficult. When we ride locally we know all the roads like the back of our hands. We know most of the bumps, humps and holes that we are likely to encounter along the way. On the trip we were following a route slip on roads that we didn't know. Some of these roads through the desert were rather remote, the consequences for missing a turn could be catastrophic. (several times we remarked that if we got lost all they would find was a dried up shell). So, we had to keep a rather close eye on the mileages on our computer and the mileages on our route slip. And of course, the mileage on our computer didn't necessarily match the route slip. The distances covered each day prevented the organizers from being able to paint arrows on the road ahead of time. Keeping track of where we were required paying attention. (On a humorous note, I have a clip to hold the route slip on my handlebars. Other riders were continuously digging their slips out of their pockets to find out where they were, so they just started following me through the tricky turn parts of the route. It was really tempting to lead them the wrong way just to

be ornery).

Another aspect preventing undo boredom was having to ride among other riders of unknown abilities or with poor pack riding skills. We have all had the experience of riding behind someone who unexpectedly swerves or brakes almost causing a crash. Until we really got to know the other riders, we had to ride defensively. On several days we were pushing a rather nasty headwind and we had to ride together to maintain a somewhat reasonable average speed. As most of you know, when you are riding in a tight peline you can never really relax, though thankfully there were no riding instances.



Not so say there wasn't any boredom. The day from Blythe to Wickenburg comes immediately to mind. The day was 116 miles with 3470 feet of climbing which doesn't sound like much except that the climbs were in the 1-2% range for hours on end. There also wasn't much to look at except the distant mountains and the horizon which never really seemed to get any closer. Oh, and we were pushing a headwind most of the day. In thinking back about that day, I can't think of what I was thinking except, "As soon as we get to the top, we'll take a break". An hour later I was still thinking, "as soon as we get to the top, we'll take a break". Dana finally just picked a distant milepost and said, "Okay, when we get to milepost 80, we'll take a break". It still wasn't the top of the climb. I never really acknowledged thinking about anything in

particular, just, “When is this ever going to end...”.

Then about the time you start to relax and let your mind wander there is the distinct feeling that something isn't right. You know that squishy squirmy feeling that a tire is low, or the slight vibration of a derailleur that is out of adjustment, or “what was that creak I just heard”. We never really could let our minds loose to wander the beautiful countryside.

So, to answer the question, “What did you think about?”, the answer is everything.... and...nothing but when will it end.

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## THE MYSTERY OF BALANCE

*By Scott D. Shaw*

Have you ever wondered what happens in the brain that allows one to progress from four wheels to two? What goes on in the multitude of neurons between one's ears that lets one shed those extra wheels and defy gravity by remaining in an upright position.

It was a long, long time ago when that critical transition occurred for me. I can still remember that bike with its white fenders and the color of the frame somewhere between candy apple red and purple. I must have been in the second grade because I can still picture the barren front yard of our new house. And I can still see the faces of the neighborhood kids that lived in this new world called suburbia. What a troop we were tooling around the block on our flashy bikes with gleaming chrome rims and shiny handle bars with streamers sprouting from the grips.

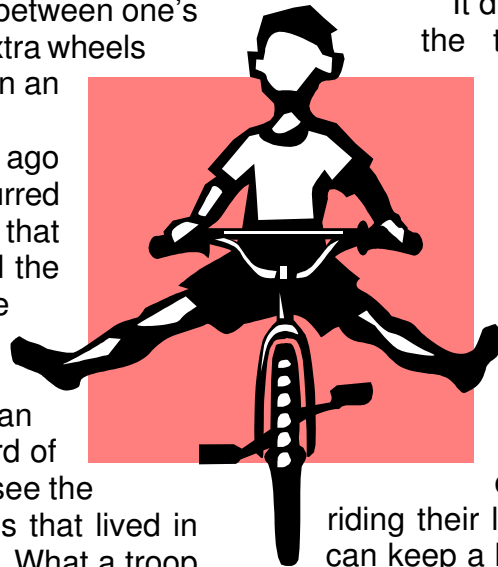
Then one by one someone would feel the urge and go through a metamorphous,

shed the training wheels and progress to the wobbly stage of riding a few feet, falling over, ride a little farther, fall, pick themselves up, brush off the dirt, maybe stanch the flow of blood and tentatively peddle off again. As the number of Band Aids multiplied so would their confidence grow and soon they would fly along the sidewalks on wings of rubber and air.

And then I felt the urge. I don't know if my evolutionary clock advanced or peer pressure mounted but it was my turn. I don't remember how many attempts I made but I do remember the firm press of my father's hand upon my back speeding me down the sidewalk to reach some terminal velocity that overpowered the pull of gravity. I remember the exhilaration of freedom that overpowered the sense of panic, a lightness of form, whisking through the air, light as a feather until gravity reexerted its pull and brought me crashing to earth.

It didn't matter. I had been free of the training wheels for a brief instant. I remember making repeated attempts, and by the end of the day, I was soaring around the block like I'd been doing it my entire life. It had become so natural that I couldn't remember not riding without training wheels.

Now it has come full circle as my boys are reaching that stage in their development. They've been riding their little bikes for a year now and can keep a brisk pace. It's quite a sight to see them riding the five blocks to preschool and home again. Feet pumping like little pistons, gapped tooth smiles, elbows bent outward, Douglas finding all the bumps in the sidewalk, Nathan avoiding them.



Douglas is the braver of the two and the first to want to ride a two wheeler. A neighbor had told me that he had taught his children to ride by letting them coast down a grassy slope at the high school. So we trudged over there several weeks ago for the first attempt. We got there and I soon realized we weren't even close to that stage. Instead I let Douglas balance on the bike while I grabbed his shirt and walked along with him so he could begin to get the feel of balance. This seemed like a good approach to slowly let his mind and inner balance mechanism become comfortable with the idea. We've been doing this now for several weeks. Each session he becomes steadier and my grip on his shirt loosens.

The big event arrived several weeks ago. On a Tuesday night Douglas wanted to ride around the block. So with me



clinging to his shirt we circled the block. The following night I had to support him for half the distance. After dinner he wanted to go for another lap and he made it around the block with little assistance from me.

Since then he has become a full-fledged two wheeler. He can navigate downhill corners, around obstacles and over bumps. And he did it all without a scrape.

So far Nathan wants none of that and is more than happy to ride with the help of his

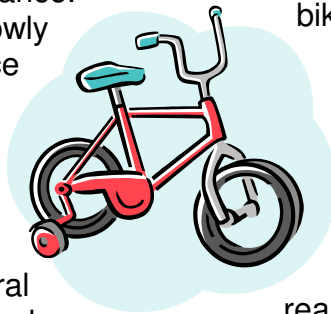
training wheels. His day will come.

## Why I ride a single speed.

*By Brian Rollins*

I quite often get asked "why do you ride a single speed?" I now tell them it makes me a more efficient peddler and a faster hill climber. The usual response is "how so?" First I tell them that single speed bikes are typically in the 24lb and below weight range. A lighter bike allows me not to have to lug the extra weight of say a 30lb geared bike up the hills. The single speed that I ride is non-suspended so every pedal stroke translates directly to my rear wheel and not to compressing suspension. Since I have neither a front or rear derailleur and am unable to shift when pedaling up hill my rear wheel covers more distance with every revolution of the pedals than if I were to shift to a larger rear cog.

Then I explain that riding with one gear forces me to adapt my riding style to the physical stresses of the unforgiving and ever changing terrain of off road riding. It's almost impossible to pick one gear ratio that is good for all riding terrain but with a little bit of trial and error one can find a reasonable compromise. I have found a manageable gear ratio that I can reasonably spin on the flats and climb hills albeit standing at times. Standing while climbing isn't the most energy efficient but it does build quad strength and some might say character as well. I think that since I have switched to a single speed my body has undergone some physiological changes. I have noticed that now that I have been exclusively riding a single speed I can maintain a much faster cadence than I could on my geared bicycle. I am also able to stave off going anaerobic much longer when climbing now.

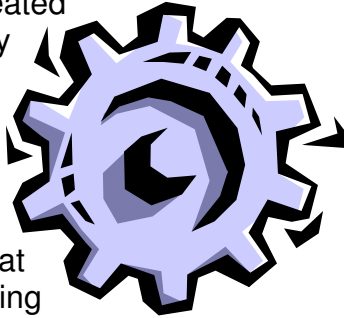


For me riding a single speed is a form of interval training in that when I am pedaling on the flats or on a slight downhill I will spin like mad for a few seconds at a time in order to engage the freewheel mechanism and turn the rear wheel. Short repeated pedaling efforts raises my heart rate and my leg muscles are allowed time to recover when coasting in-between.

Hill climbing with one gear can be challenging at times. I find my self pedaling up hill more aggressively than I would if I were on my geared bicycle. Some might think that I am showing off but for the most part I am trying to maintain a reasonably smooth pedal stroke and cadence so that my rear wheel will maintain traction. On extended climbs or when the grade is excessive and I have to stand my pedal stroke squares off similar to using a stair master. When a hill is steep enough for me to have to stand I really have to pick my lines wisely in order to prevent my rear wheel from losing traction and spinning out. Having a rear tire spin out on a steep climb is similar to having a chain break and neither is very fun "school of hard knocks." When climbing hills I think of ways to conserve energy by alternating muscle groups and focusing on keeping my upper body relaxed. Hill climbing on a single speed has definitely raised my anaerobic threshold and has forced me to ride smarter.

A proper fitted bicycle is important for any cyclist. A properly adjusted saddle height has made my single speed riding experience more enjoyable. I have adjusted my saddle height so that the weight of my upper body is supported by my saddle/seat post and not my legs this conserves a lot of energy.

I enjoy riding my rigid single speed more than my geared dual suspension bicycle. It is



less complicated, much quieter, and I no longer have to think ahead about what gear I need to be in. It reminds me of the good times I had on my very first bicycle after my Dad removed the training wheels of course.

## To Hell and Back

### A Former GI's Journey to Figueroa Mtn. from a Hollywood Perspective

*By Bob Goebel*

SCENE 1: The sky was grey, and the wind was calm as Mattei's Tavern awaited the arrival of the few intrepid cyclists from the Lompoc Valley. Col. Greenley preceded the pack as usual and prepared his report for the leader Dr. Gene. As the brave gathered the mood was sullen as was the weather.

I, too, gathered with the brave, my name is Bob Goebel and this is my story.

0900 HRS. "MOVE OUT!", the wiry Colonel barked, "we are burning daylight and you slackers are already 20 seconds behind the eight ball!" "PEDDLE, PEDDLE, PEDDLE, I want 70 RPM's, no more and God help you if there is any less!"

Bruce, Pam, Rick, Sheila, and I followed the Colonel and his foreign military advisor Lieven with Commander Dr. Gene across the highway on our journey to Happy Canyon and eventually Figueroa Mountain.

Several miles into our mission the well hydrated peloton needed to shed our extra water reserves and by order of the Colonel we stopped and hit the head.

SCENE 2: We are now at the base of the mountain getting ready for the ascent. Enemy movement (cars) strength so far was slightly higher than expected. Fortunately we

didn't suffer any casualties by avoiding their patrols.

We started our trek up and for whatever stupid reason I decided to take the lead. Deep down inside I knew this is the only chance I have to show off and that by the end, if I made it, I would be a sniveling, sweaty macaroni shell of a man trying to beat the sun while my comrades were sending out search parties for me.

I was ahead of the pack for at least 30 or 40 feet, a commanding lead! Hot on my trail was the Colonel and Lieven and they soon left me in the dust as I choked on more than my pride.

I would not let my spirit be broken and I thought of the "Little Engine that Could". "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can,...I know I can, I know.....oh \*&^%# who am I kidding?"

I was exhausted and started to muse and daydream. I thought of some of my hero's and their sage advice. Dirty Harry from "Magnum Force" comes to mind as he told me, "A man's gotta know his limitations." I thought what the heck am I doing!

I pedaled and pumped the grade, the road was relentless. Drudgery, toil, sweat! I need to stop... NO! I can't do that. Have to keep going! Finally I couldn't take it and dismounted my bike. When I did, Bruce came around and asked me if he had a flat because that is what it felt like to him. I was woozy and like in the movie "Midnight Cowboy" I responded with, "I'm walking here! I'm

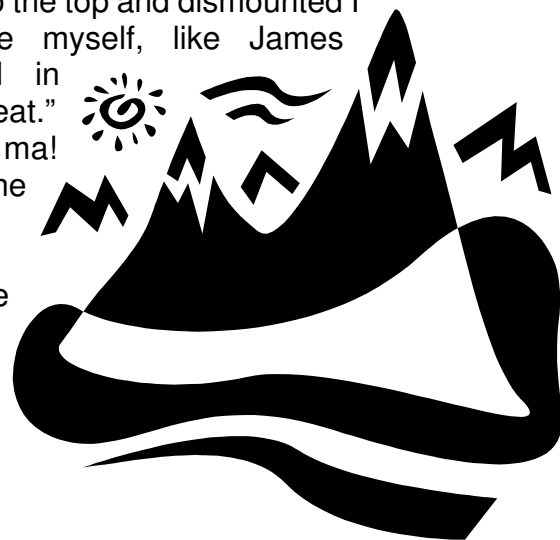
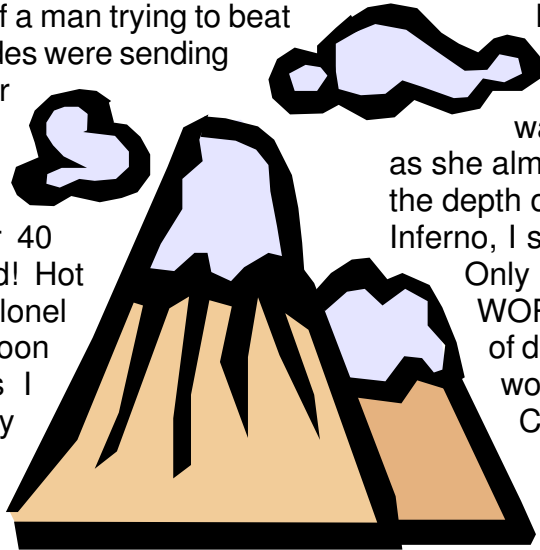
walking here!"

I didn't feel too bad because after all it was Lance, I mean Bruce. So I continued to walk my bike. I got on again, pedaled about four or five turns and again, dismounted. I didn't feel like I was walking with my bike, but I was pushing this \$%&# piece of steel up Mount Everest. My humiliation would soon be complete as another rider rode past me. I gave a warm smile and friendly hello to Pam as she almost effortlessly glided past. But in the depth of my tortured being like in Dante's Inferno, I said under my breath, "Ooh fudge! Only I didn't say "fudge". I said THE WORD, the big one, the queen-mother of dirty words, the "F-dash-dash-dash" word!" that Ralphie said in "A Christmas Story".

I pushed and pushed my bike, my piece of steel, my hunk of useless metal, my cross, my instrument of torture and humiliation towards the top of Mount HELL! Fortunately my hearing is fairly good when it needs to be, (usually when there is no women around), I heard our leader Dr. Gene rooting for those folks who already passed me. So at one turn before anyone can see me, I mounted my bike and bravely rode the rest of the way (about 50 more feet) to the summit. Dr. Gene inspired me by jeering me...I mean cheering me on!

When I got to the top and dismounted I yelled inside myself, like James Cagney did in "White Heat." "Made it ma! Top of the world!"

Dr. Gene



came over to me as I nearly passed out and congratulated me for making it. I wanted to stay there forever and never get on a bike or move my legs ever again. Satan could have offered me a "Scooter" for my legs and my soul and it would've been a deal! Then, Dr. Gene, trying to be funny said, "We're not at the top yet, there is another 500 to 1000 foot climb before we get to the very top. I looked at him and glared, he got the look of death from me, and like Quintus Arius said to Ben Hur, "Your eyes are full of hate forty-one. That's good. Hate keeps a man alive. It gives him strength." Well he didn't really say that, but it was a great line!

SCENE 3: We all started out again for our descent down to "Neverland." But we didn't make it too far when, "Houston we have a problem." Bruce got a flat tire. That was fixed in record time, I mean record time for me or a mentally challenged chimp with two broken hands. Maybe it was the fog, the blowing wet cold fog and my still quivering legs that made it feel like an eternity. I don't know?

On the road again, and a few more feet. Rick realizes that he has a bulge. IN HIS FRONT TIRE! Come on folks, quit assuming how I think! Sure enough his tube is sticking out of .....HIS INNER TUBE was coming through his front tire. Dr. Gene being the great leader he is made the right call and looked out for Rick, like he would for the rest of the Unit and ordered him to stop. (A loyal leader he is. Unlike the Colonel and his foreign advisor who deserted the Unit and decided to go on maneuvers of their own.)

We contemplated how we would rectify the situation and realized we didn't have the best supplies to do the job. While Dr. Gene, Bruce and Rick were brainstorming the solution I

was thinking like the General from the movie "War Games", who said, "God damn it, I'd piss on a spark plug if I thought it'd do any good!" Long story short we were on the down hill again.

I couldn't believe the steepness of the descent and the speed I acquired. I had a death grip on my brakes, I could only see a few feet in front of me, and I was freezing while flying through the clouds on Figueroa Mountain. It was "Dr. Strangelove" all over again with Slim Pickins, aka, Major T. J. "King" Kong saying, "Stay on the bomb run boys. I'm going to get them doors open if it harelips everybody on Bear Creek. Aaaaaa hoooo! Waaaaa hooooo!" as he rides the atomic bomb down over its target in Russia. That is how I felt, falling, out of control and heading for my certain death!

Needless to say as evidenced by this report, I made it home. The rest of the trip was uneventful other than the fact that the Colonel did return like McArthur, even though he didn't say so, and picked up Dr. Gene and Bruce at the base of the Mountain and "VAN LIFTED" them back to camp. The rest of us went on to complete the mission.

When I got back to my car, (A TREMENDOUS GIFT, MIRACLE FROM GOD WITH HEAT AND EVERYTHING!!!!!!!!!!) I said to myself like Dorothy from the "Wizard of Oz." "There is no place like home."

I can't wait to do it again .....

**NOT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

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## Ride Calendar

The Current Ride Calendar is listed on the website at [www.bikelompoc.com](http://www.bikelompoc.com)

**Standing Club Rides**

- ❑ Friday Morning Road Ride to Mother Hubbards  
(To Watch Bob Goebel eat a giant Seafood  
Omelet) meets at Home Depot at 8:30. 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 there is  
an otherwise scheduled ride)– 8am  
Meet at Southside Coffee Company  
105 South H Street in Lompoc  
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, September 12<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 (Scott Shaw) at  
735-3602 or e-mail at [sdsdvm@netscape.net](mailto:sdsdvm@netscape.net) for entry into  
next month's newsletter.

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